



THE THEORY OF CHANGE  
FOR THE GLOBAL  
PARTNERSHIP FOR  
EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT  
CO-OPERATION

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Dr. Peter Davis  
Peter.Davis@Consilience.Global

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# Executive Summary

## Background

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) is a key element in the international institutional architecture to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Within this global architecture, the specific mandate of the GPEDC is to focus on development effectiveness at both global and local level. Sustainable development is affected by a wide range of actors and undertaken through many modalities. GPEDC exists to facilitate the effectiveness of these different means of development. Accordingly the mandate of the GPEDC encompasses all the modalities described in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including domestic resource mobilisation and policies, to achieve the SDGs; the financial means, both public and private coming to a country as well as the interaction between domestic flows and international flows; and international public finance.

In operational terms this mandate encompasses two spheres of activity. The first is to focus on monitoring and evaluation as tools which provide the evidence to facilitate improvements in development practice. The second is to develop improved and effective partnerships between an increasing range of development actors, including donor agencies of the DAC; civil society organisations, private sector actors, philanthropic organizations, and South-South co-operation providers. GPEDC regards all of these actors as being equal partners.

## The GPEDC Theory of Change (ToC)

The GPEDC Theory of Change therefore does a number of things. Firstly, it positions the partnership within the global development architecture. Second it describes how the various activities and processes of the Partnership work together to fulfil its mandate. Thirdly it explains how the work of the Partnership improves development outcomes 'in the real world'.

## Global context (boxes 1 and 2)

GPEDC is part of a much wider architecture of international development cooperation, which is enshrined in a number of key international agreements.

### *Narrative*

The 2030 Agenda is a globally agreed plan of action. The GPEDC forms a key part of the global institutional architecture focussed on the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. Its key area of focus is on developing more effective development co-operation.

### *Assumptions and risks*

The most significant risk is that GPEDC failed to maintain focus on its specific role, and becomes pulled into other sets of activity. A further risk would be diminished inclusion of a complete spectrum of development actors.

### *Actions*

GPEDC and its partners need to ensure that all of their activities focus on **improving the effectiveness of development cooperation**. Activities must consciously maximize the inclusion of all relevant development actors.

### GPEDC Activities: Process (boxes 3-6, 10 and 12)

The GPEDC's theory of change works along two separate but inter-related streams of activity. The first is the **process** of activities that it is envisaged that stakeholders should take.

### *Narrative*

Effective review of partners' activities is essential for the effective implementation of the 2030 development agenda. Monitoring and evaluation provide clear evidence to improve the design and impact of future programmes and projects. The monitoring process is not an end in itself but serves a broader processes of multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

### *Assumptions and risks*

Not all stakeholders are familiar with international agreements. Whilst monitoring is important it is important to understand whether what is being monitored is relevant in understanding whether key development goals have been achieved and useful in advancing dialogue to achieve change.

### *Actions*

A proper mix of monitoring and evaluation is required; properly geared to understanding what is happening in each particular circumstance. These lessons also need to be effectively shared, and where clear evidence does not seem to be driving change GPEDC needs to be proactive in understanding why.

### GPEDC Activities: Engagement (boxes 7-13)

The second stream of GPEDC activity relates to engagement with all stakeholders, and supporting them in making best use of development effectiveness data.

### *Narrative*

The multi-stakeholder nature of the GPEDC is of utmost value. It is necessary to understand the real motivations of all potential stakeholders to engage, and their capacity to do so. GPEDC needs to use the development effectiveness data to demonstrate to each partner, in their own terms, the relevance of playing a full role in the Partnership.

### *Assumptions and risks*

Stakeholders' participation in the work of the Partnership needs to be earned, not assumed and their rationales for engagement will all be different. Many non-traditional actors will not regard themselves as bound by 2030 Agenda, or may be unaware that it is meant to apply to them.

### *Actions*

GPEDC needs to understand in each case what might make that stakeholder engage with the GPEDC process. GPEDC products need to highlight issues affecting progress in ways that allow for national and regional policy dialogue. HLMs need to be structured to directly engage the leadership of Partnership members in ways that strengthen and renew commitment.

### *Outcome and impact (boxes 14 and 15)*

The process described above provides the modality for the GPEDC to achieve its role within the wider international developmental architecture. As with the contextual issues (boxes 1 and 2) the outcome stages of the ToC are prone to factors beyond the ability of the GPEDC to control as part of its processes.

### *Narrative*

The improvement of development outcomes is the ambition of the Agenda 2030 process as a whole. This ToC lays out how GPEDC can deliver its particular part in achieving this, in collaboration with others.

### *Assumptions and risks*

The range of actors in any given situation will change over time. It may be that development outcomes are compromised in a particular situation because one or more key actor was overlooked, or chose not to collaborate with others.

### *Actions*

GPEDC needs to maintain an on-going assessment of the stakeholders in each situation.. GPEDC needs to ensure it collaborates effectively with other apex organisations within the Agenda 2030 architecture.

## *Recommendations*

### *Revising the monitoring framework for improved accountability*

The Monitoring Advisory Group recommends a number of changes be made to the GPEDC's monitoring framework:

1. The Monitoring Framework should be considered as the core resource and a significant comparative advantage to the GPEDC.
2. GPEDC's core business is where public concessional finance (ODA and SSD) link with other non-public finance flows.
3. While improvements to the Monitoring Framework may sometimes be needed, there is also a need for continuity in the indicators to understand progress over time.
4. Mutual accountability is a central, overarching indicator that should be reflected in all dimensions of effective development cooperation.
5. Greater emphasis on evaluation is an important ingredient for a more nuanced understanding of the 'why question' in assessing monitoring outcomes.

