

Enhanced Effectiveness at Country Level Pilot Conclusion Workshop Report

Key Messages for the Senior Level Meeting

The purpose of the *Conclusion Workshop* was to present and discuss the activities undertaken, challenges faced and successes achieved during the implementation period in nine pilot countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, El Salvador, Georgia, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Rwanda, and Uganda). The presentation and discussion of the country pilots was organised under four themes:

- Institutional arrangements for effective development cooperation
- Strengthening the multi-stakeholder nature of development cooperation
- Increasing the transparency of information on development cooperation
- Understanding and managing diverse finance flows.

The following messages for the SLM on key issues and priorities on the ground are a core output from the workshop and include suggestions for further country-level support in the next work programme of the global partnership.

- In too many situations, structures and systems to promote development effectiveness are established, but do not perform as they should. **There is a need to focus on where we have “form not function”**. For example, national level forums that do not have enough time to discuss strategic issues and are not connected to and informed by policy dialogue mechanisms at sector level, aid information management systems that are not reported to or are not made use of for planning and analysis, policy dialogue structures that do not include all relevant actors, or cooperation policies that are not monitored and do not influence development partners or lead to behaviour change on the ground.

Each component of the development effectiveness architecture must have a clearly defined purpose and function – and needs to be assessed and adjusted to guarantee that it is fit for that purpose. Otherwise, we risk undermining the legitimacy of development effectiveness agenda and encouraging fatigue by requiring people to participate in systems and structures that do not perform.

- **Well-structured and interlinked coordination mechanisms** are key to delivering results. Multiple overlapping coordination fora, information systems, and accountability frameworks are a recipe for failure as are structures and systems, which do not directly connect with national planning and budgeting processes at sectoral, national and local levels. Case studies demonstrate that, in those cases where a national policy and planning ministry manages development cooperation and where an adequate number of sector working groups (based on appropriate sector definitions) define sectoral priorities and feed into national policy debates, the efficiency of the system increases significantly. Ensuring that coordination mechanisms have the opportunity to focus in on specific development challenges and priorities is also important to obtain practical outcomes.

- **Inclusivity** remains a key challenge. One important aspect is the difficulty in managing numbers while ensuring fairness to all stakeholder groups. In almost all pilot studies, the *how* of ensuring representative, fair, and manageable civil society participation was flagged as an issue. The usefulness of representative structures with nominated delegates that report back to their constituencies was highlighted by several country pilots. It was noted that civil society also needs resources for coordination and that there is an opportunity for development partners to step in, though careful to ensure transparency and independence of the organisations supported.

Development partners can contribute by adopting inclusive processes in their own programming processes and, by bringing government and non-government stakeholders together and demonstrating the practicality and benefits of such processes, helping normalise and establish consultation practices that can be taken up by governments. On a different level, in many partner countries the coordination architecture does not include non-OECD DAC development partners. Establishing inclusive dialogue mechanisms with all development partners, including southern providers and new cooperation modalities, remains an important task for the future.

- Partner countries are well aware of the need to access **new sources of finance**. An increasing number of countries has carried out Development Finance Assessments. More widespread knowledge and greater transparency are needed on what instruments are available, how to tap into new sources of financing and on the risks that need to be managed. Ensuring that new sources of finance align with national priorities will necessitate moving from passive to active sourcing of financing and regularly monitoring what is available. This will require central leadership and the building of sector-level capacity to identify priorities and actively source and access new forms of financing.
- To increase **ownership in practice**, partner countries need to specify more precisely where development partners should provide support rather than allowing them to select items from the respective national development strategies according to the development partners' strategies. Good practice cases for improving the alignment of external support with national priorities include the use of gap analysis tools and the publication of annual development cooperation reports, specifying where external support is currently targeted and where it is needed to meet the priorities of the national plan, and active coordination of division of labour among development partners.
- **Transparency and quality data** are essential to understand where cooperation flows are targeted, to tackle gaps and unmet development needs and to monitor results and promote accountability. Home-grown aid management information systems in partner countries, that are adapted to local realities and designed to address identified data needs at the country level, seem to have the potential to offer useful lessons. Meanwhile, as with coordination structures, there is a need to include new providers of support if systems are to remain relevant.

Although the number of organizations providing standardized open data (IATI) is growing, a lack of easily accessible interfaces, timely or comprehensive data input, internet connections/ technical issues is perceived to prevent these data from being used at country level. The provision of timely and comprehensive data by development partners to national databases remains problematic. Establishing **incentives for providing quality data** can help to improve performance. Regular publication of the reported data and rating or ranking providers has proven effective in this regard. Including a reporting requirement in development cooperation agreements and monitoring performance in reviews can also

be a useful approach. This is part of changing the culture of development cooperation to becoming more accountable and results-oriented with partner countries truly in the driving seat.

- Country case studies demonstrate that imaginative but relatively small **tweaks** to the existing processes can produce relatively significant improvements and also **provide momentum to tackle more complex issues**. Successful examples of such quick fixes include putting information in the public sphere as in the cases of aid data reporting and gap analyses mentioned above. This could also include the public assessment and ranking of development partners' performance. Formally establishing responsibilities and who-does-what in agreements signed with development partners, Making reporting and engagement in coordination mechanisms mandatory can be effective – especially where good practices may lapse with changes in personnel on government or partner side. Similarly, introducing a requirement and guidance for consultation processes into national planning regulations can provide the incentive for stakeholder engagement at different levels of policy-making and planning.
- **Future work at country level** should be of **longer duration** given the time required to implement change and see the benefits. It should be more **directly connected to SDG impact** and focus on specific SDG challenges at national and sectoral level.

A more structured approach should be used to improve the representativity of country-level activities and ensure a demand-orientated support based on national ownership, which should also increase relevance to the country context.

Specific, **peer-proven examples** are in demand for practical actions on effectiveness at country level. There is need for an improved exchange on best practices and reliable platforms for peer-learning.