

GPEDC Working Group on Knowledge Hub on Effective Development Co-operation

Preliminary Note¹

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: A STRONG NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING TO IMPLEMENT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS..... 3

I. STATE OF PLAY: HOW THE GPEDC PROMOTES KNOWLEDGE SHARING TODAY 4

II. THE GPEDC KNOWLEDGE HUB: POSSIBLE MISSION STATEMENT AND KEY COMPONENTS..... 5

 1. POSSIBLE VISION STATEMENT, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE GPEDC KNOWLEDGE HUB 7

 2. KEY COMPONENTS 7

 i. Knowledge gathering - The GPEDC as knowledge connector 7

 ii. Knowledge sharing - Sharing solutions for better sustainable development results..... 8

 iii. Knowledge management - The GPEDC knowledge management function 8

III. POSSIBLE APPROACH AND OPTIONS TO CONSIDER..... 9

IV. NEXT STEPS 12

INTRODUCTION: A STRONG NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING TO IMPLEMENT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Through transfer of knowledge and expertise, international development cooperation can help countries to transform into prosperous nations. The Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) sets out principles (country ownership, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability) that if applied to development cooperation can contribute significantly to achieving development goals in a more effective way. With a new framework for sustainable development agreed, it is time to reflect on how the GPEDC can best promote knowledge sharing for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) and the 2030 Agenda put new demands on countries, organizations and development actors. As recognized in the Busan Partnership Agreement (paragraph30) “the inputs to sustainable development extend well beyond financial cooperation to the knowledge and development experience of all actors and countries”. More than ever, development actors need to work in partnership with different, sometimes unusual, stakeholders to implement actions, monitor them jointly, and share lessons and best practices with wider audiences to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The GPEDC has an important role to play in this area, as an inclusive platform that brings together the full range of development actors (governments, the private sector, civil society and others) to ensure that funding, knowledge and policy are harnessed for a maximum impact on development results. The GPEDC can strengthen its role of “Knowledge Hub” by providing the space for exchanging ideas and experiences as well as promoting innovative initiatives to implement development effectiveness commitments in support of the SDGs.

But what knowledge should be shared? The principles of effective development cooperation as outlined in the Busan Partnership Agreement (2011) were adopted by a wide range of stakeholders to constitute the new global framework for all development cooperation operations, complementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008). This means that all development cooperation strategies, projects, and programs should be designed and implemented in respect of the shared principles of country ownership, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability. The extent of compliance with the shared principles varies from one country to another, so does the outcome and impact of development cooperation operations. From this perspective, a GPEDC “Knowledge hub” could be a platform that serves as repertoire of experiences and success stories of development cooperation activities and rendering them available for use by other development stakeholders that need such information to improve on their development results, with the overall goal to favor the realization of 2030 Agenda. The relevance of such knowledge for the Knowledge Hub would be assessed on the basis of the compliance of the development cooperation operations with the shared principles that underpin the GPEDC.

The idea of innovation arises from the fact both the GPEDC and the 2030 Agenda are innovative in spirit, as both regard development as a shared endeavour that builds on partnerships between all stakeholders – public and private, domestic and international – to achieve its universal goals. Moreover, innovation may not necessarily entail the invention of radically new mechanisms of operating, but also refers to the fact

that the successful experiences of some countries, contexts and stakeholders can reasonably be viewed as innovative when applied – with good results – to other countries and stakeholders.

I. STATE OF PLAY: HOW THE GPEDC PROMOTES KNOWLEDGE SHARING TODAY

Today, the GPEDC offers three main types of tools for promoting knowledge sharing on effective development cooperation: meetings, analytical work and online tools.