6. Small changes are needed to adapt the framework to the particular needs and concerns of middle-income country providers.
7. The monitoring process needs to be applied to the whole development process. This includes key areas of provider institutional policies and practices.
8. Climate finance is a relevant area for applying development effectiveness principles and the Monitoring Framework should be applied here.
9. The Monitoring Framework should be restructured according to the four principles for effective development cooperation.

### Making GPEDC relevant for all stakeholder groups

All elements of the GPEDC structure need to promote the increased relevance of GPEDC's principles and commitments to all stakeholder groups. To make this work in the real world, there is a need to consider the following factors:

- Actors will only act in accordance with GPEDC's structures when they have robust incentives to do so.
- 'Evidence' can be subjective: what convinces one party may not convince another.
- Relevant actors must be inspired by, and identify their actions, with the Theory of Change.
- It is important to remember that behaviour and institutional change takes time, sometimes a great deal of time.

For GPEDC to truly work, the 'what' of development co-operation practice (performance measured through the monitoring framework) must be coupled with the 'why' question (behaviour change assessed through evaluations).

### Next steps

The key feature of a Theory of Change is precisely that it is a theory. It is a set of assumptions that are made about how the world will work, and about how behavioural and institutional change will occur over time. As more evidence comes to light a ToC therefore needs to be amended to reflect that new evidence.

Over time therefore, GPEDC needs to keep asking why change is or is not happening. It needs to continue the process of reviewing its assumptions and risks, and develop a process to re-evaluate whether the actions taken to substantiate assumptions and manage risks are working. In this way, GPEDC will be able to improve its model and promote the behaviour change required for more effective development co-operation, and so fulfil its key role to deliver Agenda 2030.

## Context

### Introduction

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) is a key element in the international institutional architecture to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. GPEDC provides a unique platform to advance the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors, to deliver results that are long-lasting and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It supports and ensures accountability for the implementation of shared principles and differentiated commitments at the political level. It contributes to the strengthening of the global partnership for sustainable development.

Through its multi-stakeholder platform, GPEDC provides practical support and guidance and shares knowledge to boost development impact with a strong country focus to implement internationally agreed effectiveness principles at country level – country ownership, a focus on results, inclusive partnerships and transparency and mutual accountability.

The Global Partnership tracks progress in the implementation of Busan commitments for more effective development co-operation through its monitoring framework comprised of a set of 10 indicators. These indicators focus on strengthening developing country institutions, increasing transparency and predictability of development co-operation, enhancing gender equality, as well as supporting greater involvement of civil society, parliaments and private sector in development efforts. The monitoring framework is currently being refined to fully reflect the 2030 Agenda and will contribute to the review of targets for SDG 5 and 17 and implementation of the Financing for Development agreements.

The Global Partnership was created at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011 and came into effect in 2012. It brings together governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations, civil society and representatives from parliaments and the private sector all committed to strengthening the effectiveness of their development co-operation.

### The GPEDC context and model

The Global Partnership exists as a key element in the Agenda 2030 development landscape. As such its work intersects with a number of other important initiatives, including the Financing for Development agenda, climate finance post-Paris agreement, and the evolving linkages between country-level and global level implementation.

Within this global architecture, the specific mandate of the GPEDC is to focus on development effectiveness at both global and local level. Sustainable development is affected by a wide range of actors and undertaken through many modalities. GPEDC exists to facilitate the effectiveness of these different means of development. Accordingly the mandate of the GPEDC encompasses all the modalities described in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including domestic resource mobilisation and policies, to achieve the SDGs; the financial means, both public and private coming to a country

as well as the interaction between domestic flows and international flows; and international public finance.

In operational terms this mandate encompasses two spheres of activity. The first is to focus on monitoring and evaluation as tools which provide the evidence to facilitate improvements in development practice. There are two distinct aspects to this. The first is monitoring, which provides the assessment of whether key benchmarks are being achieved. The second is evaluation, which is a broader process to evaluate whether activities, or groups of activities are effective tools in achieving the ends required. Together these data can be used to inform ongoing analysis and dialogue in country, The full range of the data provided by the monitoring exercise in each country can be used to underpin context-specific analysis and discussion about the bottlenecks to progress, and possible ways forward.

The second element in GPEDC's mandate is to develop improved and effective partnerships between development actors. The range of organisations impacting on development outcomes has grown significantly and now include donor agencies of the DAC; civil society organisations, private sector actors, philanthropic organizations, and South-South co-operation providers. Whilst GPEDC regards all of these actors as being equal partners, a key challenge for the Partnership is to secure their engagement and collaboration in order to achieve effective development. Some actors, for example the private sector and the donor agencies from countries which were themselves recently aid recipients sometimes view development cooperation differently from 'traditional' actors. Central to GPEDC's work therefore is to foster partnership between all these actors. To this end the Partnership has developed a number of approaches, including country-level implementation groups, knowledge-sharing platforms and relevant policy work.

Key to the delivery of these two areas of operation is the need for mutual accountability. At present there remains some lack of clarity about the relative roles of the different stakeholders to the GPEDC, and this needs to be clarified over time. Moreover, the donor agencies of developed countries need to ensure that they are fully accountable to others.

