This draft was prepared by John Eriksson in close interaction with the Management Group and with comments from Rikke Jensen and Elliot Stern.
# Contents

I. Introduction ................................................................................................................ .............. 1  
   A. Purpose ............................................................................................................................ 1  
   B. Structure of the Paper ................................................................................................. 1  
II. Background ....................................................................................................................... 1  
   B. Antecedents .................................................................................................................... 2  
   C. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness ...................................................... 2  
   D. Results of the Phase 1 Evaluation ................................................................................ 3  
   E. Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness: Linkages Issues ................. 4  
      1. Defining aid effectiveness and development effectiveness ........................... 4  
      2. Research evidence regarding Paris Declaration assumptions ................. 5  
      3. Implications of research and evaluation evidence for the Phase 2 Evaluation 5  
III. Scope and Focus of the Phase 2 Evaluation .................................................................... 6  
   A. Constituencies for the Evaluation .......................................................................... 6  
   B. Conceptual Frameworks .............................................................................................. 6  
      1. Evaluation questions ............................................................................................ 6  
      2. Indicative evaluation framework ........................................................................ 7  
      3. A policy-focused evaluation framework ............................................................ 8  
      4. Comparison between the two evaluation frameworks .................................... 9  
   C. Proposed Phase 2 Evaluation Model ....................................................................... 13  
      1. Implementation focus ......................................................................................... 13  
      2. Results focus ....................................................................................................... 13  
      3. The evaluation model ......................................................................................... 13  
         a. Main elements and challenges .................................................................... 13  
         b. The evaluation “propositions” ..................................................................... 15  
         c. “Mechanisms of change” ............................................................................ 17  
   D. Some Critical Substantive Topics ............................................................................. 17  
      1. Accra Agenda for Action of September 2008 .................................................... 17  
      2. Capacity strengthening ....................................................................................... 18  
      3. Fragile situations ................................................................................................. 18  
   E. Methodological Issues ............................................................................................... 19  
      1. Range of methodological challenges ............................................................... 19  
      2. Assessment of beneficiary status .................................................................. 19  
      3. The challenge of attribution ............................................................................ 19  
      4. Optional extension of Phase 2 ....................................................................... 20  
IV. Governance and Operational Architecture .................................................................... 21  
   A. Governance and Management Structures, Roles and Responsibilities .................. 21  
      1. Principles of governance .................................................................................. 21  
      2. Levels of governance ....................................................................................... 21  
         a. International Reference Group ................................................................. 21  
         b. Evaluation Management Group .............................................................. 22  
         c. Country Reference Groups ...................................................................... 22  
   B. Evaluation Architecture (Operational Structure) ......................................................... 23  
      1. Core Team ......................................................................................................... 23  
      2. Country Partnership Teams ............................................................................ 24  
   C. Governance and Architecture Issues ....................................................................... 24  
   D. Evaluation Products ................................................................................................. 25  
      1. Country level studies ....................................................................................... 25  
      2. Possible thematic and cross-cutting studies ............................................... 25  
   E. Dissemination and Communication Plan ................................................................ 26  
   F. Timetable .................................................................................................................... 27  
   G. Preliminary Budget ................................................................................................. 28
Figure 1. Indicative Evaluation Framework .................................................. 11

Figure 2. Policy-focused Evaluation Framework ....................................... 12

Box 1. Evaluation Propositions ................................................................. 17

Table 1. Preliminary Budget ...................................................................... 29

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

1. The overall purpose of the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2005 is to provide information about the end impacts and effects of increased aid effectiveness. The evaluation is being carried out in two phases in order to provide a proper basis for assessment. The first phase focused on the implementation of inputs and outputs associated with the Paris Declaration, while the second phase will focus on the intended and unintended development outcomes and results that can be attributed to the aid effectiveness agenda of the Paris Declaration. Both phases of the evaluation complement the Paris Declaration Joint Venture on Monitoring, by deepening the understanding of the lessons emerging from the monitoring surveys of the 12 “Indicators of Progress” identified at the end of the Declaration. This paper proposes an approach for the second phase of the Evaluation, to be undertaken from the end of 2008 to early 2011. It provides an input for the Terms of Reference for the Phase 2 Evaluation to be prepared in March-April 2009.

B. Structure of the Paper

2. The Approach Paper is organized into three main chapters. The first summarizes the background leading to the Paris Declaration and the Evaluation. The second describes the scope and focus of the Phase 2 Evaluation, including possible conceptual frameworks, an evaluation model and methodological issues. The third chapter sets out the proposed governance, management, and operational structures and processes for the Evaluation, including a timetable and preliminary budget. An Annex presents the Executive Summary of the Synthesis Report of the Phase 1 Evaluation, including its conclusions, lessons, and recommendations.

II. Background

3. The Paris Declaration highlighted the importance of independent evaluation as well as of monitoring the implementation of the Declaration. It states that the evaluation process should provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives. The Synthesis Report of the first phase of the evaluation was submitted to the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Accra, Ghana, 2-4 September 2008.

4. The Accra Agenda for Action further committed the Declaration signatories to: “continuing efforts in monitoring and evaluation that will assess whether we have achieved the commitments we agreed in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action and to what extent aid effectiveness is improving and generating greater development impact.”

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1 For the complete Declaration, see http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf
2 There is no agreed-to definition of aid effectiveness, but a widely held consensus about the different changes in behaviour and practice which are together taken to comprise effective aid.
B. Antecedents

5. The seeds of the Paris Declaration have been traced as far back as the 1967 Commission on International Development, chaired by Lester Pearson. This was followed by a series of research findings and largely donor-initiated strategic aid reforms, particularly in the 1990s and the years leading up to the Declaration. Among the key precursory documents to the Paris Declaration are:

- 1999: *Comprehensive Development Framework* (CDF), initiated by the World Bank
- 2000: *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs), jointly initiated by the UN, OECD, World Bank, and the IMF
- 2002: *Monterrey Consensus* on financing for development in 2002
- 2004: *Joint Marrakech Memorandum* on managing for development results.

C. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

6. “The Paris Declaration poses an outstandingly important challenge both to the world of development cooperation in general and to the field of development evaluation in particular. Compared with previous joint statements on aid harmonisation and alignment, it provides a practical, action-oriented roadmap with specific targets to be met by 2010 and definite review points in the years between. The number of countries and international organisations participating in the High Level Forum (HLF) and putting their signature to the joint commitments contained in the Declaration was unprecedented, reflecting a progressive widening of the range of voices included in major meetings convened by the OECD DAC.”

7. This passage, taken from the *Framework Terms of Reference* for Phase 1 of the Paris Declaration Evaluation, is still applicable. The Declaration remains the dominant international statement on the aid relationship, including how the main actors in that relationship are expected to carry out their responsibilities to make the greatest possible contribution to development effectiveness. An initial “Statement of Resolve” of 12 points is followed by 56 commitments under a “Partnership Commitments” heading, organized around five key principles:

- Ownership by countries
- Alignment with countries’ strategies, systems and procedures
- Harmonisation of donors’ actions
- Managing for Results, and
- Mutual Accountability

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5 For a useful review of this evolution, see Stern, Elliot D., with contributions by Laura Altinger, Osvaldo Feinstein, Marta Marañón, Nils-Sjard Schultz and Nicolai Steen Nielsen, *The Paris Declaration, Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness*; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Copenhagen November 2008, pp.1-11.

D. Results of the Phase 1 Evaluation

8. The Phase 1 Evaluation assessed the early implementation of the Paris Declaration, from March 2005 to late 2007. It comprised extensive assessments in eight countries, together with less extensive studies of eleven development partner or “donor” agencies, focusing at the headquarters level. Participation by all countries and agencies was voluntary. An international management group managed the evaluation and received guidance from a reference group drawn from 31 countries and institutions. In spite of a number of limitations, which are acknowledged in the Phase 1 Evaluation Synthesis Report, the evaluation results have made a significant contribution to understanding the progress achieved and challenges confronted in implementation of the Declaration.

9. The Phase 1 Evaluation sought to answer three central questions:

- What important trends or events have been emerging in the first few years of implementation of the Paris Declaration?
- What major influences are affecting the behaviour of countries and their development partners in relation to implementing their Paris commitments?
- Is implementation so far leading toward the Declaration’s five key principles? If so, how and why? If not, why not?

10. The Executive Summary of the Phase 1 Evaluation Synthesis Report is attached as Annex 1 to this paper. It presents the conclusions, lessons and recommendations of the Phase 1 Evaluation.

11. The Synthesis Report recommends that the Phase Two Evaluation be designed strategically, with wide participation, in order to:

- pursue the Phase One results and dilemmas found;
- address squarely implications of “aid effectiveness” for development outcomes and impacts; and
- rely heavily on representative country evaluations; apply a consistent core methodology; and commission targeted cross-cutting research in advance on several key topics.

12. Four thematic, cross-cutting studies were commissioned for the Phase 1 Evaluation in addition to the Synthesis Report. The four thematic studies were (1) “Statistical Capacity Building;” (2) “Untying of Aid and the Paris Declaration;” (3) “Applicability of the Paris Declaration in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations;” and (4) “The Paris Declaration, Aid Effectiveness, and Development Effectiveness.” These studies are completed with the exception of the second part of the untying study, which is still ongoing. They all have implications for the Phase 2 Evaluation, but the latter two studies are of particular relevance. The third study will be summarized briefly in a subsequent section (III-D) and aspects of the fourth study, central to the Phase 2 Evaluation, is discussed in more depth in the sections that follow below.

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7 “Countries” or “partner countries” refer to the countries receiving aid, and the term “donors” (which is used in the Declaration) or “development agencies” signifies those countries and multilateral agencies providing aid. Other partners, such as non-governmental organisations and private sector actors, will be specifically identified.

8 All four studies can be found on http://www.oecd.org/document/60/0,3343,en_21571361_34047972_38242748_1_1_1_1,00.html
E. Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness: Linkages Issues

13. According to its TOR, the purpose of the thematic or “linkages study” undertaken for the Phase 1 Evaluation was to serve as a primary document to frame Phase 2 by assessing the relationship between the recommendations of the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness and development effectiveness. In other words, it was to be a bridge between the Phase 1 Evaluation focusing on implementation of the Declaration and the Phase 2 Evaluation with its emphasis on assessing the linkages between aid effectiveness and development results. The study reviewed the history and evolution of the Declaration; considered the plausibility of its assumptions; and built on these understandings to present options for the design of the Phase 2 Evaluation. The next three sections summarize some of the salient issues raised by the linkages study.

1. Defining aid effectiveness and development effectiveness

14. Given the lack of universally accepted definitions, an early portion of the linkages study was necessarily devoted to an effort to clarify the concepts of aid effectiveness and development effectiveness and develop a working definition of development effectiveness. The Paris Declaration, including its principles and commitments, has for many become the definition of aid effectiveness – it is self-referencing. It also contains a strong emphasis on efficiency, especially through savings in transaction costs. The linkages study tried to find a definition that was less self-referential and more focused on the management of aid and the targeting of objectives. On this basis, it defined ‘aid effectiveness’ as an: “Arrangement for the planning, management and deployment of aid that is efficient, reduces transaction costs and is targeted towards development outcomes including poverty reduction.”10 This definition covers the key components of aid effectiveness and points toward development outcomes as well as efficiency.

15. The linkages study provides two definitions of “development effectiveness.” The first is in terms of what development interventions actually achieve, i.e.:

(1) “Development effectiveness is the achievement of sustainable development results related to MDGs that have country level impacts that have discernable effects on the lives of the poor.”11

The second definition focuses on processes, capacities and sustainability, i.e.:

(2) “The capability of States and other development actors to transform societies in order to achieve positive and sustainable development outcomes for their citizens.”

16. These are broad definitions. They both emphasise sustainable, positive effects on citizens or on the poor; while the first definition focuses more on actual results, the second one focuses more on the capability of development actors, including States, to achieve results. These definitions, as noted by the linkages study, are complementary and are both relevant to the Phase 2 Evaluation design.

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9 Stern, et al. op. cit. This study will be referred to in the text as the “linkages study” in order to convey its focus on linkages between “aid effectiveness” and “development effectiveness” and to differentiate it from the other thematic studies.

