

RESULTS-BASED DECISION MAKING IN DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

Effective Results Frameworks – Drivers and Users of Results Information ***Providers' use of results information for accountability, communication, direction and learning*** **DAC/DCD workshop, 12-13 September 2016, OECD, Paris**

Key messages from the workshop – and the way forward **19 September 2016**

80+ representatives of 27 DAC member and participant countries, six additional development co-operation providers, two research organisations and the OECD's development cluster participated in the workshop. Its purpose and agenda are attached, together with a link to the list of participants. The workshop delivered four key messages, building upon the analytical framework summarised in Figure 1. For each message, we have indicated the planned follow-up by the OECD/DCD results team. Finally, the purpose and attendance at the next workshop in February 2017 are suggested as part of an updated programme of work.

1. Development co-operation providers face common challenges in their results frameworks

Providers share a number of challenges in developing their results frameworks. Many providers – large and small, bilateral and multilateral – are updating their results frameworks. Some develop second iterations of their corporate or strategic results frameworks. Many are introducing standardised or context-specific indicators to capture quantitative results information against the evolving goals of their development co-operation. Overall, providers are still in a learning curve on their results approaches and frameworks.

The main purpose of the use of results information is *accountability* and *communication*, aimed primarily at domestic audiences, political and corporate management, and executive boards in the case of multilateral providers. There is a need to focus more on purposeful use of results information also for *direction* (including policy making) and *learning* (including quality assurance), as outlined below. The workshop confirmed the need for continued exchange among providers of their lessons learned on results frameworks at country, sector, thematic and corporate levels.

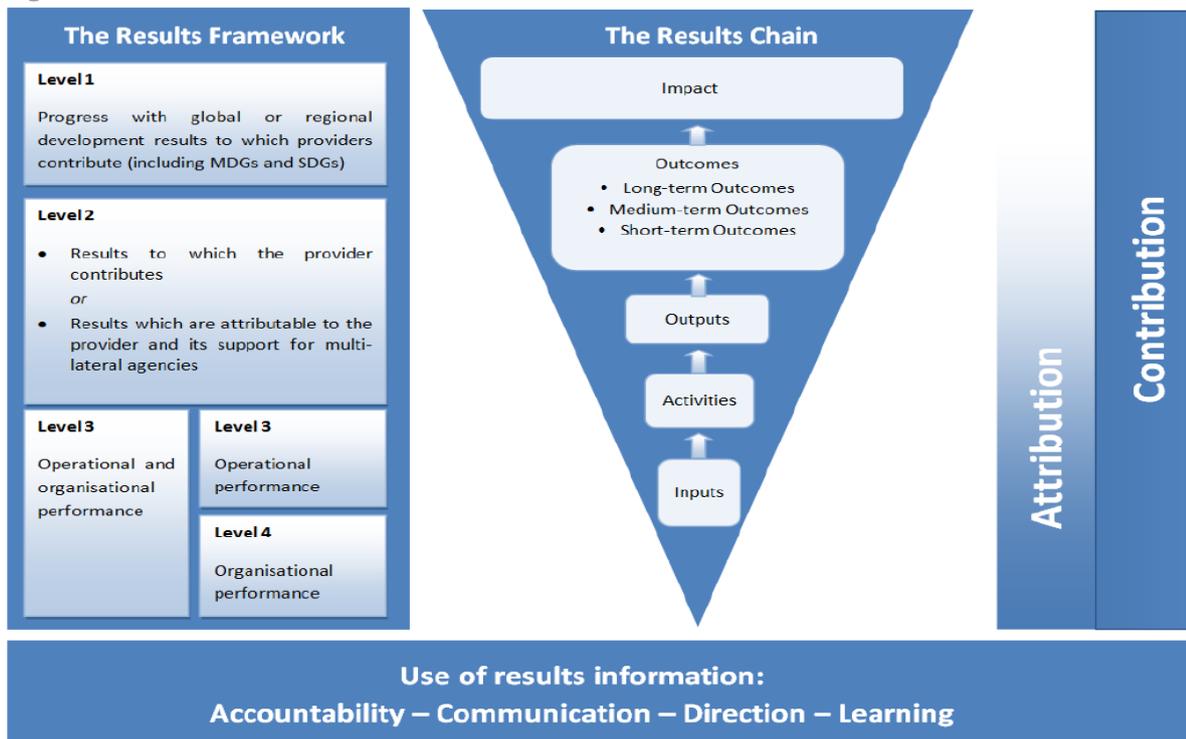
The DCD results team will undertake case-studies of the results frameworks of selected providers, to share approaches. A comparative note should be ready in January 2017, ahead of the next workshop of the results community scheduled for February 2017.

