

# Listening Up:

## Consultations on Global Partnership Monitoring Reform

### Background and Context

The original vision of the Global Partnership monitoring exercise was to: (i) drive behaviour change towards more effective development co-operation; and (ii) support global accountability for implementation of Busan commitments. Over three rounds, the monitoring exercise has generated unique evidence, acting as a key tool for global accountability around effective development co-operation commitments and is the source of evidence for three SDG targets. Yet stakeholder feedback has suggested that while the vision remains valid, the monitoring exercise has not been implemented such that both its country- and global-level aims have been fully met. Against this backdrop, the Global Partnership has embarked on an ambitious reform of the monitoring exercise with the aim of ensuring it delivers on its original promise while meeting the evolving needs of its stakeholders and producing evidence relevant to the effectiveness challenges of today. The scope of the reform is inclusive of both a review of the framework (“what we measure”) and an improvement of the process (“how we measure”).

In order to guide the reform of the monitoring exercise with the views of stakeholders, the Global Partnership’s Co-Chairs initiated a series of virtual stakeholder consultations in the lead-up to the 20<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting (December, 2020). These consultations were focused on how the **monitoring process** needs to be improved to better engage and incentivise stakeholders, as well as better unlock bottlenecks to behaviour change for strengthened partnerships. The Co-Chairs led this consultative process through small group virtual consultation meetings to gather the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders.

The findings from these consultations, presented in this report, will be considered by the Steering Committee in its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, in order to chart the next phase of the reform of the monitoring process, and also to be taken into consideration as work advances on the review of the framework. This document is issued by the Co-Chairs as part of their leadership of the monitoring reform. It was prepared by Mr. Andrew Benfield, an independent consultant engaged to facilitate the consultations and support the Co-Chairs in summarising outcomes.

Nine virtual consultation meetings were held with stakeholders of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) between September and November 2020. Each consultation brought together a small group from a specific constituency and was facilitated by a consultant. The GPEDC Co-Chairs and Joint Support Team (JST) were present in an observer capacity in all consultations.

Consultation participants were asked what could be improved in the GPEDC monitoring process, what already worked well, what they had done to make things run more smoothly, how they used the results, and what their opinions were on the indicators used. They were encouraged to be frank about their experiences and bold in their recommendations.

Some stakeholders also sent in written comments, generally in lieu of accepting a call invitation or to supplement what they had said during a call. These inputs are also incorporated in the findings below.

The following stakeholders participated<sup>1</sup>:

**Partner Countries (PCs):** Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Lao PDR, Nepal, Peru, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Somalia, Togo, Tonga.

**Development partners (DPs):** African Development Bank HQ, Australia HQ, Canada HQ, European Union HQ, European Union Senegal Country Office, Germany, Germany Rwanda Country Office, Inter-American Development Bank HQ, International Labour Organization HQ, Portugal HQ, Republic of Korea HQ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Korea International Co-operation Agency), Sweden HQ, United Nations Development Coordination Office HQ, United Nations Development Programme HQ, United Nations Development Programme Somalia Country Office, United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office Haiti, United Nations Women HQ, World Bank HQ.

**Others:** Center for International Private Enterprise, Civil Society Organisations' Partnership for Development Effectiveness, Generalitat de Catalunya (on behalf of the United Regions Organization / Forum of Regional Governments and Global Associations of Regions), International Trade Union Confederation, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, United Cities and Local Governments, WINGS.

A promise of anonymity was given for all calls in order to encourage open discussion, therefore the findings below are not attributed to individual countries / organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants were identified under the guidance of the GPEDC Co-Chairs, based on a mix of criteria. These sought to include both Steering Committee members and partners who expressed interest in the monitoring work under the 2020-22 Work Programme as well as a range of stakeholders from different constituency groups and countries who participated in - and had different experiences of - the 2018 monitoring round. Groups also had to be somewhat limited in numbers to allow for in-depth discussions, given the consultation call format.

## A. Headlines

- There is general agreement that **development co-operation can and should work better, i.e. become more effective**, and that the advent of COVID-19 has made this even more important, given that it has both increased demand and reduced supply.
- Working on this issue is recognised as the **vital link** between sourcing the financing for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and actually achieving them, telling us “how to spend it”.
- Stakeholders continue to **consider monitoring as important** in order to find out where we are and what we need to do. CSOs commented that the monitoring is what gives the GPEDC teeth and relevance at both the global and country levels. PCs, along with some DPs, are particularly keen to do more to measure DPs’ performance in order to encourage behaviour change.
- Buy-in for the GPEDC monitoring process is however not as strong as it could be, dampened by it being “**process heavy, results light**”. Procedures can be complicated and cumbersome, meaning the main focus becomes just getting the monitoring done rather than using the results. Complexity also hits data quality. Tight timelines and simultaneous global execution do not help.
- Though allowing standardisation and comparisons, the **one-size-fits-all** approach for the indicators and the **one-time-fits-all** approach for the timing do not seem a good match with the GPEDC’s “global light, country heavy” mantra, or the principles of ownership and alignment.
- Many would like to see **indicators that are simpler and easier to grasp**, making it more straightforward to measure them as well as use their results. Some suggestions were made, as well as criteria that any indicator should have to meet. While consistency over time allows comparisons with the past, participants highlighted that this only makes sense if the indicators themselves are still relevant to today’s context and are user-friendly.
- There was some consensus favouring a **core set of mandatory indicators with optional add-ons**. This would allow customisation to PCs’ context and capabilities, help increase buy-in and participation, and give more time to focus on the use of results.
- Inclusion of a **wide range of actors**, such as sub-national governments, parliaments, civil society, Southern providers, the private sector, and foundations, is very welcome, but much more still needs to be done to get these partners fully on board. Otherwise, the process risks losing relevance given the increasing prominence of these actors in development co-operation.
- Using **existing in-country structures and systems** to carry out the monitoring and action the results has worked well. It increases buy-in and legitimacy by positioning the monitoring as part of usual business, as well as helping people keep their eye on the ball by keeping everything in one place. It also exerts some peer pressure. Plus it builds the capacity of this architecture so that it can better manage development co-operation in the future.
- There are many more **great examples at the country level** of how some of the challenges mentioned above have been tackled successfully, including ensuring senior level buy-in, clear communication, and making use of peer pressure. These need to be better publicised and imitated.

