INDICATOR 1b:
Countries strengthen their national results frameworks

Methodology
Draft for consultation

Summary:
Development efforts are more likely to succeed and be sustained when countries take the lead in determining the goals and priorities of its own development, and sets a shared strategic agenda for how they are to be achieved.

The original indicator 1b mapped whether countries had one or more strategic planning tools in place, and a short narrative describing the country’s planning process. However, the methodology only provided indication of existence of these strategic plans, without assessing their quality or use. The indicator did not refer to the SDGs either.

The revised indicator addresses these shortcomings throughout a simple questionnaire that identifies whether: there are transparent, country-led frameworks in place; development results are prioritised (including SDGs); there are systems and data in place for monitoring; and whether results information is used for managing domestic and external resources.

The following draft methodology, put forth by the OECD-UNDP Joint Support Team of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, builds on the Nairobi Outcome document, the technical advice of
the Monitoring Advisory Group, the lessons learned in the 2016 monitoring round, and inputs from experts on country results frameworks.
Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognise the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (Global Partnership or GPEDC) as a solid foundation to drive more effective development co-operation. To meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, the Global Partnership must deliver evidence and data that address the needs of countries in better monitoring the effectiveness of their development efforts. In the Nairobi Outcome Document, the international development community stressed the need to “update the existing monitoring framework to reflect the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, including the pledge to leave no-one behind”.

To address these challenges, the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership outlined an inclusive strategy to refine the monitoring framework, following a three-track approach:

1. Strengthening the current 10 indicators to ensure their relevance for the 2030 Agenda context;
2. Adapting the scope of monitoring to address major systemic issues critical to the 2030 Agenda, such as climate change, gender equality, conflict and fragility as well as progressively reflecting all the modalities and development co-operation actors;
3. Enhancing the impact of the monitoring process by improving the quality and inclusiveness of country-level monitoring and facilitating follow-up and action on the results.

The refinement of the Global Partnership monitoring framework is guided by the Nairobi Outcome Document, the technical advice of the Monitoring Advisory Group and the OECD-UNDP Joint Support Team, and lessons learned in the 2016 monitoring round, including feedback from participating countries. The refinement began in April 2017 and is drawing on the technical assistance of expert groups, related to specific thematic areas, paired with iterative consultations with relevant stakeholders and country-level testing.

The refined indicators will be used in the third Global Partnership monitoring round, scheduled to be launched in May 2018. Further revisions will be incorporated in subsequent monitoring exercises. Findings from the third monitoring round will feed into high-level political processes, in particular the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
**Methodological Proposal**

**Indicator 1b: Countries strengthen their national results framework**

1. Introduction

This document presents a revised methodology for the Global Partnership indicator [indicator 1b], which measures the extent to which countries are strengthening their national results frameworks.

The indicator is part of the current Global Partnership monitoring framework, which is undergoing a refinement process to respond adequately to the effectiveness challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To inform the refinement of the indicator methodology, the OECD-UNDP Joint Support Team is consulting experts on results frameworks and development planning in partner countries and development partners’ agencies.

The document presents the current measurement of indicator 1b, the shortcomings as identified by the Monitoring Advisory Group and the past monitoring round, as well as the feedback received from a technical consultation with results experts from governments, donor agencies and academia. A proposed revised questionnaire is presented in Annex II of this document. Comments received on this draft proposal will inform the final methodology for indicator 1b.

2. Rationale

Since the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness (2005), there is growing recognition and evidence that development efforts need to be guided by the leadership of countries receiving development support. National, country-led results frameworks define a country’s particular approach to setting development priorities and results – including the associated monitoring and evaluation systems that track performance and achievement of these development results. These country-led results frameworks, at minimum, include agreed objectives and results indicators (i.e. output, outcome, and/or impact). They also set targets to measure progress in achieving the objectives defined in the government’s planning documents (GPEDC, 2015).