1. Meetings

- *International GPEDC meetings*: Ministerial-level meetings (High-Level Meetings, HLM) and its preparatory meetings, Steering Committee meetings (organized by Co-chairs and JST), Busan Global Partnership Fora (hosted by the Republic of Korea), Learning and Acceleration Programme (hosted by the Republic of Korea).
- *Regional GPEDC meetings*: regional pre-monitoring workshops, post-monitoring workshops, meetings organized by regional platforms (e.g. Arab Coordination Group, Asia-Pacific Development Effectiveness Facility, NEPAD, Pacific Island Forum).
- *Side events to key international meetings* (E.g. UN General Assembly meetings, UN DCF meetings, UN ECOSOC meetings, World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings, OECD Global Fora on Development).

2. Analytical work

- GPEDC Monitoring Report (biennial).
- Policy briefs on progress and good practice on implementing effective development cooperation, drawing from country implementation briefs (currently briefs from 30 countries are available in the GPEDC community site and 18 country stories are available at the GPEDC website).

3. Online tools:

- GPEDC website (<http://effectivecooperation.org/>), where the general public can find key information on the GPEDC.
- GPEDC community site (<https://www.unteamworks.org/GPEDC>), an interactive platform that facilitates remote interaction among GPEDC stakeholders and provides access to all documents prepared by the GPEDC.
- GPEDC newsletters (monthly) and GPEDC Monitoring newsletters (quarterly).
- GPEDC blog, which features opinion pieces from a wide variety of development actors.
- GPEDC Social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn).
- Monitoring webinars, videos, helpdesk and support material, all of which help countries to participate in the GPEDC monitoring exercise.

The existing GPEDC tools for knowledge sharing already provide a wealth of information on development cooperation. However, a key issue is how to rationalize these tools and transform information exchange into real learning. Some proposals for addressing this issue are presented below:

- **Promote regular dialogue among GPEDC stakeholders** by better articulating GPEDC meetings (discussions in one event inform following events) and further using online tools as a means to keep dialogue ongoing between international events.
- **Better integrate country-level implementation efforts and GPEDC monitoring framework** so country-level evidence informs the monitoring process and monitoring help to prioritize efforts in implementation. This would strengthen evidence generated from the monitoring exercise, foster systematic analysis and policy dialogue on progress made and bottlenecks faced at the country level in deepening multi-stakeholder actions for more effective cooperation, and help to inform regional and global dialogue for further policy actions and changes.
- **Help knowledge seekers to find information easily.** For example, this could be done by strengthening the search function at online tools. Another possibility would be to nominate an organization as a “curator” for different thematic issues (e.g. ownership, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, transparency and accountability) relevant to GPEDC members. As a “Knowledge Hub”, GPEDC needs to be supported by its members who may become thematic curators.
- **Strengthen intra-government knowledge sharing and co-ordination.** Countries in the GPEDC are often represented only by one particular agency (e.g. development or finance authority) in the government and information on GPEDC efforts are not fully shared or even known by other ministries and agencies. Thus, knowledge-sharing and dissemination within the governments of each GPEDC member need to be enhanced to streamline the GPEDC agenda in the entire government. The second round monitoring process has helped some countries to bring together various ministries to discuss the articulation and efforts to deepen the principles of effective development cooperation. Similarly, mainstreaming of the SDGs led by countries also provide an opportunity to ground the development effectiveness efforts strongly as part of the country SDGs implementation framework.

II. THE GPEDC KNOWLEDGE HUB: POSSIBLE MISSION STATEMENT AND KEY COMPONENTS

As an inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnership, the GPEDC is suited to develop solutions to difficult and diverse challenges for development finance and development cooperation. The GPEDC provides an open and safe space to tackle underlying principles and processes facing international development cooperation as we embark on implementing the AAAA and the 2030 Agenda. More than ever, the high ambition of the SDGs - leaving no one behind, coupled with limited resources and the need to broaden existing partnerships, demand attention for development effectiveness.

The AAAA welcomes “efforts to improve the quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation and other international efforts in public finance, including adherence to agreed development cooperation effectiveness principles” (OP 58). While the main vehicle for pursuing these efforts within the United Nations is the Development Co-operation Forum (DCF) of ECOSOC, United Nations Member States will also “take account of efforts in other relevant forums, such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, in a complementary manner” (OP 58). The GPEDC, therefore, has a distinctive but complementary role to that of the DCF. The GPEDC and DCF will continue to strengthen synergies in jointly contributing to effective development co-operation, including through the joint DCF-GPEDC Roadmap and reporting to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

Overall guidance for the GPEDC role in the 2030 Agenda is contained in the outcome document for the UN Summit in September 2015 which states in para 17.16 on means of implementation: “Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.”