- The **Joint Support Team** were consistently praised for providing a very valuable service with limited resources. **Regional co-operation platforms** also provide useful support in some cases and could be leveraged more.
- Some feel that the decision **not to carry out the monitoring in 2020** will jeopardise future momentum for participation as well as leaving a large data gap.

## B. Improving the Process

The key issues with the current monitoring process that were raised are summarised below. This is followed by an overview of how some partners have already managed to address them. Then comes a series of new proposals that partners believe could address these issues in future.

### B1. Issues

#### B1.1. Buy-In

A number of DPs questioned **how much some PCs really buy-in to the monitoring**, suggesting that, in some cases, they may feel pressured into participating by DPs and the GPEDC, as opposed to seeing any real value in the process itself. DPs report that, when their Country Offices contacted the nominated National Coordinators in some countries, they found them to be unaware of the monitoring. Where PCs do not seem to buy in, it also weakens the enthusiasm of other actors to participate.

Some **DP Country Offices have also shown limited interest** in participation, or even knowledge of the process, despite their HQs' commitments to it.

This lack of buy-in is believed to stem from concerns about:

- **Relevance:** there are often doubts about what the results will be used for, especially if partners have participated before and not seen anything happen afterwards in terms of discussion of the results, follow-up actions, or behaviour change. This perceived lack of relevance can be compounded on the PC side by the one-size-fits-all nature of the monitoring and governments' limited say in its set up.
- **Complexity:** the process is often perceived as complicated and confusing. Guidelines and questionnaires are lengthy, and it is still not always clear who needs to do what, how, when. It can even appear rather intimidating, particularly to PCs, given the volume of paperwork, formulae and "dev-speak" involved. This means that there is a very substantial resource cost in terms of getting it done.

Due to the above, **even where there is a willingness to participate, there may not be sufficient ability to do so.** Fragile States and Small Island Developing States are particularly challenged, given their more limited public administrations, yet at the same time they are the ones who would benefit most from more effective development co-operation. The GPEDC monitoring is also but one of multiple monitoring requests that governments are faced with, each with its own procedures and requirements. As one PC commented, the GPEDC needs to appreciate that it is "not the only show in town". On the DP side, some smaller DP Country Offices also report that they simply do not have time to participate.

## B1.2. Coverage

In addition to a lack of adequate buy-in from some of those who have already committed to participating in the monitoring, there is the challenge of **persuading new actors to buy in more**, such as Southern / non-traditional partners, sub-national governments, foundations and some private sector entities. This is vital as these actors are providing an increasing share of development co-operation and so, without them on board, the monitoring risks declining in relevance. For example, in some DP countries, sub-national governments already provide more development co-operation than their national government.

## B1.3. Data

The monitoring's value – and thus the use of its results - hinges on getting **comprehensive, credible data**.

Unfortunately, National Coordinators often **have trouble in getting such data** from constituencies, in particular DPs. Often multiple approaches need to be made to partners. Even then, sometimes data comes late, in the wrong format, only partially complete, or simply does not come at all. DP HQs also on occasion dispute the data provided by their Country Offices after it has gone to the National Coordinator and then the JST. DPs and PCs sometimes never manage to reach agreement on the figures provided for DPs' support.

One **reason it's hard to get data** is because of doubts from providers about what the results will be used for, as flagged above, which limits their willingness to provide it. Another is the complex and confusing indicator definitions and data gathering methodologies which also sometimes change between monitoring rounds. These make it hard for partners to comply with requests for information. For example, GPEDC and OECD terminology on types of intervention don't always match up. There are also practical issues such as DPs using different financial calendars and currencies from PCs. Certain types of support are particularly tricky to report accurately on, such as multi-country programmes that are not managed by a DP's Country Office, multi-partner funds, in-kind support, and technical co-operation. The more fragmented support to a country is, the harder it is to report on it well. GPEDC data requests are also just one of multiple international, often very similar, data gathering initiatives that partners are requested to submit information to.

All of the above means that the **data validation** process that is supposed to happen in all PCs once all of the information is in becomes even more critical. However, this data validation process does not always happen.

The issue of data credibility is compounded by the relatively **limited time** allowed for data collection and validation and, for DP HQs, by the fact that it is undertaken in all PCs at the same time.

## B2. Existing Remedies

The following measures have already been used successfully in some countries / organisations to tackle the issues set out above.

- Some PCs motivate participation by having a **senior-level figure**, such as a Minister, publicly endorse the monitoring as well as holding dedicated kick-off workshops that bring together all stakeholders to explain the “why” and the “how”, as well as subsequent bilateral meetings to deal with individual partners' specific questions and challenges. This helps get traction with all partners and provides the National Coordinator with high-level backing to help persuade people to supply the necessary data. In the Pacific, PCs invited the regional co-operation platform, the Pacific Island Forum, to visit and present on the

monitoring which had a similar effect. In the same vein, some PCs recommend copying in senior-level figures on the participants' side when requesting data and following up, in order to improve responsiveness.

