Learning from evaluations and reviews of RBM approaches and systems

Development of guiding principles

Concept note

1. Background and rationale

The DCD Results Team aims to strengthen results-based management for effective development co-operation, fostering exchange and driving collective learning among development co-operation providers, CSOs, research institutes and partner countries (the “OECD/DAC Results community”). In 2014, DCD conducted a review of results-based management (RBM) challenges and practices among DAC members and observers that led to a policy paper on Measuring and managing results in development co-operation. More recently, the Results Community conducted seven case studies on members’ results-based management approaches, which were synthesised into a policy paper that was discussed at the Results Community workshop in October 2017. One of the recommendations of the paper was that providers articulate the purpose of their results systems, and then undertake external evaluation and/or review of their results-based management approach on a periodic basis. In line with this recommendation, several members of the Results Community and other actors have conducted evaluations and/or reviews of this nature over the last two/three years. Together, these reviews create a substantive evidence base on results-based management practice in development co-operation.

In addition, participants at a recent OECD/DAC Results Community workshop (April 2018) discussed new developments in results-based management in development co-operation such as adaptive management and collaborative learning, payments by results, and use of data and new technologies. As expressed by the participants, the Results Community has a role to play in sharing good practice and, where needed, in building the evidence base to support new practices.

Furthermore, evidence from OECD DAC Peer reviews and feedback from the Results Community suggest that some DAC members, as well as emerging providers, are building their results approaches and systems from the scratch, often with limited resources. As such, the Results Community also has a role to play in providing guidance to help members and partners of the Results Community to set up sound results-based management approaches and systems that can be used for accountability, decision-making, learning and communication.

This concept note builds on this foundation, setting out a proposed OECD DAC Results Community project for 2018-19 to be led by the Results Team in DCD.

2. Purpose and objectives of the project

Purpose- to build on existing evidence to identify good practice and generate lessons that development co-operation providers and partners can concretely use to design or refine their results-based management (RBM) approaches and systems.

Objectives- Undertake review and synthesis of recent evaluations and reviews of results-based management conducted by members of the DAC, the Secretariat and other bodies, to:

1. Set the current scene for results-based management in development co-operation and describe how it has recently evolved in response to evolving contexts (e.g. the 2030 Agenda);
2. draw general lessons from the opportunities and challenges of setting-up functional results-based systems to guide development co-operation at headquarters and in partner countries;
3. identify good practice in relation to results-based management, including from new approaches;
4. develop guiding principles for results-based management in development co-operation, for use by members of the Results Community, emerging donors, partner countries, and DAC peer review teams;
5. contribute to building a demand and a culture for results-based management in development co-operation ministries and agencies, recognising the importance (and challenges) of using results information for learning and decision making, and ultimately contributing to the achievement of positive development outcomes.

3. **Approach**

The approach will involve the following steps:

*Synthesis*

The Results team will review and then synthesise findings from the various evaluations and reviews of RBM systems conducted by bilateral and multilateral organisations in the past four years (provisional list in Annex A). This analysis will aim to:

i) identify recent trends in results-based management,

ii) explore challenges faced by providers when developing their results approaches and systems, and

iii) select good practices in responding to these challenges that can be useful for the Results Community. An effort will be made to integrate new approaches (adaptive management and payment by results), new technologies (information and communication technologies and big data) and evolving contexts (e.g. the 2030 Agenda; results-based management in fragmented systems and in partnerships).

Findings from the review and synthesis will be summarised into a report. A range of internal and external stakeholders will peer-review the report before it is finalised (see section 5).

*In-depth seminar*

The synthesis and other OECD guidance and tools\(^1\) will be used as the basis for an in-depth seminar on results-based management. The purpose of this seminar will be to bring together providers that are developing or are interested in developing results-based management systems for their agencies and a few members with more well-established approaches to share experiences, learn and work towards approaches that:

- Reflect the goals and policies of their agencies – including a sound theory of change
- Are fit-for-purpose, taking into account the size and style of delivery
- Are linked to Agenda 2030 and other global goals
- Support generation of robust results information by implementing partners
- Incentivise and enable use of results information at multiple levels for multiple purposes.

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Participants will be encouraged to identify concrete actions to take forward in further developing their results approaches. In addition, the workshop will also be an opportunity to identify areas where guidance would be most useful.