GPEDC's role is proactively intended to be complementary to that of other global development entities. It is therefore of key importance that the Partnership has a solid Theory of Change which defines how the GPEDC's model is unique, and operates as a stand-alone platform with a distinctive agenda, principles, commitments, and mechanisms. GPEDC has a distinctive approach, which includes:

- Activities, including thematic priorities, monitoring and other assessment of progress, activities at national, regional, global and provider HQ level, and Global Partnership Initiatives.
- Processes ranging from implementation of aid and development effectiveness agreements to improved awareness to policy reform at country, regional, global and provider HQ level.
- An architecture of internal governance which fosters change at global, regional and national levels.
- Engagement with traditional and non-traditional development co-operation actors, through inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue, incentives for behavior change and capacity building.



- Linking improved policies and practices involving multiple actors that take account safeguarding of human rights, gender equality and environment sustainability for improved development outcomes.
- Ensuring that at a global and national level no-one is left behind, and that sustainable development reaches all.

## The process of developing a Theory of Change (ToC)

Although some work on elaborating on a ToC for the GPEDC had been undertaken by the founding stakeholders, the process was taken up in 2015 by the GPEDC Monitoring Advisory Group (MAG); a twelve-member body of experts that was mandated in 2015 by the GPEDC Co-Chairs and Steering Committee to review and refine the GPEDC Monitoring Framework. In order to progress its work, the MAG first examined how change is expected to happen through the Global Partnership by developing an implied **Theory of Change**. The consultation document, ‘GPEDC Theory of Change: Issues for Discussion,’ highlighted some important areas for discussion as well as challenges in achieving more effective development co-operation through the Global Partnership. In doing so, it aims to explore why there has been progress in some areas since Busan, but limited advances in others. Following up on this, an online consultation on a ToC took place 14 March-15 April 2016. The following questions guided the online consultation:

- What are your general reflections on the assumptions and issues raised by the MAG’s implied Theory of Change? For example, does the MAG’s Theory of Change adequately explore the links between monitoring effective development co-operation commitments, more effective development co-operation in practice and the achievement of development outcomes?
- What are the implications for strengthening the current GPEDC monitoring framework? What factors can strengthen the value-added of this monitoring framework in the context of issues raised by the Theory of Change?
- What are the implications of this Theory of Change for the relevance of the Global Partnership in achievement of Agenda 2030? What are the potential roles of the Global Partnership in promoting behaviour, policy and institutional change in development co-operation in relation to Agenda 2030?

The outcomes of this consultation informed the MAG’s meeting in June 2016. At this meeting, the Group finalised its advice on the ToC; recommendations that were then presented to the Steering Committee meeting in New York in July 2016. That meeting recommended the establishment of a working group to take the MAG’s recommendations further. This document reflects the work of that group so far.

## Why does the GPEDC need a Theory of Change?

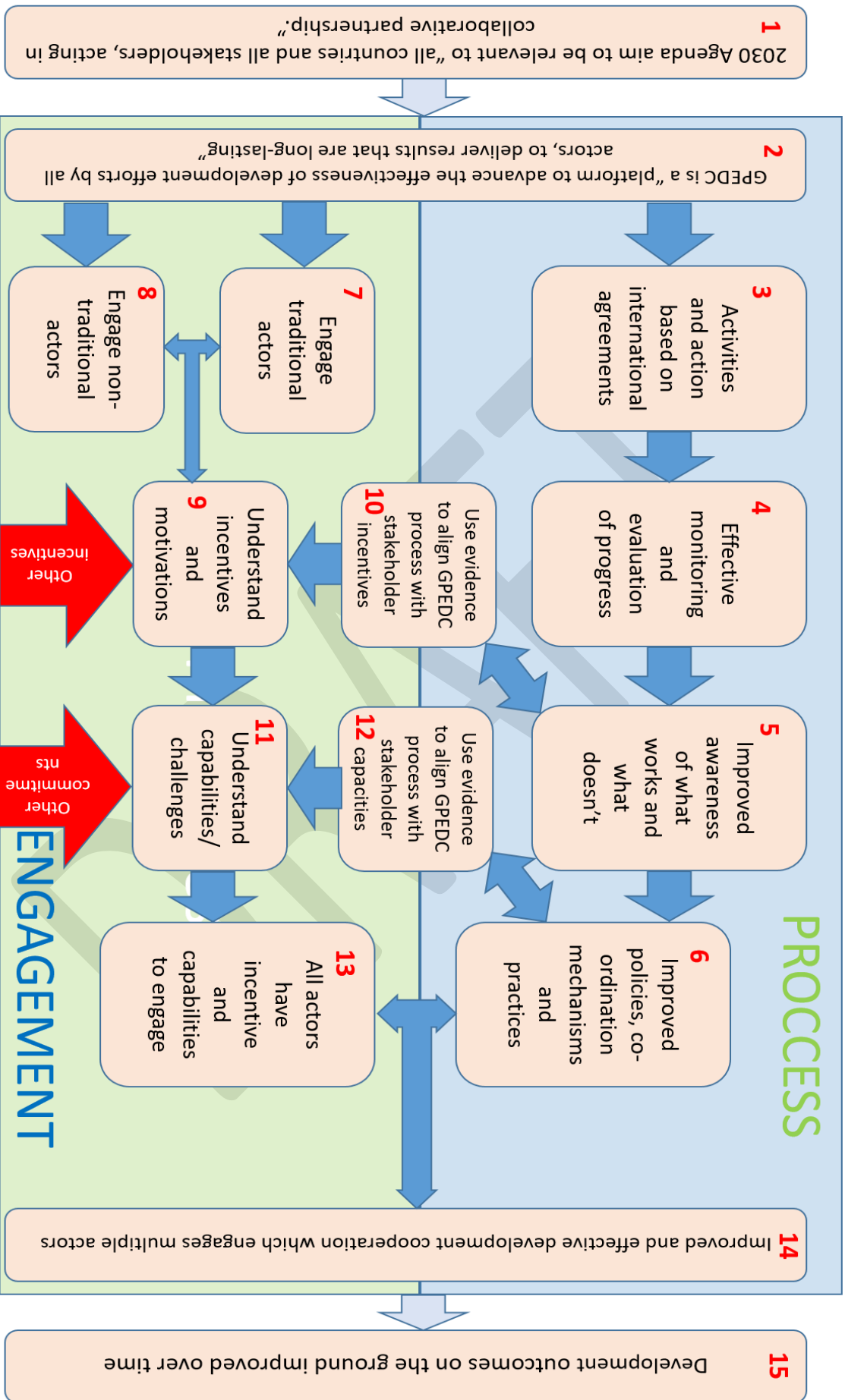
A Theory of Change is essentially a map of how one gets from agreements and commitments to behaviour and institutional change. It sets out a common set of assumptions about how this change will happen. It is valuable because it can map the essential components that are required, such as, for example, monitoring, a progress report for accountability, Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs) for

