

REPORTS BACK TO PLENARY ON BREAK-OUT SESSIONS 1 AND 2

GROUP 1 OWNERSHIP & ALIGNMENT

Policy Alignment and Programme-Based Approaches

Common understanding

- Country leadership, providing an enabling environment for bottom-up formulation of national priorities, involving engagement of stakeholders
- Ownership is wider than national government – it encompasses other stakeholders, CSOs, parliamentarians etc.

What has worked

- Cross-party political support for development priorities strengthens dialogue with donors
- Avoid proliferation of donor groups and mission creep, which undermines ownership

Lessons

- Lack of agreement on approaches among co-financing donors causes delays
- Government must be allowed the space to determine the pace of implementation

Gaps

- Lack of capacity weakens ownership. Capacity development takes time. TA provided in ways that respect ownership can strengthen capacity
- Harmonisation may be a second-best option to alignment. How to overcome obstacles to stronger alignment?

Moving forward

- Invest in strengthening governance at all levels (central to local)
- Respect and support local capacity

Systems Alignment

Common understanding

- Gradual improvement through working with national systems to build on achievements of domestic reforms.
- Alignment with national development strategies. Does this also include sub-national strategies? Impact of decentralisation on alignment.
- Hand-in-hand capacity development
- Donor vs. country interpretation. Alignment agenda emerges through dialogue.
- Obligation to strengthen country systems by using them. Bypassing country systems does not strengthen them.
- Long-term commitment

- Includes alignment with national policies as well as national systems

What has worked

- Strengthening country systems by using them
- Use of national competitive bidding
- More success on policy alignment than systems alignment
- Use of 'equivalent standards' that are set too high are counterproductive

Lessons

- Innovative approaches and instruments to strengthen systems while using them
- Increase national competitive bidding

Are all aspects being addressed?

- No
- There are expectation gaps between donors and partner countries, and among donors
- Incompatible and inflexible regulatory requirements by donors
- We need more progress on untying of aid. Tied aid diminished the quality of aid.
- System requirements in sectoral programmes need to be consistent with national reform efforts

GROUP 2 HARMONISATION

Donor Harmonisation Initiatives

Common understanding

- Relates to the objective: to make aid more effective in achieving development results, and to lower transaction costs
- In practice, joint undertaking of actions by donors, including analysis, pooled funding and joint programming.
- Internal coordination should not be confused with harmonization
- Rules are not always clear. Some coordination efforts not open to government and civil society.
- Uncertainties on how to bring together donors at different levels.
- Link between harmonization and alignment not clear.

What has worked

- Joint analysis, joint strategies, reducing overlap by building on comparative advantage
- Harmonisation through PBAs and SWAps has led to benefits which could not have been achieved by single projects

Not worked so well

- Worked better in social sectors than in infrastructure
- Partner countries not sufficiently empowered to coordinate
- Aid insufficiently channelled through country systems
- Smaller donors can be difficult to coordinate
- Field level is sometimes not sufficient supported at field level
- Not all bilaterals are following Paris principles

Lessons

- Ownership and leadership at sectoral level can be stimulated through enhanced coordination, e.g. sectoral meetings chaired by govt
- Donors capacity to be self-critical and define comparative advantage facilitates coordination

Improvement

- Strong institutional commitments
- Right messages to staff, inc. at sectoral level
- Mitigate against effects of staff turnover
- Better accountability mechanisms between donors at sectoral level
- Planning cycles should be better aligned
- Political economy of reform and country context should be taken into account in design of reforms
- Common arrangements for monitoring of reforms at sectoral level
- Financial incentives offered to civil servants should be standardized

Gaps

- Timeliness and milestones for use of country systems
- Incentives and disincentives for both donors and partner countries need to be further examined.
- Fragile states: need more coordinated and predictable support. Harmonisation must be sustained despite political instability.

Harmonisation in Emergency Contexts

Common understanding

- Working together for common goals is also applicable to emergencies, but applies differently. Speedy intervention and good division of labour is key.

What has worked

- Speed
- Transparency
- MDF is an effective tool for donor harmonization, but 90% of funds were going through other modalities. Therefore need a stronger coordination between different modalities.
- Common reporting systems is a good tool for harmonisation
- Lack of delegation of authority within donors is a constraint

Lessons

- Relief and reconstruction are different phases, and require different coordination approaches
- In emergency relief, division of labour more important than pooled funding, while pooled funding is important in the reconstruction phase
- Sharing information and databases among donor stakeholders is key
- Single needs assessments facilitate harmonization
- Resources for emergency relief are abundant when public interest is high. Need more long-term planning and management of resources.