10 See Stern, et al., for a more extensive discussion of these definitions, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

11 In other words, development effectiveness refers to the actual achievement of relevant results with discernable effects on the lives of people. Development efficiency, on the other hand, refers to a given level of development effectiveness or results achieved with a minimum feasible level of resources.
2. Research evidence regarding Paris Declaration assumptions

17. The linkages study uncovered a “large and disparate” body of research that tries to relate aid to development outcomes. It concludes that there is some evidence that aid delivered in ways consistent with the Paris Declaration (e.g. as found in the CDF and General Budget Support evaluations) can improve the way aid is managed and delivered. The evidence is less convincing about whether changes in ‘aid effectiveness’ will in turn lead to sustained reform in policy-making and governance. Existing evidence is also less clear-cut as to the likely efficiency gains or reductions in transaction costs likely to follow from implementation.

18. With respect to results, the study finds “clear evidence” that aid-funded interventions can improve public services for poor people but no clear evidence to confirm that Paris Declaration-like interventions lead to sustained improvements in such basic services, let alone to income growth.

19. The linkages study also notes that positive examples of development results (e.g. in East Asia) are often built on governance and rights assumptions different from those of the Paris Declaration. The study concluded that governance seems important but not consistently so. It is also observed that Phase 1 country studies find a typically narrow base for country ownership and that the Declaration appears to have reinforced central government ownership rather than meaningful inclusion of civil society, parliament and the private sector. Also, the study notes that in many countries donor influence over government policy-making and priority setting continues to be high and that the motives of donors can be strategic and commercial and not confined to development. Differences in objectives can be a barrier to harmonisation.

20. Research on fragile states suggests that how such states are defined is important. It is probably better to focus on ”dimensions of fragility” of “fragile situations,” which many States experience to various degrees at different times rather than to assume that Fragile States all fall into common – or even differentiated – categories. Most perceived dimensions of fragility draw attention to ‘up-stream’ state-building processes – only likely to be detectible in the medium to long-term. This issue is significant for a number of partner countries and donors and was the subject of one of the four thematic studies undertaken for the Phase 1 Evaluation. It will be discussed further in section III-D “critical substantive issues.”

3. Implications of research and evaluation evidence for the Phase 2 Evaluation

21. The linkages study concludes that research and evaluation findings suggest that the Paris Declaration should be expected to have short, medium and long-term outcomes. Therefore, not all the results will be evident by 2011, and evaluation design and methods will need to be adapted to this.

22. Country specific dynamics appear to be important in understanding development results and aid effectiveness. These tend not to be clear from cross-country analyses. As the implementation of the Paris Declaration appears to be influenced by specific starting conditions and histories, it is likely to be highly varied. The interaction and sequencing of factors are likely to change over time, and two-way causalities are possible. Simple “logic models” will not be easily applied. This suggests that the main unit of analysis should be Paris

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Declaration-endorsing countries and their implicated donors. A key part of such a focus should be how development actors (governments, civil society, and donor agencies) have defined their priorities and used Paris Declaration arrangements over time and to what effect.

23. At the same time, the study notes that research tends to confirm that direct, vertical interventions have a good record in bringing about targeted improvements in basic needs—such as child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS programmes and primary education. This suggests that the Phase 2 evaluation should undertake comparative analysis between different strategies, delivered in similar settings in pursuit of common goals. Other relevant topics and issues from the linkages study are addressed in the following sections on the proposed scope and focus of the Phase 2 Evaluation.

III. Scope and Focus of the Phase 2 Evaluation

A. Constituencies for the Evaluation

24. Since the findings of this evaluation will be of interest to multiple constituencies, its design and implementation must incorporate their needs and perhaps diverging concerns. Primary constituencies include the signatories to the Paris Declaration: the governments of the partner countries and governing authorities and senior managements of development agencies. At the second level are those tasked with implementing the Paris Declaration: government, donor, civil society and private sector stakeholders in the partner countries as well as management and operational staff of donor/development agencies.

25. The Phase 1 Evaluation focused on the practical lessons learned about implementation and contributed to ongoing aid effectiveness policy debates in the High Level Forum 3 (HLF 3) on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana in September 2008 and in other forums. The focus of Phase 2 will be on a more results oriented or summative investigation to be presented to the HLF 4 in 2011.

B. Conceptual Frameworks

1. Evaluation questions

26. Following the schema of the linkages study, three classes of evaluation questions can be delineated.

The first set of questions concerns the extent to which the Paris Declaration principles and commitments have been taken on board, adapted and put in context by partnerships.

- What are the Paris Declaration “configurations,” how were they decided and are they appropriate, i.e. are they well adapted to country circumstances and aid scenarios?

This set of questions was the main focus of the Phase 1 Evaluation. To the extent that this set of questions has been seen as an issue among countries and donors to be included as new case studies in Phase 2 (not covered in Phase 1), these questions would be pertinent. But the main overall focus of the Phase 2 Evaluation will be on development outcomes and results.

27. The second set of questions concerns how the actors use Paris Declaration partnership arrangements (opportunities for policy dialogue, planning, new aid modalities, problem solving, joint review) to pursue their own development objectives and to what effect.

- How have governments, donors and civil society used Paris Declaration partnership arrangements – and with what discernable added value?

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This set of questions overlaps the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Evaluations. The partner country and development partner (donor) case studies of Phase 1 examined in varying degree how the actors used the Paris Declaration partnership arrangements. However, the effect or value added aspect is clearly a Phase 2 Evaluation question and it relates closely to the third set of questions, below. A credible answer will require careful selection and application of evaluation methodologies (see section III-C below, on “Methodological Challenges.”

28. The third set of questions concerns the extent to which the Paris Declaration can be said to be the most appropriate policy or strategy to achieve poverty reduction and broader development results.

- Is the Paris Declaration the best way to achieve the kinds of outcomes and results that the evaluation model (see section C) identifies? Are there other strategies that could achieve the same results more effectively and efficiently?

This set of questions falls clearly into Phase 2 and getting answers will also require as robust a set of methodologies as available data will permit.

29. These are to be seen as ‘top-level’ evaluation questions, which will need to be elaborated when the Phase 2 evaluation and its component evaluations are fully planned and specified centrally and at country level. Each set of questions needs to be asked of each of the four kinds of outcomes and results identified in the evaluation model in order to maintain the focus on outcomes and results, i.e.,

- Poverty reduction, including MDG achievement
- Broader development outcomes
- State building including public management reforms
- International outcomes and results such as donor policy learning and ODA legitimation

2. Indicative evaluation framework

30. Taken together, Phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation seek to address all the levels outlined in an indicative framework, which summarized below and presented graphically in Figure 1 as “Indicative Evaluation Framework.” (see page 11). This framework is taken from an “Options Paper,” prepared in 2006 by Booth and Evans.14

1) The paper identifies “necessary inputs,” as “political support, peer pressure and coordinated action” (using Paris Declaration language), but goes on to assume that this phrase covers a range of types of necessary inputs, on both the donor side and on the side of partner countries.

2) Outputs are the actions and changes in behaviour to which the Declaration commits the signatories.

3) There are two sub-levels of outcomes.
   a. Outcomes 1 express how realization of the Paris commitments is expected to make aid more effective through strengthened capacity to make and implement policies and programs intended to yield development results.
   b. Outcomes 2 express how these outcomes yield more efficient and equitable public and private investment.

4) Impacts refer to sustainable development results, i.e., economic growth and socio-economic impacts on individuals, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as

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14 Booth, David and Alison Evans, DAC Evaluation Network: Follow-up to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: an Options Paper, Revised Draft, OECD/DAC, Paris, 2006. The original version of Figure 1 is from p. 9 of the cited paper, but has been slightly simplified for readability and clarified to show the two “Outcomes” levels. The figure is explained in Booth, op. cit., pp. 7-8 and 10. [https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/3/38255452.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/3/38255452.pdf)
well as other longer-run national development goals, e.g. transformation of institutions of
governance capable of enabling the full participation of the population in economic
growth and the political process.

31. In line with the “options paper,” the focus of the Phase 2 Evaluation would be on
development outcomes and results levels articulated by the following premises:

- Country ownership and the other outputs promised by the Paris Declaration would, if
  implemented together, strengthen country capacity to make and implement policies
  focused on development results and make good use of aid.
- Country capacity enhanced in this way will raise the quality of public investment and
  service provision, including for private investment.
- Premises i) and ii) will lead to better development results, such as growth and
  transformation, and the realization of the MDGs.

3. A policy-focused evaluation framework

32. Drawing on a wide range of development research and evaluations, the
“linkages” thematic study by Stern, *etal*, undertaken for the Phase 1 Evaluation, constructed a
more complex “Policy Model” evaluation framework, as shown in Figure 2 below.15 This
framework introduces the term “PD Configuration” to communicate that the Paris Declaration
is not a unitary intervention but consists of a number of elements that can be brought together in distinctive ways. For example, some developing countries have well-developed poverty reduction strategies linked to well-established aid management processes that are strongly “owned” by their governments – but in others, this is not so. Furthermore, the Declaration is not a traditional intervention with its own inputs and actions – rather it enables, encourages and aims to change the character of other often pre-existing inputs and actions, such as policy development and planning through various forms of “partnership working.” This is why the Declaration appears in Figure 2 as a background influence on existing inputs and outputs rather than as a self-contained input.

33. Not every Paris Declaration configuration is unique. The Phase 1 Synthesis Report and the monitoring reports make it possible to identify a limited set of Declaration configurations. But their form and content are dynamic and can be refined over time. Tracking this evolution will provide some confirmation that the Declaration is being used and contributing to development outcomes.

34. The policy-focused framework (Figure 2) from the linkages study employs similar levels of inputs, processes, and results as the indicative framework (Figure 1), with the following distinctive features:

1) The Paris Declaration’s *inputs and outputs* are directly concerned with aid and the aid management capacity of governments. The two-way arrow between these inputs and outputs indicates the need for consistency: for example, planning and analysis need to be conducted in ways that ensure that policies and programmes are inclusive, relevant and targeted.

2) This framework stresses the processes of *partnership working* and *capacity development* as main means for enhanced implementation of the Declaration. Partnership includes policy dialogues, donor coordination groups, joint reviews and joint problem solving meetings. Capacities for aid and development effectiveness can include, in addition to building government capacity, strengthening parliamentary scrutiny and inputs into policy; and supporting structures that give civil society and

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15 Stern, *etal*, *op. cit.* Explanatory text is on pp.43-46 and the figure (3.2) is on p. 44.
the private sector a voice in policy-making and a “watchdog” role. Capacity development is likely to require donor inputs as part of its implementation.

3) The framework also stresses policies as a key step toward realizing development results from the Paris Declaration (the study refers to the framework as a “Policy Model”). But aid-related policies are themselves embedded in other country-based policies and policy-making processes. Policies that may not be aid-related are nonetheless important for development results and for the way aid is managed. But as the multi-directional arrows in Figure 2 suggest, the model is open to the possibility that the Paris Declaration itself will have spill-over effects that will influence non-aid policies. For example, improvements in statistical analysis, budgeting and planning encouraged through the Declaration may have implications for how non-aid policies are implemented.

4) Country level outcomes and impacts include some that are expected to be short-term, medium-term and longer-term. It is posited that poverty reduction results will be evident, although not necessary sustainable, in the shorter-term. Other Development Outcomes” in Figure 2 entails a “broad” definition of development, including sustained basic services, income growth, social inclusion and equality, and is assumed to take longer to achieve.

5) The inclusion of state-building as a long-term outcome of the Paris Declaration follows from the importance given by the linkages study to governance and its institutions, as well as the prominence given to fragility” and fragile states in the Declaration.

6) The Paris Declaration has international outcomes and impacts. It was partly intended to re-assure taxpayers in donor countries that aid was well-spent, yielded results and was worth increasing levels of expenditure. The legitimacy of ODA is therefore an important international outcome. Another international outcome/impact identified by the linkages study is a donor “learning effect,” resulting in the greater efficiency of donor policies and behaviour (see comparison with the indicative framework in the following section).