**Development of guiding principles**

The Results team will use the review and synthesis, other material developed by the Results Community, and insights from the in-depth seminar to develop draft guiding principles for results-based management approaches and systems in development co-operation. The Results team will develop “guiding principles” as opposed to standards or guidelines, recognising that there is no one-size-fits all approach, but that a set of shared principles can help guide providers towards more efficient and harmonised results-based management systems, conducive to collaborative approaches. The core set of proposed guiding principles will include in an annex a synthesis of good practices and lessons applying to three/four focus topics reflecting new approaches. These will be put for discussion at a workshop of the Results Community (likely April 2019). Based on this discussion, guiding principles will be refined so that a final version can be issued over the summer.

**Dissemination of the guiding principles**

Guiding principles will be issued as an OECD Policy Paper (provisional title: Results-based management: Approaches and systems fit for the 2030 Agenda – guiding principles). A detailed dissemination plan will ensure findings from the project are communicated to relevant partners and stakeholders. The Results Team and Results Community will in particular seize opportunities within and beyond the OECD to communicate these principles to the management of their institutions and to practitioners in partner countries.

Guiding principles could also serve as a basis for a shared session with EvalNet, exploring how to address common challenges (e.g. building a culture and an internal demand for evaluation and RBM, making more use of the evidence generated through RBM and evaluations for decision making and learning).

Guiding principles will also be used to inform the reference guide of the DAC peer reviews.

**4. Proposed outputs, milestones and timeframes**

The results team will produce interim and final reporting products. An ad-hoc working group will be set up to accompany the project and peer review interim products.

**Key outputs:**

- In-depth seminar on results-based management as part of the October Results Workshop
- Synthesis report published as an OECD Policy Paper in Q1 2019 and posted on the website
- Preliminary discussion paper on guiding principles for discussion at the April 2019 Results Community workshop
- Guiding principles endorsed at the October 2019 Results Community Workshop, issued as an OECD Policy Paper and posted on the website.
Tentative project milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Project element/ milestone</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Complete by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May - June 2018</td>
<td>Project planning and inception</td>
<td>Concept note finalised</td>
<td>30/6/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June - September 2018</td>
<td>Review and synthesis</td>
<td>Preliminary synthesis report</td>
<td>15/10/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>Results workshop and in-depth seminar - finalisation of the synthesis report</td>
<td>Discussions will inform the finalisation of the synthesis report and development of guiding principles</td>
<td>20/12/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2018-March 2019</td>
<td>First draft of guiding principles</td>
<td>Draft guiding principles shared for discussion</td>
<td>31/03/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>Results workshop</td>
<td>Feedback on guiding principles</td>
<td>04/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>DAC event</td>
<td>Guiding principles endorsed by the DAC with related dissemination plan</td>
<td>12/19</td>
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5. Mapping key stakeholders and other work relevant to this project

Below is an initial mapping of relevant stakeholders, potential synergies with other projects and work streams and potential partners/ contributors.

Internal - OECD work streams relevant to project

- DAC Evaluation Network: membership of the Network will be involved (and DEReC will be used) to identify evaluations for the synthesis. This project will be presented and discussed at the June 2018 EvalNet meeting and members of EvalNet may be asked to peer review the synthesis report. Members of EvalNet, whether those with experience or those setting up their evaluation function and results-based management system will be invited to the in-depth seminar.

- DAC Peer review team: as the main vehicle for accountability, DAC peer reviews play a key role in ensuring that guiding principles are translated into the development co-operation systems of DAC members. Once endorsed, guiding principles for RBM in development co-operation will be reflected in the reference guide used for the DAC peer reviews of development co-operation policies and systems.

- DCD/FSD Private finance for sustainable development unit: seek complementarity with FSD’s planned work on defining policy guidelines on the OECD DAC Blended Finance Principle 5: Monitor blended finance for transparency and results. In collecting and analysing evidence of RBM approaches, the project will share any examples related to MDBs and DFIs that may be relevant for their work. It will also ensure consistency between the policy guidelines on the OECD DAC Blended Finance principle 5 and the guiding principles for RBM in development co-operation.

- Global Partnership for Effective development Co-operation (GPEDC): in developing guiding principles for RBM in development co-operation, ensure consistency with the development effectiveness principle related to results.
Results Community

- Members will be involved in identifying reviews and evaluations relevant to the synthesis, and selected members will be asked to peer review draft reports. All members will discuss interim products at the Results Community workshops.

External – Potential partners and contributors

- Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations: draw synergies with JIU’s comprehensive review of Results-Based Management in the United Nations Development System and ensure consistency between JIU’s recommendations and guiding principles on RBM in development co-operation.

- MOPAN: Seek convergence with MOPAN assessments of the results approach of multilateral organisations.
Annex 1: Evaluations and reviews considered in the stock-take analysis – Provisional list


Adaptive Management


Payment by results