- Some PCs report that, in addition to kick-off workshops, **technical capacity building workshops** and **regional exchanges** between National Coordinators have been particularly useful to raise awareness and preparedness.
- Some **DPs work extensively to sensitise and support their Country Offices**. This can include: flagging the monitoring's relevance and HQ's commitment to it via communications from senior management; ensuring that sector and geographical desks are on board (as opposed to just the dedicated development effectiveness people); producing additional, tailor-made guidelines to explain methodologies and clarify technical definitions, using the DP's usual in-house language and categorisations to ensure understanding and standardised reporting (though this does add to the already substantial amount of paperwork associated with the monitoring); providing training; maintaining help desks; and assisting in data gathering. Some DPs have adjusted their in-house management information systems so that they can more easily assist their Country Offices with the provision of data. One DP HQ has broken down their commitments and payments by month to solve the problem of reporting on a different financial year to PCs. Another supplies dedicated data sets for the monitoring to its Country Offices. Encouraging exchanges between Country Offices on how best to get the monitoring done is also reported to have worked well.
- Some civil society organisations (CSOs) have **worked to “translate” the indicators**, in order to demonstrate the relevance of them to their constituents in their daily work on improving livelihoods, thereby increasing their willingness to participate.
- One PC noted their success with nominating dedicated single **monitoring focal points** in each constituency (i.e. government, DPs, local CSOs, trade unions, international CSOs, and the private sector) who were given responsibility for coordinating and facilitating inputs on behalf of their constituency. This spread the workload more evenly, considerably reducing the strain placed on the National Coordinator, and gave a sense of ownership and agency to each constituency. There is however the question of who nominates the focal point – in the case of trade unions, recommendations made by their global representative body to the JST for suitable organisations at the country level were not always followed by PCs. Establishing focal points in each organisation in each constituency is also recommended, as well as in each relevant Ministry.
- One PC highly recommended getting all partners to agree on a public **calendar** at the outset that sets out what needs to be done, when, by who, in order to meet the ultimate monitoring submission deadline.
- A significant number of PCs and DPs recommended using PCs' **existing architecture** to help gather the data, such as coordination structures, management information systems, and national plan monitoring processes. Some PCs commented that this approach works particularly well when such architecture includes civil society and the private sector, as it can otherwise be challenging to get data from these partners. The approach of using existing architecture not only makes it easier to get data and saves time and effort, but also further legitimises the monitoring and increases buy-in, puts some peer pressure on all partners, helps people keep their eye on the ball, and ensures there is an institutional memory of the monitoring. It can also help people to see where the data required might already be available from existing sources. Some countries have also used their national statistical agencies to help. Finally, such an approach has a knock-on benefit in that it raises awareness of this existing infrastructure, thereby increasing its legitimacy and use, boosting its potential to manage development co-operation more effectively in the future.

- One PC worked through their association of local mayors to increase **local government's** participation in the process.
- In the Pacific, the **regional co-operation platform**, the Pacific Islands Forum, has been used to help support the monitoring by publicising it, providing training on how to get it done, establishing a help-desk, and organising exchanges between countries.
- **Support** provided by the JST, UNDP Country Offices, and other DPs is said to have been very useful in helping to advocate for, explain and complete the monitoring in many PCs.

### B3. New Proposals

The following new ideas were proposed by participants to address the issues in the future.

- Increasing GPEDC's focus on **communicating the relevance** of the monitoring, making clear its potential benefits in terms of helping work towards the SDGs. This should highlight who could potentially use the results and how, along with convincing examples of how they have been used in the past. This was a proposal from nearly all participants.
- Designing a **more streamlined and simple process** and accompanying guidelines, making it clear exactly what is required, when, from each constituency, and involving all stakeholders in their design. Much has been made of a "country heavy, global light approach" – what is needed now is a "results heavy, process light" one. This was a proposal from nearly all participants.
- Allowing countries to **choose which indicators to monitor** to match their context and capacity.
- **Aligning and, where possible, integrating** the GPEDC monitoring with other international monitoring processes, such as those for the SDGs.
- Allowing **more time to** get it done.
- Running monitoring rounds **less often**, for example only once every four years. NB. This could however have implications for using the monitoring to provide data for three of the SDG indicators as it does at present.
- As an alternative to the above, allowing **countries to decide when to do the monitoring** – for example to match with when they are preparing a new national strategy or review, to better fit with when partners are most available to contribute, or to avoid a clash with national budget preparation This was a proposal from a substantial number of PCs. Such an approach would also allow more support to be provided with the existing resources of DP HQs and the JST, given that not all countries would be requesting their help at the same time. NB: This could again have implications for using the monitoring to provide data for three of the SDG indicators.
- **Flagging to DP HQs when a PC agrees to participate in the monitoring**, along with the respective National Coordinator's details, so that they can notify their County Offices who can then follow up with the National Coordinator about initiating the process, if necessary.
- **Increasing outreach** at the GPEDC level to providers of development co-operation who do not currently participate in the monitoring to explore the root causes of this and how they might be incentivised to get on board in the future. Ensuring they have a prominent role in the reform process could help. At the same time, any inclusion of additional actors does risk increasing the complexity of the overall process.

- Including a **commitment for DPs to participate** in the monitoring in (a) the bilateral agreements that DPs sign with PCs to operate in the country and (b) the country's national development co-operation policy.
- Using a **website** to gather data as opposed to the current, Excel-based system. NB. This would of course depend on adequate connectivity being present at the PC level.
- Mandating that DP Country Offices **verify their data** with their HQs before sending it to National Coordinators.
- Making more use of **existing data sources**, particularly the International Aid Transparency Initiative's repository, urging partners to report to this and then, whenever possible, gathering the data needed for the monitoring from there.
- **Scoring** partners' level of participation in the monitoring and including this as part of the results.
- **Increasing and better coordinating support to National Coordinators.** Some DPs stressed that such support should not only help PCs get the monitoring done, but also strengthen their ability to manage development co-operation in future by improving structures and systems. For example, assisting with the establishment / enhancement of a national development co-operation management unit, management information system, or coordination platform. One PC recommended that the JST organise "audits" in each PC to look at their past experience of monitoring and, on the basis of these, propose what support might be needed in future. They also suggested the production of country-specific handbooks for the monitoring.
- **Supporting global associations of stakeholders** that are currently underrepresented in the monitoring to help them sensitise and support their constituencies at the country level. For example foundations, parliaments and sub-national government.
- **Supporting the use of regional platforms** to discuss GPEDC monitoring and follow-up, as well as promoting exchanges on practical development effectiveness issues, such as developing good Management Information Systems.

