

## Progress Since Busan: Results

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This document was prepared by the Building Block on Results and Mutual Accountability and does not necessarily reflect the official views of the the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). This paper draws on a range of evidence sources and is designed to complement and deepen the analysis available from the Global Monitoring Report so as to foster useful discussions during the High Level Meeting in Mexico City.

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## INTRODUCTION

At the 2011 Busan High Level Forum (HLF4) voluntary groups were created to further promote the Busan principles and consisted of representatives from partner countries, development partners and civil society organisations. One of these 'Building Blocks' (BB) was the Building Block on Results and Mutual Accountability (BB-R&MA).

The BB organised two regional stocktaking workshops, one in Zambia (September 2012) and one in Benin (November 2012) that attracted a large number and variety of stakeholders with 7 and 11 partner country delegations respectively, together with various multi-lateral and bi-lateral development partners as well as civil society representatives and regional support organisations. The workshops concluded that to a large extent roadmaps for R&MA frameworks exist, at varying levels of implementation.

In February 2013 a BB management meeting was held to discuss the two stocktaking workshops and concluded to remain active in keeping the promotion and support of country-led R&MA frameworks on the agenda. The current co-chairs are Bangladesh and Switzerland. This paper reflects on the experiences of the BB members as actors for implementing results frameworks and mutual accountability arrangements. It aims to trigger the discussion on main challenges and the best way forward.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE BUILDING BLOCK

In the run up to the Mexico HLM, the BB co-chairs decided to carry out a quick survey among its members on progress made and on ideas how to continue with the R&MA agenda. The Busan indicators 1 and 7 were used to guide the questions on progress. Achieving and demonstrating results of development cooperation are foreseen in the Busan Partnership agreement (BPa) as the most critical indicator for Global partnership monitoring. The indicator is used to assess the extent to which providers of development cooperation utilise partner country results frameworks (CRF) and their associated monitoring and evaluation systems. The BB aimed to assess whether providers actually use the CRF as the basis for their planning, implementation and reporting.

### **Indicator 1: Development Cooperation is focused on results that meet developing countries' priorities**

The BB-R&MA has not yet clearly defined what a partner country results framework is. For clarity purposes in this paper we suggest the following operational description:

A Country Results Framework (CRF) is an institutionalised and functioning system of formulating and assessing progress and results set out in the national development plan. There is an efficient mechanism of collecting and analysing data to be used for the national development strategy.

The results framework serves both a learning and decision making objective. For a results framework to be effective the enabling environment will need to comprise of:

- Senior leadership support
- A results focussed organisational culture
- Effective change management practices
- Multi-stakeholder cooperation among government, private and civil society partners

Even though there are variations between countries, the overall picture is that partner countries have results- and indicator-based national development strategies to which the DPs contribute; priorities for development cooperation are largely country owned. For instance, Bolivia works with 13 development goals (Agenda 2025) supported by a government led working group in which the main DPs also take part; Bangladesh identified 35 indicators in its Sixth Five Year development plan to which most of the Development Partners are contributing; Madagascar has 60 national priority indicators that are annually monitored by the government. When needed, DPs provide assistance in setting up effective systems and capacities for results based management. Increasingly efforts are made to publish results on-line, e.g. the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

Improvement suggestions at the country level, for some countries more than others, are:

- Improving the quality of information to measure the country indicators. This would for instance imply strengthening the Statistical Offices and coordination among national information centres
- Besides the 'easily' measurable quantity indicators, also focus on the quality indicators, like quality of life and leadership quality. DPs may shy away from these indicators because they cannot easily be demonstrated as impact to their parliament/ taxpayers
- Attention to results in post conflict and fragile areas. Because of the rapidly changing context in these areas, results frameworks will look different and will more easily change. Country systems will be less developed or absent altogether. In addition, it will be hard to formulate a unified approach to post conflict and fragile areas because of the highly context specific developments.

In recent years, as a consequence of accountability pressures in DP countries, donor agencies are increasingly developing their own results frameworks, allowing them to aggregate information across partner countries. There is a risk that these results framework will become parallel systems putting more emphasis on donor priorities than partner country priorities. In Peru domestic results differ in some cases from the results formulated by development partners. In 2014 Peru will finalise the indicators in the annual cooperation programme, aiming at increased DPs' alignment to the domestic results framework. In other countries (e.g. Madagascar), there is also an increase in direct funding of local NGOs, outside the national country development framework.

At the same time, there is a trend among DPs to work together on joint analysis and joint programming (e.g. EU member states), facilitating a better alignment of the DPs' results orientation with the respective country results frameworks.