Countries’ leadership in establishing and defining their own results frameworks, and attached monitoring and evaluation systems are a fundamental aspect of the principles of country ownership and results orientation (OECD-UNDP, 2016). A country results framework provides a foundation for implementing national development strategies and priorities and it is understood as led or originated by the government of the country itself, rather than being provided or imposed by development partners (GPEDC, 2017).

Recognising the relation between the use of country-led results frameworks and country ownership, 165 governments - with their endorsement of the Busan Partnership Agreement - committed to rely on country-led results frameworks to guide their support to partners countries and to the extent possible, avoid

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1 This draft proposal is open for public consultation. In parallel, it is being piloted at country level, with the participation of governments and development partners. Once feedback from this consultation and piloting process has been consolidated, a revised proposal of the methodology will be submitted for consideration to the Global Partnership 15th Steering Committee in April 2018. The revised methodology will be rolled out in all participating countries as part of 2018 monitoring round.
parallel systems to monitoring and track result of their development interventions (GPEDC, 2011).

Furthermore, in 2016 the Nairobi Outcome document reiterated the use country-led results frameworks as a matter of urgency for development partners (GPEDC, 2016a). In parallel, countries receiving development co-operation committed to strengthen their national results frameworks, as to make them more effective, inclusive, transparent and useful.

Indicator 1b seeks to track the implementation of the above effectiveness commitments at country level by measuring the extent to which a nationally owned results framework is being strengthened.

3. Current methodology

The purpose of the original methodology for indicator 1b was to provide qualitative information on the country context, complementing the results observed through indicator 1a, i.e. the extent to which development partners aligned their development efforts to countries’ own priorities and results frameworks (GPEDC, 2015: 24-25).

Indicator 1b aimed at providing a brief characterisation of the country’s institutional context for strategic planning relying on two complementary blocks of information:

- **Mapping whether certain strategic planning tools existed.** The mapping covered from high-level planning (i.e. long term vision, national development plans) to specific sector strategies. This was done by offering check boxes and inviting national co-ordinators to provide the electronic link to those planning documents. Note that only the existence of these planning documents was validated. The quality, coherence, content or current relevance for policy-making of these different documents was not examined.

- **Providing a brief description of the country’s planning process.** A guided, open-ended question invited national co-ordinators to describe the country’s current arrangements to set development priorities, goals and targets, as well as the overall characteristics of the country’s process to plan for development results.

The data collection method relied on the responses of government officials –normally sitting on the ministries of planning, finance or foreign affairs– who were encouraged to consult with other government offices as needed in order to provide an illustrative picture of the country context for strategic planning. After the country level validation phase, the OECD-UNDP Joint Support Team performed a second validation of the responses, to ensure comprehensiveness and consistency.

The original methodology did not preview any level of aggregation or scoring method. For global reporting, the team estimated the percentage of countries that had identified the existence of an overarching country-led results framework (all participating countries but one). Additional in-depth analysis allowed estimating the percentage of countries that had a complete results framework in place (74% of countries).²

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² Acknowledging the limitations of the current methodology, for the global progress report, this more in-depth review of national development plans and sector strategies was carried out by the OECD-UNDP team. As this was not part of the original methodology, the additional data not inform the country level monitoring process. The complementary analysis included an individual desk review of long term visions, national development plans and sector strategies in the 81 participating countries, to verify whether countries had included a comprehensive results framework (i.e. including development priorities, targets and indicators) in higher-level planning tools.
Descriptive statistics on the percentage of countries with the different types of planning tools in place was also presented in the global reporting process.

4. Overall assessment

The original methodology for indicator 1b was subjected to three parallel assessments.

First, the Global Partnership’s Monitoring Advisory Group carried out an exhaustive analysis of the indicator against three criteria: relevance, efficiency and usefulness of the indicator. Box 1 presents the main suggestions.