### C. Using the Results

There was a strong consensus from all constituencies that the results of the monitoring are **not used enough** either at the global, country, or DP HQ level. Right now, many partners tend to just focus on the very formidable task of getting the monitoring done, and have little bandwidth left once it is completed to work on using the results. This is seen as one of the most serious issues with the monitoring, as it brings into question its whole *raison d'être*.

Results use does **vary by indicator** and there are examples, such as with the indicator on gender, where there is significant use of the results across the board.

Below, results use is considered at the **global, DP HQ and country levels**, looking into what currently happens at each, before collating the ideas that were put forward on how to improve things in future.

One key proposal that would increase results use at all levels has already been covered above – **making the process lighter and simpler**. This would allow more time and energy to go into analysing, and acting on, what comes out of it.

One PC also noted that, for the results to make a difference at any level, they need to be delivered to the **right people in the right format**. Getting the language, messaging, and presentation on point is key,

including an emphasis on the relevance to the respective audience and their priority issues. This is especially important when seeking to gain traction with senior decision makers. The results also need to be circulated to as wide an audience as possible to help build momentum for action, for example presenting them at existing meetings and workshops as an add-on agenda item.

## C1. Global Level

### C1.1. Current Use

PCs in particular questioned **what the overall global report is used for**. DPs also expressed their doubts. However, some examples of use of results at the global level were given by other participants:

- One DP reported that the UN incorporates it in the **Financing for Development Report** that it sends to all UN Member States.
- **CSOs** highlighted that they use the results in their engagement and advocacy with the UN, OECD and bilateral DPs, as well as to assist global organisations that represent civil society with their work. The results have also been used to feed into global initiatives such as the design of SDG civil society indicators and the Belgrade Call for Action. As such, CSOs believe that the monitoring has provided specific added value in supplying concrete inputs from the country level to global processes.
- **Trade Union** representatives have used the results to help decide on their priority areas for engagement and leveraged the data to support their advocacy and policy proposals, for example to provide concrete evidence of a deteriorating environment for their constituents at the country level.

### C1.2. New Proposals

- In general, DPs proposed more focus on translating the results into **global advocacy** on what works, and what needs working on, to better leverage development co-operation in support of the SDGs. To do this, they recommended that the results be **better integrated with existing global processes**, for example increasing the linkages with SDG reporting (including on financing) and OECD work. This would help correctly position development effectiveness as the link between SDG financing and SDG achievement, a link that is often missing right now in PCs' Voluntary National Reviews of progress on the SDGs, as one DP pointed out. One PC commented that, in order to achieve this, the results need to be better packaged and timed.
- It was recommended that the results be used more to **complement other development effectiveness initiatives** such as the Kampala Principles on Effective Private Sector Engagement in Development Co-operation and the Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation.
- CSOs flagged that the establishment of the **OECD Development Assistance Committee's Reference Group on Effective Development Cooperation** offers a very interesting opportunity for using the global results.
- Some DPs and many PCs recommended publishing **dedicated reports on DPs' performance** at the global level to help incentivise behaviour change at the country level, given that it is rules and regulations set by HQs that determine what happens on the ground in most cases. This is seen as a key way to elicit behaviour change, given the lack of other direct accountability mechanisms for this constituency to PCs. The information to construct such reports is already available in the data provided by the monitoring.

## C2. DP HQ Level

### C2.1. Current Use

Some DPs admitted that they **do not use the results** at all at their HQ level. Others do, however, and provided the following examples.

- Some DPs hold internal meetings and undertake analysis to look at trends in their performance, the underlying reasons for them, and the implications for their future work. Some translate their findings into **policy recommendations** to senior decision makers and make adjustments to their **strategy and programming**. One highlighted that they use them as part of their global **advocacy** efforts.
- Some bilateral DPs **include some of the indicators in their in-house performance assessment frameworks and strategy**. This is reported to have incentivised and facilitated staff to focus on them and further legitimised development effectiveness as part and parcel of the DP's core business.
- A number of DPs commented that the results are useful for keeping the issue of development effectiveness on the **in-house policy agenda**. One DP mentioned that this contributed to them establishing a new directorate focusing on development effectiveness and data. Another has set up an interdisciplinary reference group on effectiveness issues that feeds into GPEDC discussions. One has established an informal working group of country desks and programme staff on effectiveness, drafted internal guidance on applying the principles, and integrated them in their international assistance training course.
- The **UN** incorporates the results in its **Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review**, which analyses the effectiveness of the various entities that together make up the UN system.

### C2.2. New Proposals

- Some PCs and CSOs flagged that DPs' HQs could use the results to work out where they need to **change the rules and regulations** that their Country Offices are governed by in order to promote more effective development co-operation on the ground.
- **Each DP could be provided with a clear score / rank** on an easily understandable issue to gain their attention.
- One DP suggested that, to get the indicators **integrated into multilateral DPs' in-house performance assessment frameworks**, the GPEDC should go through the people that govern what these multilateral DPs do – i.e. their boards or equivalent – as these are mainly representatives of governments who have already signed up to the GPEDC principles and committed to the monitoring process. Despite this, they very rarely ask the multilaterals to report on development effectiveness at present. Therefore, these governments could be asked to ensure that they sensitise their representatives to the importance of the issue. However, some DPs mentioned that one challenge to such integration is timing, given that the monitoring is not synchronised to their own reporting cycle.

### C3. Country Level

Some DP HQs commented that this level is where results use needs to be most urgently addressed as it is where behaviour needs to change if development co-operation is to really become more effective. However, some DP Country Offices, PCs and CSOs highlighted that DP Country Offices' behaviour is in many cases **set by HQ rules and regulations**, meaning that individual DPs tend to behave the same wherever they work, and their Country Offices are unlikely to be willing or able to significantly change their behaviour without changes first happening at the DP HQ level. This issue is addressed in the first of the "New Proposals" of the preceding section.

