Introduction

The proposed guiding principles on Managing for Sustainable Development Results (MfSDR) are grounded in a review of existing literature and evaluations, in the systematic review of learnings from results-based management (RBM) systems, and in technical discussions within the OECD/DAC Results Community (October 2018 and April 2019). To ensure that the guiding principles are relevant, clear and broadly applicable, a transparent consultative process was set in motion, where Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries and all other key stakeholders (see below list of targeted participants) could review and comment on the proposal. The aim has been that, by the time the principles are submitted for DAC approval, existing concerns (if any) have been addressed; or, at least, that stakeholders have received a reasonable explanation of why certain points were not addressed. The process has also helped in opening up a collective discussion on how the guiding principles can be applied, what were the most/less difficult/controversial points, and what would be useful in terms of guidance to increase the use of the principles as a guiding framework for action.

An online consultation was therefore organised with the expectation that: i) it will result in refined guiding principles that address concerns of key stakeholders; ii) these principles are widely owned by most key stakeholders as they had a chance to be heard and shape the content; and iii) the principles are ready for submission to the DAC for approval, and then for their dissemination.

An outreach strategy was designed and implemented to ensure that all key stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in the consultation process. Targeted participants included the OECD/DAC Results Community of practitioners; new bilateral donors [or non-DAC donors engaged with the DAC in some activities]; multilateral organisations; agency staff and management in charge of organisational performance beyond results specialists; partner countries; implementing partners; civil society organisations; think tanks and research institutes; leading international experts, and M&E consultants. The information was disseminated through the various OECD/DAC networks and platforms; Evaluation Associations/Societies, RBM Communities and the Results Community members’ own networks and partners.
An awareness raising campaign was launched in end April, comprising: i) an email campaign (teaser e-mail including a short video, e-mail announcing the launch of the consultation and a series of reminder e-mails); ii) a dedicated website for the consultation process, nested within the OECD Results webpage; and iii) a social media campaign using Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

The online consultation took place between 6 and 27 May 2019. Participants were offered two ways of participating: an on-line survey and a series of four interactive online webinars. In addition, ad hoc feedback transmissions (e.g. via email or phone) were also sought and welcomed, and compiled in the final mapping of feedback received. While the survey questionnaire was drafted in English, participants were offered the possibility to respond in English, French or Spanish. The French version of the draft guiding principles was available on the main consultation page at mid-course and the fourth webinar was conducted in French.

2. Participation

A total of 250 contributions from 60 different countries\(^1\) were received, with participation in the survey being the preferred engagement method (192). 54 people registered to the webinars, with some of them also responding to the survey. Nine additional contributions were received via e-mail. As shown in Figure 1 below, all categories of stakeholders that are involved in results-based management in development cooperation took part in the consultation.

![Figure 1: Institutional affiliation of respondents](image)

(as a percentage of respondents who provided information on their institutional affiliation)

* DAC and non-DAC member countries

3. Analysis of the responses

3.1. Overall degree of agreement

Overall, there is a strong support for the proposed six guiding principles. Responses to the survey show that the average degree of agreement (agree or strongly agree) is 94%, with slight variations among the principles (from 95% for principle 4 to 93% to principle 3).\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) Find more information on the geographical spread in the annex.

\(^{2}\) Find a detailed table with the level of agreement for all principles in the annex.
Comments made during the webinars and via e-mail confirm an overall high-level of agreement, with principles considered as useful and timely. Participants also expressed a positive appreciation of the consultation process, which allowed an open and diversified participation.

Participants raised a number of observations\(^3\), some of which cut across the principles:

- **Focus**: A few respondents mentioned that the principles tend to speak primarily to development agencies and that attention should be paid on reflecting better the perspective of other actors (e.g. the co-ordinating role of partner country governments). Meanwhile one respondent questioned the extent to which a set of guiding principles can apply to all actors, even if they are good, and for how long they can remain valid.

- **Interdependencies**: There is a need to identify and map interdependences and co-benefits between principles (and avoid that one undermines another). As an illustration, while there is a strong support to adaptation, a few respondents note that: i) adaptation risks undermining alignment; and ii) having clear targets and indicators at all levels might undermine adaptability. It would be also useful to specify that the principles build on the past MfDR principles, incorporate the development effectiveness principles, and are consistent with other principles such as the principles on results in private sector engagement. An introduction could also emphasise the benefits of attaining the principles to motivate organisations to change.

- **Complexity**: The principles could benefit from stating clearly that achieving development results is a complex undertaking. Problems are complex and interrelated. Solutions cannot be simplistic and the development community cannot be required to report “big impact” in a very short term. Key elements could better reflect doing development differently/adaptive management (e.g. referring to problem-driven analysis) and how to demonstrate results that move beyond traditional quantitative indicators. The point on attribution and contribution needs to be better addressed – with the results systems seeking to acknowledge all roles but clarifying exactly each intervention’s contribution and risk sharing.