**Box 1. Monitoring Advisory Group: Technical guidance to strengthen indicator 1b**

- On **relevance**, the importance of this indicator for the country ownership and results agendas was noted, but it was suggested to (a) assess the inclusiveness of the process to define country priorities; (b) refer to actions to reflect the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among national priorities and results; and (c) break the assumption that development planning leads to development outcomes by capturing how plans and results information are used to inform policy.

- On **efficiency**, it was acknowledged the complexities of creating an efficient indicator to assess a country’s leadership and ownership on development efforts, but it recognised the value of contextualising the information on development partner’s actual behaviour with the institutional arrangements for strategic planning at country level was the right approach. Nonetheless, suggestions to strengthen the methodology include enhancing indicator 1b to ensure that the ‘country-led results framework’ is (a) **identifiable**, i.e. publicly accessible, (b) **consistent**, i.e. there are not multiple government results frameworks at country level in competition but in coherence, and (c) in **use**, i.e. the results framework is being used to inform legislation, policy and budgeting decisions. It was argued that country results frameworks with these characteristics could potentially gather more coherent alignment from development partners as well as whole-of-society scrutiny on its actual impact. Other suggestions include offering flexibility on how countries define their own development priorities, to reflect the diversity of country approaches to development planning; and to include a dimension on countries’ own statistical and M&E capacities, as a measure not only of the country’s capacities to track progress towards country-set targets, but as a control to the country’s capacity to autonomously oversee and verify the impact of development partners’ programmes and projects.

- On **usefulness**, advice suggested that a revised indicator that more fully capture the country’s institutional capacities for strategic planning and monitoring would provide critical information on the country’s relative leverage in defining its own development priorities vis-a-vis the influence and policy priorities of external stakeholders – encouraging further revisions in that direction.

Source: GPEDC, 2016c: 3-11.

The original methodology for indicator 1b was rolled out in 81 countries during 2015-2016. Two key lessons stand out in reviewing the performance of indicator 1b in practice:

- Reliance on an open-ended self-assessment question did not provide consistent, comparable information on countries’ arrangements for development planning. A lesson learned from the past round is that, in general, disparities in capacities across participating countries are highly correlated
with the response quality (GPEDC, 2017c; GPEDC, 2017d). For this indicator as well, available in-country capacities and resources to carry out the monitoring exercise were critical in defining whether the response behaviour was optimizing, i.e. comprehensive and reliable, or satisficing, i.e. short imprecise statements that only partially covered the substance of the open-ended guided question (Krosnick, 2018).

b) By limiting the methodology to identify, i.e. ticking boxes, whether a list of typical strategic planning documents were in place, the indicator failed to provide any information on the relevance, quality or actual use of these documents as a reference point in defining the country’s development priorities. The team had to carry out a complementary analysis of each planning document to assess whether those contained at least a narrow set of characteristics (i.e. development priorities, targets and indicators) that provide a minimal definition of a country results framework (OECD-UNDP, 2016: 28, 44-47).

The Nairobi Outcome document also develops the Busan commitment in more sophisticated ways. First, countries committed to ‘develop or strengthen effective, inclusive, nationally-owned development strategies to implement the 2030 Agenda; and planning and budgeting systems and processes, considering our commitment to develop ambitious responses to the SDGs’ (GPEDC, 2016a: 11). The selection of adjectives suggest that a renewed look to indicator 1b should consider (a) the characteristics of nationally-owned development strategies, i.e. effectiveness and inclusiveness; (b) consider the extent of linkages with the SDGs, and (c) reflecting whether there is planning-budgeting coherence.

Second, a cross-cutting commitment across the document calls for enhancing the role of the parliament, civil society, the private sector and local governments in working with the government to define national priorities and nationally-owned development strategies. Lastly, in line with the focus on results principle, countries committed to adapt their national results frameworks to strengthen linkages with national priorities and SDG-related targets and indicators, enhancing the quality of these results frameworks, improving national monitoring and evaluation systems to support follow-up, and provide appropriate data disaggregation to drive performance, improve development outcomes, facilitate multi-stakeholder participation and ensure no-one is left behind (GPEDC, 2016a: 14).