The 2030 Agenda is explicitly concerned with inclusivity, mutual learning and knowledge exchange on best practices. It not only focuses on results but also on monitoring and exchange on the best ways to implement this agenda, as exemplified in para 72 and 73: “A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation and will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing this Agenda in order to ensure that no one is left behind. Operating at the national, regional and global levels, it will promote accountability to our citizens, support effective international cooperation in achieving this Agenda and foster exchanges of best practices and mutual learning. It will mobilize support to overcome shared challenges and identify new and emerging issues. As this is a universal Agenda, mutual trust and understanding among all nations will be important.”

The above mentioned paragraph can be read as an open invitation to the GPEDC. The unique value of the GPEDC as an open, inclusive platform should be exploited fully and at all levels - global, regional and national - to support SDG attainment.

In this context, there are certainly opportunities for the GPEDC to explore in performing a key role at regional level. As per paragraph 80 of the 2030 Agenda: “Follow-up and review at the regional and sub-regional levels can, as appropriate, provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets. We welcome in this respect the cooperation of regional and sub-regional commissions and organizations. Inclusive regional processes will draw on national-level reviews and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level, including at the high-level political forum on sustainable development..” and paragraph 81: “Recognizing the importance of building on existing follow-up and review mechanisms at the regional level and allowing adequate policy space, we encourage all Member States to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage.”

The GPEDC could fill this void and establish itself as the most suitable regional forum for all stakeholders involved. At present, structures and mechanisms concerning the implementation of the SDG agenda are not yet operative. National and international development actors will have to sound out the best way forward to plan, implement, monitor and review achievements in reaching the set targets.

In the sections that follow we provide a possible vision statement and main components of the Knowledge hub.

1. POSSIBLE VISION STATEMENT, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE GPEDC KNOWLEDGE HUB

The vision statement, the mission statement and the specific objectives of the GPEDC knowledge hub could be:

Vision: Policy-makers and practitioners learn from evidence and understand better key success factors in development cooperation for achieving development results.

Mission: To be the knowledge hub for countries and organizations to share knowledge and experiences and promote innovative initiatives

Overall Objective: To implement development cooperation effectiveness commitments in support of the SDGs.

Specific Objectives

- Strengthening the GPEDC anchorage to the 2030 Agenda;
- Gathering and sharing of information on effective development cooperation;
- Fostering action and building trust between partners.

2. KEY COMPONENTS

The GPEDC knowledge Hub could have the following three components:

- Knowledge gathering
- Knowledge sharing
- Knowledge management

i. Knowledge gathering - The GPEDC as knowledge connector

In establishing a role as global and regional connector and drive a community of practice, the GPEDC can draw on ***the following key assets***:

A. A *monitoring framework* that is inclusive and country owned and provides lessons on development effectiveness across a range of indicators.

B. 40+ *Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs)* which - due to their innovative character - learn by doing and provide key insights on the practice and results of development collaboration.

C. Global and Regional *development effectiveness fora, and multilateral and regional development cooperation agencies* that have a long development cooperation experience and convening power, are multi-stakeholder and ideally placed to promote peer learning, cutting edge knowledge sharing and review.

D. National level *development effectiveness fora and development cooperation agencies* that have relevant development cooperation experience and convening power, are multi-stakeholder and ideally placed to assemble evidence on progress towards sustainable development and poverty alleviation targets. Multilateral, regional and national development cooperation agencies need to be fully employed. They are stakeholders of the GPEDC and are responsible for implementing the GPEDC

principles in their development cooperation strategies and operations. Moreover they have the necessary expertise and long experience in issues addressed by the 2030 Agenda. As such they constitute a good knowledge source for the Knowledge Hub.