#### C3.1. Current Use

Many PCs flagged the usefulness of the Country Profile for their work in managing development co-operation. Many DPs, though, said that they do not believe the results are used at all at the country level, even by their own Country Offices. However, responses from PCs, some other DPs, and CSOs provided a **number of examples** of where they are, though it was recognised that there is still significant room for improvement.

The following are the examples that were provided of results being used at the PC level by different constituencies:

#### PCs

- Some PCs have used the results to help **analyse where there are weaknesses** in development co-operation provision and management and to make the case for addressing these.
- In one country, the process of monitoring **acted as a catalyst for a variety of new development co-operation management initiatives**, including national plan monitoring, reporting on funding flows, a methodology for assessing alignment of new programmes and projects, the revival of a task force on the use of country systems, and the establishment of a new statistical bureau.
- Two PCs designed their first dedicated **development co-operation policies** on the basis of the results, setting out how development co-operation should be better delivered and managed in future. This has allowed them to take more ownership of support and tackle issues such as poor alignment, coordination, and execution.
- One PC drafted a **development effectiveness strategy** rooted in the results.
- Some PCs have flagged that the monitoring has contributed to **improvements in public financial management**.
- In some PCs, indicators are being used to help work on formulating **Integrated National Financing Frameworks** (INFFs).
- In two PCs, the monitoring stimulated the creation of **management information systems** to track development co-operation.
- Some PCs have used the results in **negotiations with DPs**, for example making the case for more aligned and coordinated support, a healthier sector distribution and, in some cases, an increase in the use of budget support. Some PCs have seen increases in the use of country systems and national results frameworks, as well as in the amount of development co-operation that is recorded on budget, following the monitoring.

- In one PC, when the government used the results to make the case to DPs that they needed to **better align** their support to national priorities, DPs made the case back that an improved national plan would help them to do so. This in turn served to motivate new sector analysis and also a country-led study on the causes of development ineffectiveness, looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats around each GPEDC indicator. A new development co-operation policy is now being planned to encapsulate the findings along with an enhanced management information system.
- Some PCs are integrating some of the indicators and results in their **national strategies, results frameworks, and development co-operation reports**. Others are planning to do so in future.
- One PC flagged that they had used the overall monitoring to help them complete their **Voluntary National Review** of progress towards the SDGs. And, of course, in all countries the monitoring provides the data to report on three of the SDG indicators.
- In the Pacific, the indicators are included in **regional reporting** under the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Compact, and are viewed as key to improving the effectiveness of development co-operation. A regional “2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent” is currently under development, and there has been a strong demand from Pacific Islands Forum members to highlight the importance of development effectiveness and the GPEDC principles within this, in recognition of its role as a crucial driver of success.
- One PC noted that the monitoring had **boosted the capacity** of civil servants and their ability to effectively manage development co-operation.

#### DPs

- In some PCs, DPs are using the results of some indicators to **expand dialogue and gain traction with the government**, pinpointing areas that need attention.
- One DP commented that the **impartial, objective nature of the country profiles** is very useful in this respect, as they can be used to drive discussions without the perception of bias that might be present if they had been produced by the PC government, DPs, or CSOs. As such, the GPEDC is playing a valuable “honest broker” role in helping to drive change at the country level.

#### CSOs

- In one PC, a **Civil Society Partnership Framework** was agreed as a result of the monitoring, setting out how engagement between government and civil society should function at both the national and local levels.
- One PC noted that CSOs had shown keen interest in the data that was produced by the monitoring, as they had not previously had access to such information. They used it to **enhance their watchdog role**, making enquiries to government about what external assistance had been received and how it had been used. This led to the strengthening of the position of CSOs in development co-operation management and oversight, as well as to a review of the national aid policy.
- One global CSO representative body has used the results to inform **country-level workshops** on the CSO enabling environment and CSO development effectiveness.

#### Multi-stakeholder

- Some DPs reported that the process had been useful at the country level in terms of **keeping development effectiveness issues on the agenda** and bringing what had previously been diverse data

on development effectiveness issues together in one place. This helped focus people and was more persuasive in terms of promoting action.

- Some PCs and DPs noted that the monitoring process itself promotes **coordination, collaboration and accountability** between different actors. CSOs and the private sector particularly highlighted this point, noting that the methodology for monitoring their respective indicators mandates dialogue between their constituencies and PC governments, and that this often continues after the monitoring is done. One PC stated that it had contributed to building social inclusion and underpinning democracy in their country.
- Several countries improved results use by leveraging existing **joint coordination structures, systems, and reporting mechanisms** to analyse the outcomes and propose follow-up actions. This helps ensure legitimacy, buy-in and focus, plus exerts some peer pressure. It also strengthens the architecture itself and the relationships it depends on, putting it in a better position to manage development co-operation going forward.

### *C3.2 New Proposals*

- PCs would welcome more **support and guidance on packaging and using the results** from the GPEDC, including sharing examples of how it is done in other countries. This could include region-specific ways of applying them, which has the potential to also support regional integration.
- There was a strong call from all constituencies for **country-level action plans** to be drafted based on the results of the monitoring, perhaps forming an add-on to the Country Profiles. These could be put together on the basis of collaborative meetings with all stakeholders and agree what will be done, when, by who, to address the issues raised by the results. The implementation of these action plans could then be checked up on during the subsequent monitoring round.
- Many PCs and some DPs recommended publishing **dedicated results on DP performance** at the PC level to help incentive behaviour change. As at the global level, this is seen as a key way to elicit such change given the lack of other direct accountability mechanisms for this constituency to PCs. The information to construct such reports is already available in the data provided by the monitoring.
- CSOs commented that DP HQs could be asked to **sensitise their Country Offices** about the results and ask them to report back on how they are being used.
- Some DPs recommended better sensitising PCs to the fact that three of the indicators are **part and parcel of SDG reporting**.
- Trade Unions recommended **breaking down the results** that come out of multi-stakeholder dialogues to show the views of the different constituencies involved.

## **D. Assessing the Indicators**

Assessing the indicators used was **not the main focus** of the consultations, given that it will be covered by a subsequent, dedicated process of the monitoring reform.