research and knowledge development, country level nodes for reviewing implementation, etc. It can also identify the externalities which affect these processes that are beyond the control of the actors, but affect the achievement of outcomes.

GPEDC members wish to reach a common understanding of what effective development co-operation is, what it can and should do, what improved development outcomes entail, and why change happens. An agreed Theory of Change is a step forward towards a clearer GPEDC mandate, a better refined global monitoring framework, a more impactful HLM2 outcome document, and ultimately better development outcomes at the country level.

Moreover, an explicit ToC will help to identify the assumptions implicit in the Global Partnership's approach, and so allow the validation of those assumptions. In some cases it may be the case that assumptions are not realistic, in which case discussion of these points can identify actions that can be taken to ensure that risks to delivery stemming from unmet assumptions can be proactively identified and managed.

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## The GPEDC Theory of Change (ToC)

The GPEDC Theory of Change therefore does a number of things. Firstly, it positions the partnership within the global development architecture. Second it describes how the various activities and processes of the Partnership work together to fulfil its mandate. Thirdly it explains how the work of the Partnership improves development outcomes ‘in the real world’.

This ToC is set out diagrammatically on p6. By definition a theory of change reflects a series of assumptions made by those who designed the process. Therefore, it is important to understand whether those assumptions are accurate over time, and what activities may be needed in order to make the anticipated connectivities come about in practice. This section therefore examines each aspect of the ToC to understand:

- **Narrative:** What is the cause and effect anticipated by the GPEDC: the ‘null hypothesis’?
- **Assumptions and risks:** What assumptions are implicit about how the real world operates, and about the motives and actions of others? What issues and factors may affect whether this ‘null hypothesis’ will work in the real world?
- **Actions:** What do GPEDC and its partners need to do to ensure that the assumptions can be validated, and risks managed effectively?

In each case the assumptions and risks, and remedial actions suggested are intended to be illustrative of the issues rather than an exhaustive list. It is for each GPEDC stakeholder, and the Partnership’s governing bodies to ensure that an on-going assessment of issue affecting the GPEDC’s impact is undertaken.

It is also important to consider the issue of agency: to understand which elements its ToC that the GPEDC has the agency to affect. As is made clear in the diagram above, boxes 1 and 15 relate to a wider global context which GPEDC cannot directly affect. These contextual boxes are included to illustrate how GPEDC slots into a wider development architecture. However, it is on the boxes within its span of control (2-14) which GPEDC must concentrate in order to maximise its capability to fulfil its specific mandate within that wider global architecture.

### Global context

GPEDC is part of a much wider architecture of international development cooperation, which is enshrined in a number of key international agreements.

#### *Box 1: 2030 Agenda aim to be relevant to “all countries and all stakeholders”*

##### Narrative

The 2030 Agenda is a globally agreed plan of action for people, planet, partnerships, peace and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in the context of freedom and the realization of human rights. The Agenda seeks to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty. The GPEDC forms a key part of the global institutional architecture focussed on the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. It uniquely engages all development stakeholders as equal partners within its actions to achieve this Agenda.

### Assumptions and risks

The risks to GPEDC here are largely exogenous. The Partnership's role stems from its position within the new global development architecture associated with Agenda 2030. If the global focus were to shift away from development issues, or if a revised developmental agenda were introduced then the role of the GPEDC may alter.

### Actions

There is little the GPEDC can do to alter the course of international geo-politics. However, keep in a watching brief for changes in global attitudes to development policy would enable the Partnership to anticipate possible changes. It will also be important to ensure that the Partnership keeps those in political office aware of the importance and impact of effective development cooperation. The GPEDC needs to reinforce its links to the UN and its agencies and processes, for example by establishing development effectiveness focal points in each UN regional office, thus strengthening UN-GPEDC links, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and national implementation.