2. Results information can influence strategic direction, decision making and the politics of co-operation

Many providers engage in aggregation of project-based results information, though it differs whether they aggregate at country, sector, thematic or corporate levels. Most providers with country programmes seek aggregation of results or performance indicators at country level. Use of context-driven results information can form the basis of meaningful dialogue and direction with partners at all levels.

With increasing engagement in global challenges, including the provision of global public goods, thematic aggregation of results information is attempted by some. Results-based decision making by providers requires aggregation of results information across the levels of the results framework (development progress; attributed / contributed results; and operational / organisational performance), the objectives and types of collaboration (e.g. political dialogue, capacity development or support for service delivery) as well as the channels of development co-operation (bilateral, multilateral, private sector, etc.).

Figure 1: The results framework and the results chain



Aggregation of results information to providers’ corporate level enables evidence-based decision making. Results information can influence the politics of development co-operation in provider countries. However, policy makers may use results information selectively to support policies and decisions already made. Results *stories* are essential for accountability and communication, but for direction and decision making systematic use of results information is needed. Providers must be realistic with respect to what results information can influence in given political contexts.

Development co-operation has moved beyond ODA, and its scope has extended to the full range of the SDGs. In addition, development co-operation may have been merged with economic relations, security and trade within broader Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Aggregation and measurement of meaningful, development-related quantitative results indicators become more difficult, though highly needed. The challenge is seen also in the limited number of Tier 1 SDG indicators (with robust and readily available country data) that have been adopted by the UN Statistical Commission.

The DCD results team will attempt to summarise the evolving results approaches of a few bilateral providers that have experienced changing government approaches to results (e.g. from “measuring and documenting results at all costs” to “pursuing principles and minimising the risks of quantification”) as well as integration with other foreign policy goals.

3. Results information is the basis for informed learning and meaningful dialogue

While good assessment and use of results information is widely practiced at project level, there is some way to go to implement fully the Paris principle of managing for development results across projects, programmes, thematic sectors, and at corporate level. In particular, many providers struggle with making good use of results information for *learning*.

Good results-based management at project level, which is focused on learning, is essential for building a strong agency-wide results approach. Many providers face challenges to incentivise results-based learning

and decision making during project implementation. While use of results information for real-time learning and course correction during implementation should be the core focus, performance incentives tend to be stronger during the design phase. Available human resources are used primarily during planning, partly because of the short time perspective of most projects. Where there are incentives during implementation, the focus is often more on delivery of activities and inputs. Innovative uses of results information, such as results based aid, have potential to shift the focus towards implementation and outcomes.

Many providers acknowledge the need for a results-culture where learning is encouraged, there is transparency and trust, and results which demonstrate both success and failure are acknowledged and discussed at all levels of the organisation. To encourage such learning, providers develop feedback loops between and across programmes, themes and sectors. In addition, linking concrete results information to more in-depth evaluation findings creates meaningful dialogue for learning.

Capacity and human resources challenges are often cited as a barrier to promoting learning through results within provider agencies. Importantly, good results based management should be the business of *all* managers of development co-operation and not just the domain of results, monitoring and evaluation experts. Understanding and expecting good monitoring information from implementers, and adopting a results-based approach to project and programme management should be core business.

Providers also hope to increase the use of results information for dialogue and learning with partners. Some see tensions between an approach focused on context-specific partner-led results, and more top-down corporate results architecture. However, where there are clear organisational goals, and acknowledgement that not all results information needs to be aggregated to corporate level, both are possible and can complement each other. What matters is ensuring that results information at all levels is purposeful, focused on development impact, and therefore useful not only for accountability and communications but also for direction and learning.

The DCD results team will build on the above-mentioned provider case studies to develop a good practice guide for results-based decision making (first half of 2017). The team will also engage directly with providers who are developing their results based approaches.

