

AGENCY-SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

EVALUATION OF UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION ■ 12 JULY, 2007

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. The Paris Declaration stresses that effective partnerships among development partners and recipient countries are based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies and plans. With this framework, sound policies, good governance and effective mechanisms are necessary at all levels to ensure that development assistance produces development results.

While the Paris Declaration has a strong focus on monitoring, it also highlights the importance of exploring cross-country evaluation processes. The Declaration states that the evaluation should provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development results and that it should be applied without imposing additional burden on partners. Progress towards aid effectiveness will require political and conceptual agreement on approaches to measuring and understanding both the quantity and the quality of development assistance.

The evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration will be undertaken by development partners and partner countries

using a two-phased approach between 2007 and 2010. The first phase will be a **formative** evaluation concentrated on inputs, the implementation process, and to the extent possible, on outputs. The second phase will be a **summative** evaluation focusing on the results of implementation, to the extent possible, at the outcome level.¹ The results of the formative evaluation will be a contribution towards the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra, Ghana in 2008.

Ten countries and 10 development partner agencies have volunteered to conduct an evaluation of their performance. They will use a common framework terms of reference, adapting it to their specific requirements. The countries are Bangladesh, Bolivia, Mali, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia. The development partners are Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and UNDP.

UNDP, as one of the 10 development partners, will conduct a joint evaluation together with UNAIDS, UNECA, IFAD and UNIFEM on UN support to new aid modalities, looking both at the performance at headquarters in bringing its procedures and incentive systems in line with the Paris Declaration and at the

¹ Inputs, outputs, and outcomes are defined in the Framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration, 25 April 2007. See Annex 1: An Indicative Outline for an evaluation framework for the Paris Declaration.

country level in supporting partner country capacity. It will conduct the independent evaluation according to the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN System.

The engagement of United Nations in supporting the implementation of the Paris Declaration at the country level was implemented under the UN Resident Coordinator System. The evaluation will shed some light on the challenges and opportunities of the role of UN organizations in fostering the aid effectiveness agenda as the UN reform process continues towards ‘Delivering as One’.

These Terms of Reference for the evaluation of UN contribution to the implementation of the Paris Declaration are based on the ‘Guidance for Management of Development Partner Evaluations’ developed by partner countries and development partners participating in the joint evaluation.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to provide critical guidance to improve UN contribution to the implementation of the Paris Declaration based on an assessment of lessons learned in terms of what practices have worked and not worked. The emphasis will be on learning and providing recommendations to strengthen national ownership, harmonization of aid efforts, alignment to national development strategies, managing for results, and mutual accountability.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess UN initiatives in support of the implementation of the Paris Declaration; identify where the UN comparative advantage has been proven; identify gaps; and provide recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of current

approaches to aid modalities and aid effectiveness and their implications for long-term development.

- To assess how United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) have used partnerships at local, national and international levels and positioned themselves vis-à-vis other actors to bring greater coherence and relevance to their initiatives related to aid effectiveness.
- To provide substantive insights on how to ensure that lessons learned from initiatives and strategies implemented by UN organizations at corporate and country levels can be institutionalized within the organizations through systematic monitoring and evaluation, adapted and made more relevant to country needs.

3. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will focus on the following explanatory dimensions that have been identified as contributors to development partner behaviour:

- Commitment:** The Paris Declaration calls for a radical new way of delivering aid. Country strategies are no longer to be formulated by individual development partners. Instead, with the emphasis on partner ownership, development partners’ cooperation strategies are to be guided by partner governments’ needs-based demands in an aligned and harmonized manner.
- Capacities:** Also within UN offices, whether at headquarters or at field level, uneven commitment to Paris Declaration roll-out may be found as well as uneven capacities between different staff employed by the same development partner. Indeed, a single UNCT might represent very different approaches to aid effectiveness. As a consequence, development partners and national

coordinators alike have called for more effective communication on Paris Declaration issues between headquarter policy advisers and operation staff.

- c. **Incentive Systems:** Development partners incentive systems have been reported as a critical parameter for efficient development partner behaviour. The baseline survey suggests that a number of obstacles work against development partners' ability to meet the commitments made in Paris. These include, amongst other things, inappropriate pressures for disbursements, lack of flexibility on staff time, and high staff turnover, which taken together create incentives that reward short-term benefits over longer term and collective gains.

Promoting gender equality is essential to the achievement of the mandates of all UN organizations participating in the joint evaluation. Hence, the evaluation will assess the gender dimension of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, including the following:

- UN initiatives to support partner countries in improving the countries' key processes, systems and capacities to incorporate gender equality in the countries' national development strategies, programmes, and managing for results and accountability frameworks.
- The extent to which UN organizations have improved their own processes, systems and capacities to adequately reflect the gender perspective, for example, in their programming, operational and reporting requirements to support partner countries more effectively in implementing their commitments to the Paris Declaration.

The evaluation will assess the following specific aspects:

- Emerging trends in new aid modalities and, to the extent possible, what has been the

UN contribution to the implementation of the Paris Declaration, specifically in relation to promoting country ownership, alignment of donors' support to country strategies, harmonization of donors' actions, managing for results and mutual accountability.

- Key characteristics of UN collaboration, highlighting how development approaches have been implemented and have showed results.
- Good practices and operational arrangements in place in UN organization headquarters and field offices for an effective coordination and implementation of the Declaration.

4. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation will be particularly interested in examples of (potential) successes in, and obstacles to, the implementation of the Paris Declaration; how the obstacles have been overcome; and with what results. Hence, the outlined evaluation questions below shall be taken as explorative starting points for the assessments and will be further refined to incorporate specific dimensions concerning gender equality, HIV/AIDS, rural development and capacity building.