### *Box 2: GPEDC as a "platform to advance the effectiveness of development efforts"*

#### Narrative:

The international agreements address many different aspects of the development process: both the goals to be aimed at, and the processes by which these goals might be achieved. Within this development architecture it is important that different actors are clear about their role and how they interrelate with the role of others. GPEDC is clear that its role is to facilitate and improve effective development cooperation through a Partnership whose strength draws upon the full and equal participation of all development cooperation actors.

#### Assumptions and risks:

The most significant risk is that GPEDC failed to maintain focus on its specific role within the wider development architecture. The Partnership's purpose is defined clearly in GPEDC's in the Busan Outcome Document: to support and ensure accountability for the implementation of commitments at the political level. Either through demands from partners and stakeholders or through its collaboration with other apex organisations in the development field, GPEDC may find itself pulled into activities and workstreams which are not its core function. Similarly diminished inclusion of development actors will undermine synergies between these actors in carrying out the activities and processes of the Partnership.

#### Actions:

GPEDC and its partners need to ensure that all of their activities focus on **improving the effectiveness of development cooperation**, rather than on other aspects of the international development process, no matter how important these other activities might seem to be. Activities must consciously maximize the inclusion of all relevant development actors.

## The GPEDC process

The GPEDC's theory of change works along two separate but inter-related streams of activity. The first is the **process** of activities that it is envisaged that stakeholders should take; and processes of **engagement** with these different groups of stakeholders. It is the set of activities described in boxes 3-13 over which GPEDC has direct agency.

### *Box 3: Activities and action based on international agreements*

#### *Narrative*

The international agreements underpinning development provide a comprehensive and holistic architecture for effective development policy and practice. GPEDC anticipates therefore that the actions and activities undertaken by its stakeholders will be driven by the international agreements that are in place. Furthermore the process is aimed at creating synergies with the follow up and review processes for the SDGs at the country and global levels.

#### *Assumptions and risks*

It is in itself an assumption that stakeholders are familiar with international agreements, which may not always be the case. For example, the Busan agreement is not always well known at the country level. Moreover, in some cases international agreements are not sufficiently defined to enable progress to be measured and issues identified that affect the achievement of these commitments. Further, whilst it is not in itself undesirable that development partners might take initiatives which are not driven by the international agreements, there is a risk that such additional activities may not gel effectively with wider development activities and agendas.

#### *Actions*

Where partners' actions are derived from aims not defined by the international development architecture, GPEDC needs to understand where any potential conflicts may occur and, where possible to identify where synergies may be found. GPEDC needs to maintain its focus on improving the effectiveness of development co-operation.

### *Box 4: Effective monitoring and evaluation of progress*

#### *Narrative*

Central to the GPEDC thesis is that review of partners' activities is essential for effective development cooperation. Reviews of activities require two elements. Monitoring provides the assessment of whether key benchmarks are being achieved. Evaluation is a broader process to evaluate whether activities, or groups of activities are effective tools in achieving the ends required. Monitoring, along with the Partnership's multi-stakeholder character are its key value-added and define its core role.

#### *Assumptions and risks*

A central assumption is that what is being monitored is relevant in understanding whether key development goals have been achieved and useful in advancing dialogue to achieve

change. This may not necessarily be the case. Monitoring without evaluation risks production of results that are not properly geared to the achievement of the desired development outcomes. Monitoring indicators are not ends in themselves. They must provide useful information on key issues for multi-stakeholder and inclusive policy dialogue in making progress in behaviour and institutional change.

#### Actions

GPEDC needs to ensure that, in each case, there exists a proper mix of monitoring and evaluation, and that these are properly geared to understanding what is happening in each particular circumstance, with indicators that are relevant, efficient and useful for behaviour and institutional change. To ensure monitoring leads to change, and stakeholders engage, it is important to focus on follow-up to the monitoring process.

#### *Box 5: Improved awareness of what works and what doesn't*

##### Narrative:

The GPEDC believes that effective monitoring and evaluation provides clear evidence that policy makers and practitioners can use to improve the design and impact of future programmes and projects. The monitoring process is not an end in itself but serves a broader processes of multi-stakeholder policy dialogue

##### Risks and challenges

A number of factors could impact on the real-world impact of this stage of GPEDC's process:

- Lessons are not effectively recorded and shared with others. As a result there is no learning mechanism to ensure that 'best practice' informs others.
- The political economy factors that led to the success or failure of an intervention in one location have not properly been recorded. As a result the context cannot be properly explained and therefore the degree to which lessons can be learned from one location to another is unclear.

##### Actions

To manage these risks, the GPEDC needs to develop effective processes for sharing lessons and experiences. It is also important that lessons learned need to be understood properly in their political economy context so that this can be factored into the application of those lessons elsewhere. To this end a number of 'Global Partnership Initiatives' have been established as key sources of information for what works or does not at country, regional and global level.

#### *Box 6: Improved policies, co-ordination mechanisms and practices*

##### Narrative

GPEDC believes that evidence-based examples of what works in development policy and what does not will provide the basis for better development strategies and programmes by all stakeholders involved. This includes not just the 'what to do' but also the 'how to go about doing it'.

### Assumptions and risks

A key assumption is that all actors are motivated by the desire to undertake evidence-based policy making. It may be the case that other factors and interests mean that development policy and approaches by some actors may be driven by other motivations. In some cases there may be issues of capacity that prevent particular stakeholders acting effectively on the GPEDC lessons. More will be said on this topic under boxes 9 and 10.