4. Comparison between the two evaluation frameworks

35. It is not surprising that there are differences between the two frameworks and that the second, policy-focused evaluation framework is more complex than the first, indicative framework. There has been an evolution of thinking and evaluative research of over two years between the two efforts (one relevant document that emerged in the intervening period was the Synthesis Report for Phase 1 of the Paris Declaration Evaluation). While the two frameworks have some elements in common, it is useful to highlight some key differences.

1) The indicative framework (Figure 1) makes a clear distinction between “outcomes” and “impacts” and differentiates two levels of outcomes, whereas the policy-focused framework (Figure 2) merges outcomes and impacts into one column with no differentiation between the two.

2) While the indicative framework shows bi-directional causation between pairs of elements, multi-directional causality flows are depicted among a number of elements in the policy-focused framework. Feedback loops from “Outcomes and Impacts” back to “Actors” and “Contexts” are explicit in the latter framework.

16 This assertion is based on evidence that targeted improvements in health and education and other public services can be achieved in the short-term. But sustained improvement will be a longer term outcome or impact. Given possible confusion between the first and second boxes in the right-hand column, Figure 2 has been modified to say “Other Development Outcomes,” and “Human and Economic” has been omitted.

17 “It is not suggested that State-Building outcomes if detected are likely to be attributable mainly to the PD. However the model acknowledges the potentially catalytic effect of the PD to improve public management, strengthen institutions and promote inclusion when combined with other development and non-development polices and when supported by capacity development measures.” Stern, et al, op. cit., p. 45.
3) Outcomes and impacts are shown at the “International Level,” including “ODA Legitimation” and “Donor Policy Learning,” in the policy-focused framework. In the indicative framework, these policies are considered outputs of implementing the Declaration. But to the extent that implementation of the Declaration encourages further improvement in donor policies, they could legitimately be viewed as outcomes and impacts as well.

4) The indicative framework specifies three “necessary inputs,” as “political support, peer pressure and coordinated action.” The policy-focused framework specifies 13 “mechanisms of change” (see III-C-3-c, paragraph 45 below, for a list of the mechanisms).

5) The feedback loops in the policy-focused framework imply iterative and learning approaches to implementing the Paris Declaration. An initial configuration of inputs, outputs, outcomes and results is likely to lead back to a changed configuration as new ways of managing and using aid are learned and implemented more effectively, providing other things remain equal.

36. It is also important to emphasize what both frameworks share. In somewhat different ways they both recognize that understanding the development results that follow from the Paris Declaration requires a focus on outcomes and impacts as well as outputs. This was well signposted in the options paper and has been further elaborated in the linkages study. The former identified the mechanisms of political support, peer pressure and coordinated action and concentrated on the direct consequences of the actions to which the Declaration commits its signatories. It suggests, following the logic of the Declaration itself, that these actions will strengthen capacity and policy-making leading to improved public and private investment. The linkages study identifies a wider set of mechanisms and emphasizes the way the Paris Declaration is likely to be affected by the context in which it is being implemented as well as its interactions with many other aspects of aid management including other “programmes,” policies and policy-making processes. Both the options paper and the linkages study understand impacts to include poverty reduction, achievement of the MDGs, improved regulation and institutions. The linkages study elaborates on these outcomes to include lessons learned and applied for donors as well as for partner countries and takes on board some of the ‘state-building’ priorities that follow from the Paris Declaration’s inclusion of fragile states or fragile situations.

37. The importance of the external environment, contexts or exogenous factors to both frameworks cannot be overemphasized. These factors include global and regional economic, political, and public health conditions (and their impacts on a partner country, as well as on a donor), to political, economic, social, and natural developments or crises originating within a partner country. Specifically, these can range from commodity price fluctuations, to the spread of dangerous communicable diseases, to the outbreak of violent conflict, to natural disasters, to the emergence of new donors providing substantial resources but who are not Declaration signatories. Inevitably, contexts and actor intentions for implementation of the Paris Declaration will not ‘remain equal’. An iterative perspective should focus attention on changes in the context and in so doing, will help safeguard against inappropriate attribution of change to the Paris Declaration.

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18 The latter includes harmonisation of aid, division of labour, reduction of transaction costs and alignment of priorities with those of the recipients.
Figure 1. Indicative Evaluation Framework (based on Fig. 2.2, *Follow-up to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: An Options Paper; May 2006*)

**Level 1: Inputs**
- **Ownership**
  - Countries define strategies and exercise leadership
- **Alignment**
  - Donors base support on country strategies, and use/strengthen country systems
- **Harmonisation**
  - Common arrangements, better division of labour and supportive internal incentives
- **Results Management**
  - Programming is focused on results and uses information for improvement
- **Mutual Accountability**
  - Country and mutual accountabilities are strengthened

**Level 2: Outputs**
- **Outcomes 1**: Strengthened country capacity to make and implement policies and programs focused on development results, making optimal use of concessional finance
- **Outcomes 2**: Efficient and equitable public investment and service provision, plus regulation and institutional development/coordination for private investment

**Level 3: Outcomes 1 and Outcomes 2**

**Level 5: Impacts**
- Sustainable economic growth and transformation, resulting in attainment of Millennium Development Goals and other national-development objectives

**Exogenous influences**: e.g. other donor country actions, political change, disasters
Figure 2. Policy-focused Evaluation Framework (Fig. 3.2, “A Policy Model for PD Evaluation,” *The Paris Declaration, Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness*; November 2008)
C. Proposed Phase 2 Evaluation Model

38. The substantial methodological and data challenges implied by Phase 2 of the Paris Declaration Evaluation suggest two different but complementary foci that comprise an evaluation model for Phase 2.

1. Implementation focus

39. The first focus would involve a horizontal expansion of the Phase 1 emphasis on implementation (inputs, process, outputs, and aid effectiveness) by increasing the number of country level studies. This would provide a more balanced mix among countries, including those where implementation of the Paris Declaration principles have been faster as well as those where progress has been slower. A larger number of countries would also improve the likelihood of a more diverse set of countries along other relevant dimensions, including degree of aid dependency, language orientation (e.g. English and French-speaking), fragility of governance and regional location. The range of country stakeholder groups would also be expanded (levels of government, parliaments, civil society – including umbrella media organisations, private sector, donors). The implementation focus would monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Synthesis Report of the Phase 1 Evaluation and of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). This focus would also give greater attention than did Phase 1 to targeted capacity building (including technical assistance and training) and would assess the contribution of donor supported analytic and advisory activities in support of the Paris Declaration principles, which was not given much attention in Phase 1. Several donors that did not participate in the Phase 1 Evaluation would assess their performance in implementing the Paris Declaration.

2. Results focus

40. This focus would identify Paris Declaration consequences in the form of development outcomes and results; i.e. development effectiveness. This would require the selection of countries with sufficient data and experience to help meet the challenging analytical and methodological hurdles that would have to be overcome, including the fact that few if any development outcomes and results directly attributable to the Paris Declaration can be expected by 2011, the year when the Phase 2 Evaluation is to be completed for the 4th High Level Forum. One method under this focus would be to employ “backward-tracking” of selected countries to assess the impact on policies, and possibly, outcomes, of “Paris Declaration-like” principles implemented in the past, even though they may not have been recognized as “Paris Declaration principles” at the time. (see further discussion below).

3. The evaluation model.

41. This section describes the main elements and challenges of the proposed evaluation model and then sets out 21 “Evaluation Propositions” and 13 “Mechanisms of Change” identified by the linkages study. These are not set in stone in number or in substance, but comprise a point of departure for the detailed Evaluation design. They are subject to modification in the detailed Terms of Reference for the Phase 2 Evaluation to be prepared in March-April 2009.

a. Main elements and challenges

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19 In most cases it will be more feasible to survey and interview umbrella organisations or associations representative of civil society organisations (including the media) and the private sector, rather than all CSOs and all enterprises in a country (a random stratified sample could also be taken but this would likely be time-consuming and costly).
42. The proposed evaluation model incorporates the “implementation focus” and the “results focus.” But the emphasis will be on development outcomes and results. The Phase 2 Evaluation will not have achieved its purpose if it does not identify results attributable to the Paris Declaration. Policy changes and their implementation, including associated programs, play a central role in the model. They are key outcomes in achieving impacts or results attributable to the Declaration. As shown in Figure 1 (“Outcomes 1”) and Figure 2 (under “Outputs”), the capacity to make and implement policies and programs is posited to result from implementation of the Paris Declaration principles. The resulting policies and programs (“Outcomes 2” in Figure 1 and “Outputs” in Figure 2) in turn “point” to potential Paris Declaration-associated impacts (at the bottom of the Figure 1 and the right-hand column of Figure 2), even though these impacts might not yet be observable. Implementation of this model would involve the following elements:

- Being able to make predictions of *change in development outcomes and/or results* in line with the “results focus,” or at least the direction of likely change, and perhaps more feasible on a sector basis, providing the conceptual or theoretical linkages are sound, and that realistic assumptions can be made about intervening variables.

- *Backward-tracking* of countries with relevant experience and data, which may permit observation of changes in outcomes and/or results that could be attributed to outputs and inputs resulting from the implementation of “Paris Declaration-like” principles before 2005. The possibility of “tracking” from apparent cases of successful development outcomes and results to understand the origins and evolution that led to the current situation is especially appropriate for the Paris Declaration, given that many of the actions and processes that the Declaration encourages have been promulgated for a number of years. Tracking back to uncover the conditions that were associated with success could use a variety of methods, including historical case-studies; synthesis studies of already extant research; and statistical analyses where time-series data exist. Examples include a cluster of “positive” results in areas such as social inclusion or improving conditions for small businesses to operate. Tracking back in selected sectors may prove more feasible than attempting tracking on an economy-wide basis.

- More rigorous and comprehensive analyses of linkages between the Paris Declaration principles and aid effectiveness inputs and outputs implied by the “implementation focus” are needed in order to *confirm and extend the findings of the Phase 1 Evaluation*. While there is a general expectation that Phase 2 will yield findings about results, explicit statements by key stakeholders, including by the Phase 1 Reference Group, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), have indicated a desire for confirmation and extension of the findings of the Phase 1 Evaluation.

43. The challenges faced by the model include:

- The *methodological and data requirements* of the model are daunting, particularly if development outcomes and results are to be explicitly identified, quantified and attributed. However, the identification of more ultimate impacts of the Paris Declaration on long run well being is not likely to be feasible or an objective of the model. (see a subsequent section on additional methodological challenges)

- The *timeframe* required to identify development outcomes attributable to the Paris Declaration will vary according to the specific Declaration commitment and type of

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20 See Stern, *etal*, op. cit. pp. 50-51 for a more extensive treatment of some of these issues.

21 Ranges of change might be suggested, such as “positive” or “negative” effect, and “little” or “substantial.”
outcome. The linkages study stipulates 4 levels of possible Paris Declaration outcomes and results. The first two might possibly be observed within the 2005-2011 timeframe of the Phase 2 Evaluation – (1) targeted poverty reduction, including the MDGs and (2) “broader development outcomes,” such as income growth and social inclusion. The study argues that the next two categories – (3) governance reforms (state capacity building, incl. public management reforms) and (4) “international outcomes” (e.g. “ODA legitimation” and “policy learning”) – are likely to be observed only over the long run. The “backward tracking” approach suggested above would provide a way of getting around the time frame problem if adequate historical data could be found in countries adopting Paris Declaration-like measures. Another approach suggested by the linkages study is to select a small number of countries as “tracker sites” that would employ new indicators to monitor beyond 2011 the longer-term processes involved in (3) and (4).22

- The cost of the proposed evaluation model will likely be substantial. But the cost of just the implementation focus alone would be significant. Selectivity will be required in the final designs of the “implementation” and “results” components of the proposed model. A balance will need to be struck between the call for more rigor and comprehensiveness on the one hand, and cost, on the other. The governance and management structures required for the proposed model will likely be somewhat more costly than they were for Phase 1 (see section on governance and management structures and a preliminary budget in Table 1). The post-2011 “tracker sites” approach as suggested below, could be designed as a separate longer term research project, but funded and executed separately.

b. The evaluation “propositions”

44. The linkages study sets out 21 “propositions”23 drawn from its review of the literature, including the findings of the Phase 1 Evaluation. These propositions are shown in Box 1, organized under five main headings that encompass but are not identical to the five Paris Declaration principles.