ASSESSING COMMITMENT

- How has the Paris Declaration's emphasis on demand-driven development cooperation been reflected in UN development policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures? Has the implementation of the Paris Declaration affected priority setting for UN development cooperation? Have there been key changes in UN policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Declaration? What are the main drivers of these changes?
- How is UN commitment to the Paris Declaration demonstrated at the level of

agency headquarters? Has the role of UN headquarters/field offices been adapted to the aid effectiveness agenda? If not, why not?

- Is UNDG fulfilling its Paris Declaration commitments? If there are concerns, what are the reasons for these? Are the concerns linked to the relevance and coherence of the PD commitments and indicators? Are there ways in which these might be overcome?

ASSESSING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- What is the level of staff knowledge and understanding about aid effectiveness and its operational implications, particularly in the field?
- Have specific instructions, guidelines, operational directives been developed and disseminated to staff to facilitate implementation and assessment of the Paris Declaration implementation plan?
- How is delegated authority within UN organizations structured, and why? Are the UN organizations sufficiently decentralized (staff, resources, delegation of authority) to address field-based aid management in line with the Paris Declaration? Does UNDP coordinate sufficiently with other UN agencies, funds and programmes for the implementation of commitments to the Paris Declaration?

Assessing incentive systems

- Are there specific incentives provided by UN organizations—e.g. for recruitment, performance assessment and training—for their management and staff to comply with the Paris Declaration objectives of ownership, harmonization, alignment and results orientation?
- Are there any perceived disincentives, in respect of other UN priorities?

ASSESSING UN CONTRIBUTION, POSITIONING AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION

- How has the United Nations supported partner countries in exercising effective leadership over their development policies and strategies?
- How has the United Nations aligned its support to partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and processes?
- How has the United Nations supported strengthening of capacities of partner countries to implement their commitments to the Paris Declaration, particularly with respect to policy making, public finance management, national procurement systems, managing for results and accountability frameworks?
- How has the United Nations contributed to reducing transaction costs for partner countries?

5. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Generally, the evaluation will be undertaken through extensive desk review, field visits to a sample of countries, interviews, and mining of data from the evaluations to be done by the 10 volunteering partner countries. The evaluation will draw from existing assessments of participating agencies that are relevant to this evaluation.

Following are the criteria for the selection of countries for the field visits and case studies: countries that signed the Paris Declaration; countries where UNCT plays a significant role in aid coordination; and countries in which the national government is interested in assessing UN contribution to the aid effectiveness agenda. Five countries have volunteered to participate: Cameroon, Gabon, Mauritania, Lao PDR, and Ukraine.

The selection of case studies conducted to substantiate the evaluation findings at

headquarter level is based on a process of auto-selection that does not enable the establishment of a proper sampling frame.

The evaluation methodology will be further specified and finalized as part of the inception stage of the evaluation.

6. STRUCTURE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The evaluation will be conducted in three stages:

- **Inception:** The contracted evaluation team will develop an inception report (30 pages maximum) including: a contextualized evaluation approach based on the outlined evaluation questions of the present Terms of Reference; a final sampling frame including the identification of relevant information sources; data collection methods and draft instruments (interview guide, questionnaires, etc.); a processes for institutional learning during the evaluation; and a detailed work plan and methodology.
- **Data collection and presentation of preliminary findings:** The drafting of the report will be facilitated by presenting first the preliminary findings of the evaluation (Power Point presentation) to key evaluation stakeholders at the field level and at headquarters, including the Management Group and Advisory Panel.
- **Report preparation:** The evaluation team will take into account feedback received in drafting the narrative report, adhering to the development-partner level evaluation report outline (to be developed). The evaluation report should not exceed 50 pages, including the executive summary. An external advisory panel will be organized to review the quality of the evaluation report. The Management Group and the advisory panel will review the draft report and their feedback will be considered by the evalua-

tion team in finalizing the report. Once the report is finalized, it will be presented to the Synthesis Team of the Joint Evaluation Management Group for its submission to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra in 2008.

7. EVALUATION TEAM AND COMPETENCIES REQUIRED

An independent evaluation team will undertake the evaluation. It will be headed by a Team leader, with three team members, including a research assistant. Collectively, the evaluation team should have the following qualifications:

- Advanced knowledge and experience in designing and undertaking complex evaluations involving multi-stakeholders, using process and participatory approaches
- Advanced knowledge and experience relating to aid effectiveness policies including that of the Paris Declaration
- Advanced knowledge and experience in managing for results, accountability frameworks and systems, and capacity development
- In-depth understanding of issues relating to gender equality and advanced knowledge and experience in gender analysis, including its application in evaluation methodology
- Experience relating to the work of the different UN organizations participating in the joint evaluation

In particular, the evaluation team leader should possess the following:

- At least 10 years of experience in undertaking evaluations
- Experience in leading evaluations of initiatives supported by multilateral organizations
- Excellent facilitation, writing and communication skills

The Team Leader will be responsible for the timely submission of the following deliverables:

- Evaluation design/methodology and work plan
- Power Point presentation on preliminary findings
- Draft report (50 pages maximum, including Executive Summary)
- Final report (50 pages maximum, including Executive Summary)

8. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

For this joint evaluation, a Management Group will be established composed of representatives of the evaluation offices of the participating UN organizations, namely, IFAD, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, and UNIFEM, It will be responsible for planning and managing the

evaluation to ensure the independence and high quality of the evaluation. Its tasks will include the finalization of the evaluation Terms of Reference, selection of the evaluation team, and review of the draft report. The Management Group will be chaired by UNDP.