### Actions

Where clear evidence does not seem to be driving change, GPEDC needs to be proactive in understanding why this is the case. It may be that there are issues relating to the political economy, which render lessons from elsewhere hard to implement. It may be that the willingness is not there to change. Clear assessment of these situations will provide lessons in specific situations as well as driving learning more broadly. To this end it will be valuable to include evaluation as a mechanism to monitor improvement in policies and coordination mechanisms

### *Box 7: Engage traditional actors*

#### Narrative

The bilateral development agencies of developed countries, and international organisations such as the UN and World Bank been integral to the development process for most of the past 50 years. These need to be mobilised as the agents of delivery of the 2030 Busan agenda.

#### Assumptions and risks

Whilst the 'traditional actors' have all signalled their acceptance of the Busan agenda, the degree of commitment of each partner will be affected by a range of other factors. Many bilateral donors are seeing their budgets cut, and issues such as the Syrian crisis are taking a good deal of financial and other resources. A key risk therefore is that the focus of some traditional actors on the 2030 Agenda, and on effective development co-operation is diluted by other priorities. A further challenge is that the 'traditional' donors fail properly to adjust their practices and attitudes to enable them to deal effectively with newer partners. This in turn affects how those new partners relate to them.

#### Actions

To ensure the on-going engagement of its traditional partners, GPEDC needs to maintain close relationships with each and seek actively to understand the other, perhaps competing, interests that might dilute each partner's commitment to the Partnership's work. GPEDC products, such as the periodic Progress Reports, need to highlight issues affecting progress in ways that allow for national and regional policy dialogue on the importance of effective development cooperation for achieving the SDGs. GPEDC HLMs need to be structured to directly engage the leadership of Partnership members in ways that strengthen and renew commitment to effective development cooperation and the commitments in related international agreements.



### *Box 8: Engage non-traditional actors*

#### *Narrative*

Central to the 2030 Agenda is that the process of development needs to include not just ‘the usual suspects’, but a wide range of other actors in both the public and private sector. The multi-stakeholder nature of the GPEDC is of utmost value. Companies of all sizes, CSOs, non-DAC donor agencies, private foundations and others are all considered to be actors within the Busan development architecture. Engaging these organisations is fundamental to the success of the new approach to sustainable development.

#### *Assumptions and risks*

A key – indeed perhaps the most significant – risk to the GPEDC is that many non-traditional actors will not regard themselves in any way bound by the Busan agreements. In some cases different cadres of non-traditional actors have been ‘represented’ at international events by apex bodies, which may not reflect the views of the constituency they allegedly represent, while also recognizing that these constituencies are very large and often reflect diverse views.

#### *Actions*

Engagement by the Global Partnership with non-traditional actors needs to move beyond the generic and seek to engage with each potential non-traditional actor in relation to their own agendas. GPEDC needs to understand in each case what might make that stakeholder engage with the GPEDC process, and indeed with the overarching Busan development objectives. Further, it is important to provide space for stakeholder groups to facilitate their own discussions.

### *Box 9: Understand incentives and motivations*

#### *Narrative*

The Global Partnership needs to understand the rationale that each stakeholder has to pursue effective development cooperation. If success for the Busan development architecture requires collaboration of a wide range of traditional and non-traditional stakeholders, then incentivizing each to engage is essential.

#### *Assumptions and risks*

It is one thing for GPEDC to say that they wish to engage with different actors, it is quite another for those actors to want to be engaged. As the left-hand red arrow on the diagram indicates, each actor will have ‘other incentives’ as well as those which would urge collaboration with the Global Partnership, for example:

- ‘Traditional’ actors, even though formally identifying with the Busan structures have other priorities as well as their voluntary commitment to the GPEDC. For example in some countries development aid can be domestically unpopular and there are other demands on governmental resources.
- Newer, non-DAC development partners may not feel themselves to be bound by a development architecture put in place by others. In addition, for some, development

spending has more specific political aims and principles for structuring development cooperation relationships.

- Other actors, private sector companies or foundations for example, may not even be aware of the Busan agenda, much less realise that it is meant to apply to them. Thus even if they are having impacts on 'developmental' issues they may see no rationale in working with state structures.
- Some actors such as CSOs are both numerous and diverse, involving development actors at community, national, regional and global levels. The effectiveness of their engagement necessitates both time and commitment of resources to ensure inclusion in processes at these levels.

#### Actions

The GPEDC cannot assume the proactive buy-in to its activities of any of its partners unless and until it clearly understands the self-interest of each partner for such collaboration. Thus both at global and country level the SC and others in the Partnership need to work hard to understand the incentives and motivations of key stakeholders. The Partnership must also structure its actions and processes so that they create realistic opportunities for the stakeholders to engage at the relevant levels, particularly at the country level. Nevertheless, the Partnership must also be careful not to compromise on its key commitments and characteristics in order to make the Partnership more palatable for actors not interested in joining.

#### *Box 10: Use evidence to align GPEDC process with stakeholder incentives*

##### Narrative

A key thesis of the GPEDC process is that good evidence supports improved development policy and practice over time. The evidence produced by the Partnership's core work can therefore be used proactively to demonstrate to different stakeholders why it would be in their needs and interests to engage with GPEDC. By using evidence to show stakeholders how their different interests would be furthered by working closely with the Global Partnership, the incentive for that engagement can be built up and fostered. The GPEDC also seeks to provide technical guidance and responses, actually making the work of its partners better and so increasing their results.

##### Assumptions and risks

It may be the case with certain stakeholders that no-matter what evidence they are given about the rationale for engagement with the GPEDC they still choose not to do so. Other incentives and geo-political motivations remain more influential and important to them.