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23 The term “indicative propositions” instead of “hypotheses” is used in the linkages study to indicate the tentative nature of the analysis at this point in the process. Ibid. p. 46.
Box 1. Evaluation Propositions

Country Ownership and Poverty Reduction
1. The Paris Declaration, by addressing inequalities of power between donors and recipients of aid, makes recipient country governments more able to exercise leadership in planning and delivering polices to reduce poverty.
2. Developing countries are more likely to respond to incentives and ‘conditions’ to improve policy-making and aid effectiveness if they are linked to poverty reduction goals that are nationally determined.
3. Ownership if it rests on effective political leadership, an agreed and supported national development plan, cross-government (ministry) coordination and better budgetary systems will make it more likely that aid will be directed to development-related priorities including poverty reduction.
4. Consulting and involving national development actors including Parliaments, NGOs working with the poor and marginalized groups and the private sectors, will lead to plans for poverty reduction that are relevant to country needs and more sustainable.

Propositions about Donor Harmonisation and Alignment
5. The extent to which donors are willing to harmonise among themselves will depend on the extent that they share development objectives not overshadowed by other commercial or political objectives incompatible with development needs.
6. The willingness and ability of donors to align with country systems will depend on the extent to which a) they trust these systems and b) are able to manage risk while these systems are tested and improved and c) are able to negotiate their own domestic accountability requirements to match developing country circumstances.
7. Suitable organisation of aid agencies (front-line staff skills, local autonomy, and discretion to local actors) and their influence with their national governments will determine their ability to deliver Paris Declaration commitments and promote policy learning among donor governments.
8. Mutual accountability will lead to enhanced learning among donors about how better to lower barriers to development resulting from their own policies, which should lead to improvements in development outcomes.
9. If harmonisation leads to a sensible division of labour among donors and lower transaction costs for Partner countries then the latter will be able to spend more resources for poverty reduction and development purposes rather than on aid management.

Propositions about Contribution to Wider development Goals
10. Managing for development results will create a focused and clearer analysis of development needs and how to pursue them in a particular country context.
11. If ownership translates into improved capacity in budgeting and planning this will spill-over into other development related government decision-making with positive effects quite apart from reductions in transaction costs.
12. The Paris Declaration should also increase capacities of policy coordination and policy coherence which will then also spill-over to the benefit of broader development goals.
13. Aid that directly supports trade preparedness, facilitates the redeployment of resources, the acquisition of relevant technologies etc will make a direct contribution to growth and indirectly to development outcomes in broad terms (including, basic services, human development, equal rights etc.)
14. Institutional developments that support innovation and economic growth through the private sector will be more likely if the extremes of social inequality are reduced

Propositions about Improving Governance and Reducing Fragility
15. Increases in public services that address the needs of the poor will increase the legitimacy of governments thus reducing fragility of States.
16. Improvements in the effectiveness of governments (e.g. through budgeting, policy making, planning, stakeholder consultation, policy coordination and policy coherence) will gradually strengthen governance more generally thus reducing aspects of State fragility.
17. Greater social inclusion, government effectiveness and State legitimacy will make it more likely that a virtuous cycle of poverty reduction and improvements in governance will occur.

Propositions about Capacity Development and Mutual Accountability
18. Capacity development will follow from practical experience of implementing the Declaration principles and commitments (learning by doing) if supported by an effective partnership relationship with committed donors.
19. Mutual accountability in its broader sense that includes accountability to stakeholders, parliaments and civil society – and when combined with transparency/information flows – will provide positive feedback, reinforcement and increase the likelihood that development policies will be sustainable.
20. International mutual accountability (e.g. between donors and the recipients of aid) will be strengthened by more inclusive in-country accountabilities which requires capacity development for other development actors.
21. Partnership arrangements promoted by the Paris Declaration – including policy-dialogue, open exchange of information, joint reviews and assessment mechanisms, as well as joint problem solving – will lead to greater trust and confidence in governments to innovate.
c. “Mechanisms of change”

45. The above propositions along with the other elements of the proposed evaluation model provide points of departure for detailed Evaluation design. The propositions in turn suggest a number of “mechanisms of change” that should be investigated as part of the evaluation. The linkages study argues that in order to be confident that effects are ‘caused’ by policies or programs, it is not sufficient to observe just changes. In addition, the mechanisms of change that operate in particular contexts also have to be identified. Exploring these propositions and the following mechanisms within the broad map outlined by the proposed model would provide Phase 2 evaluators with useful tools to assess the contribution of the Paris Declaration to aid and development effectiveness. Examples of mechanisms of change include:

- Empowerment of development actors (including governments, CSOs –including umbrella media organisations-, parliaments and the private sector)
- Reforms perceived as positive (because supported by a broad country-based consensus)
- Increased levels of trust between development partners
- Increases in confidence by governments in recipient countries
- Improved decision-making skills
- Improvements in risk-management
- Improvements in negotiating and influencing skills by donor agencies in their own policy communities
- Organisational supports for learning from policy experience
- Improved quality of needs analyses and available information
- More information sharing and transparency of information
- Spill-over of capacities from aid to non-aid policy-making
- “Learning by doing” or experiential learning
- Positive feedback loops from policy reforms and program innovations.

D. Some Critical Substantive Topics

46. There are several important substantive topics that should be addressed in country studies and thematic, cross-cutting studies as pertinent.

1. Accra Agenda for Action of September 2008

47. The Agenda for Action adopted by the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008 in Accra, specified 48 commitments undertaken by partner countries and donors to increase aid effectiveness. These are grouped under the following headings. The Phase 2 studies should assess the implementation of these commitments.

- **Strengthening Country Ownership over Development**
  - We will broaden country-level policy dialogue on development
  - Developing countries will strengthen their capacity to lead and manage development
  - We will strengthen and use developing country systems to the maximum extent possible

- **Building More Effective and Inclusive Partnerships for Development**
  - We will reduce costly fragmentation of aid
  - We will increase aid’s value for money
  - We welcome and will work with all development actors
  - We will deepen our engagement with civil society organisations

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We will adapt aid policies for countries in fragile situations

 Delivering and Accounting for Development Results
 We will focus on delivering results
 We will be more accountable and transparent to our publics for results
 We will continue to change the nature of conditionality to support ownership
 We will increase the medium-term predictability of aid

 2. Capacity strengthening

 48. Capacity strengthening is critical for effective implementation of the Paris Declaration. Capacity is not just a means to realise results in health, education, agriculture or environment. Rather, it refers to effective systems such as institutions and organisations that are crucial elements of a county’s ability to pursue its development path. This perspective on capacity requires that governments use checks and balances to protect public goods, that laws are upheld, that public goods and services are delivered, etc. It requires also that citizens, particularly the poor and their civil organisations need the ability to defend their rights by means of political and decision-making processes, access to basic services and opportunities to earn an income above the poverty threshold and realise their ambitions. From this perspective, capacity is not merely a means to achieve development results but also a goal in itself and a key to development. The results of capacity strengthening may be observed only in the long-run, after 2011.

 49. Some key evaluation questions about capacity strengthening are:
 • What changes attributable to the Paris Declaration have taken place in the capacity of partner country organisations?
 • What effects have changes in the capacity of these organisations had on the realisation of their development objectives (outputs and outcomes)?
 • How effective have external (donor development partner) interventions been in terms of strengthening the capacity of partner countries?
 • What factors explain the level of effectiveness of external interventions? What lessons can be learned?25

 3. Fragile situations

 50. Fragile situations. The Phase 1 thematic study on fragile and conflict-affected situations concludes that the failure of “one or more of the assumptions about national government capacity, objectives, effective control and legitimacy” has the following consequences:26
 • “The Paris Declaration development partnership model to achieve aid effectiveness will not be straightforwardly applicable.
 • A concern with ‘aid effectiveness’ as a basis for international engagement must have an agenda of ‘state building’ as well as an agenda of increasing aid effectiveness. Recent research on state-building in fragile states strongly emphasises the essentially political and conflict-resolving nature of the process.


• In fragile situations characterized by transitional or post-conflict settings, i.e., by “hopeful partnerships,” the Paris Declaration can be applied incrementally over time, but in deteriorating situations, or “problematic partnerships,” the Declaration “may be of limited or declining relevance as a guide for action.”

• Harmonization remains “the key entry point for improving aid effectiveness in these situations.”

The Phase 2 Evaluation should take the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this thematic study into account.

E. Methodological Issues

1. Range of methodological challenges

51. The kinds of methodological challenges to be addressed include:

• Different ways in which the Paris Declaration is being implemented

• Importance of different political, economic and institutional contexts for implementation (“intervening variables”)

• Significance of key actors’ intentions and priorities

• Possibilities of multi-directional causality between the main elements in the model

• Iterative nature of policy implementation associated with the Paris Declaration.

2. Assessment of beneficiary status

52. Measurement of change will need to extend beyond expenditure data and administrative records. To be true to the definition of development effectiveness the evaluation will need to establish whether there have been changes to the lives and capabilities of poor people as a consequence of poverty reduction efforts and, indirectly, Paris Declaration implementation. Resource constraints will tend to preclude collection of primary data on beneficiaries, but existing relevant information from Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and related monitoring and evaluation is relatively plentiful.

3. The challenge of attribution

53. The challenges of assessing the Paris Declaration’s contribution to poverty reduction include that of attributing any observed effects exclusively or largely to the Declaration. Several non-mutually exclusive ways of ascertaining attribution are suggested. Among other things, they would demonstrate synergies among inputs, outputs and outcomes of the Paris Declaration.

1) First, the number of country level studies would need to be increased in order to provide a more balanced mix among countries, including those where the Paris Declaration principles have been implemented more rapidly as well as those where progress has been relatively slower (and other relevant dimensions, such as country size, aid dependency, fragility of governance and regional location). This would permit comparisons of poverty reduction progress in countries in the former group with those in the latter group. Any association between Declaration implementation and aid dependency would be taken into account. Consistent definitions and measures of Declaration implementation progress

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28 See for example, Stern, etal, op. cit., p. 43.
would have to be formulated and the effects of other intervening factors would have to be assessed.  

2) Second, sites or sectors might be selected to compare more or less successful experiences of poverty reduction across different sites or communities within the same country and common policy setting. This could enable the identification of factors responsible for more successful and less successful implementation in the same country.

3) Third, comparisons might also be made between examples of poverty reduction pursued within a policy setting supported by Paris Declaration types of partnership interaction and another that employed what might be called “non-Paris Declaration” strategies to implement targeted poverty reduction policies and programs. For example, there are a number of documented sectoral or ‘vertical’ programs focusing on maternal health, HIV/AIDS and primary education which by-pass national treasuries but are nonetheless attempting to achieve similar outcomes to those that are to be found in national plans intended to be strengthened by the Paris Declaration. Such an approach if carefully designed would begin to address “counterfactual” type questions.

4) Fourth, investigations should be undertaken in more depth of several propositions flowing from the eight country level studies that were a part of the Phase 1 Evaluation, as well as from additional countries covered in Phase 2. For example, slow rates of aid disbursement and what influence, if any, implementation of the Paris Declaration has had and why.

5) Fifth, representatives from the eight partner countries would be well-placed to identify other issues from their respective country level studies that merit further investigation in Phase 2.

54. These approaches and methods would be of particular interest to policy makers at both country-level and internationally because they would highlight the strengths and weaknesses of different strategies to achieve similar outcomes. While in some settings detectable changes in “targeted poverty reduction/MDG” outcomes can be expected, less progress in other development areas relevant to the Paris Declaration will be observed. For these other outcomes it will still be possible to track “distance travelled” and “directions of change”, provided the evaluation develops causal models, “theories of change” or other theory based approaches that specify plausible steps towards future but still nascent outcomes.

4. Optional extension of Phase 2

55. The linkages study proposes that a small number of ‘tracker sites’ be identified where revisits can be planned over a more extended time-period (beyond 2011) in order to identify and monitor longer-term processes and outcomes such as state building and changes in institutions. While this approach is not seen as essential to the Phase 2 Evaluation being able to yield meaningful and useful results, the Reference Group may wish to discuss it as a possibility for design and decision at a later stage. It could be designed as a separate longer term research project, but funded and executed separately.