Developing the country results framework has become more inclusive; non-state actors like civil society and private sector organisations are getting more involved in country priority setting. Involvement of parliaments and local/ sub-national government agencies is increasing, even though some BB members state that these latter two stakeholders need to be involved more prominently. Donors are actively supporting country level processes and platforms on results frameworks. For instance, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) guidelines for the elaboration of country strategies make it mandatory to use— in a multi-stakeholder setting – the partner country development priorities as the starting point for formulating the SDC contribution.

During the BB discussions it became clear that introducing a country results framework is more than agreeing on a series of results and indicators, it also entails change management and political issues that ask for behavioural changes; this enabling environment is sometimes lacking:

- Political leadership within some partner countries is to engage itself more in results thinking (from inputs to outputs/outcome) and become assertive to DPs concerning alignment

- Set up processes that work towards inclusive country frames, incorporating multiple stakeholders
- Addressing the DPs' possible dilemma of accountability towards donor parliament versus the commitment to use country systems

In December 2013 a pilot survey was initiated by a joint OECD/UNDP team among BB members with the objective to develop an adequate indicator for the use of country results frameworks. Seven members are participating (Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, DRC, Madagascar, Moldova and Peru). Results of the survey will likely be available during the 1<sup>st</sup> HLM in Mexico.

**Indicator 7: Mutual accountability among development cooperation actors is strengthened through inclusive reviews**

Mutual accountability (MA) refers to the agreement between partner country and development partner on commitments to the country results framework; both are held accountable. MA serves as an overarching principle for the effectiveness of development cooperation. Commitments are regularly reviewed. Domestic accountability within partner countries is an equally important part of MA, but was less discussed in this Building Block.

Various countries have established a national framework for development cooperation and partnership that defines specific objectives for improving the effectiveness of development cooperation. Joint assessments take place and good practices are gradually emerging. For instance, in June 2010 the Government of Bangladesh and 18 DPs signed a Joint Cooperation Strategy (2010-15) that spells out tangible commitments relating to effective government institutions, use of country systems, rationalising sector support, stronger results monitoring and regular institutional dialogue. In Mali, since the May 2013 Brussels Pledging Conference, the government meets with the donors twice a year to discuss pledges and mutual commitments. In-country the donor community is meeting monthly, three of them (The Troika) are leading the policy dialogue with the government.

While a lot of progress has been made, many national MA agreements are still to be established. Partner country aid policies and targets for individual providers are little developed. The aid architecture - with multi-stakeholder platforms - is often available, but monitoring and performance assessment remains mainly focused on the recipient side, less on the provider side. The effectiveness of a national level MA system depends to a large extent on the political leadership. In Honduras the 'Declaración Conjunta' was established, a monitoring instrument defining the roadmap on five themes (Security, human rights, social development, electoral reform and governance). The objective was to be mutually accountable for these roadmaps, but in practice accountability was mainly from partner country to DP, not the other way around.

In fragile contexts, MA arrangements become more complex. For instance, in Haiti there have not been government-donor meetings since the last meeting of the Comité d'Efficacité de l'Aide (CEA) in May 2013; the large number of players and the geopolitical interests may decrease the effectiveness of MA arrangements, as is for instance also the case in the Palestinian Territory.

The most frequent mutual accountability agreements are made at the sector, programme and project levels. At these levels, multi-stakeholder assessments are more common. For instance, in Nicaragua the agricultural & rural development sector has set up an annual agenda for structured dialogue among stakeholders. In Peru the mutual assessments take place at the implementation levels, only few reach the top level with hardly any attention to effectiveness and quality; quality of cooperation has not been defined as a topic of assessment. In general the MA practices seem more elaborate when basket funding or (sector) budget support is the aid modality.

Civil Society organisations, private parties and parliament are getting more involved in mutual assessment. Some BB members wish an increased involvement of these stakeholders, e.g. Peru. A separate topic of attention in (sub-) national MA systems is the communication of the results of mutual assessments, e.g. the role of media and CSOs in facilitating communication. Various BB members see scope for improvement in this area of domestic accountability.

In order to support partner countries, efforts are made at regional level to develop a generally accepted framework for defining and measuring MA. An example is the African Mutual Accountability Standards Programme (AMAS, 2011-2015) which is now in the phase of testing the principles at country level and assess capacity development needs. Besides regional, also thematic MA arrangements are developing, see for instance <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/commitments> where partner country and donor commitments are monitored using a small set of indicators.