Lastly, building on the above, the team carried out a technical consultation with experts on results from partner countries and development agencies in December 2017 (GPEDC, 2017b). Among the proposed directions to refine the indicator, the team suggested to look both at the existence and quality of national results frameworks, articulation, current political buy-in, associated monitoring and evaluation arrangements, and actionability of these planning tools –including some limited look at the linkages between planning and budget. The team also suggested identifying the progressive uptake of the SDGs by countries, as part of their national results framework(s) and/or development priorities.

The experts agreed that the proposed evolution of the indicator was positive. Some key suggestions include (a) focusing mostly on critical building blocks, given the complexity of countries’ institutional architecture for national and sector planning;³ (b) finding a balance to design a survey instrument that minimises the burden on the respondent and maximises the accuracy and usefulness of the response; and (c) focusing on behaviour as an indication of quality, i.e. a country results framework might be considered of higher quality if this is

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³ Among the suggested building blocks, experts mentioned (1) inconsistencies between national planning and sector or local planning; (2) information gaps; (3) moving beyond planning considerations and into monitoring and evaluation capacities; (4) linkages between planning and budgeting.
actually used by the government as a reference point in designing policies and in organizing the country-level dialogue and development co-operation efforts.

5. Refinement proposal

The revised methodology for indicator 1b addresses these issues and takes on board the suggestions from the four sources of technical guidance summarised above. The indicator is designed to capture all the key building blocks that are necessary for an effective, inclusive, transparent, country-led results framework.

The questionnaire has been designed to minimise the burden on the government’s national co-ordinator, with simple, closed-ended questions that identify specific building blocks which are required for. In defining those building blocks, to the extent possible the focus is on function rather than form, that’s it, whether the intended positive behaviour is happening instead of whether certain process or institutional structure has been adopted (Beckert, 2010).

6. Methodology

Assessment Criteria

Indicator 1b articulates a specific vision of what it means for a country to assume leadership and results focus of its development efforts. It does so by reviewing whether each of the building blocks across the policy cycle that reinforce country ownership and results focus are characterised by behaviours that enhance the quality, inclusiveness, transparency of the country’s strategic planning and results framework.

Thus, the indicator is structured around four (4) criteria or functions, each defined by 2-3 key elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>11 Sub-elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Setting transparent, country-led results frameworks</td>
<td>● Approved/Established&lt;br&gt;● Developed in an inclusive manner (whole-of-society)&lt;br&gt;● Transparent to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Prioritising development results</td>
<td>● Defines priorities, targets and indicators&lt;br&gt;● Plans to identify/identifies SDGs&lt;br&gt;● Informs sector and subnational priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Monitoring results at country level</td>
<td>● Monitored regularly and transparently&lt;br&gt;● Monitors whole-of-government progress&lt;br&gt;● Relies on government’s own systems and data to monitor progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Using the results information</td>
<td>● Uses the framework to inform budgeting&lt;br&gt;● Uses the framework to guide priorities in development co-operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to define the state of progress in strengthening countries’ national results frameworks, the government’s national co-ordinator will be invited to answer the 11-item qualitative questionnaire presented in the following page.

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4 The questionnaire is an adapted version of the Paris Declaration indicators 1 (operational development strategies) and 11 (results-oriented frameworks for policy-making), adapted to reflect the effectiveness commitments in the Busan Partnership Agreement (2011) and the Nairobi Outcome Document (2016).
**Scoring Method and Aggregation**

The 11 sub-elements described above define building blocks towards transparent, country-led strategic frameworks that strengthen country ownership, results-based decision-making and accountability.