29 Careful case studies of observed effects would be required in terms of inputs, outputs and possible exogenous influences that might account for them. The range of possible outcomes in terms of strengthening capacities and other actions and policies that might influence the focal result, i.e. poverty reduction, would have to be identified; the interdependence of these actions or policies would need to be assessed, with weights assigned to each, including the Paris Declaration in relation to other inputs. See Stern, etal. op. cit., p. 50.
IV. Governance and Operational Architecture.

56. The governance of the evaluation will inevitably be closely tied to its operational architecture. The evaluation architecture follows from evaluation design – its tasks, methods and intended outputs. But in evaluations where there are many stakeholders, as in the case of the Paris Declaration, issues of power and influence can arise and the technicalities of operational architecture have to be reconciled with issues of governance. The Paris Declaration evaluation architecture and governance should support and strengthen “development partnerships” in their pursuit of aid effectiveness and development results. It should do this in ways that support joint ownership and, in line with the Accra Agenda for Action, do so in an inclusive way. As noted by the linkages study,

...[while] technical design and operational criteria remain important – experience with joint evaluations has underlined the methodological risks as well as benefits of multi-stakeholder involvement in an evaluation and the transaction costs of over-complex coordination arrangements.30

A. Governance and Management Structures, Roles and Responsibilities

1. Principles of governance

57. It will be up to the Reference Group for Phase 2 to decide the governance structure for the evaluation. The following proposed principles and options are drawn from the experience of the Phase 1 Evaluation as well as the suggestions contained in the linkages study.31 The governance of the evaluation should entail appropriate involvement, cooperation and ownership by the main stakeholders in the Paris Declaration evaluation. This is to ensure that the evaluation will be relevant to stakeholders, its results will be used and that evaluators will be able to access needed information. There is also a prior expectation that all stakeholders will be committed to the independence and professional credibility of the evaluation.

58. Stakeholders are understood to be the main development actors at country, regional and international levels who have endorsed the Paris Declaration and are active in its implementation. This could include central and other tiers of government; parliaments; donors and their agencies; and civil society based development actors – at country level this could include the private sector, the media and research institutes. Different but linked structures are needed at country and international levels.

2. Levels of governance

a. International Reference Group

59. An International Reference Group is proposed, analogous to the Phase 1 Reference Group. The International Reference Group would consist of a representative of each entity with a strong interest in the evaluation or actively participating in it, either through overseeing and coordinating participation at the country level or through contributing financially or in kind to the evaluation. Accordingly, every country comprising a case study would be represented, as would all donors and other organisations contributing to the evaluation.

A balance would be sought between partner country members and donor members in the International Reference Group. The Group would make evaluation-wide decisions, including:

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30 Op. cit., the entire paragraph is drawn from p. 40 and the indented portion is a direct quote except for the word in brackets.
1) Approval of the Management Group membership, the Evaluation Approach Paper, Budget, and TOR (with detailed country and consultant selection criteria and mechanisms for the Core Team, country and thematic and cross-cutting studies, and synthesis report).

2) Review of draft Country-level and Thematic, Cross-cutting reports.


60. While the International Reference Group would approve the items mentioned under category “1)” above, it would only review and provide comments on the quality, clarity and credibility of draft reports mentioned under categories “2)” and “3)”. In order to protect the independence and credibility of the evaluation, the Reference Group would not approve or disapprove the reports produced by independent evaluation teams.

b. Evaluation Management Group

61. An Evaluation Management Group is proposed, analogous to the Phase 1 “Management Group.” The composition and membership of the Evaluation Management Group would be endorsed by the International Reference Group. It would be relatively small – not more than 6 members plus the Evaluation Secretariat (see para 63) and would have a balanced composition of members from partner countries and donors. The Management Group would report to the Reference Group but would be separately charged with the responsibility to safeguard the quality and independence of the evaluation. The Evaluation Management Group would meet more frequently in person and by videoconference than the International Reference Group. Specific responsibilities include:

1) Develop criteria for selection of consultants for the various evaluation components (to be approved by International Reference Group)
2) Select the Core Team (see functions below)
3) Approve a common design template for country studies, as submitted by the Core Team
4) Oversee, and maintain regular interaction with, the Core Team, including being responsive to requests from the Team during the course of the Evaluation
5) Commission thematic and cross-cutting studies and other consultancies as necessary (e.g. select and appoint consultants and peer reviewers)
6) Develop and implement a dissemination and communication strategy
7) Oversee budget, spending and accounting for the Core Fund (see Section IV-G)
8) Prepare the agendas and approve documents submitted to Reference Group meetings.

c. Country Reference Groups

62. Country Partnership Reference Groups will consist of key government and non-government development stakeholders in a given partner country, including but not confined to the central government and key donors. The function of these groups would include:

1) selecting the members of country evaluation teams, based on criteria approved by the International Reference and Evaluation Management Groups
2) approving the design of the pertinent country study that incorporates (a) a common design template approved by the International Reference and Management Groups and (b) a module with country-specific evaluation questions
3) serving as a resource and to provide advice and feedback to teams, which includes review of the draft evaluation products.

32 One of the main concerns of the Phase 1 Synthesis Team was its limited interaction with the Management Group, which hindered the “building-up of the necessary trust and mutual understanding.” Danida, Evaluation of the Paris Declaration: Country/Development Partner Evaluations of phase 1: Survey of lessons learnt during evaluation conduct, Draft survey report, Copenhagen, December 2008, p.4.
63. The Evaluation Management Group will be supported by a small secretariat located at the Danish Institute for International Studies. The Head of the Secretariat will be an ex officio member of the Evaluation Management Group.

64. The evaluation may draw on two or more independent evaluation practitioners, experts and/or academics from donor and developing countries to serve as professional reviewers and to offer impartial methodological advice at various stages in the evaluation process.

**B. Evaluation Architecture (Operational Structure)**

65. It is proposed that the evaluation be organized operationally at two levels:

- A “Core Team” that under the guidance and approval of the Evaluation Management Group would undertake overall design and ensure coherence among country studies; interact closely with Partnership Teams; and design and conduct selected thematic and cross-cutting studies; and
- ‘Partnership Teams’ that under the guidance from the Core Team will be responsible for designing country studies and undertaking them.

66. Both the core and partnership teams would be chosen through open tender with the core team set up approximately 6-8 months in advance of ‘partnership teams’ and involved as one party together with partner country reference groups in the selection process for these teams. It should also be possible for ‘partnership teams’ to include regional experts. For example, there could be some shared team members across partnership teams within a region, even though these teams will need to have strong in-country roots.

1. **Core Team**

67. This team would be responsible for evaluation design and work planning in consultation with the Evaluation Management Group and country-based partnership teams. It would be selected on a competitive basis and bring together a high-level, multi-disciplinary evaluation team of international standing and be organized and managed by a single organisation contracted to do this work. The Core Team would consist of two-to-three professionals, at least one of whom would be from a partner country. An important responsibility of the Core Team would be to continuously interact with country “Partnership Teams” to ensure consistency and coherence across country studies. While the Core Team would propose criteria for the selection of Partnership Team members, it would not select those members, which would be left to the Country Reference Groups. The Team would be engaged for the length of the Phase 2 Evaluation, from September 2009 through September 2011.

68. The Core Team would need to:

1) Review and synthesize relevant pre-existing research and evaluations.
2) Provide a professional input into the selection of country-based partnership teams
3) Design for the approval of the Evaluation Management Group a common “template” for country case-study work, data gathering and fieldwork at country level that will be comparable and able to be synthesized.
4) Provide ongoing advice and support to Country Teams to ensure the coherence of the evaluation and the comparability of its different elements.
5) Propose, for the approval of the Evaluation Management Group, thematic and cross-cutting studies and conduct selected studies in cooperation with ‘partnership teams’ or other experts as appropriate.33

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33 See section below on “Possible thematic and cross-cutting studies”.
6) Propose, for the approval of the Evaluation Management Group, criteria for the selection of members of partnership and cross-cutting teams.
7) Synthesize evaluation results generated at country and cross-cutting levels and prepare the overall Evaluation Synthesis Report.

2. Country Partnership Teams

69. These teams would be competitively selected to:

1) Undertake country based studies approved by the County Reference Group, within the overall plan and common design template put forward by the Core Team and approved by the Country Reference, Evaluation Management and the International Reference Groups.
2) Undertake country-specific studies that they design as requested and approved by the Country Reference Group, linked to the priorities and circumstances of the particular country and development partnership.
3) Prepare reports on country studies, provide feedback to the country reference group and participate in regional ‘review’ and exchange events.
4) A tangible but minor share of the evaluation program at country level would address specific country evaluation priorities.
5) Each partnership team would have 3-4 members, a majority of whom would be from the specific country and/or another partner country.

C. Governance and Architecture Issues

70. The proposed structure would help to ensure the independence and quality of the Phase 2 Evaluation. This is particularly important if this complex effort to identify outcomes and results is to be successful and be seen as credible.

71. This structure will be more costly than Phase 1 – partly because more countries would be included and partly because of the introduction of the Core Team. Somewhat offsetting this additional cost is the fact that the Core Team would also be expected to prepare the Synthesis Report (the Phase 1 Synthesis Report was prepared by a separately commissioned independent team).

72. The linkages study highlights the potential advantages of engaging regional expertise in the Evaluation. Given the relative newness and the consequent lack of experience and human and financial capacity of relevant regional institutions, their ability to take on operational roles in the evaluation will in most cases be limited. On the other hand, they could serve as forums for taking up common issues of a design or methodological nature or reviewing tentative findings emerging from country studies in the region. The linkages study suggests the following menu of possibilities:

1) Having an ‘evaluation forum’ or ‘regional evaluation capacity centre’ in areas where the Paris Declaration is being implemented, such as Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia could provide a platform for horizontal or ‘peer-to-peer’ exchange in settings not perceived as dominated by donors.
2) Ideally, a ‘regional evaluation forum’ could also serve as an ‘observatory’ gathering regional information on aid effectiveness, and synthesizing existing regional case-studies and research as well as outputs of the Paris Declaration evaluation to promote the dissemination of good practice.
3) Evaluation skills that country-level evaluation activities will need to call on can be networked at regional as well as national levels.
4) A regional forum could help reinforce regional evaluation capacities, for example by involving regional professional evaluation association networks, such as the African Evaluation Association and the Latin American Network of Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization (ReLAC), and mobilizing regionally-based research institutes; and encouraging links between regional evaluation and research networks (e.g. the African Economic Research Association) and country based evaluation activities.

5) In regions where existing networks are less well-established, the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) and the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) may also be able to offer support, possibly working through regionally respected national institutions.34

6) Taking up this entire menu may be more than is feasible during the Phase 2 time frame. As noted above, the capacity of many regional institutions to take on such activities is likely to be very limited. It is proposed that the Reference Group discuss the subject of regional approaches—the potential and the limitations.

D. Evaluation Products

1. Country level studies

73. The Phase 1 Evaluation included eight country level studies. To provide the variation in the rate of Paris Declaration implementation, aid dependency, fragility of governance and regional location that would enhance the possibility of drawing inferences about the influence of Paris Declaration principles on policies, development outcomes and results, the number of countries should be substantially expanded to 15-to-20 countries. Taking into account the number of countries in each region, this range could permit six-to-eight African countries, five-to-seven Asian countries, and four-to-five Latin American countries. Donor performance on the ground in adhering to the Declaration principles should be assessed in the country level studies.

2. Possible thematic and cross-cutting studies

74. Selected thematic and cross-cutting studies could usefully be undertaken to investigate topics and issues relevant to the objectives of the Phase 2 Evaluation but which do not lend themselves to individual country studies. These studies would rely on secondary data and not likely to involve fieldwork. The monitoring surveys of implementation of the Paris Declaration provide a rich source of relevant information, in particular the September 2008 survey.35 Among the candidate studies that have been suggested are:

1) the previously mentioned “backward tracking” of success in relation to Paris Declaration-like initiatives36
2) transaction costs of Paris Declaration implementation for countries and donors
3) the roles of civil society (including umbrella media organisations) in Declaration implementation and development effectiveness37

34 Stern, et al., op. cit., see for example, p. 40.
36 “Backward-tracking” studies are already mentioned as part of the “evaluation model.” However, it may be possible to do such tracking in some non-country study countries by utilizing secondary sources, thus making these studies more like a cross-cutting, thematic study.
37 CSOs have burgeoned in number in recent decades. Therefore, as a practical manner, an assessment of the role of civil society could, where feasible, focus on CSO umbrella groups (including the media). Such umbrella groups will need to be representative of the spectrum of CSOs in the country.
4) donor harmonisation in relation to country ownership and alignment, including division of labour\textsuperscript{38} 
5) strategies for enhancing the sustainability of Paris Declaration implementation 
6) improved governance\textsuperscript{39} 

75. Budget and management constraints would probably limit the number of such studies that could be undertaken to three or four.