4. Progress on the SDGs may yield useful information for providers' and partners' results frameworks

Results frameworks are driven by goals – for development and development co-operation. Provider goals are usually a combination of provider specific objectives, such as foreign policy goals, and common goals of the international community, such as the MDGs and now the SDGs. The providers' results frameworks also reflect the Paris principles of development effectiveness, including management for development results, use of partner country systems, and support for partner countries' results frameworks. Most providers feed partner countries' development goals and priorities into the objectives set for their bilateral development co-operation programmes, and providers also take part in setting goals for multilateral development co-operation through their participation in the governing bodies of multilateral organisations.

The targets set and indicators used for providers' results frameworks may reflect primarily accountability and communication needs of the provider agency, including its operational and organisational performance. This may lead to approaches that underutilise the targets and indicators of partner countries. There is a need for better use of the development results data of partner countries, adhering both to the principles of development effectiveness and to the contextual nature of results.

Providers and partners aim to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and they subscribe to the SDGs. For political or capacity reasons, each party may give priority to a subset of the SDGs in their development portfolios. Awareness of partner country progress across the SDG targets enables providers and partners to assess how development co-operation contributes to the priority results pursued by partner

countries. The DCD results team undertakes a pilot analysis of the potential contribution of development co-operation to a number of SDG targets that aim at concrete outcomes in developing countries. The analysis uses SDG indicator data, provided by developing countries and compiled by the UN, and ODA allocation data available at OECD.

The aim of the pilot exercise is to provide inputs to provider / partner dialogues on real life SDG challenges and progress on the development results of partner countries. Analyses may yield insights on the links between development co-operation and the SDG challenges, which are prioritised by individual developing countries and where they may face the longest “distance” to the 2030 targets. The workshop emphasised the need to engage actively partner countries that are working to apply the SDGs to their goals and results frameworks, in accordance with national priorities, as well as the UN organisations that are in charge of monitoring the achievement of the SDGs.

5. Next steps in the programme of work

The DCD results team will engage in two related work streams over the next six months:

1. Enhancing peer learning through collation of good practice case-studies and a practical guide to highlight successful results framework approaches developed by providers (as outlined in messages 1-3 above).
2. Provision of information on the relevance of development co-operation to partner country progress on the SDGs, as inputs to dialogues on collaboration for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (as outlined in message 4 above).

In February 2017, the EU and the OECD will co-host a workshop in Brussels provisionally titled: “Mutual accountability through results: Supporting partner countries’ development goals and results frameworks.” DCD will seek attendance and active contribution from partner country representatives, colleagues in UN agencies responsible for monitoring SDG progress, and members of the OECD results community. The workshop is likely to include the following themes:

1. *Country focus*: linking and aligning the *results frameworks of providers and country partners*, and prioritising partner led approaches
2. *Mutual accountability*: identifying tools and operationalising the use of results for accountability, communication, direction and learning *between partners and providers*
3. *Goals and results*: assessing the relevance of development co-operation’s *contributions* to the achievement of goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda

Workshop content will draw from the following sources, among others:

- The UN Development Co-operation Forum (DCF): *Global Accountability Survey – Assessing status and progress of mutual accountability and transparency at national level*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA).
- EU International Cooperation and Development: *Results Report*, 2016, notably the results by country.
- The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC): *Second monitoring round*, with a focus on two indicators: 1) Use of country-owned results frameworks; and 7) Mutual accountability.
- DAC / DCD: *Peer learning review on mutual accountability*, with three case studies of partner countries (Burkina Faso, Timor Leste and Togo).
- DCD: *Pilot analysis of the potential contribution of ODA to SDG progress*, applying the UN’s SDG targets, indicators and data.
- DCD: *Good practice case studies* of how providers in varying contexts are using results information meaningfully to engage with partners.

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CC15, OECD Conference Centre, 2 rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16

Context and purpose

Results information gathered by providers of development co-operation is used mainly for two purposes: External reporting for accountability and communication, with an emphasis on reaching domestic audiences and the institutions in charge of the development co-operation budget; and project or programme cycle management, where performance and progress information is used during monitoring, evaluation and redesign of projects, often within the provider's country programmes. For most providers, results information is used less for: strategic direction and policy formation, and learning and quality assurance. What are the drivers and who are the users of results information for these purposes? What lessons do we have for effective results frameworks? The workshop has **three goals**:

1. *Purpose*: To identify types of *results information* that is fit for different uses.
2. *Design*: To build *effective results frameworks* that can overcome challenges of aggregation.
3. *Way forward*: To use results information *higher up the results chain* – to achieve goals with impact.