Participants recognised the **potential of data** to help advocacy and influence decision-making, if it's the right data, packaged in the right way.

While the four development effectiveness principles espoused by the Global Partnership are still readily endorsed, **all call participants felt that the indicators used to interpret them need some attention**, but they varied in the degree to which they believe this is necessary. Some proposed only small adjustments, while others proposed completely new indicators.

While the value of **maintaining the same indicators over time** was recognised, in that it allows comparisons with the past and promotes accountability, it was also highlighted that this is useless if the indicator itself has lost some or all of its relevance, for example due to changes in context that have taken place in recent years. It was flagged that there have been plenty of these since the Paris Declaration of 2005, the document in which many of the current indicators have their origin. There are now new actors and ways of working, meaning that the reality of what makes development co-operation sail or fail may have shifted. One participant highlighted that the GPEDC has made repeated statements about this evolution and the need to adapt, including in the conclusions of the High-Level Meeting in Nairobi in 2016, and therefore it would seem rather odd if it took the stance that the indicators should stay exactly the same.

Some DPs and a number of PCs called for a **simpler framework** with fewer indicators and ones that are easier to measure. One CSO participant commented, however, that some complexity is inevitable to reflect the nuances of different stakeholders' views and promote dialogue.

As mentioned above, for the GPEDC monitoring to remain relevant, it needs to **widen its net** in terms of who participates. This should also be taken into account in indicator selection and methodology, seeking to involve not only governments, traditional DPs, and CSOs, but also parliaments, sub-national governments, trade unions, emerging DPs, foundations, and the private sector.

More details of specific inputs provided by participants on the indicators are included in **Annex 1**, including proposals on **improvements to existing indicators**, a consideration of **one-size-fits-all versus tailor-made** approaches, suggestions for **new indicators**, and **criteria** all indicators should meet.

## Annex 1: Indicator Intel

### A. Proposals on Existing Indicators

Even where participants suggested keeping the same indicators that are currently in use in order to allow comparisons with the past and promote accountability, all suggested that these still **need some work to increase their usefulness and make them easier to measure**, streamlining and simplifying them wherever possible. One non-executive stakeholder described a need to “tone down” the indicators, making them less ambitious but more usable - and thus more likely to generate comprehensive, credible data.

The following specific adjustments were proposed to individual indicators:

#### ***Indicator 1a: Development partners use country-led results frameworks***

One DP flagged that the current indicator has limited use, given the wide scope of most national plans. This makes it very easy for a DP to just focus on whatever they choose and then subsequently search through the national plan to cherry pick something that is connected to it and claim alignment.

One DP suggested improving this indicator to better capture PCs' focus on results and the SDGs.

#### ***Indicator 1b: Countries strengthen their national results frameworks***

One non-executive stakeholder suggested looking at how inclusively such frameworks have been put together. One DP flagged this indicator as being in particular need of attention to provide more robust findings.

#### ***Indicator 2: Civil society organisations operate within an environment that maximises their engagement in and contribution to development***

Some CSOs recognise and welcome that this indicator has evolved over time, moving from more of a “checkbox exercise” towards an actual assessment of the enabling environment against a series of different scenarios, and that, in its monitoring itself, it promotes dialogue. One CSO global representative organisation stated that the four-part framework of this indicator is valuable and distinct from other monitoring exercises in the way that it recognises the interlinkages of different issues.

However, some CSOs flagged that care is needed to assess the quality of such dialogue and choice of participants. At present, this quality is said to vary significantly from country to country. In some countries it works well, in others not so well, and in others not at all, with stakeholders instead simply filling out questionnaires in isolation. The tight deadlines for getting the monitoring done mean that the dialogue may not take place as envisaged or, if it does, may not be as inclusive as planned, for example with very little participation from outside of capital cities. Dialogue also needs to continue after the monitoring has finished in order to track and foster behaviour change. This does not happen enough at present.

It was highlighted that some governments may not actually be in favour of creating an enabling environment, and there are examples where they have been very selective in the use of the monitoring results, for example using them exclusively to pressure CSOs to become more accountable. Of course, improving the development effectiveness of CSOs is indeed covered under this indicator, but it should not become the sole focus of government's or other stakeholders.

It was noted that this indicator had the lowest response rate of all the indicators during the 2018 monitoring round. To help address this, it was suggested to shorten and simplify the questionnaires used.

One DP recommended expanding this indicator to also cover partnerships between DPs and CSOs, as opposed to only with governments.

One CSO global representative organisation recommended that the indicator be updated in light of upcoming global developments such as the OECD Development Assistance Committee's Policy Instrument on DP Support and Engagement with CSOs which will come online in 2021.

### ***Indicator 3: Quality of public-private dialogue***

Private sector and trade union representatives recommended that this indicator should be further adjusted in future to reflect the Kampala Principles on Effective Private Sector Engagement in Development Co-operation.

One DP recommended expanding this indicator to also cover partnerships between DPs and the private sector, as opposed to only governments. One DP recommended including blended finance and another recommended including a quantifiable measure.

Private sector representatives highlighted that, like the CSO indicator, this one has evolved, expanding over time to include a wider range of private sector actors, and that reporting on the indicator itself involves consultation between private sector representatives and government, so the monitoring already helps foster engagement between these two constituencies. Again however, dialogue also needs to continue after the monitoring has finished in order to track and foster behaviour change. This does not happen enough at present.

### ***Indicator 4: Transparent information on development co-operation is publicly available***

Some PCs felt that this indicator should be improved so that it yields more useful information. It was proposed to expand the range of information sources it covers and to add on an assessment of the ability to utilise them.

### ***Indicator 5a: Development co-operation is predictable: annual predictability***

One DP recommended expanding this indicator to make it multi-year.

### ***Indicator 5b: Development co-operation is predictable: medium-term predictability***

One DP flagged this indicator as being in particular need of strengthening.

### ***Indicator 6: Development co-operation is included in budgets subject to parliamentary oversight***

One DP flagged this indicator as being in particular need of strengthening.