76. Another type of cross-cutting study would be to examine the roles of one or more “global funds” in implementing the Paris Declaration principles. Two funds that have been identified in this connection are: *The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)* and *The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.*

**3. Synthesis Report**

77. The Synthesis Report will draw together the findings and conclusions of the country level studies as well as the thematic and cross-cutting studies. It should also contain recommendations for follow-up by partner countries and by development partners (donors). Since Phase 2 will mark the conclusion of the Paris Declaration Evaluation as a whole, every effort should be made to also integrate the results of the earlier (Phase 1) thematic and cross-cutting studies conducted earlier. The Core Team will be responsible for preparing the Synthesis Report. It will be a free-standing, printed volume.

**E. Dissemination and Communication Plan**

78. While the Synthesis Report will draw on the thematic and cross-cutting studies, it is expected that the latter studies will also be issued and possibly printed as free-standing Evaluation products. The country level studies will be available as working papers (printed and/or electronic). Since the Phase 2 Evaluation represents the culminating evaluative effort of the overall Paris Declaration, a systematic, global dissemination and communication plan should be developed to encourage awareness, the exchange of good practice and lesson-learning. In addition to the 4\textsuperscript{th} HLF the results of the evaluation should be communicated in different ways to different constituencies. This should entail dissemination workshops, discussions, and interviews in the main partner country regions as well as in Europe and North America. Ideally, there should be one workshop in each of two sub-regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The executive summary of the Synthesis Report should be translated into a number of widely read languages (e.g. Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese and Spanish, in addition to English) and distributed widely. The use of newspaper, periodical, film, and broadcast media should also be explored.

79. A detailed dissemination and communication plan should be finalised by January 2011.

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\textsuperscript{38} In order to improve harmonisation and the division of labour among donors aimed for in the EU Code of Conduct (2007), the EU has launched the Fast-tracking Division of Labour Initiative involving 30 partner countries and 12 EU donors. Progress with in-country and cross country division of labour is being monitored and reviewed. The results of the monitoring/review exercise will provide a useful input for the Phase 2 Evaluation.

\textsuperscript{39} Governance is a complex issue with various components (such as public administration reform) and varying time dimensions. A Phase 2 thematic study could clarify what aspects of governance could be, and have been, furthered by implementation of the Paris Declaration in the short-term, medium-term and long-term.
**F. Timetable**

80. The proposed design has implications for the timing and duration of the Phase 2 Evaluation. It would follow that:

- The evaluation is organised in stages with a preparatory stage; a main evaluation stage and a reporting stage aligned with the High Level Forum planned to take place in the third quarter of 2011.

- The scope, design and governance and administration of the Evaluation should be decided by early 2009 to ensure that the central team is contracted by mid-2009 in order to undertake preparatory work and detailed planning, and that country and thematic and cross-cutting teams are contracted by early 2010.

- While the Phase 2 Evaluation will be a complex effort, it should be noted that the time period for implementation for the individual studies is the full year of 2010 – about twice as long as for the Phase 1 Evaluation\(^\text{40}\).

**2008**

November 18  DAC Evaluation Network meeting: Briefing on Phase 2. Solicit indications of donors' and agencies' interest in participation and funding.

November 26  DAC WP-EFF meeting: Briefing on Phase 2. Solicit indications of partner countries’ interest in participation.

December  Develop Evaluation Approach Paper Outline, first draft, notional overall budget, etc.

**2009**

January  Develop detailed Approach Paper, prepare for Reference Group Meeting.

Feb. 11-13  Reference Group Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, to discuss and decide on evaluation governance, budget, design and process.\(^\text{41}\)

March – April Prepare detailed Terms of Reference and work plans.

End of April  Reference Group Meeting to agree on Terms of Reference

May – July  Tendering and contracting the Core Team.

September  Core Team in place and operational.

Sept – Dec  Regional workshops: Establishment of Country Reference Groups; further detailed planning, tendering and contracting country and thematic/cross-cutting teams.

**2010**

Jan – October  Evaluation country studies and other (thematic and cross-cutting) studies.

December  Reference Group Workshop on “emerging findings” prepared by the Core Team based on the component evaluation and studies.

\(^\text{40}\) In the Phase 1 Synthesis Report, owing to timing differences, it was not possible to incorporate the findings and conclusions of three of the four Phase 1 cross-cutting studies.

\(^\text{41}\) The meeting in New Zealand coincides with a DAC Evaluation Network workshop on evaluation quality standards, which will enable partner country members to participate in both events.
2011

January       Finalise detailed dissemination and communication plan.
Jan - April   Preparation of draft Synthesis report
April         Reference Group Meeting to comment on draft Synthesis report
May           Finalisation of Synthesis Report
Sept/Oct??   4th HLF
Sept - Dec    Dissemination activities (workshops, discussions, interviews, wide distribution of Synthesis Report and Summary).

G. Preliminary Budget

81. A tentative budget for the Phase 2 Evaluation is based on the costs of the Phase 1 Evaluation adjusted for changes in structure between the two phases – mainly the added number of country level studies and the addition of the Core Team to Phase 2 and the absence of a separate synthesis team that was part of Phase 1. The budget estimates shown in the table below will be revised in accordance with the outcome of the Reference Group meeting in February 2009.

82. As shown in the table below, the estimated total cost is € 4,785,000 (US$ 6,233,500) and the funding need is € 4,695,000 (US$ 6,103,000) for the period 1March 2009 – 31 December 201142.

83. The core cost is budgeted at € 2,535,000 (USD 3,295,500,000). It is suggested that the core costs be funded through a fund held by the Secretariat at DIIS, as in Phase I.

84. Some items, such as the costs of Reference and Management Groups’ meetings and regional workshops are difficult to predict with precision, as some meetings may be back-to-back with other meetings that will reduce the cost. The cost of the Core Team is expected to include between two and three professionals throughout the evaluation, from September 2009 to September 2011. The budget estimate for special studies is very tentative, depending on the number of studies/consultancies decided upon. Given that the Phase 2 Evaluation Synthesis Report will represent the culmination of the entire evaluation effort, the “Dissemination and Communication” item is estimated somewhat higher than for Phase 1. It still needs to be adjusted depending on the number of languages of the final reports (in Phase 1 the final report was issued in three languages only).

85. The cost of country level studies is based on 15 studies at € 80,000 (USD 104,000) each. This is a very preliminary estimate, both in terms of number of studies and unit cost. As in Phase I these may be funded by individual donors or they may be funded from the core fund (in which case the core fund needs to be increased accordingly).

86. Four new donor HQ studies are included in the budget at € 80,000 (USD 104,000) each. These will be self-financed by each donor, as was the case in Phase 1.

87. The continuation of the Secretariat has been secured by a grant of € 740,000 (US$ 962,000) from the Netherlands.

42. The costs for the 1st Reference Group meeting in Auckland and some costs for preparation of the Approach Paper have been covered from the Phase I budget. Consultant costs for preparing the Approach Paper have been covered by the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank.
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Evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration

Mary Chinery-Hesse, Chief Advisor to H.E. The President of the Republic of Ghana

The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness calls for “… independent cross-country monitoring and evaluation processes to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives.”

This first phase evaluation complements the international monitoring work with a qualitative assessment of progress and obstacles in implementing the Declaration in its first two years. It focuses on ways to strengthen the performance of both countries and aid providers, and prepares the ground for a second phase evaluation by 2011 on the effects of better aid in advancing development objectives.

The evaluation is a multi-partner effort. It comprises eight country level evaluations of how the Declaration’s principles are being applied on the ground, and eleven donor evaluations focusing on changes in their policies and guidelines. All the participating countries and donor agencies volunteered to take part. The findings and recommendations will be of wide interest: First and foremost to the more than one hundred authorities that have endorsed the Paris Declaration, primarily the governments of partner countries and ministers and senior managers responsible for development agencies. More broadly, the results should be useful to all who have a stake in ensuring more effective aid: other parts of governments, new and emerging donors, civil society and private sector actors in development, journalists and opinion leaders, as well as managers and operational staff in partner countries and development agencies.

The synthesis authors stress that the individual evaluation reports merit wide national and international attention, in addition to the direct value they will have for the countries and agencies where they have been conducted. Their executive summaries are annexed to this report, and the full texts are available in the enclosed CD-ROM.

Synthesis report
EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION

PHASE ONE

SYNTHESIS REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bernard Wood, Team Leader
Dorte Kabell
Nansozi Muwanga
Francisco Sagasti

July 2008
The Paris Declaration poses an important challenge both to the world of development cooperation in general and to the field of development evaluation. Compared with previous joint statements on aid harmonisation and alignment, it provides a practical, action-oriented roadmap with specific targets to be met by 2010. The number of countries and international organisations participating in the High Level Forum and putting their signature to the joint commitments contained in the Declaration was unprecedented and reflected a progressive widening of the range of voices in the aid effectiveness debate.

Alongside its strong focus on monitoring, the Paris Declaration also highlights the importance of undertaking an independent joint cross-country evaluation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives.

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the Paris Declaration and its contribution to aid effectiveness and ultimately to development effectiveness. In order to provide a proper basis for assessment, the evaluation is being carried out in two phases:

- **Phase One** has been conducted with the purpose of strengthening aid effectiveness by assessing changes of behaviour and identifying better practices for partners and donors in implementing the Paris commitments.

- **Phase Two** will be conducted with the purpose of assessing the Declaration’s contribution to aid effectiveness and development results.

The first phase of the evaluation is now completed and we hope it will contribute constructively to the ongoing aid effectiveness policy debates and, in particular, to the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness which will take place in Accra in Ghana in September 2008. The second phase is planned to start in early 2009 and to be completed in time for the 4th High Level Forum in 2011.

Phase One comprised eight *Country level evaluations* designed within a common evaluation framework to ensure comparability of findings across countries while allowing flexibility for country specific interests. These evaluations looked at the actual implementation of the Paris Declaration in concrete settings and were undertaken in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Vietnam (the Vietnamese study was an Independent Monitoring Exercise designed and executed separately). The country level evaluations were managed by the respective partner country and most were supported, both financially and substantively, by donors.

The country level evaluations were supplemented by eleven *Donor and multilateral development agency evaluations* which looked at how the Paris Declaration is represented in their policies and guidelines. These evaluations were mainly based on document reviews and supplemented by interviews with key players and were undertaken in the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the UNDG. (The UNDG conducted a joint headquarters and country level evaluation). They were managed by the respective agencies’ evaluation departments.

The country and agency evaluations were reviewed by two independent advisers: Rikke Ingrid Jensen and John Eriksson.

The present report is a synthesis of these nineteen evaluations. It was prepared by an independent team comprising Dorte Kabell (Denmark), Nansozi Muwanga (Uganda), Francisco Sagasti (Peru) and Bernard Wood, team leader (Canada).

The Synthesis Report was reviewed by Mary Chinery-Hesse, Adviser to the President of Ghana and formerly Deputy Director General of the International Labour Organisation and Bruce Murray, Adjunct Professor at the Asian Institute of Management and former Director General of Evaluation at the Asian Development Bank.
Strategic guidance to the evaluation has been provided by an international Reference Group comprising members of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, representatives from partner countries, principally the members of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, and representatives for civil society. The Reference Group convened three times in the course of 2007 and 2008. It has also had the opportunity to comment on successive drafts of the Synthesis Report.