UNDP Evaluation Office will then designate one of its staff as the Evaluation Task Manager. The Evaluation Task Manager will act as the interlocutor between the evaluation team and the Management Group to ensure a smooth process for the evaluation.

UNDP Evaluation Office will provide the funds to cover costs directly related to the evaluation. IFAD and UNAIDS will make financial contribution to share the costs. UNECA and UNIFEM will contribute in kind by making available the expertise of their staff through their participation in the Management Group.

UNDG MEMBERS

UNDG membership is 28, plus 5 observers

DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHRLLS	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries
SRSGCAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
	Director, Office of the Deputy Secretary General
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DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

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INTERVIEW GUIDES – QUESTIONNAIRES

1. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

These interviews will last between 45 minutes and one hour. Most will be conducted as individual interviews, but sometimes there could be two or three persons present. The flow of questions and answers is likely to vary significantly, and the responses should be compared to, and the questions developed, in light of the terms of reference for this evaluation.

1. Introduction: Presentation of the evaluation assignment, a note on the methodology and the work of the evaluation team.
2. The importance of context: What are the major factors in the environment that have influenced the strategic management of aid, national ownership of processes and the commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration?
3. What mechanisms have been put in place to implement the Paris Declaration? Names of these, mandates, participation, frequency of meetings.
4. Capacity-building initiatives: Document any that took place and the experiences of each.
5. Any specific studies or other initiatives to implement the Paris Declaration? Who took the initiative, how was it financed, when was it implemented and how can that experience be assessed?
6. Which are the most significant features of the changes implemented since 2005?

7. Are there any obstacles to further change? What needs to be done to move forward on the Paris Declaration?
8. Concluding remarks: Summing up the experience to date and the main lessons learned from the past two years.

2. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

These interviews will last between 45 minutes and one hour. Most will be conducted as individual interviews, but sometimes there could be two to four persons present. These interviews can be more structured than those in the first category.

1. Introduction: Presentation of the evaluation assignment, a note on the methodology and the work of the evaluation team.
2. The importance of context: What are the major factors in the environment that have influenced the strategic management of aid, the role of civil society organizations and the commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration?
3. How has the Paris Declaration influenced the dialogue between civil society, government and development partners as regards to management of development cooperation? Any new platforms for dialogue? If so, which ones? Experience of participation in these?

4. Capacity-building initiatives: Document any that took place and the experiences of each.
5. Any specific studies or other initiatives to implement the Paris Declaration? Who took the initiative, how was it financed, when was it implemented and how can that experience be assessed?
6. Which are the most significant features of the changes implemented since 2005?
7. Are there any obstacles to further change? What needs to be done to move forward on the Paris Declaration?
8. Concluding remarks: Summing up the experience to date and the main lessons learned from the past two years.

3. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

These interviews will last between 45 minutes and up to two hours. Most will be conducted as individual interviews, but some could also take the form of group interviews with the whole UN Country Team.

1. Introduction: Presentation of the evaluation assignment, a note on the methodology and the work of the evaluation team.
2. The importance of context: What are the major factors in the environment that have influenced the strategic management of aid, national ownership of processes and the commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration? How did the UN organizations work together in the past? How were development partners coordinated in the past? What are the main sectors of cooperation?
3. What mechanisms have been put in place to implement the Paris Declaration? Names of these, mandates, participation, frequency of meetings. What is the contribution of each actor? Where have strategic initiatives been formulated? What are the roles of different organizations and individuals?

4. Capacity-building initiatives: Document any that took place and the experiences of each. Any specific training programs, new recruitments, policies formulated, or manuals?
5. Any specific studies or other initiatives to implement the Paris Declaration? Who took the initiative, how was it financed, when was it implemented and how can that experience be assessed?
6. Which are the most significant features of the changes implemented since 2005?
7. Are there any obstacles to further change? What needs to be done to move forward on the Paris Declaration?
8. Concluding remarks: Summing up the experience to date and the main lessons learned from the past two years.

4. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH HEADQUARTERS

ASSESSING COMMITMENT

- How has the Paris Declaration's emphasis on demand-driven development cooperation been reflected in UN development policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures?
- Has the implementation of the Paris Declaration affected priority setting for UN development cooperation?
- Have there been key changes in UN policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Declaration?
- What are the main drivers of these changes?
- How is UN commitment to the Paris Declaration demonstrated at the level of agency headquarters? Has the role of UN headquarters/field offices been adapted to the aid effectiveness agenda? If not, why not?

ASSESSING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- Have specific instructions, guidelines, operational directives been developed and disseminated to staff to facilitate implementation and assessment of the Paris Declaration implementation plan?
- How is delegated authority within UN organizations structured, and why?
- Does UNDP as resident coordinator coordinate sufficiently at country level with other UN agencies, funds and programmes for the implementation of commitments to the Paris Declaration?

ASSESSING INCENTIVE SYSTEMS

- Are there specific incentives provided by UN organizations (e.g. for recruitment, performance assessment and training) for their management and staff to comply with the Paris Declaration objectives of ownership, harmonization, alignment and results orientation?

- Are there any perceived disincentives, in respect to other UN priorities?

