This project was begun in 1999 by Julius Court when he served as program officer at the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo. Subsequently, Goran Hyden was invited to serve as joint coordinator, and together they developed the World Governance Survey, a project that generated the database on which this book is based. The instrument for the survey was developed and refined in several sessions both at UNU and with advice from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was first applied in late 2000 and early 2001, when country coordinators in twenty-three countries, mostly in the developing world, administered the questionnaire to a cross section of people concerned with national governance issues, referred to in the text below as well-informed persons (WIPs). Kenneth Mease joined the team in 2001 at the analysis stage, and the book has benefited enormously from his expertise.

This is the first consolidated and comprehensive report on the World Governance Survey. Our intention was to develop a way to generate comprehensive, comparative governance assessments. This raised major conceptual and methodological challenges: the survey was logistically complex, and measuring governance is politically sensitive (though less so than we expected). Nevertheless, it was an enormously rewarding exercise. We are extremely grateful to partners around the world who have helped in developing a framework, testing different approaches, and gathering systematic data on issues that are so important yet so challenging. It is appropriate, therefore, that we acknowledge the contributions of several colleagues and friends.

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The coauthors are solely responsible for the final result of this book. Joint authorship is always a challenge, but it has been a great pleasure on this important project.