The Reference Group appointed a small Management Group tasked with the day-to-day coordination and management of the overall evaluation process. The Management Group also supported the donors and partner countries conducting their evaluations. The Reference Group and Management Group were co-chaired by Sri Lanka and Denmark and were supported by a small secretariat hosted by Denmark.

The Synthesis Team took guidance from the Management Group regarding such issues as interpretation of terms of reference and operational matters, including time-frames and budget constraints. As specified in its mandate, the team also gave full consideration and responses to substantive comments from both the Reference Group and the Management Group, but the responsibility for the content of this final report, is solely that of the Synthesis Team.

This evaluation was initiated on the premise that – in spite of the complexity of evaluating the outcomes of a political declaration – it would be possible to identify useful lessons and actionable recommendations for the governments, agencies and individuals concerned with development effectiveness. We believe that the evaluation has identified such lessons and recommendations. Moreover, the evaluation process itself has been an example of the Paris Declaration’s basic principles of partnership and ownership and has contributed to better insights and dialogue with the countries and agencies that participated.

It is now up to the governments, agencies and civil society groups for whom this evaluation has been prepared to apply the lessons and recommendations.

Velayuthan Sivagnanasothy Niels Dabelstein
Co-chairs of the Reference and Management Groups

1 The Reference Group comprises: Asian Development Bank, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Denmark, EURODAD, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mali, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, OECD/DAC, the Philippines, Reality of Aid, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom, UNDP/UNDG, USA, Vietnam, The World Bank and Zambia.

2 The Management Group comprises: Niels Dabelstein, Evaluation Department, Danida/Secretariat for the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, Denmark; Ted Klieser, Senior Evaluation Officer, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands; Saraswathi Menon, Director, Evaluation Office, UNDP; Velayuthan Sivagnanasothy, Director General, Department of Foreign Aid and Budget Monitoring, Ministry of Plan Implementation, Sri Lanka; and Advocate Elaine Venter, Director, International Development Cooperation, National Treasury, South Africa.
Purpose and background

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, endorsed in March 2005, is now recognised as a landmark international agreement aimed at improving the quality of aid and its impact on development. It lays out a road-map of practical commitments, organised around five key principles of effective aid:

a. Ownership by countries
b. Alignment with countries’ strategies, systems and procedures
c. Harmonisation of donors’ actions
d. Managing for results, and
e. Mutual accountability

Each has a set of indicators of achievement. The Declaration also has built-in provisions for the regular monitoring and independent evaluation of how the commitments are being carried out.

This report synthesises the results of the first evaluation of the early implementation of the Paris Declaration, from March 2005 to late 2007. It comprises extensive assessments in eight countries, together with “lighter” studies on eleven Development Partner or “donor” agencies, focussing at the headquarters level. Participation by all countries and agencies was voluntary. An international management group managed the evaluation and received guidance from a reference group drawn from 31 countries and institutions. Since it is an early evaluation, the focus is on ways of improving and enhancing implementation, rather than giving any definitive judgment about effectiveness.

This evaluation complements a parallel monitoring process. The Monitoring Surveys are intended to monitor what is happening with respect to implementation against selected indicators, while this evaluation is intended to shed light on why and how things are happening as they are. In spite of a number of limitations, which are acknowledged in the report, the evaluation results make a significant contribution to that aim.

It should be stressed that no synthesis could hope to capture the full wealth of information, perceptions and insights, and not least remarkably frank assessments, in the individual nineteen reports on which it is based. These reports have a value in themselves in advancing the Paris Declaration in the countries and agencies where they have been conducted. Their detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations merit wide national and international attention. Their executive summaries are annexed to this report, and the full texts are available in the enclosed CD-ROM.

The evaluation questions

The evaluation has focused on answering three central questions:

- What important trends or events are emerging in the early implementation of the Paris Declaration?
- What major influences are affecting the behaviour of countries and their Development Partners in relation to implementing their Paris commitments?
- Is implementation so far leading toward the Declaration’s five commitments of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability? If so, how and why? If not, why not?

All the evaluation teams were expected to examine three “enabling conditions” for implementing the Paris Declaration:

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A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY: The terms used in the terms of reference for these two groups were “countries” or “partner countries” for countries receiving aid and “Development Partners” for the countries and agencies providing it. This reflects the understanding that the old terms of “recipient” and “donor” (and “aid” for that matter) implied an undue measure of beneficence in the relationship, and carried undesirable connotations. Nonetheless, the repeated use of “partners” for both groups (several hundred times in this report) has been found to create enormous confusion, especially for its intended non-specialist readership. For the purposes of this report, “countries” or “partner countries” will refer to the countries receiving aid, and the admittedly imperfect term “donors” (which is used in the Paris Declaration) or “development agencies” will usually be used to signify those countries and multilateral agencies providing aid. Other partners, such as non-governmental organisations and private sector actors, will be specifically identified.
• The commitment and leadership being applied
• The capacities to act
• The incentives to do so.

**Context is key**
The Paris Declaration in 2005 was not the beginning of international concern for improving the effectiveness of aid and its contribution to development. The Paris Declaration was, however, a watershed in formalising and refocusing efforts to develop an international plan of action with unprecedented breadth of support. It was finally spurred by a long-brewing crisis of confidence in the field of aid in the 1990s, and several major global policy responses. Joint actions were needed, based on a new set of relationships between countries and their “Development Partners”. A majority of the countries and agencies evaluated here were already among the acknowledged leaders in aid effectiveness reforms, so that the Declaration came as a major milestone rather than as a point of departure. Context is also dynamic: Several studies highlight substantial shifts and/or uncertainties in implementation performance that can be attributed to political changes and pressures. One other crucial, and changing, part of the context, not yet properly analysed, is the effect of non-aid resource flows and growing aid flows which may remain outside the Paris Declaration frameworks (particularly from major foundations and other private sources, non-traditional official donors, and development NGOs.)

**Implementation of the five commitments: findings and conclusions**

**Ownership by countries**
The principle of ownership has gained much greater prominence since 2005, although the evaluations show that the practical meaning and boundaries of country ownership and leadership often remain difficult to define. In both partner countries and donor administrations engagement and leadership at the political level do most to determine how they will act to strengthen country ownership in practice.

All the partner country evaluations indicate a strengthening of national development policies and strategies since 2005, providing a stronger base for ownership. Yet even the countries with the most experience face difficulties in translating these national strategies into sector strategies and operational and decentralised programmes, and in coordinating donors. So while national ownership is strong in these countries, it is also narrow. In practice, it remains heavily weighted in favour of central government players rather than provincial and local authorities, even in fields that are supposed to be devolved. The ownership situation also varies across sectors, with sectors such as education, health, energy and infrastructure remaining primarily government-led, while civil society and marginalised groups find greater space for partnership in cross-sector and humanitarian areas of cooperation and development.

Since 2005, all the donors evaluated have taken further steps to acknowledge the importance of partner country ownership and to ensure that it is respected in practice. At the same time, most donors’ own political and administrative systems are found to set differing limits on their actual behaviour to support country ownership.

To remain useful in advancing the implementation of the Paris Declaration, the concept of ownership in this context needs to be approached not as an absolute condition, but as a process or a continuum. The Monitoring Survey’s indicator on ownership relates to only one simple dimension of this complex picture.

**Alignment with country strategies, institutions and procedures**
Development agency and partner country evaluations reveal that, despite clear commitments to alignment, implementation of the various components of alignment set out in the Paris Declaration has been highly uneven. Progress is more visible in aligning aid strategies with national priorities, less so in aligning aid allocations, using and building country systems, reducing parallel Project Implementation Units and coordinating support to strengthen capacity. Among bilateral donors, there is only sparse evidence of improvements in aid predictability and untying. As with ownership, the leadership exercised by the host partner country is the prime determinant of how far and how fast alignment will proceed.

The real and perceived risks and relative weaknesses of country systems are serious obstacles to further progress with alignment. Efforts by most countries to strengthen national processes and systems are not yet sufficient to support the needed progress, and not enough donors are ready to help strengthen these systems by actually using them. On the other hand, donors do appear ready to continue and increase financial and technical assistance for the further capacity strengthening required.

**Harmonisation of donors’ actions**
The evaluations do not suggest any backsliding on harmonisation, but neither do they indicate any overall trend toward progress, with the exception that the European Union Code of Conduct of 2007 is seen as having strong potential to bring further harmonisation among its members. The responsibility for changes to implement harmonisation goals falls primarily on donors. At the same time, the evaluations make clear that, as in other areas, leadership, initiative and support from host partner countries are important, and often indispensable, factors for progress.

Debates about the particular instruments of budget support – especially in a number of countries and circles where these instruments have become highly controversial – run the risk

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2 Indicator 1: “At least 75% of partner countries have operational development strategies. (By 2010)”

3 Budget support is generally aid provided through the country’s own financial management systems, and not earmarked for specific projects or expenditure items in the same ways as in traditional aid modalities.
of overshadowing the broader harmonisation agenda and diverting attention from a number of achievements and other harmonisation needs and commitments spelt out in the Paris Declaration.

Basic issues of confidence and trust in others’ systems need to be satisfied for harmonisation to meet expectations. This is true even for those donors who do not have to overcome “harmonisation” problems within their own systems, major formal restrictions on entering into harmonised arrangements, or strong pressures for maintaining direct visibility and accountability for their own aid.

Finally, some findings strongly suggest that the role and importance of harmonisation within the Paris Declaration agenda may be changing, increasingly taking a back seat to the push for greater alignment with country systems.

Managing for development results

Many of the evaluations have documented and helped explain the relative lack of attention and progress recorded in implementing the Paris commitment toward managing for results. The evaluations are virtually unanimous that progress is slow toward meeting the Monitoring Survey’s benchmark for what partner countries need to do.4 Several studies raised the need to strengthen statistical capacities and to use them more effectively for decisions.

At the same time, the evaluations also re-focus attention on the Paris Declaration’s other concerns: What donors need to do to gear their own systems and their active support to more effective country systems. Given the weak capacity in this area that is also reported, it may not be surprising that different frameworks for results on the two sides are seen as a constraint to progress.

More encouragingly, where information and platforms for participation exist5, it is easier for donors to make progress in meeting their own Paris commitments for the better management of aid for results.

Finally, the recognition that significant actions by partner countries in areas related to managing for results may in fact be under-reported suggests that there are also problems in how the requirements to fulfil these particular commitments are being presented and/or understood.

Mutual accountability

All the evaluations convey a sense that the joint processes for tracking progress and resolving problems fall short in terms of mutual accountability. In order to capture what the evaluations actually said about the implementation of the mutual accountability commitment, it is necessary to look beyond the single indicator selected for the Monitoring Survey6, and go back to the carefully framed and reciprocal package of mutual commitments in the Paris Declaration itself. It shows that the key questions about mutual accountability that otherwise seem unclear or potentially divisive – particularly regarding who is accountable to whom and for what – had been anticipated and opened up for mutual review by the Declaration.

The evaluations themselves show that, although they all view mutual accountability as a complex puzzle, more pieces of the solution are actually at hand than is generally assumed. The synthesis report identifies a half-dozen types of mechanism that are already being used to varying degrees, and could be better harnessed to fulfil this commitment, on which the credibility of the Paris Declaration depends. Evaluations, and especially joint evaluations, should also play a greater role.

The evaluations show that in this pivotal commitment area of mutual accountability, the obstacles limiting progress are political in nature, primarily related to the potentials for embarrassment or interference. Political leaders need to re-engage to get it on track. Among other benefits, such re-engagement should help clarify the intended role and limits of the Monitoring Survey in the ongoing assessment of implementation, and correct some of the unintended effects of the ways it has been used to date.

Overall conclusions

The Paris Declaration is a political agenda for action, not just a technical agreement. The reports have underlined the fact that the entire Paris Declaration and its commitments are political undertakings. In the difficult processes required for implementation, real issues of power and political economy come into play, in many cases requiring political solutions.

As examples of the political steps needed, most donors have yet to prepare their publics and adapt their legislation and regulations as necessary to allow for:

• Putting less emphasis on visibility for their national efforts and tying aid to their own suppliers;
• Accepting and managing risks in relying on country and other donor systems rather than insisting on applying their own;
• Agreeing to delegate greater decision-making power to in-country staff;
• Assuring more predictable aid flows; and
• Finding ways to resolve political disputes with partner countries without undermining long-term relationships.