The knowledge hub function of the GPEDC seamlessly ties in and builds upon these key assets, positioning knowledge sharing as one of the core of the work of the Global Partnership. Hence, using knowledge to inform better policies and create more effective practices should not be confined to a website or other IT instruments: it lies at the core of any development partnership. If the knowledge hub is truly functional, all processes shall provide inputs and refer to it to make use of its contents.

In all these areas work needs to be done.

ii. Knowledge sharing - Sharing solutions for better sustainable development results

In order to globalize local knowledge and localize global knowledge, and to develop the GPEDC as an internationally recognized knowledge hub, we might take into account the following assumptions and preconditions.

1. First, and maybe most important, is to assess *demand*. Only if knowledge provision is relevant and used, momentum can be generated. Demands may differ according to topic/subject and theme, actor(government, private sector, civil society etc.) and intervention level (project, national program, regional). Key is to become as demand driven as possible, design for local ownership, and ensure local buy-in which is critical for long term success.
2. Knowledge is a means, better development solutions are the end. Knowledge should be effectively deployed to obtain better results.
3. Mechanism should add value with regard to innovation and crucial lessons for development. Focus is essential, given the vast diversity of actors, regions and themes; avoid information overflow.
4. Analyze why sharing of knowledge has not produced desired results as per the evidence in many organizations. What are bottlenecks for effective knowledge management? Are there organizations that we can learn from, or cooperate with?
5. Platform should be invited to actively engage: not a static, reactive website, but a forum to co-create. Connect local context with regional platforms and global fora. GPEDC stakeholders, beyond the OECD/UNDP Joint Support Team, should be contributing to and leading knowledge sharing within the GPEDC. In line with the GPEDC spirit of “global light and country focused”, knowledge sharing within the GPEDC should be more decentralised, organic and should not only be based on information coming from the JST. All GPEDC stakeholders should feel responsible for sharing knowledge not only benefitting from it.
6. Platform is not an exercise in public relations, sharing failures is as important as sharing success. Mechanism should be easily accessible, simple and practical.
7. Focus must not only be on quantitative but qualitative forms of knowledge as well. GPEDC as a knowledge hub must practice inclusiveness in gathering and sharing knowledge from different stakeholders (e.g. country case studies from civil society on CSO enabling environment, impact of development cooperation programs on communities and human rights, etc.).

iii. Knowledge management - The GPEDC knowledge management function

The OECD/UNDP Joint Support Team (or a dedicated Knowledge Management Unit for the Knowledge Hub) could act as an interface; charged with quality checks and review of knowledge products provided

by the processes, fora, agencies and initiatives mentioned above. It will also organize its own knowledge generation activities.

III. POSSIBLE APPROACH AND OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

Turning the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation into a knowledge hub can be an ambitious goal – depending on how we define knowledge hub. Accomplishing this task will require a step-by-step strategy that builds on existing GPEDC knowledge management and comparative advantages – embodied by its monitoring framework and network of GPIs, takes departure in actual knowledge gaps and takes available resources into account. Specific demands for GPEDC to provide knowledge sharing functions must be coordinated at the global, regional, and country levels. Below is an initial outline of key elements of such a strategy, which the working group proposes should be addressed until June.

Base development of knowledge hub activities on existing GPEDC knowledge management and comparative advantage