ASSESSING UN CONTRIBUTION, POSITIONING AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION

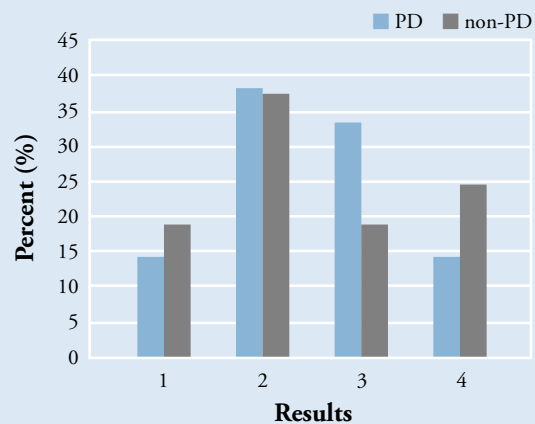
- How has the United Nations supported partner countries in exercising effective leadership over their development policies and strategies?
- How has the United Nations aligned its support to partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and processes?
- How has the United Nations supported strengthening of capacities of partner countries to implement their commitments to the Paris Declaration, particularly with respect to policy making, public finance management, national procurement systems, managing for results and accountability frameworks?
- How has the United Nations contributed to reducing transaction costs for partner countries?

SURVEY TO UN RESIDENT COORDINATORS FOR PARIS DECLARATION EVALUATION

- **Surveys sent out—119:** 61 to signatory countries and 58 to non-signatory countries
- **Surveys returned—41:** 22 from signatory countries and 19 from non-signatory countries
- **Response rate—34 percent overall:** 36 percent from signatory countries and 33 percent from non-signatory countries
- **Cross Tab Results** by signatory (PD) and non-signatory (non PD) countries: Survey asked the Resident Coordinators to respond in four categories, from very low (1) to very high (4).

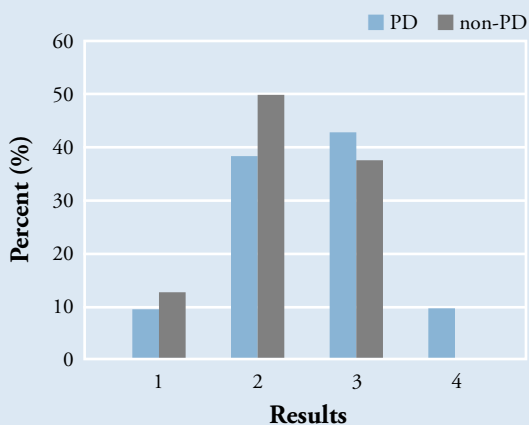
OWNERSHIP: NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Is there a clear national development strategy, monitored and linked to budget?



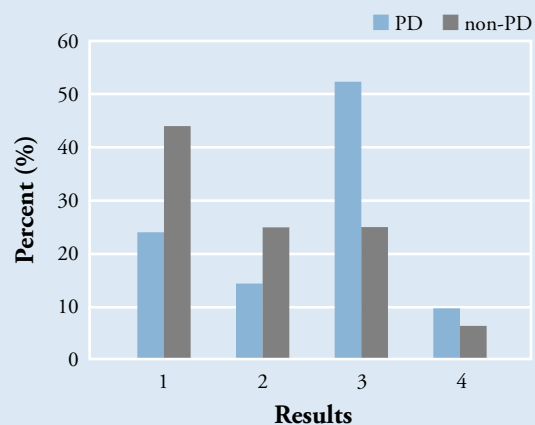
OWNERSHIP: SECTORAL STRATEGIES

Are there sector-level strategies monitored and linked to budget?



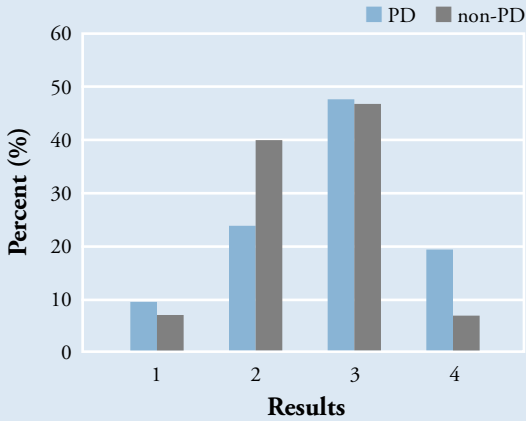
OWNERSHIP: CSO PARTICIPATION

Are strategies prepared in a participatory way including broad segments of civil society?



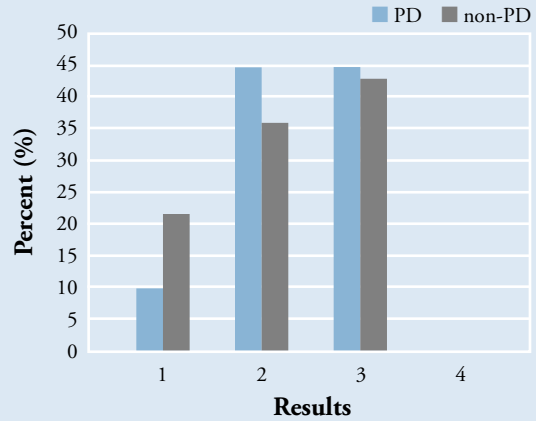
**ALIGNMENT: PARTNER
COUNTRY STRATEGIES**

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures: **a) Donors align with partner country strategies**



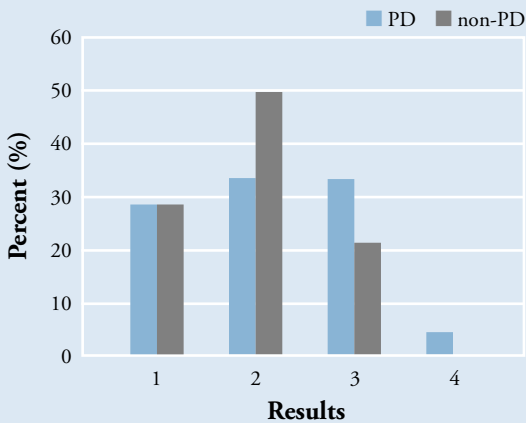
**ALIGNMENT: STRENGTHEN
COUNTRY SYSTEMS**