GROUP 3 MANAGING FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS & MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Improving Performance Assessment Frameworks

What are the results

- Importance of localization
- Quality and relevance of results information
- Output to outcome information is very important
- The importance of utilizing and improving existing data systems
- Competitive assessment, if necessary, to give results larger social relevance

How do results influence management?

- What drives behavioural change? Need to develop appropriate incentives.
- Programme-based approaches: are they a solution? Potentially, but not automatic. Need to look beyond modalities/formats, to get at motivations.
- Learning from the community of practice
- Third Hanoi Roundtable approaching. If it is a supply driven event, it will not meet its purpose. How can we make a supply-driven event?

Who are the managers? Unbundling the management challenge

- Programme/project level
- How does this feedback into the budgetary process?
- Promoting results-orientation in central government is important
- Need to unbundled the users of the information

Mutual Accountability

Common understanding

- Not just between government and donors, but also including people
- Also between donors
- Complex issue. Not much action on ground. E.g. govts request greater predictability of aid, or less TA, are not always listened to by donors
- Accountability is an opportunity to shift power, because partner governments often lack capacity to lead, and there are political sensitivities, especially for aid dependent countries
- Shared responsibility is very important, but not all partners are willing
- Mechanisms for mutual accountability are lacking

What has worked

- Development of monitoring frameworks, with localized plans and key performance indicators
- Disclosure of ODA information
- Surveys and monitoring exercises, including independent evaluation
- Mutual accountability depends on strong government ownership, including at sectoral and sub-national level.

Not working

- Lack of delegation by donors to country office, and lack of support from HQs
- Lack of transparency from donors, information sharing

- Lack of engagement from both sides. They have signed up, but don't necessarily respect their commitments.

All aspects addressed?

- Need to broaden participation, bringing the concerned parties, citizens, civil society into the mutual accountability framework
- Behaviour on both sides needs to change. Identify incentives and disincentives
- Capacity development is key. Governments need to be able to implement their own policies, if they are to call government to account. Capacity development is needed all the way through the system, including sub-national government and civil society.

GROUP 4 LINKING EVALUATION AND POLICY

Strengthening Evaluation Functions

How to strengthen evaluation functions for MfDR?

- Need performance-oriented evaluation culture, in and outside the public sector
- On-going evaluations are critical for informing management decisions
- Focus efforts where gains are highest
- Link between accountability and performance management functions – policy makers not always comfortable with hearing bad news

Challenges and overcoming them

- Requires sustained effort. Capacity development is underway. This includes policy commitments, legal systems, institutional arrangement, skills development, information.
- Packaging of information can help to raise demand
- Need to link evaluation and policy is widely recognized, and methods are known. But need to strengthen the capacity of policy makers to make use of them.
- DAC survey on issues on evaluation capacity development is useful
- Evaluation-oriented culture requires pressures for accountability, plus appropriate incentive systems. Accountability also depends on resources from parliament, civil society etc.
- Not enough resources available for capacity development.
- Institutionalisation of capacity development is key, so partner countries must take the leadership on capacity development.
- Specifying training areas on ECD, depending on donor comparative advantage
- How should donors collaborate: joint assessments of evaluation capacity

Capacity enhancement

- Evaluation societies in country should be strengthened
- Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association is welcomed.
- Support for the existing community of practices – need forum for sharing experience.

Formative Evaluation of the Paris Declaration

- Overarching issue covering all areas of Paris Dec.
- Valuable opportunity for partners to collaborate on promoting cross-country and cross-sectoral evaluation.

- Coordinating evaluation: should focus on lesson learning, not on the worth of the programme.
- Donors tend to focus on their own sectors of operation, rather than the national development agenda. Evaluation should therefore not be donor-driven
- Should take into account each country's perspective. TORs should be developed at country level.
- Reducing transaction costs on Paris implementation
- Propose a global reference group to endorse a global evaluation framework, and manage and coordinate evaluation efforts.
- Evaluation capacity development needs to be kept in mind.
- Vietnam: localizing of PD is contributing to strong govt ownership and capacity development.