- *Monitoring Report:* The monitoring framework is inclusive and country owned. It provides lessons on development effectiveness across a range of indicators. In addition to publishing the results of the second monitoring round, how will the GPEDC stakeholders analyze emerging results and other sources of evidence and transform them into shared knowledge? While the JST in preparing a Progress Report seeks complementary analysis and narrative to inform political and policy messages from the monitoring, how will the GPEDC stakeholders (individually or as a group) internalize the findings to advance the development effectiveness agenda? Can we institutionalize the multi-stakeholder monitoring mechanism at country level for promotion and knowledge sharing for effective implementation of the SDGs? How can we do this?
- The GPEDC monitoring framework assesses progress against agreed indicators on effective development cooperation. It focuses on behavior change that would help country governments and other development actors mobilize, utilize and manage development funding, knowledge and policy for maximum impacts and citizen to reinforce country accountability for results. While it does not inform on the progress made towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development targets, it complements the SDGs monitoring framework at the country and global level by providing an opportunity to facilitate dialogue to better address challenges and promote behavioral change by the broad range of development actors to support effective implementation of the SDGs. However, the monitoring framework is currently structured to be informed at central government level; it does not sufficiently inform on change at sub national or sector level. In order to satisfy the knowledge needs of knowledge hub, the monitoring process may need to be complemented by a GPEDC evaluation; much like the Paris Declaration evaluation complemented the Paris Declaration monitoring findings. The GPEDC evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of effective development cooperation principles on poverty alleviation and sustainable development results, thereby complementing the knowledge generated through the GPEDC monitoring process.
- The importance of a GPEDC evaluation for the Knowledge Hub also holds on the fact that when we talk of knowledge we imply learning and an ‘evaluation’ is well placed to inform the learning needs for SDGs implementation of GPEDC, evaluation is an integral part of any development process and the GPEDC, being a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, needs an evaluation framework. The eventual realisation of a GPEDC evaluation is beyond the scope of the Working Group on the Knowledge Hub and should be approved and coordinated at the level of the Steering Committee.

- Compared with the First Round, the 2nd Monitoring Round should improve in terms of the quality of data, inclusivity, and amount of participating countries and practical usefulness of its outcomes. The progress has been made in terms of increased number of partner countries, and efforts are currently on-going in strengthening usefulness of findings of the second round monitoring including through preparation of country profiles, preparation of policy and knowledge products based on results. Further and continuous support is needed by all stakeholders with regard to their engagement in country-led monitoring process to strengthen the quality of data and inclusiveness of the monitoring process. Furthermore, the framework deserves a critical look in adjusting its indicators to new demands of the SDG framework. The work is on-going with the Monitoring Advisory Group, with the eventual refined monitoring framework (a set of indicators and improved process) to be further considered in the GPEDC Steering Committee as well as at the second High-Level Meeting in Kenya. To fully address the needs of learning needs necessary for the SDGs development, the monitoring process may need to be complemented by a GPEDC evaluation that will assess the overall impact of effective development cooperation principles on poverty alleviation and sustainable development. To support linking the behavioral and policy changes for more effective development cooperation with the impact on poverty eradication and sustainable development, the work has started to reflect on the GPEDC theory of change which will inform discussion on GPEDC mandate and working arrangements.
- *Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs)*: There are currently more than 40 GPIs. While a reporting format has been recently established, the potential of the GPIs as knowledge generators has not been fully captured. Existing GPIs on the one hand and new, successful GPIs on the other can be created to support a multi-stakeholder approach for the implementation of the SDGs at the country level. The GPIs could become a dynamic innovation mechanism translating research and knowledge into action and creating new evidence for effectiveness in SDG implementation.
- *Development Cooperation Effectiveness Fora*: There are numerous development cooperation effectiveness fora at the global, regional, and country levels. The GPEDC should provide evidence of development effectiveness to other fora and should look for ways to cooperate. The annual input GPEDC is invited to contribute to the HLPF is critical in this regard.
- Though a reporting procedure has been recently established, the potential of the GPIs is not yet fully exploited. The work done in the GPIs provides valuable lessons and offers great insights that need to be shared and used more fully. However, more should be done to tap the full potential of GPIs to inform knowledge sharing in the GPEDC. They should play a more effective role in the knowledge hub.
- The greatest challenge lies in better organizing, using and strengthening the regional and national platforms of the GPEDC. Regionally, fora in Asia, Pacific, Africa and Latin America can be more fully used as multi-stakeholder platforms for peer learning and sharing knowledge, drawing on evidence and informed by data and experience on the ground. Again this potential is largely untapped. As the basic mechanism is in place, it will require additional effort to structure and transform these platforms into regional hubs. In many countries, a development coordination mechanism and forum exists that bring together intra-government stakeholders (central and line ministries), development stakeholders (such as development partners, civil society, private sector) to reinforce strategic development planning and effective implementation of national, sectoral and sub-national development plants. Furthermore, in several countries, platforms exist that are multi-stakeholder and share knowledge on development planning and implementation. Here, the work of the Working Group on the country focus will be instrumental in acknowledging the actual state of affairs (where, who, how, for what, results) and recommending on enhancing the impact of these national fora in

facilitating SDG attainment. Globally, the GPEDC has shown its convening power during the HLMs.