At prima facie, although there is necessarily an implicit logical sequence in the way the sub-elements emerge as part of governments’ strategic planning (e.g. establishing a country-led results framework precedes any attempt to monitor progress), these sub-elements are equally important.

This allows for a simple scoring method for the indicator:

- First, it assigns one (1) point to each sub-element if fully met, or a prorated score, i.e. less than 1 point, if the element is only partially present or in development. If the sub-element is absent, the score is zero.
- Estimating the scoring for each of the 4 broad criteria is the result of averaging the individual scores for each element within that particular criterion.
- The overall score for the indicator is the results of averaging the scores for the 11 sub-elements.

To ease interpretation, scores are expressed as a percentage instead of as a number in the 0-1 continuum. As countries strengthen a specific function (one of the four criterion), or as countries strengthen and sustain all these 11 building blocks that compose the indicator, the score approaches 100 per cent.

The Busan target is improvement over time vis-à-vis the baseline situation. In practice, this involves enhancing the building blocks to achieve a nationally owned development planning framework that increases the likelihood of achieving locally-defined development outcomes.
ANNEX I. METHODOLOGY FOR INDICATOR 1b

1. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Criteria and scoring method

Indicator 1b articulates a specific vision of what it means for a country to assume leadership and results focus of its development efforts. Indicator 1b is assessed based on four (4) criteria, defined by related sub-elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>11 Sub-elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (1) Setting transparent, country-led results frameworks |   ● Approved/Established  
   ● Developed in an inclusive manner (whole-of-society)  
   ● Transparent to the public |
| (2) Prioritising development results |   ● Defines priorities, targets and indicators  
   ● Plans to identify/identifies SDGs  
   ● Informs sector and subnational priorities |
| (3) Monitoring results at country level |   ● Monitored regularly and transparently  
   ● Monitors whole-of-government progress  
   ● Relies on government’s own systems and data to monitor progress |
| (4) Using the results information |   ● Uses the framework to inform budgeting  
   ● Uses the framework to guide priorities in development co-operation |

In order to define the state of progress in strengthening countries’ national results frameworks, the government’s national co-ordinator will be invited to answer the 11-item qualitative questionnaire presented in the following page.5

Each of the 11 sub-elements represents a building block towards transparent, country-led strategic frameworks that could strengthen country ownership, results-based decision-making and accountability.

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5 The questionnaire is an adapted version of the Paris Declaration indicators 1 (operational development strategies) and 11 (results-oriented frameworks for policy-making), adapted to reflect the effectiveness commitments in the Busan Partnership Agreement (2011) and the Nairobi Outcome Document (2016).
2. **PROPOSED QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. **Setting a transparent, country-led results framework:**

   Q1. Is there national development strategy or government strategic plan? [Yes | No ]
   
   If Yes, what is the name? ______
   which period does it cover? 2__-2__
   
   If No, is there one under preparation?
   If Yes, what is the stage of its preparation? [options provided in drop-down menu]

   Q2. To what extent the following actors participated in developing the government strategy/plan?

   - Parliament:  □ No □ Consulted □ Enacted the plan with a vote
   - Civil society: □ No □ Consulted □ Participatory process
   - Private sector: □ No □ Consulted □ Participatory process
   - Subnational governments: □ No □ Consulted □ Participatory process
   - Development Partners: □ No □ Consulted □ Participatory process

   Q3. Is the strategy/plan publically available online?

   If yes, please include web link: [Type here]

2. **Prioritising development results:**

   Q4. Does the national development strategy or government strategic plan define development priorities, targets and associated indicators?