For their part, most partner countries need:

• Stronger political engagement to assert more fully their leadership in aid alignment, coordination and harmonisation, accepting the risks and managing the effects in their relations with donors.

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4 To have in place by 2010 transparent and “monitorable” performance assessment frameworks to assess progress against a) the national development strategies, and b) sector programmes.

5 As in the example of Uganda.

6 Indicator 12: “All partner countries have mutual assessment reviews in place. (By 2010).”
To ensure that responsibility for development and aid is shared more widely between different parts and levels of government, as well as with legislatures, civil society and the private sector, and citizens at large.

It is a shared agenda, with some divergences. This evaluation reveals only a few consistent differences between the perspectives of country and donor representatives (especially those responsible for programmes and on the ground) on the key issues examined. Three key points where they diverge are:

- What is really limiting the use of country systems to manage aid?
- The relative priorities among ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability; and
- The degree of concern over transitional and increased transaction costs to date in changing systems to live up to Paris Declaration commitments.

Strengthening capacity and trust in country systems is a major issue. One of the most important obstacles to implementing the Declaration is the concern about weaknesses of capacities and systems in partner countries. This obstacle is repeatedly identified in almost all of the evaluations, even though the countries assessed here include some of those with the strongest capacities and most advanced systems among all partner countries. This indicates that the concern may at least in part be the result of outdated perceptions among some donors.

Expectations and uses of the Paris Declaration differ. In the words of one of the evaluations, views of the Declaration vary from it being a “statement of intent” all the way to it being a set of “non-negotiable decrees.” The widespread tendency to focus almost exclusively on selected indicator targets feeds the latter view. Both country and donor partners are evidently struggling to get a firm grasp on how to actually use the Declaration as implementation proceeds in different settings.

How to deal with different contexts is an unresolved issue. A general finding across the evaluations is that a better balance needs to be struck in recognising and adapting the Paris Declaration to different contexts, while maintaining its incentives for the most important collective and collaborative improvements.

The appropriate uses and limits of the monitoring indicators need to be more clearly recognised. The evaluations show that misunderstanding the role and place of the Monitoring Survey and its indicators has had serious unintended effects in narrowing the focus of attention, debate and perhaps action to a limited set of measures.

There are important synergies and tensions between commitments. Across the board, there are strong indications that movement on the different commitments is in fact mutually reinforcing, but there are also signs of some differences in priorities and possible trade-offs. As implementation advances on several fronts, it is becoming clearer that countries expect donor harmonisation to be country-led, and to be geared to support alignment. Some of the donors are perceived to be emphasising managing for results, selected aspects of mutual accountability and harmonisation, while partner countries tend to be most concerned with strengthening alignment and ownership.

The challenges of transition and transaction costs in implementation need to be tackled. Without calling into question the directions and measures specified by the Paris Declaration to strengthen aid effectiveness, all of the donor evaluations record that these changes are resulting in difficult transitional adjustments and increased transaction costs in managing their aid programmes. The studies suggest that harmonisation and division of labour have not yet advanced to the point of yielding much relief. Partner countries’ evaluations are not yet clear about the burden of the new demands of strategic leadership being placed on them, or old ones of managing multiple donor interventions perhaps being alleviated. Overall, the evaluations do not yet yield a clear view as to whether the net transaction costs of aid will ultimately be reduced from the pre-2005 situation as originally anticipated as a key reason for the reforms, and how the expected benefits (if they exist) will be shared between countries and their Development Partners.

Partner country assessments of the Paris Declaration as a tool for aid effectiveness

Six country studies included chapters evaluating the Paris Declaration as a tool for aid effectiveness, specifically examining the clarity, relevance, and internal coherence of its provisions. The reports find that the Paris Declaration is still really clear only to those stakeholders working with it directly. This highlights the need for broader engagement and popularisation to avert the danger of it becoming a subject only for dialogue among bureaucrats, divorced from the political landscape in which it must be carried forward.

Countries raised concerns about the clarity, validity and purpose of some of the indicators being used to monitor implementation. They challenged the perceived notion that “one size fits all.” Some of the Paris Declaration’s targets are deemed unhelpful, unrealistic or insufficiently adapted to diverse conditions. As examples, informants cast doubt on such issues as: The actual capacity of governments in some countries or donor field staffs to carry the new tasks; the donors’ ability to provide more predictable aid flows; the feasibility or merit of phasing out parallel project implementation units across the board; or of phasing down projects (which are still seen by some as the best vehicle for reaching some vulnerable groups).

The Paris Declaration is relevant to some of the main issues regarding the effectiveness and strategic use of aid, and it encourages greater impetus toward development goals. At the same time the Declaration is not necessarily designed to offer any tailored solutions to some of the other most pressing...
development preoccupations, such as: The management of
devolution and de-centralisation; human resource and cap-
acity issues; new thematic thrusts in development; sustainabil-
ity of the results of development projects and programmes;
environmental issues; gender concerns; or better manage-
ment of non-aid financing for development. Simply put, while
the Paris Declaration has relevance within its particular sphere
of aid effectiveness, it is far from being seen as a panacea for
many countries’ main development concerns.

The Declaration is seen by some as too prescriptive on coun-
tries and not binding enough on donors, and some point to a
continuing perception that it is “donor-driven”. All see a need
to ensure that action on the different commitments is made
complementary and mutually reinforcing, and to reduce the
potential for incoherence and potential conflicts between dif-
ferent commitments and implementation measures.

Are the required commitments, capacities
and incentives in place?
All of the individual evaluations assessed the “enabling condi-
tions” – commitment, capacities and incentives – available in
countries and agencies to support successful implementation
of the Paris Declaration. The three tables in Section VII syn-
thesise in one place the overview from the evaluations of the
“whys” and “hows” of performance. It should be stressed that
the variations in performance – and of the supporting com-
mitment, capacities and incentives in different countries and
especially agencies – are extremely wide. This is because the
issue of managing aid better is only part (and often a relatively
small part) of managing development priorities in all the part-
cer countries assessed. These countries find the Declaration
more or less useful for a variety of purposes, and the enabling
conditions put in place will naturally reflect those variations.

A few development agencies are now internalising effect-
ive aid as their “raison d’être”, and the Paris Declaration is a
constant guide to how they organise and do their work. For
other donor agencies, the evaluations find that aid effective-
ness concerns do not always prevail over institutional inertia
or other foreign policy or commercial objectives in their aid
programmes, and Paris Declaration approaches are not fully
internalised or applied. The summary assessments combine
the findings and conclusions from both country and donor
assessments, since their self-assessments and mutual assess-
ments arrived at remarkably consistent results.

Key lessons
1. To counter the growing risks of bureaucratisation and “aid
effectiveness fatigue” that many of the evaluations warn
against, concrete measures are needed to re-energise and
sustain high-level political engagement in the imple-
mentation of aid effectiveness reforms, both in countries
and in Development Partner systems. Faster movement
from rhetoric to action by both partner governments and
donors is now crucial to retaining the Paris Declaration’s
credibility.

2. Successful implementation of the Declaration’s reforms is
much more likely in countries where understanding and
involvement are extended beyond narrow circles of spe-
cialists, as has been shown in some promising advances
in involving legislatures and civil society in both partner
and donor countries. Within many countries, regional and
local levels of government are also increasingly important
actors and must be fully involved.

3. Other factors for successful implementation in countries
often include the role of “champions” who ensure that the
necessary capacity is deployed, and lead the vital drive
to align aid with the country’s budgetary and account-
ability systems. Among donors, the changes in regulations
and practices to delegate greater authority and capacity
to field offices have been the most important enabling
conditions for successful implementation.

4. Strengthening both the actual capacities of partner coun-
try systems to manage aid effectively, and the interna-
tional recognition of those capacities where they already exist,
are now key requirements for advancing the implementa-
tion of the Paris Declaration reforms. Using those systems,
while accepting and managing the risks involved, is the
best way that donors can help build both capacity and
trust.

5. The integrated, balanced and reciprocal character of the
full package of Paris Declaration commitments needs to
be strongly re-affirmed and applied, and the Monitoring
Survey and indicators placed in their proper perspective
as part of the overall agenda.

6. To offset the image of the Paris Declaration as a “one size
fits all” prescription for rigid compliance, there is a need
to reiterate and demonstrate that its guidance can and
should be adapted to particular country circumstances,
while also clarifying the features to be maintained in
common.

Key recommendations
These recommendations are derived directly from the syn-
thesised findings and conclusions of the evaluation, building
both on examples of good practice and revealed weaknesses
in the different countries and Development Partner pro-
grammes evaluated. They are set at a strategic level, and are
likely to be applicable to a much wider range of countries and
donor agencies than those directly evaluated, a number of
which are already at the forefront of reform.

It is recommended that countries and partner agencies take
the following steps for the remainder of the Paris Declaration
review period up to 2010, establishing a clear basis for the
five-year assessment of progress and further course correc-
tions as needed at that time.
It is recommended that partner country authorities:

1. Announce, before the end of 2008, a manageable number of prioritised steps they will take to strengthen their leadership of aid relationships up to 2010 in the light of lessons from monitoring, evaluations and other stocktaking to date.

2. Build on the interim reviews of implementation in 2008 to ensure that they have in place a continuing transparent mechanism, ideally anchored in the legislature, for political monitoring and public participation around aid management and reform.

3. Give clear guidance to donors who are supporting capacity strengthening on their priorities for assistance to manage aid more effectively, consistent with their main development concerns.

4. Work out, by 2010 at the latest, adapted systems of managing for results that will best serve their domestic planning, management and accountability needs, and provide a sufficient basis for harnessing donors’ contributions.

It is recommended that Development Partner/donor authorities:

5. Update their legislatures and publics in 2008 on progress to date with aid effectiveness reforms, underlining the need and plans for further concrete changes to be implemented before 2010 to accept and support country leadership in aid implementation and greater donor harmonisation.

6. Before the end of 2008, announce their further detailed plans to delegate by 2010 to their field offices sufficient decision-making authority, appropriately skilled staff and other resources to support and participate fully in better-aligned and harmonised country-led cooperation.

7. Specify their concrete planned steps to improve, by 2010 at the latest, the timeliness, completeness and accuracy of their reporting and projections for aid flows to feed into the planning, budgeting and reporting cycles of partner countries, together with other donors. Make the necessary provisions for multi-year allocations, commitments, or firm projections.

8. Provide supplementary budgets, staffing and training up to 2010 to help their own programmes adjust for the transitional and new demands and transaction costs and learning needs that are being reported as major concerns in implementing the Paris agenda.

9. Allocate special resources (budgets and coordinated technical assistance) to support and reinforce countries’ prioritised efforts to strengthen their own capacities to implement more effective cooperation. Work with partners to design and manage other interim means of implementation (such as project implementation units) so that they steadily enhance capacity and country ownership.

It is recommended that the organisers of the Phase Two evaluation on implementation:

10. Design the evaluation strategically to: Pursue the results and dilemmas found during Phase One and address squarely the question of “aid effectiveness”, assessing whether aid is contributing to better development outcomes and impacts (development effectiveness). It should rely on representative country evaluations and apply a consistent core methodology.
“This Synthesis Report is a coherent strategic document that facilitates the sharing of experience and good practices among countries and their development partners. The lessons and recommendations proposed are of longer term strategic importance, charting a sound way forward for improved application of the Paris Declaration.

The country evaluations demonstrate that the Paris Declaration has made a positive impact on the management of development assistance. The Declaration has exhibited its potential as a rallying pole for refocusing, reinforcing and legitimizing positive processes of aid administration, for maximum impact.

In order that the Paris Declaration retain credibility, however, it is important that both Governments and Development Partners move much faster from rhetoric to action in applying the principles.”

Mary Chinery-Hesse, Chief Advisor to H.E. The President of the Republic of Ghana

Countries and agencies evaluated

Asian Development Bank • Australia • Bangladesh • Bolivia • Denmark • Finland • France • Germany • Luxemburg • Netherlands • New Zealand • the Philippines • Senegal • South Africa • Sri Lanka • Uganda • United Kingdom • UNDP/UNDG • Vietnam

Ownership, Alignment, Harmonisation, Results and Accountability