### ***Indicator 8: Countries have systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment***

One DP was heavily involved in both the design and roll-out of this indicator. Apart from being part of the GPEDC monitoring, it is also used to measure progress against SDG indicator 5.c.1, namely the "proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment". Significant effort was put into the indicator's methodological development to ensure relevance and usability, both at the global and country levels. The methodology for measurement was

developed collaboratively and included inputs from partner countries. It was also vetted by representatives of UN statistical agencies.

The indicator results are said to be widely used at the global, DP HQ, and country levels.

More work may be needed to sensitise partners to what the indicator does *not* measure however. People sometimes wrongly assume that it counts how much money is being channelled to work on gender equality, as opposed to whether there is a system in place to track such flows. Further simplification of some of the questionnaire questions would also be useful.

In some countries, the results get only limited traction with government. This is particularly the case if they do not yet have a strong tradition of Gender Responsive Budgeting. To address this, robust multi-stakeholder dialogues that bring in gender-focused actors such as women's organisations are recommended. Some countries are already making very productive use of such dialogues and so could serve as examples of best practice.

One PC, one DP, and one CSO representative recommended that this indicator be further strengthened.

One DP recommended integrating this indicator into a new, more wide-ranging, indicator covering PC work to meet the SDGs.

One CSO participant recommended adopting a dialogue-focused approach, similar to that used for the civil society and private sector indicators, allowing government, DPs, and CSOs to all provide their views on questions in order to promote interaction.

#### **Indicator 9b: Development partners use country systems**

Some DPs and CSOs recommended looking not only at the use of government systems but, in line with a broader concept of national "ownership", also at how much DPs channel support through national civil society, contractors and consultants.

Some DPs stressed that it is not always possible or desirable to use country systems. Others highlighted that this indicator can seem to penalise working through multilateral partners which is often a very effective way to operate and to reduce fragmentation, particularly in fragile and conflict-afflicted states. Similarly, use of national procurement systems may not always be the best way to go, for example when dealing with global vaccine programmes that depend on *not* using country systems for their efficiency, effectiveness, and economies of scale.

#### **Indicator 10: Aid is untied**

One non-executive stakeholder described this indicator as inadequate given that it is quite easy for a DP to bias its contracting to favour home-country contractors via the technical requirements and language it uses in its tendering, without actually legally sanctioning the practice and thus falling foul of the indicator. One DP also recommended modifying this indicator.

One non-executive stakeholder recommended that, for any **indicator that involves parliaments**, the assessment of the indicator be brought in-house and institutionalised, for example in the form of a parliamentary hearing. This is in contrast to the present tendency to take an MP outside of parliament and involve them in an external process such as a round table. This is seen as detrimental as it positions the monitoring as something outside of mainstream parliamentary business, as well as making the quality of parliament's contribution to it solely dependent on the MP or MPs who participate.

## B. One Size Fits All vs. Tailor-made

The current approach is that the same set of indicators is reported on in all PCs. Some proposed that this **one-size-fits-all** approach makes sense as it allows comparisons between countries and provides a global snapshot, plus its standardisation may make the overall process easier to administer.

However, the reality is that not all participating PCs choose / are able to report on all of the indicators, often due to constraints in capacity and the supply of data. Many PCs and some DPs, CSOs and other non-executive stakeholders called for more flexibility, allowing for different indicators to be reported on in different countries, depending on their **context and capacity**. The latter can vary greatly between different countries with, for example, a fragile state having very different priorities and capabilities than a middle-income country.

The consensus was not, however, a complete free-for-all in terms of indicator selection. Rather, opinions seemed to coalesce around having both (a) a small, fixed, **core set** of indicators that are measured everywhere and cover universally applicable issues of development effectiveness, thereby allowing for international comparisons and facilitating data gathering, coupled with (b) a **menu of additional indicators** that dig deeper into certain issues that PCs could choose from, depending on which are most relevant to their context, and aligned to their capacity for monitoring them. One DP and one non-executive stakeholder suggested these choices could even be decided on by using a decision-tree approach, whereby the country would answer a series of questions to discern which out of the set of optional indicators were the most relevant and feasible for them.

By adjusting to local realities and abilities in this way, both the **relevance** and **practicality** of the monitoring would be increased, which could significantly increase **buy-in** and **participation**. By making the monitoring easier to get done in general and thus not overburdening people with the process, it would also allow more breathing room to focus on use of **results**. One DP did caution however that such an approach needed to be pursued with caution given the risk of further complicating the whole process and potentially bringing its “global” moniker into question.

One DP suggested a **sampling** approach be used for some indicators, looking at selected groups of PCs to gauge progress, as opposed to the current census approach of looking at everything everywhere.

One non-executive stakeholder recommended including an element of **peer review** in the monitoring.

Some CSOs recommended that different country contexts be taken into account by how the data from indicators is **analysed** and **interpreted**.

## C. Suggestions for New Indicators

Some recommended focusing solely on reforming the existing indicators. Others, however, felt that new ones also need to be considered that **better reflect the principles and current context and are more intuitive and easier to measure**. However, this distinction perhaps depends on how tightly one defines the existing indicators as, what some might see as a new indicator, others might instead consider to be a reform of an existing one that maintains its spirit even while substantially changing its content.

Given that the majority of respondents called for a simpler and lighter overall process, **the proposals below could perhaps be considered as either** (i) additions to be made only if the existing indicator set can be simplified so that overall monitoring costs do not rise, (ii) alternatives that would replace some of the existing

indicators or (iii) add-ons that would be adopted only if an approach is agreed where just a small set of core indicators are compulsory with others selected by PCs according to context and capacity.

One CSO pointed out that there will always be useful new things we could measure but this does not mean that we necessarily should - there is a cost to doing so in terms of the resources needed to complete the monitoring and the added complexity it brings, which can actually decrease the impact and use of the results. Some DPs also proposed that **less indicators would be better** as it would encourage participation and allow people to better focus on the results that come out. This is particularly important to bear in mind given the past experience of a heavy process that has diverted attention and energy from using its results. One DP also proposed that the GPEDC might want to supplement the indicators that are monitored with existing data from other sources.

