

Step 1. Define the long-term goals

Focus of this chapter: Deciding your long-term goals regarding money in the electoral process – and conceptualizing what the ideal situation for your context would be.

Content of this chapter:

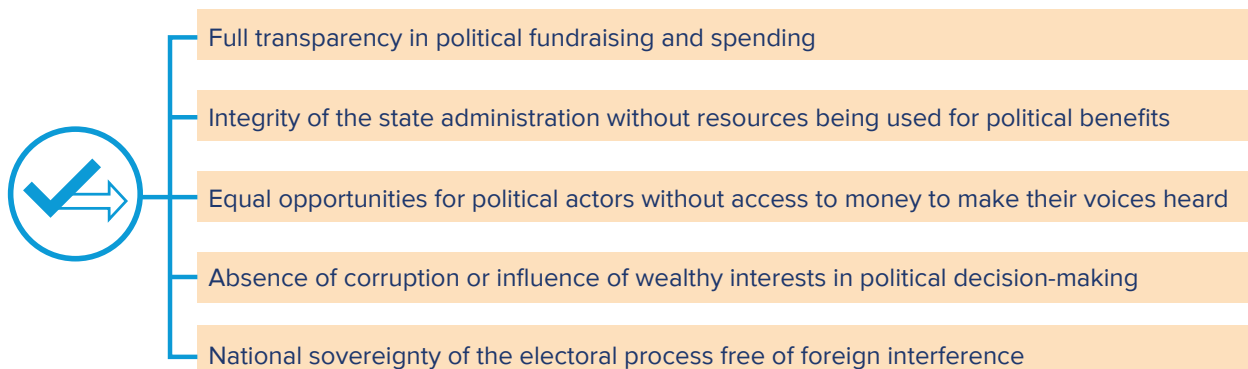
- What we mean by “long-term goals,” and why deciding on them matters
- Examples of long-term goals

Monitoring of campaign finance can be done for a variety of reasons and in pursuit of various goals. If monitoring is to be useful, it is important to be explicit about what these goals are. Hence, the first step in developing a methodology for CFM is to consider why you are doing it, or more precisely, what longer-term situation do you hope to see regarding the role of money in politics (and in particular in elections) for the country being monitored.

No single CFM project is likely to bring about these higher-level, long-term goals. Arriving at this point requires extensive action from a myriad of people and entities including citizens, civil society players, the media, public institutions and business and political players. However, before developing a detailed plan for campaign finance monitoring, it is important to identify the long-term goals to which your project should contribute. These goals will help determine the activities which should be carried out.

For example, if the identified long-term goal is increased transparency, it makes sense to focus on the accuracy of ongoing financial reporting and the activities of the political finance oversight institution. If instead the goal is decreased political corruption or accountability from politicians, it may make more sense to focus the monitoring on vote buying or abuse of state resources. If ensuring that the electoral process is free of foreign interference, focusing on campaign income or on spending by non-contestants (“third parties”) might be called for. Some common long-term goals are shown in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6. EXAMPLES OF LONG-TERM GOALS OF CFM PROJECTS



No goal is more important than another de facto. Your general view of how the political and electoral process should function will determine which goals you wish your CFM monitoring project to contribute to. This can vary, for example, depending on political culture. For example, the general view of the role political parties should play in the political and electoral process is vastly different in the U.S. compared to Scandinavia, but both views are equally valid.

Naturally, you may well come up with multiple long-term goals. This is understandable given the complex nature of democracy and the political process. Be careful not to identify too many long-term goals though, as this may dilute your monitoring efforts, and make it more difficult to identify a logical connection between your long-term goal and the CFM you are carrying out.

Once you have identified the long-term goals that your project wishes to contribute to, the next step is to consider what current campaign finance problems are hindering the achievement of these goals. This is the focus of the next chapter.