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures: **b) Partner countries strengthen development capacity with donor support**



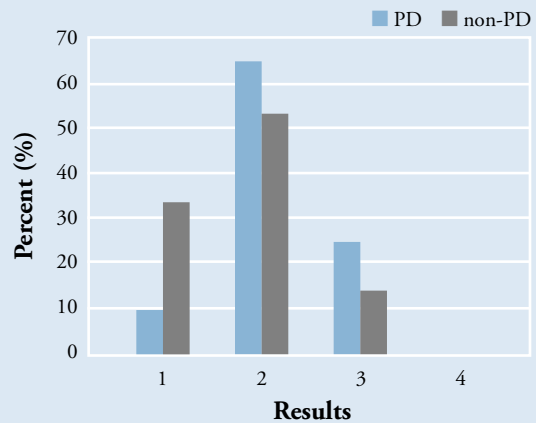
**ALIGNMENT: USE
COUNTRY SYSTEMS**

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures: **c) Donors use strengthened country systems**



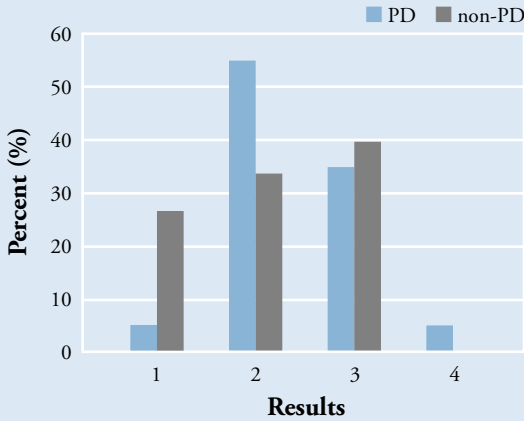
**HARMONIZATION:
SIMPLIFY PROCEDURES**

Donors actions are more harmonized, transparent and collectively effective: **a) Donors implement common arrangements and simplify procedures**



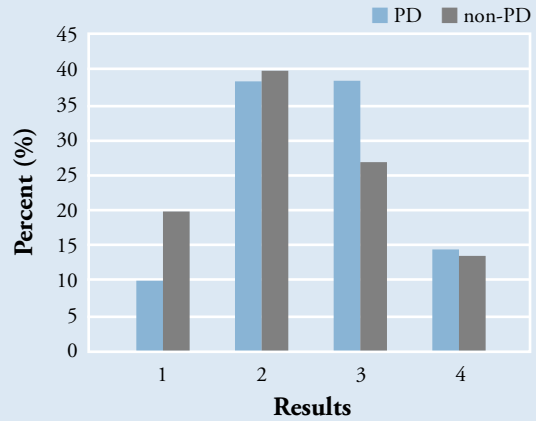
HARMONIZATION: COMPLEMENTARITY

Donors actions are more harmonized, transparent and collectively effective:
b) There is a more complementary division of labour



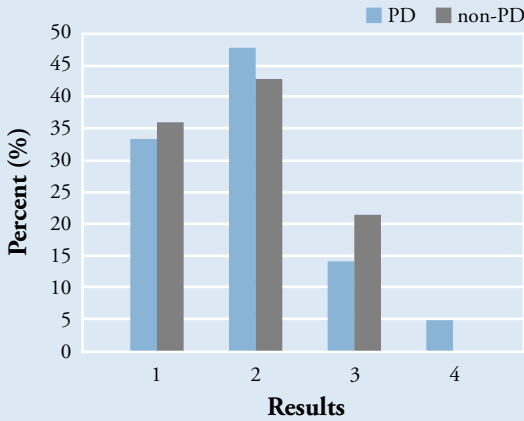
MANAGING FOR RESULTS: PROGRAMME

Managing resources and improving decision making for results:
a) Country programming and resources linked to a results framework



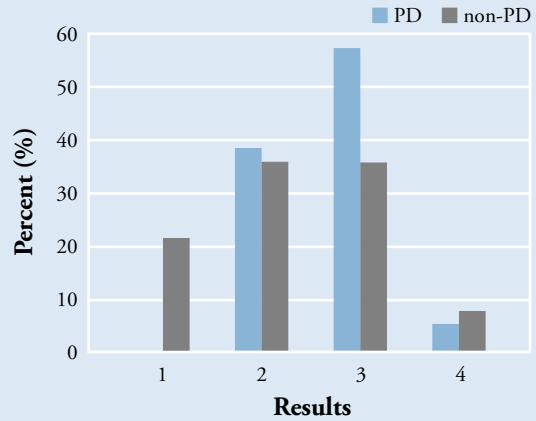
MANAGING FOR RESULTS: COUNTRY

Managing resources and improving decision making for results:
b) Donors rely on partner countries' results-oriented and monitoring frameworks



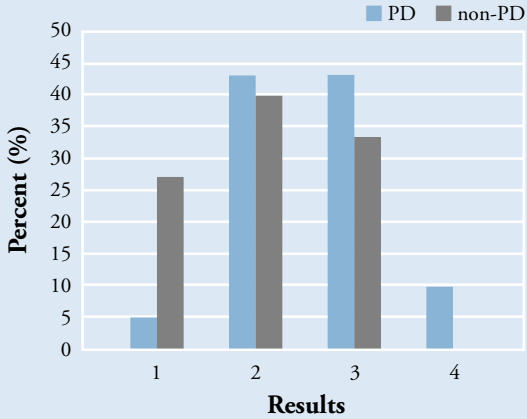
MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY: DONORS

Donors and partner countries are accountable for development results:
a) Donors provide timely transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows



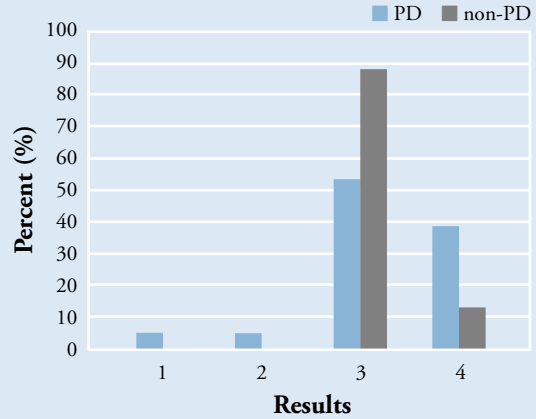
MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY: COUNTRIES

Managing resources and improving decision making for results: **b) Partner countries present comprehensive budgets and report to their legislatures and citizens**



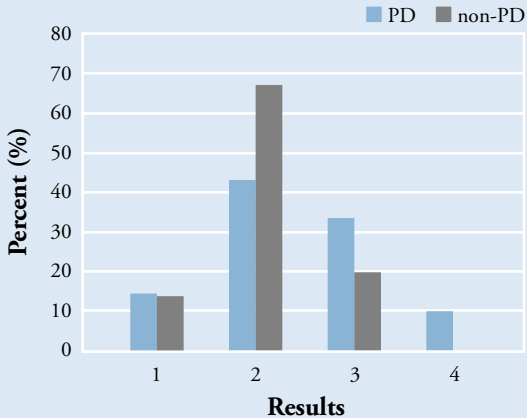
COMMITMENT

To which extent has the PD's emphasis on demand-driven development cooperation been reflected in UN development policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures?



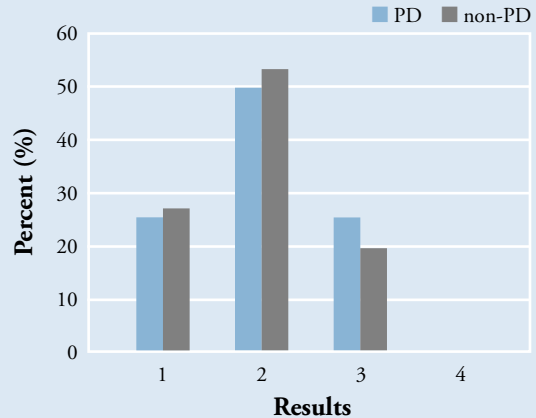
CAPACITIES

To which extent have specific instructions, guidelines, operational directives been developed and disseminated to staff to facilitate implementation and assessment of the PD?



INCENTIVES

To which extent are there specific incentives provided by UN agencies—e.g. for recruitment, performance assessment and training—for their management and staff to comply with the PD principles?



MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

ETHIOPIA

RC/UNCT activities were supported by: a strong government commitment to the PD; solid government ownership of an economic programme (the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty) focused on poverty alleviation, although it was prepared with consultation rather than civil society organization participation; and a large ODA programme coordinated through the Development Assistance Group (DAG), which was established prior to the PD. Post 2005, election disturbances weakened donor support though much of the direct budget support provided to the government was re-channelled under poverty-alleviation programmes to local governments. The RC in the role of co-chair of DAG (together with WB co-chair) played an important role during the post-2005 election period in maintaining donors' interest in aiding Ethiopia.

PROGRESS

- The RC/UNCT commitment to the PD principles, to the extent it existed before, was further accentuated from 2005 onward.
- The positive role played by RC in DAG improved the PD principle of strengthening predictability of aid flows, in advocating for maintaining aid flows level and poverty orientation of ODA.
- The capacity of the DAG Secretariat, located within UNDP, has been given continued attention though not always

meeting the expectations of bilateral donors. UNDP also has hosted an IFAD 'field presence' since 2006.

- The UNCT developed UNDAF 2007-2011 in full alignment with Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty; all UNCT members including WB signed UNDAF.
- The UNDP Country Programme Document is consistent with UNDAF and the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty. It was prepared in consultation with government and other stakeholders.
- Coordination between the UN organizations' programmes under the umbrella of the UNCT is viewed positively and has led to avoiding duplication and overlaps by participating agencies. Much of the coordination work is being carried out under specialized technical/working groups. A lead agency will take charge of a particular sector or issue even in the case where a UNDG member does not have local representation.

CONSTRAINTS

- The government, concerned about the transaction costs associated with ODA, took the initiative in 2005 for higher PD targets than in the Declaration itself. This was dragged out by donors because of the post-2005 election events. In 2007, the government proposed to the UNDG ExCom members in the UNCT a harmonized programme implementation manual. The

proposal is still under discussion among the agencies, which want to ensure compatibility of the proposed manual with their own institutional process requirements.

- Regarding incentives, the RC sees agencies continuing to place top priority on the carrying out of their respective programmes when it comes to personnel evaluation from headquarters.

LAO PDR

Laos is classified as a least developed country that is heavily dependent on ODA. It is a Single Party Socialist State. The government, together with development partners, has shown commitment to the PD through its 'domestication' in the form of the Vientiane Declaration that was signed by both the government and almost 30 development partners between 2006 and 2007 (with much assistance from UNDP). The government's development efforts are guided by clear national development strategic frameworks: National Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (NGES) 2004-2005 and National Socio Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2006-2010. In the context of implementing the PD, Laos has eight Sector Working Groups, four of which represent the priority development sectors: education and gender, agriculture, health and HIV/AIDS, and rural development and infrastructural development.