##### Action

It may be that reluctant stakeholders can be persuaded over time to engage more fully. Thus maintaining long-term relationships even with stakeholders not engaging is important, as is constant review of their other motivations, which may impact on their support and engagement with GPEDC. Where appropriate, creating opportunity for reluctant stakeholders to engagement with counterparts in development cooperation, based on

related principles for effectiveness, such as SSC, may also further the broad goals for effective development cooperation.

#### *Box 11: Understanding stakeholders' capabilities and challenges*

##### *Narrative*

Even in circumstances where different actors are motivated to engage properly with the Global Partnership it may be that other challenges they face make it hard for that engagement to happen, or that they lack the specific capabilities that may from time-to-time be required. These limitations need to be understood.

##### *Assumptions and risks*

The central risk at this stage is that elements of the GPEDC process are compromised by a lack of necessary resources or capabilities for a key actor. For example, a host government may lack reliable data to share with the global process; or an international development partner may face urgent funding demands in other areas. Local CSOs, local government or parliamentarians may lack resources or capacities to effectively engage in the monitoring and/or policy dialogue processes at country level. Resources, financial and otherwise may also be a constraint on actors' participation.

##### *Action*

In the same way as GPEDC needs to maintain close relationships with its partners in order to understand their incentives and motivations (box 10), such relationships also help to anticipate issues of capability and alternative commitments that might prevent an otherwise-willing partner from playing its required role in the GPEDC. All stakeholders need to provide the resources according to their means, needed to carry out the GPEDC activities in a timely and effective way.

#### *Box 12: Use evidence to align GPEDC process with stakeholder capacities*

##### *Narrative*

Maintaining close relationships with stakeholders can help to ensure that any limitations of capacity and the other challenges they face can be factored into the overall GPEDC process. Adjustments can be made to timing and other parameters to minimise the impact of stakeholder capabilities and challenges on the overall process.

##### *Assumptions and risks*

No matter how well this process is managed, there will from time to time be occasions when these issues of capacity or lack of resources cannot be avoided.

##### *Actions*

There needs to be careful collaboration between the GPEDC processes at international and at national level in order that expectations by each of the other are realistic. The JST is likely therefore to be a key intermediary. Given the desire to be 'global light' alternative mechanisms to facilitate collaboration from local to global should be identified, for example through regional platforms. The JST is likely to be a key intermediary in facilitating this.

*Box 13: All actors have incentives and capabilities to engage*

*Narrative*

GPEDC anticipates that providing the right evidence to each stakeholder in the most relevant way to each, and aligning the interests and motivations of all, then all actors can and will engage in effective development co-operation.

*Assumptions and risks*

Actors' incentives and capabilities are dynamic and will change over time. The risk is that over time a partner's interests and capacities may change, rendering it less (or more) willing to collaborate in development cooperation.

*Actions*

GPEDC needs to ensure that it maintains a view over time of the position of each stakeholder so that their willingness and ability to participate in collaborative actions is maintained over time. This will include the need to invest in better understanding incentives and capabilities of different actors.

*Outcome and impact*

The process described above provides the modality for the GPEDC to achieve its role within the wider international developmental architecture. As with the contextual issues (boxes 1 and 2) the outcome stages of the ToC are prone to factors beyond the ability of the GPEDC to control as part of its processes.

*Box 14: Improved and effective development cooperation which engages multiple actors*

*Narrative*

The outcome of the GPEDC evidence-based approach is intended to be development cooperation, which genuinely includes all actors, and ensure that all work in their different ways to achieve clear development goals.

*Assumptions and risks*

The range of actors in any given situation will change over time. It may be that development outcomes are compromised in a particular situation because one or more key actor was overlooked, or chose not to collaborate with others.

*Actions*

GPEDC needs to maintain an on-going assessment of the stakeholders in each situation since effective development co-operation requires not just multiple actors, but the necessary ones in each case. This 'horizon-scanning' should become a core responsibility of the secretariat, who is best placed within GPEDC to keep an objective eye on the evolving context and the incentives for engagement by each stakeholder. JST could periodically share these analyses for discussion.

### *Box 15: Development outcomes on the ground improved over time*

#### *Narrative*

The improvement of development outcomes is the ambition of the Agenda 2030 process as a whole. This ToC lays out how GPEDC can deliver its particular part in achieving this, in collaboration with others.

#### *Assumptions and risks*

The achievement of improved development outcomes is subject to factors beyond GPEDC and the wider development community. Economic changes and political crises may divert attention no matter how well-focused is the work of the development community.

#### *Actions*

GPEDC needs to ensure it collaborates effectively with other apex organisations within the Agenda 2030 architecture to ensure that focus is maintained on the importance of finding the most effective ways to improve development outcomes, and the rationale for these is maintained in the minds of key political decision-makers.

### *Fostering change through effective monitoring and accountability*

#### *Revising the monitoring framework for improved accountability*

As a core part of its work the MAG proposed a number of principles and modalities for GPEDC's revised monitoring framework lead to greater levels of behaviour change and improved accountability. These recommendations seek to hone further this framework is a core part of GPEDC's model and its ultimate purpose is to promote evidence-based dialogue to influence behaviour change among development co-operation stakeholders. The recommendations of the MAG in this regard were as follows:

- 1. Strengthen the Monitoring Framework as a core GPEDC resource*

The Monitoring Framework should be considered as the core resource and a significant comparative advantage to the GPEDC, whose credibility is its relevance to the principles for effective development cooperation and Agenda 2030.