Results frameworks usually comprise at least three levels: 1) Development progress; 2) Co-operation results (contribution or attribution); and 3) Operational and organisational performance. These levels are inversely linked to the results chain, which goes from inputs and activities, via outputs, to outcomes and impact.

Summary of survey analysis

The survey of development co-operation providers' use of results information, which was undertaken in May 2016, offered some key findings:

- Providers are making progress in their use of results information; however, bilateral providers in particular have a long way to go to maximise their use of results information for direction and learning.
- There are opportunities for better use at portfolio, thematic, cross-cutting and sector levels.
- The use of results information for accountability and communications is predominantly targeted at domestic stakeholders. Few providers mention results-based accountability to, and communication with, partners; the extent of links to partners' country results frameworks is unclear.
- There is a missing middle in the use of results information between project/activity and programme levels and accountability and communication.
- Too little emphasis is attached to using results information for quality assurance and learning; analysis of results does not appear to be driving policy formulation and strategic decision-making.
- While there is value in using results information for accountability and communications, these elements do not drive corporate improvement or sustainable development results.
- Multilaterals have made good progress in their use of corporate results frameworks for tracking development progress and organisational performance; few bilateral providers report against corporate results frameworks.
- The use of corporate results frameworks might assist providers to be more purposeful about the use of results information for direction and learning.
- Three elements are considered to be critical in providers' use of results information: leadership and a corporate willingness to learn from results; a clear purpose for the results system; and available and reliable data.
- All providers can learn from the good practice, tools and methods of others.

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Outline of workshop programme, CC15, OECD Conference Centre, Paris

Monday 12 September, 2016: Morning session – Purpose: Results information fit for purpose

9.30 – 10.00	Welcome and setting the stage. Presentation of the provider survey findings on the use of results information. <i>Presentation by John Egan, DCD. Chair: Karen Jørgensen, DCD</i>
10.00 – 10.45	Tour de table: Participants summarise their experience, lessons learned, policies and approaches to results. <i>Chair: Poul Engberg-Pedersen, DCD</i>
10.45 – 11.00	Refreshments
11.00 – 12.30	Group work, examining case-studies of results frameworks that are fit for the purposes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountability, upwards to policy- and decision-makers and outwards to partners. <i>Chair: Alicia Dinerstein, USAID (tbc)</i>• Communication with domestic audiences and stakeholder constituencies. <i>Chair: René Taus Hansen, MFA, Denmark</i>• Strategic direction, including evidence-based policy formulation and portfolio management. <i>Chair: Suvi Virkkunen, MFA, Finland</i>• Learning and quality assurance, through a results culture, feed-back loops and formal requirements. <i>Chair: Glenys Karran, MFAT, New Zealand</i>
12.30 – 14.00	Buffet lunch (Room: Roger Ockrent)

Monday 12 September, 2016: Afternoon session – Design: Challenges of aggregating results information

14.00 – 15.45	Bilateral and multilateral providers present the purpose, coverage and data of their corporate results reports. <i>Presentations by: Vaughn Lantz (Global Affairs Canada); Pradeep Itty (SDC, Switzerland); Anthony Higney (DFID, UK); Franco Conzato (DG-ICD, EC); Nazmul Chaudhury (the World Bank); Abdallah Bchir (GAVI). Chair: John Egan, DCD</i>
15.45 – 16.00	Refreshments
16.00 – 17.00	Small group discussions on good practice in results reporting: Audience, platforms, topics, drivers. <i>Chair: Rosie Zwart, DCD</i>
17.00 – 18.00	Attribution and/or contribution in results frameworks: What can results information tell us? <i>Chair: Poul Engberg-Pedersen, DCD</i>

Tuesday 13 September 2016: Morning session – The way forward: Move higher up the results chain

9.00 – 10.30	Results frameworks in a political context: How can good results information be used both for political purposes and for organisational learning and direction? <i>Chair: Brenda Killen, DCD. Reflections by incoming DAC Chair, Charlotte Petri Gornitzka</i>
10.30 – 10.45	Refreshments
10.45 – 11.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linking providers' and partners' use of results information – Evidence on challenges and synergies (<i>John Egan, DCD</i>)• Development Co-operation and the SDGs: Relevance and results (<i>Poul Engberg-Pederson, DCD</i>) <i>Chair: John Egan, DCD</i>
11.45 – 12.30	The way forward for providers' use of results information: Improving results frameworks. <i>Chair: Karen Jørgensen, DCD</i>