Mutual accountability is a policy area that receives large international attention. One BB member, UNDESA, is organising the 3<sup>rd</sup> global accountability survey in preparation for the next UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) in March 2014. Results of this forum will likely be available for the HLM in Mexico.

## CHALLENGES AHEAD

### *On results frameworks*

The world of development cooperation has formulated a large number of results frameworks. Partly these are designed by partner countries, partly by multi-lateral, bi-lateral and private development partners. If the DPs' results frameworks are mainly serving as accountability mechanisms to their own constituencies, this will be less of an issue. But if these results framework are too much influencing the selection of support programmes and indicators to be measured, then we will divert from the agreement that the partner country results frameworks are leading for development cooperation. Besides, it does not seem efficient to have a multitude of different, even though comparable, results frames.

A major challenge facing the partner countries is coordinating the data collection efforts of the various ministries and agencies. Capacity gaps in data collection and analysis need to be addressed at different levels of Government. This issue has already been identified and various development partners are providing corresponding technical assistance. Effective linkages need to be established between the National Development Strategy (NDS) Policy Matrices, the Annual Development Programmes and MDG monitoring.

### *On mutual accountability*

- Emphasise the development of national level MA agreements that inform the sub-national and sector agreements. Experiences at implementation level are to be used for monitoring the national agreements
- Include the quality of cooperation on the agendas of the dialogue platforms. This is a topic for both political and technical leaders, often informally discussed but not yet formally included in the agreements
- Differentiate between accountability to *commitment* and accountability to *results*. The goals of the post 2015 agenda may provide the guidelines to make mutual accountability for results more operational

## *On the Building Block R&MA*

This BB is one out of 10 voluntary groups that came out of Busan, there are no formal linkages with the Global Partnership. BB-R&MA members see as its main priority area:

*Supporting capacity development and knowledge sharing;* the BB should become a platform for regional knowledge sharing in support of implementation of the agenda at country level and working towards standards with examples of good practices. It is in a good position to be a broker or resource centre to promote exchanges of lessons learnt through interaction with existing regional (and global) platforms

The BB has around 50 members, 10 of them from partner countries. To make the work of the BB truly 'Global light and Country heavy', partner country participation should increase, which would have funding implications.

At the same time, having partner country focal points for all BBs would be a little too country heavy. Merging BBs may be efficient; for instance the BB R&MA is also discussing the topics of aid fragmentation and creating effective institutions. A feasible country heavy approach will need to be developed to ensure that country experiences – via regional representation – can feed into the global policy environment.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

The Building Block also discussed organisational aspects of how the results orientation and other Busan indicators may be strengthened. This final part of the discussion paper elaborates ideas on how to improve the *Global Light, Country Heavy* approach.

Most partner countries have a system and structure on aid architecture, some more elaborate than others, some more country driven than others. The main objective of the aid architecture is to coordinate and support development efforts. Multi-stakeholder coordination takes place at national, sector and sometimes thematic level. The topics covered by the BBs can be (and to a certain extent are already, like for instance in the case of Bangladesh) included in the national and sector level platforms.

We suggest a practical way forward and take the current country coordination arrangements as the starting point. The aim of being country heavy is a country-led aid architecture that is able to support and implement a national results framework and enforces true mutual accountability. These country level effectiveness frameworks will generate experiences to be shared with other countries – peer reviews – and with the global level policy environment. In making these frameworks operational, some countries may need external capacity development support, probably more for LDCs and Fragile States than for the MICs.

In order for the partner countries to effectively share experiences and feed into the global policy arena, a strong regional level coordination needs to be available. The coordination function on development effectiveness at regional level may need to be strengthened. Regional groups on development effectiveness already exist in Asia and Africa, and also the MfDR developments are supported by three regional Communities of Practice; country MfDR chapters are emerging. The policy coordination between DPs and partner countries can become more practical and focused when carried out at the (sub-) regional level. For the country to region communication, separate funding will be needed.

A focus on country capacities for development effectiveness, and increased attention to regional experience exchange and policy development, may create the desired *Global Light* approach in which only one annual meeting may suffice. In these annual meetings the regional

representatives can make the dialogue and discussions on development effectiveness more focussed and effective. Important issue in these global discussions would be that the post 2015 goals and agenda – in which new ‘MDGs’ and indicators will be formulated – are flexible enough for all countries, allowing them to design their own results frameworks. The alignment between monitoring the post-Busan development effectiveness agenda with the post-2015 agenda may imply an adjustment in the post-Busan coordination arrangements.