PROGRESS

- UNCT was very strong under the leadership of the RC. The following are some of the achievements:
- UNCT members played a key role in providing technical support to the formulation of the Vientiane Declaration

and the Country Action Plan, an operational plan for implementing the Vientiane Declaration. They served on task forces for crafting these key documents.

- UNDP provided leadership in organizing the Round Table Meetings (which also date to pre-Vientiane Declaration period). The round table process fosters partnership building and policy dialogue between government and development partners.
- The UNCT's UNDAF of 2007-2011 stays within the national priorities and incorporates Vientiane Declaration principles.
- The three ExCom Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF) have operationalized the first stages of HACT, thus providing strong leadership to other development partners to take harmonization efforts seriously. A locally adapted HACT training manual was developed.
- The UNCT has developed a Joint Sustainable Livelihood Programme involving all UNCT members, including agencies that are not resident in Laos. Within this programme, there is a clear division of labour based on the agencies comparative advantage.
- UNCT members are involved in pre-testing of WB-developed tools for capacity development in the four priority areas.
- UNDP, in partnership with the government Public Service Department, jointly conducted a survey on capacity development needs for the whole public service. The results are due for publication in early 2008.
- The National Execution Unit has played a key role in enhancing government staff capacity on programme management (rules, procedures, programme formulation, execution and M&E). This falls within the context of PD alignment.

CONSTRAINTS

- The government is concerned about having adequate resources to assume leadership of all working groups.
- There is concern among some development partners that the Round Table is not the right forum for coordination and negotiating. It is considered too large with too much 'reporting' characteristics.
- The UNCT reported slow feedback from UNDG headquarters on matters relating to HACT. The draft HACT manual has not received timely inputs to motivate the players at country level.
- The round table mechanism is viewed as lacking in creating a rich environment for analytical work.
- Knowledge of PD issues remains a privilege for senior UNCT staff and may have a negative impact on contribution of all UNCT staff to PD.

MAURITANIA

This country is in a fragile state. It emerged from 30 years of dictatorship in 2005, recently concluding the first-ever democratic election. The economy is on a promising upswing due to recent start of oil production, but expectations may have to be downscaled due to poorer-than-expected quality of oil. Although economic growth has been high in recent years of 6.9 percent and 11.7 percent in 2006, 50 percent of the 2.6 million population live below the poverty line. Mauritania has shown impressive results in its commitment to the PD in a short period of time (this is also influenced by a strong commitment towards reform and progress all levels in Mauritania), bearing in mind that the PD was launched while the country was engaged in a system transition process and needs to build its capacities at all

levels. Differing perceptions exist among development partners as to UN contribution, especially in regards to leadership. The United Nations has an important role to play, but it has to be spelled out and leadership demonstrated in areas where the United Nations has obvious comparative advantages.

PROGRESS

- The PD action plan has triggered ownership and internalization of the PD process. UNDP led advocacy to disseminate PD to national and international partners alike. The United Nations and WB worked closely together and early progress was triggered by the exceptionally good working relationship between the two institutions and individual leadership of the WB Director and RC. However exit of these two key figures demonstrated that the system of enhanced collaboration/coordination was largely born by individuals and not institutionalized enough to be carried on by successors unless they can demonstrate the same commitment and leadership.
- The United Nations supported a national survey, PD action plan, and coordinated support to the election process including the establishment of a 12 million USD multi-donor trust fund. Agreement to move on in instituting HACT, joint mission (60 percent)

CONSTRAINTS

- Some consider it a risk that UN efforts are inward looking, at the expense of external coordination efforts.
- The government is not part of an existing working group structure.
- There is concern among agencies about how reporting can show individual agency attribution.

- Clear identification of issues related to further harmonization has not been made (for example, what specific agency rules and procedures are hindrances).
- There is a lack of a government led coordination mechanism to assign roles of development partners based on their comparative advantages.
- UNCT's oversight/division of labour is lacking.
- At the sectoral/working group level, activities and sector components that may benefit from joint programming have not been identified.

GABON

Gabon, a country of 1.5 million people, of whom 80 percent live in urban settings, has for three decades been a middle-income country with oil as its key asset. The oil reserves are likely to diminish in the future and the country now faces the challenge of diversifying the economy. In the area of governance, accountability, transparency, control of corruption, participation and the existence of a fair legal and judicial system are weaknesses. Civil society is still weak and fragmented.

PROGRESS

- The UNCT/RC was the main driver in sensitizing the government to the importance of PD principles and their relevance for development efforts and aid effectiveness. These efforts were successful and led Gabon to sign the PD in March 2006. The significance of this achievement should be seen in the contextual background of the relatively modest importance of external aid in Gabon. The commitment on the part of the UNCT/RC to undertake this role was induced through headquarters' instructions and guidance and by commitment and leadership on the part of the RC and others.
- The RC office, as well as the UNCT, was instrumental in setting up a coordination structure for regular interaction among development partners. In addition to at least one meeting to convey and share the PD principles, a number of thematic working groups have been established, led and facilitated by agencies with 'natural' comparative advantages in respective sectors.
- The RC office acts as Secretariat for all the working groups and has a key role in convening meetings. The groups convene on a monthly, bi-monthly or tri-monthly basis. All groups have elaborated specific terms and mandates. This has stimulated commitment among development partners to align with government priorities. However, commitment was hampered by a lack of government ability to set priorities and assume genuine ownership of the reference strategies.

CONSTRAINTS

- The government was not part of the groups and saw the enhanced joint efforts among agencies as a 'fait accompli' and ganging up behind closed doors. These statements should be taken in the context of a slow start on the part of the government. The government also complained of a lack of resources to engage in the PD process. It requested further assistance to establish a PD road map and set priorities as well as financial support for the process.
- Coordination groups focus on the exchange of information and share insight into agency programmes, but they need to identify the specific measures needed to apply PD principles. This would include

identification and listing of issues both at the operational and the programme level. Once areas for enhanced harmonization are identified, joint assessments and joint monitoring and evaluation should be followed by identification of specific procedural and administrative issues or challenges to be addressed. These should be brought to the attention of headquarters if not feasible to solve at the country level.

