

Accessible PDF edition · Generated from the canonical publication content

Latest Edition in Brief · Governance Research Brief · Edition 3

Every Friday, the Governance Research Brief selects consequential recent research, official reports and institutional analysis, keeping the evidence distinct from the questions it raises for Kenya, the Global South and the wider world.

The Blind Spots Inside Public Authority

Five new and recent publications examine whether public institutions can see the risks they carry, understand the reasons citizens withhold trust, trace external finance and use procurement with sufficient knowledge of the markets they shape.

Published **18 September 2026**

Selected **5 publications**

Current window **4 published 12–18 September**

Extended window **1 published 8 September**

Risk **Compare policy attention with the sectors and people most exposed in practice.**

Trust **Measure citizens' experience of reliability, responsiveness, openness, integrity and fairness.**

Finance **Bring external resources into domestic planning, scrutiny and institutional learning.**

Procurement **Use public purchasing with market intelligence, professional capacity and credible exit rights.**

The finding

Government cannot govern what its institutions cannot see.

The five readings describe different forms of administrative blindness. Artificial-intelligence policy can overlook vulnerable sectors. Trust statistics can flatten the institutional experiences that produced the judgement. Development finance can sit outside public budgets, while procurement can shape markets without leaving government any clearer about the power it has exercised.

The evidence does not form a universal blueprint. It ranges from a research preprint and methodological guidance to multilateral monitoring, a global democratic assessment and a United Kingdom policy report. Read together, the publications identify the information that must enter public systems before authority can be exercised accountably.

The administrative requirement

Assign responsibility for interpreting and acting on the evidence.

A risk map, trust survey, financing record or procurement dataset has little administrative value unless a named institution can interpret it, connect it to a budget or service process, and alter a decision when the evidence changes. National rules must also state how county and frontline institutions will use the information under actual operating conditions.

For Kenya and the Global South, this means joining policy design to subnational practice, strengthening the public systems through which external finance is recorded, and treating procurement data as part of market governance rather than a record of expenditure alone.

Questions to carry into the room

Four matters to settle before authority is exercised.

Exposure **Where does governmental attention diverge from public vulnerability?**

Evidence **Which evidence must enter public systems before accountability becomes possible?**

Authority **Which institution owns the information, the decision and the consequences?**

Learning **Can the institution change course and explain what changed?**