The new indicators that were proposed were:

### **D3.1. Government Performance**

- **Overall governance performance:** suggested by one PC.
- **Strength of national institutions:** suggested by one PC.
- **Sustainability and resilience / crisis response capacity:** suggested by one DP.
- **Level of corruption and illicit flows:** suggested by some non-executive stakeholders. However, it may be possible to use existing data sources for this, such as Transparency International.
- **Parliamentary oversight of the budget:** at its simplest, just asking if the parliament has a dedicated office on budgetary affairs. Suggested by some non-executive stakeholders.
- **Parliamentary vetting of public-private initiatives:** such as large infrastructure projects. At its simplest, just asking if the parliament has a committee to oversee public-private partnerships. Suggested by some non-executive stakeholders.
- **Performance of local government:** suggested by one PC.

### **D3.2. DPs' Performance**

- **DPs' overall performance:** this could be collated into some kind of score / index at both the country and global level. It was recommended that this be as holistic as possible, bringing in other existing data where necessary, as there are cases where effective performance in one area may be offset by ineffective performance in another. Suggested by PCs, DPs, CSOs and some other non-executive stakeholders.
- **Effectiveness of South-South / non-traditional partners' co-operation and Triangular co-operation:** suggested by most PCs.
- **Compliance with bilateral agreements:** looking at DPs' adherence to what they have signed with PCs. Suggested by some PCs.
- **Fragmentation:** viewed as a crucial issue that can make or break the effectiveness of development co-operation, as has been recognised in past international commitments. It would also be relatively straightforward to measure. One suggestion was to simply look at the percentage of development co-operation delivered jointly as opposed to bilaterally. Suggested by a number of PCs, DPs and CSOs.
- **Alignment of DPs' planning and strategy cycles to the national cycle:** easy to understand and measure. Suggested by a number of PCs.

- **Alignment to medium-term plans:** as opposed to more general, long-term plans, given that medium-term plans tend to be more specific and thus alignment to them is more meaningful. Suggested by some DPs.
- **Use of national plans, processes and systems:** suggested by some PCs.
- **Use of national CSOs, contractors and consultants by DPs:** potentially as a replacement to the “untied aid” indicator. Suggested by some PCs, DPs, and non-executive stakeholders.
- **Maintenance of a permanent in-country office:** easy to understand and measure. Suggested by some PCs and non-executive stakeholders.
- **Time taken by DPs from planning to delivery:** this would go beyond looking just at whether DPs disburse when they say they will to considering how long it actually takes them. Suggested by some PCs.
- **Flexibility of DPs to adjust their plans and programmes in line with changing national needs:** suggested by one PC.

### **D3.3. Financing**

- **Access to financing:** suggested by some PCs.
- **Domestic resource mobilisation:** suggested by some non-executive stakeholders.
- **Budget support financing:** one PC recommended that this include looking at disbursement criteria. Suggested by some PCs.
- **Climate change financing:** suggested by some Pacific PCs. However, it is possible that data is already available from existing sources.

### **D3.4. Coordination Architecture**

- **Overall strength of in-country coordination architecture:** suggested by some PCs.
- **Strength of Government’s role in coordination:** suggested by some DPs.
- **Integration of development effectiveness principles in the national strategy:** suggested by one DP.
- **Existence of a functional development co-operation policy:** defined as a policy that mandates and ensures that providers of support deliver in an effective way. This could also include partners’ level of compliance with the policy. Suggested by some PCs.
- **Management information system use:** tracking how well partners meet their reporting obligations. Suggested by some PCs.
- **Coordination of development, peace, and humanitarian work:** one PC also suggested that the monitoring expand to measure humanitarian work. Suggested by some PCs and DPs.
- **Participation in the monitoring:** suggested by some PCs.
- **Use of results:** looking at if actions were agreed on the basis of the last monitoring round and, if so, whether they have been implemented. Suggested by some PCs and DPs.

## D. Criteria All Indicators Should Meet

For individual indicators, the following proposals were made for criteria that they should have to meet before being included in the monitoring:

- Be linked to the **priority issues** of our times such as working towards the SDGs and tackling climate change. Suggested by some DPs.
- Be **aligned** with PC priorities. Suggested by some PCs.
- Be able to demonstrate a **direct link to development results**. Suggested by some DPs.
- Demonstrate that **results from previous monitoring rounds were used** (when considering whether to keep an existing indicator). Suggested by some DPs.
- Provide information that can be **used practically** to assist in decision-making or nudging behaviour change – there should be a clear “theory of change”: who would use the information, how, to change what. Suggested by some PCs, DPs and non-executive stakeholders.
- **Enable a clear comparison** with performance in the past and of other actors / countries. Suggested by some DPs.
- Be **intuitive** and easy to understand in terms of what it shows and how it should be measured and used. Suggested by some DPs and non-executive stakeholders.
- Not involve **self-assessment** if possible, given the risk of subjective bias. Suggested by some PCs and DPs.
- Not provide data which is **already available from an existing source** in some form. NB. This does not preclude that such a source be used alongside the primary data gathered by the GPEDC in order to complement / validate it. The following were proposed as potentially valuable existing repositories of data that could be tapped into: the International Budget Partnership, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Transparency International. Suggested by some DPs and non-executive stakeholders.
- Have a **reasonable resource cost** in terms of what is required to measure it. Suggested by some PCs and DPs.
- Be **endorsed** by those who will be involved in its measurement, particularly “non-traditional” providers of development co-operation such as emerging DPs, Southern providers, foundations and the private sector, who have sometimes been reluctant to participate in the monitoring in the past. To achieve this, involving these partners in indicator development is highly recommended. Suggested by some DPs.

It should be noted that a number of the existing indicators, as well as many of the new indicators proposed above, would not meet many of these criteria in their current form.