- Lack of resources to engage and implement PD and enhanced coordination efforts are key constraints.
- A government owned and led PD action plan and road map needs to be established, accommodating the government's request for support to do this.

High commitment to the PD and relevant organizational structures were established, although the coordination structure should comprise government and civil society organizations. The PD is, to a large degree, driven by the United Nations with other development partners gradually coming on board and government only about to come on board. The process is time-consuming and many initiatives were put on hold or never developed due to lack of resources. This means that UNCT has been able to identify areas where PD capacity could be developed but has not been able to address those areas.

UKRAINE

Ukraine, a middle income country, is characterized by a volatile political environment, having had four different governments between 2004 and 2007. The country has a relatively small community of development partners. If country ownership is measured by a well developed national strategic development framework, Ukraine stands in a rather

weak position. There are numerous policy development frameworks, but there is not one clearly agreed-upon strategic framework to which development partners can align. Development partners choose policy frameworks that suit their agenda from the available ones. However, in the last few years (2005-2007), the government has worked towards creating an environment for government and development partners to work towards a common goal. The Ministry of Economy and its department responsible for coordination of development partners appear to have better appreciation of PD issues compared to line ministries, which are still struggling with leadership issues.

PROGRESS

- Through UNDP, UNCT played a significant role in enhancing the capacity of the government at the political level to assume ownership and leadership in development.
- Through the catalytic work of the Blue Ribbon Commission (which occurred prior to the PD), UNDP worked consistently on policy dialogue aimed at helping the government to assume leadership. One of the outcomes of this effort was the government Programme of Action of 2005.
- UNCT assisted the government in developing the Donor-Government Working Groups, a coordination mechanism through which development partners and the government can implement the principles of PD.
- There is clear division of labour among members of the UNCT, as they take leadership in different thematic areas in the Donor-Government Working Groups.
- UNCT's 2006 UNDAF indicated efforts made to align to the government Programme of Action 2005. The UNDAF is also aligned to the MDGs.

- UNAIDS, as member of the UNCT, has provided an environment for harmonization of key players in the HIV/AIDS field. UNAIDS is striving to operationalize the principles of the Three Ones.

CONSTRAINTS

- Not all development partners view UNDP as a neutral broker between the government and development partners. Some donors would prefer to have direct interface with the government rather than have UNDP represent development partners' position.
- Size of financial support may influence advocacy for PD. Most development partners believe 'who has the money dictates the rule of the game', and UNCT is viewed as a small player compared to big donors.
- Ukraine does not have a clear PD Action Plan with targets for implementation of the PD.

CAMEROON

Cameroon, due to its oil reserves, is a relatively wealthy middle-income country. However, human development indicators for the 18 million person population are low. The country ranks 144 out of 177 on the human development index. Governance is characterized by a top-heavy civil service with weak institutional capacity and is classified as one of the most corrupt countries in Africa. There is no real involvement of civil society or non-governmental organizations—most still have low capacity and struggle to develop and to participate. There are a few very articulated non-governmental organizations. Cameroon received considerable amounts of ODA but funding volumes have decreased. Many development partners are concerned about a lack of transparency, progress of civil and

political rights, and a commitment to donor cooperation, including the PD. Cameroon is not dependent on ODA, which accounts for less than 2 percent of public expenditure budget. Recognition of and commitment to PD principles is strong and the institutional infrastructure has been strengthened, but staff time allocation and efficiency are a stumbling block to further progress. The application of PD principles are in progress. Important preconditions are in place and there is a strong commitment to proceed, but this is hampered by concerns about corruption and lack of confidence in government efforts among partners.

PROGRESS

- The overall coordination structure for UNCT and development partners was in place pre-PD, but coordination processes gained more strength post-PD and more sectoral coordination groups were established.
- The UNDAF was instrumental in enhancing awareness of the need for coordination. However, it was with the PD that effort to and commitment to 'speak with one voice' gained momentum.
- The first PRSP did not trigger enhanced coordination effort, but with the second PRSP, emphasis was put on coordination.
- The working group structure was instrumental in providing a platform for coordination, however it lacks sufficient government representation especially line ministries.
- Coordination and joint programming of Avian Flu contingency planning was a good example of a successful joint programme.
- Strategic partnerships exist on gender issues, for example promoting female electoral participation and steps to initiate a gender mainstreaming strategy. The United Nations has an important normative

role to play; gender and anti-corruption cooperation are examples.

- A joint government and development partners independent aid assessment coordinated by UNDP enhanced mutual accountability.

CONSTRAINTS

- Some of the normative functions of UNCT members are not visible. Hence there is a need for agencies to demonstrate attribution while engaging in enhanced coordination.
- There is still a need to harmonize how to work with the government and a more efficient mechanism put in place for sharing information among agencies.
- Although there has been progress on HACT, Daily Subsistence Allowance, and

fees, other functions are not harmonized. For example, every agency does its own governance profile.

- Identification and listing of specific agency constraints in further harmonization efforts need to be elaborated.
- Many UNCT members (and other development partners) felt that the process could not be pushed, given the need to have and develop a common vision as point of departure that everyone can ‘buy into’. The real challenge is the need for a joint government and development partner vision.
- There are time and resource constraints in engaging in PD process (meaning engaging in enhanced coordination efforts).
- Commitment and engagement is a result of individual commitment.