Identify knowledge niche and demand for GPEDC to be a knowledge hub

- *GPEDC constituencies:* Steering Committee members should perform outreach to their relevant constituencies to gauge interest and demand in strengthening the GPEDC as a Knowledge Hub. How can we strengthen the GPEDCs role at country level in promoting multi-stakeholder action for the implementation of the SDGs? How can we link the GPEDC better with academia, knowledge centers and other research platforms on development effectiveness and create action in support of more effective development? What is the perceived niche on linking development effectiveness knowledge to GPEDC action?
- *Regional and national platforms:* The GPEDC should perform more deliberate outreach to regional and perhaps national development cooperation platforms. This outreach should focus again on the perceived knowledge niche and what these platforms believe the GPEDC could provide as an input, building on the multi-stakeholder character of the GPEDC. Outreach should attempt to “clarify” the GPEDC role, and seek to understand what the knowledge niche and translate it into action.
- *Research institutions:* Many academic institutions and think tanks regular perform research and analysis on development cooperation effectiveness. Direct engagement with these organizations would also allow the GPEDC to develop a network of contacts with whom the GPEDC could work in the future to develop additional research and analysis on development cooperation effectiveness and create action on the ground to provide evidence in support of the research.

Define and implement the GPEDC knowledge hub

- *Resources:* Unless we receive other guidance from the Steering Committee, we should assume that the knowledge hub will need to operate within the existing resources the GPEDC has at its disposal. Another option would be to create a special activity in support of the knowledge hub by translating it into a GPI.
- *Audience:* The GPEDC is a multi-stakeholder forum and should be of value to all stakeholders. However, if we are successful at building the GPEDC’s capacity to support country-level implementation of the SDGs our main focus on a country-level audience. Based on knowledge of country level, multi-stakeholder partnerships for SDGs implementation we can inform policy makers and other stakeholders at the global level through the Steering Committee and HLM and beyond – to serve as input also to the Finance for Development forum and the HLPF. Prior outreach should help us identify where demand is greatest. Our multi-stakeholder approach to effective development on the ground generates knowledge for all stakeholders to become more effective. Country level information creates knowledge for political action and new insights in being more effective.
- *Knowledge:* We must focus. Once we better understand the knowledge niche, we should not intend to fill all of it (at least not at once). Instead, we should identify where we can add the most value based on the GPEDC’s comparative advantages (inclusive, political forum; monitoring report; GPIs; etc.) and existing resources. Should we focus more at the policy level, or at the practical level? One suggestion is to select 1 or 2 annual themes that the knowledge hub would focus on, in line with the role GPEDC is invited to play in the follow-up and review process by the HLPF.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Until June 2016, this working group will focus on:

- Agree on preconditions and strategy for effective knowledge management in the framework of the GPEDC;
- Propose options for turning the GPEDC into a multi-actor knowledge hub at global, regional and national level and chart their interlinkages;
- Prepare an initial assessment of the demand for knowledge provision (what, for whom, why);
- Provide clarity on how and when lessons learnt and innovative policies and practices from countries and institutions could inform the formal FfD and SDG information sharing and monitoring process (HLPF, FfD forum, DCF etc.);
- Recommend on the format and mechanism for the knowledge hubs (design of repository, interactive space, co-creation labs, national and regional conveners, global oversight etc.);
- Formulate action plan for its implementation (train key interlocutors, IT facilities, budget);
- Define time path for implementation (when is the hub fully operational?).