

Indicator Seven

Mutual Accountability

Mutual accountability among cooperation actors is strengthened through inclusive reviews

Draft Assessment and Proposals

1. Introduction

Track Three of the MAG's work plan is to provide advice on the continued relevance and usefulness of the GPEDC monitoring framework to the GPEDC Co-Chairs and Steering Committee. The MAG initiated this review process at its February 2016 meeting.

In doing so, three working groups examined the ten indicators in three clusters – ownership and results, inclusiveness, and transparency and accountability. At its February meeting, MAG members contributed perspectives on the continued relevance of the indicator (in light of the SDGs and Agenda 2030), the effectiveness and efficiency of the methodology at a practical level in gathering data, and the usefulness of the indicator for GPEDC stakeholders. The draft assessment and proposals for each indicator is the result of this work. The MAG is also examining issues affecting the structure of the monitoring framework as a whole.

These documents are posted on the [MAG's Teamworks web site](#) for review and comments. Our advice will be finalized at the MAG's next meeting, June 4-6, in Paris.

Comments and suggestions are very welcome from GPEDC stakeholders. Comments can be provided on the site, or submitted to the MAG Chairperson, Brian Tomlinson (brian.t.tomlinson@gmail.com).

2. Overview

Relevance Mutual accountability is a central, overarching indicator that should be reflected in all the dimensions development effectiveness. It is, therefore, highly relevant. To reflect this importance, it should be considered the first, or tenth indicator.

Efficiency Mutual accountability is also covered in considerable, if not more, detail by the UN Development Cooperation Forum and there may be duplication of effort. Presentation of progress, however, is different and indicators can complement each other with GPEDC's focus on the importance of partnership arrangements at the national level. However, the MAG finds the limited exchange of data (as opposed to findings) between the UN DCF and GPEDC unhelpful.

Usefulness The top level methodology employed by the indicator is able to demonstrate little about the *quality* of partnerships and how this has improved. Furthermore, performance against this indicator is poor - 59% of countries undertaking the necessary review against a target of 100%.

Unless there is a significant increase in the second round of monitoring, such results suggest the indicator has not been especially successful in driving progress and more is needed to understand why.

3. Key Issues and Challenges

- a) **Overlap with UN DCF** There is a clear overlap with the UN DCF National Mutual Accountability Survey and their complimentary nature needs further clarification. Data sharing between the exercises could also be improved substantially.

- b) **Limited measurement** The methodology measures the number of partnerships and frequency of joint target setting and monitoring. Reviewing only the number of countries engaged in mutual accountability dialogue is not very informative against the importance of the notion of mutuality in development cooperation, in the context of the principle of democratic country ownership. It is important to also assess progress in the quality of dialogue and its inclusiveness of development actors.

- c) **Determining why progress has been slow** The target was for all countries to have these mutual assessments reviews in place by 2015, but by 2013, only 59% had done so. As with predictability above, the GPEDC must play a role in understanding why progress is slow to clearly ascertain whether barriers are related to capacity or compliance (demonstrating value of the indicator and calling for subsequent exploration of how barriers can be addressed) or due to perceived irrelevance (necessitating a revision to the methodology);

- d) **Better balance in methodology between partner country and providers** Under the GPEDC indicator, responsibility for mutual accountability rests firmly with developing country governments. While it could be argued that this is right and proper in terms of country ownership, it places the burden of accountability monitoring exclusively on developing countries that may have the least capacity to manage such exercises.

Such an approach also locates the problems and responsibility for addressing them at the country level, when global issues may also substantially affect performance. It is almost self-defeating to only publish information at the recipient country level, and it should be quite easy to ask providers the same questions.

The record of both the Paris Monitoring Survey and now GPEDC Monitoring Framework is that many providers have a poor record in delivering on their Busan commitments across the board, and they need to be held accountable for poor performance more broadly, not just at individual country level.

4. Steps Forward

- a) **Assess the quality of mutual assessments** Yes/No answers are not sufficient to assess real progress in quality. Further methodological consideration should be given to help understand how mutual and inclusive identified mutual assessments actually are.

- b) Include direct questions for providers** Providers should be asked the same questions on mutual accountability as recipient governments. The weakness of key mutual accountability systems, such as follow up/monitoring of partnership policies, country results frameworks etc., is often (at least partly) located in factors such as providers choosing to invest in their own parallel monitoring systems rather than joint, or government-led systems. Asking providers the same questions as partner countries – how many countries do you have an aid partnership policy, do you mutually agree on monitoring targets, do you review those targets jointly, do you involve non-state stakeholders, do you publish the results – could illuminate where underlying issues lie, and be clear and simple enough to help bring about a shift in incentives.
- c) Consider a package of modules dedicated to providers at HQ level** The need for more global assessment to strengthen provider accountability should be considered across a number of indicators. This may constitute a package of modules dedicated to the provider at HQ level, structured to inform country level monitoring.