   □ Development priorities □ Targets □ Indicators

   If targets and/or indicators are missing, can these be found in sector strategies and plans instead? [Yes | No]

   Q5. How are the 2030 Agenda and SDGs incorporated or referenced in the development strategy or government plan? [Multiple answers among the following options]

   □ The 2030 Agenda/SDGs are referenced at strategic level [in the narrative]
   □ SDGs are referenced at goal level [in the narrative or result framework]
   □ SDGs are referenced at target level [in the result framework]
   □ SDGs are referenced at indicator level [in the results framework]
   □ There is no reference to the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in the current strategy or government plan
   □ There is no reference to the SDGs as the strategy or government plan was approved before September 2015.
If No, is there an ongoing process to incorporate SDG targets in the country’s strategic plans? [Yes | No]

**Q6.** To what extent are sector and sub-national strategies, if they exist, linked to the national development strategy (e.g. timing and sequencing, consistency of their objectives, institutional responsibilities)?

- Most sector and sub-national strategies are required to align to the national development strategy or government plan, by law and in practice.
- Although there is no law, in practice central authorities (e.g. planning, finance, development ministry) oversee that new sector and sub-national strategies align to the national development strategy or government plan.
- Although there is no law or central authority enforcing alignment, sector and sub-national strategies tend to reflect at least core priorities in the national development strategy or government plan.
- Only some sector and sub-national strategies are aligned with the national development strategy or government plan.
- Sector and sub-national strategies are in general not aligned with the national development strategy or government plan.

**3. Monitoring results at country level:**

**Q7.** Is (Are) there a progress report(s) of the national development strategy or government strategic plan?

If Yes, how often are they formulated? [options provided in drop-down menu]

Is the most recent report publicly available? [Type web link here]

**Q8.** How is the progress against the national development strategy or government plan reported?

- A central unit collates all the data from different sources and produces a unified progress report.
- Several line ministries and entities are responsible for collating the data, and a central unit produces a unified progress report.
- Several line ministries and entities are responsible for collating the data and producing sector or thematic progress report(s).
- Responsibilities for data collection are fragmented across the government, and only some entities have produced progress report(s).
- No progress reports have been produced yet by government entities.
Q9. To what extent do the national M&E system and statistics meet the demands for data to track the input, output and outcome indicators identified in the national development strategy or government plan?

☐ Timely, regular, accurate government data is available to all the indicators
☐ Timely, regular, accurate government data is available for most indicators
☐ The availability of government data to track the indicators is mixed – only some indicators have timely, regular, accurate government data available to track progress.
☐ At present, very few indicators can be tracked relying on the national M&E system and statistics.
☐ There are no indicators in the national development strategy or government plan.

4. Using the results information:

Q10. Does the national development strategy or government plan include an indicative budget or costing information?

If Yes, is that information used to inform the annual budget and the medium-term fiscal or expenditure framework (if these exist)?

Q11. Do the government use the national strategy/plan (or its progress reports) to inform the dialogue with development partners on priority areas and results for development co-operation? [Dropdown menu]

3. Scoring method

The scoring method is simple:

- First, it assigns one (1) point to each sub-element if fully met or a prorated score if elements are missing.
- Scoring for each of the 4 broad criteria is the result of averaging the individual scores for each element, expressed as a percentage. As countries strengthen the specific function, the score approaches 100.
- The overall score for the indicator is the results of averaging the scores for the 11 sub-elements, expressed as a percentage. As countries strengthen and sustain these building blocks, the indicator approaches 100 percent.
4. Definitions

National Development Strategies
In this context, National development strategies include Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs) and/or similar overarching strategies. These are typically prepared to cover a clearly identified period of time covering several years.

Progress Report of the National Development Strategies
Such report(s) are typically published once or more during the implementation of the national development strategy, and will provide a comprehensive overview of progress drawing on relevant evidence.

Medium-Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF)
A framework that defines the overall medium term (typically 3-5 years) fiscal aggregates including revenue, expenditure and deficit/surplus that a country has available in the medium term consistent with a macro-economic framework.

Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)
A framework that combines coherently a medium term (typically 3-5 years) fiscal framework, medium term sector strategies for key sectors of the economy and medium term indicative expenditure plans/ceilings for each sector.
REFERENCES