- 2. Confirm that GPEDC monitors public concessional finance and encourages donors to report also on other development co-operation funds.*

GPEDC's core business lies with public concessional finance (ODA and part of SSD) and where it links with other non-public finance flows as well as with south-south co-operation, triangular co-operation, the private sector to realise development results. SSD refers to total official support for sustainable development and so includes non-concessional funding; the scope of SSD is still being debated and may change in the coming months.

- 3. Make change to the Framework to improve relevance, but respect continuity*

While responding to proposals for relevance and improvements to the Monitoring Framework, the MAG also agrees that continuity in the indicators and their methodologies,

where feasible, is essential for understanding progress over time and for the overall credibility of the process with country-level stakeholders involved in its implementation.

4. *Give greater prominence to mutual accountability.*

MAG members consider mutual accountability (currently Indicator Seven) to be a central, overarching indicator that should be reflected in all dimensions of effective development cooperation. In particular, there needs to be a greater clarity about the roles of different parts of the GPEDC in delivering the overall mandate; and 'traditional' donor agencies need also to accept the need for accountability to others.

5. *Add depth to analysis of monitoring outcomes with greater emphasis on evaluation.*

Greater emphasis on evaluation is an important ingredient for a more nuanced understanding of the 'why question' in assessing monitoring outcomes. Periodic evaluations of GPEDC's activities to strengthen its accountability and ways of working. Consideration should be given to adding greater prominence to this element in Indicator One, but with greater emphasis on strengthening country capacities for evaluation. Perhaps the indicator could also assess the quality and use of internal evaluation systems.

6. *Adapt the Framework to accommodate the realities for Middle-Income providers / recipients.*

Some modest measures are required to adapt the framework to the particular needs and concerns of middle-income country providers. This includes, for example the need to focus on technical co-operation.

7. *Enhance engagement at the provider HQ level in the monitoring process*

The MAG reiterates its concern that the Monitoring Framework should be a balanced framework that calls upon all actors committed to the Global Partnership, including providers, to fully participate in a monitoring round. The MAG recommends further discussions with providers and other GPEDC stakeholders to identify key areas of provider institutional policies and practices that are seen to be critical for effective development cooperation, which can inform a provider-specific set of questions or modules in current indicators. The MAG has made some specific suggestion in its proposals for individual indicators.

8. *Clarify the relevant of the Monitoring Framework for climate finance*

The MAG agrees that climate finance is a relevant area for applying the development effectiveness principles and the Monitoring Framework is most relevant for climate finance that is clearly a public financial resource, delivered through cooperation partnerships.

9. *Restructure the Monitoring Framework*

Consider a restructuring of the Monitoring Framework according to the four principles for effective development cooperation, with modular layers for different development actors involved in GPEDC.

## Making GPEDC relevant for all stakeholder groups

However, the changes to the Monitoring Framework proposed above will be irrelevant without concerted efforts by the whole GPEDC structure to promote the increased relevance of GPEDC's principles and commitments to all stakeholder groups, including middle-income providers, philanthropy or the private sector.

The exposition of the ToC in the previous section identifies as the greatest risk to GPEDC's ability to create sustained behaviour change would be a failure to understand the motivations and incentives of different actors (box 9 of the ToC), and to understand the other commitments or capacity constraints those actors might have (box 10).

If GPEDC is to make its ToC work in the real world and at the country level, it will need to take into account a number of factors, including the following:

- Actors will only act in accordance with GPEDC's structures when they have robust incentives to do so. Understanding stakeholders' incentives and working to align these with the work of the Global Partnership is essential.
- 'Evidence' can be subjective: what convinces one party may not convince another. Using GPEDC's evidence judiciously, and in light of a clear understanding of the starting point of each stakeholder will be crucial in securing engagement.
- Relevant actors must be inspired by, and identify their actions, with the Theory of Change. The Global Partnership needs to work to ensure that each actor sees the ToC as 'theirs', not just belonging to a global entity.
- It is important to remember that behaviour and institutional change takes time, sometimes a great deal of time. It is not realistic to expect fundamental change to take place across a wide range of stakeholders in the short- or even medium term. This reality needs to be anticipated in what change is sensible to expect year-by-year.

Taking this into account implies promoting qualitative assessments of development impact, as well as periodical evaluations based on meaningful, accurate and accessible data. For GPEDC to truly work, the 'how' of development co-operation practice (performance measured through the monitoring framework) must be coupled with the 'why' question (behaviour change assessed through evaluations).

## Conclusions and next steps

The key feature of a Theory of Change is precisely that it is a theory. It is a set of assumptions that are made about how the world will work, and about how behavioural and institutional change will occur over time. It is a hypothesis that posits that a defined set of approaches, processes and activities will have a pre-defined impact on a given range of outcomes.

Such an approach makes assumptions that may or may not be true. This short paper has sought to identify the most obvious of these relating to the processes and approach of the GPEDC and to

identify what actions the Partnership and its stakeholders might take to test these and, where the assumptions may be unsound, to take remedial action.

However over time, GPEDC needs to keep asking why change is or is not happening. It needs to continue the process of reviewing its assumptions and risks, and develop a process to re-evaluate whether the actions taken to substantiate assumptions and manage risks are working. In this way, GPEDC will be able to improve its model and promote the behaviour change required for more effective development co-operation, and so fulfil its key role to deliver Agenda 2030.

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