- **Terminology**: Many respondents call for clarifying concepts: “Achieving results can be complex, but explaining them should not be as complex as the jargon makes it look”. Not all partners have the same definition of what “results” are, what a results culture is, and the many concepts that are used (e.g. impact, outcome, results information). Language must also be consistent with the revised DAC evaluation criteria (“impact” or “long-term effect”). Three participants note that

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\(^3\) In particular through responding to the question: is there anything missing? – to which 26% of respondents (50) responded positively. To note also that two respondents to the survey disagreed with all principles without leaving any comment, which makes their response difficult to interpret.
“results-based management” itself does not reflect the complexity of development, conveys “a strong bias towards technical projects”, and minimize the change dimension. They propose to rather use “social change oriented management”; “results management” or “results-oriented management”; or “results-based administration”.

- **Operationalisation:** A number of participants in the webinars and respondents to the survey pointed out that if everyone can agree with high-level principles, the issue would then be on how to operationalise these principles, in general and for specific actors (e.g. private development finance institution). For instance participants mentioned the following challenges: mainstreaming RBM within an institution and ensuring buy-in at each level from diverse stakeholders with different results measurement and reporting priorities; accessing granular data to monitor the actions and their impact better; moving away from the log frame approach to allow more flexibility in programming – following iterative processes, and treating failure as a learning process.

Other concerns relate to more specific aspects that participants would like to see better reflected:

- **Incentives.** The unintended effect of “gaming” the results system due to implicit incentives to report (attribute) positive results and underreport negative results. The value for money approach is also mentioned as hampering development effectiveness and leave no-one behind (LNOB).

- **Complex financing methods.** The importance of the partnership dimension, with new multi-stakeholder approaches and mixed partnerships incorporating non-ODA funding.

- **Participatory approaches.** The need for participatory approaches involving partners and local communities across all phases of a programme – a requisite for social change to happen, and for transparency and mutual accountability; this requires a frank dialogue with partner organisations, understanding of local contexts and their cultural dimension, a strengthened focus on institutional capacity and peer learning, and adopting a long-term approach open to taking risks.

- **Quality data.** The challenge of accessing and processing quality data – and relatedly the issues of data collection, storage, and protection (especially when data sources involve vulnerable individuals), and the need for user-friendly IT system that can handle the range of results information.

- **Learning loops.** The relationship between Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, the feedback loop across the RBM system, and the need for clear documenting processes.

- **Capable staffing.** The importance of recruiting the right people with the relevant skills, experience and interest to use, manage and improve the system and tools.

- **Cross-sectional issues.** The SDGs’ crosscutting dimensions such as human rights, gender equality and the intersectionality between various dimensions that are relevant to LNOB.
3.2. **Degree of agreement and comments made for each principle**

This section presents and analyses responses and comments provided by participants on each of the principles.

**Principle 1. Ensure that results-based management approaches support development goals and desired change**

Results-based management should maximise the impact of development efforts towards achieving social, economic and environmentally sustainable development that leaves no-one behind.

**Key elements:**

1.1 Results-based management aims to maximise sustainable development results. The results system is inherently linked to the ultimate objective of development policy and contributions to achieving Agenda 2030 including the pledge to leave no-one behind.

1.2 Results-based management is mainstreamed across all dimensions of management, spanning strategic management, operational and change management processes, partnerships, and performance and knowledge management.

1.3 Results-based management ensures adaptability and emphasises learning, recognising the evolving and complex nature of development. Clear results objectives and indicators aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are set, and sound methodologies are designed and applied flexibly at corporate, portfolio, sector, programme and project levels to achieve these objectives.

As shown in the graph above, most participants are fully supportive of the principle and its elements, e.g. recognising the importance of “Mainstreaming Agenda 2030 results frame into development planning” and that RBM is the “collective responsibility of all those involved in the project management process, from strategy, to resource mobilization, project design, implementation, monitoring, results reporting and evaluation”. This support was echoed in the webinars.

Four participants (out of 13) who disagreed made comments, mentioning two additional aspects to the terminology issues mentioned above:

- **Formulation**: three respondents consider that the text is too vague and generic, and should be made more specific and clearer (e.g. explain that it relates to RBM specific to Development Co-operation, include a definition of RBM, explain how we would know if a results system does not in fact support development goals, explain the need to focus on what is realistic and feasible in the context of limited institutional capacity, severely constrained local finances and weak governance).
The key elements incorporate too many ideas into each bullet. Meanwhile another respondent notes that the formulation is too complicated and normative.

- **Scope**: one respondent notes that the principle does not speak to its (environmental) organisation, as it does not seem to embed environment.

While agreeing with the proposed text, a number of survey respondents made suggestions to help clarifying or nuancing the principle as follows:

- **International agreements**: There is a debate on whether/how to refer to international agreements: some respondents would like to drop the reference to Agenda 2030 and refer instead to “agreed-upon global or national development frameworks” – in order to remain generic and as this would also help engage ministries and institutions whose mandates do not strictly refer to the SDGs. Others want to keep the reference to SDGs, and some would add a reference to climate change given the potential of climate change impacts to undermine progress on the SDGs. Some contributors also question the reference to the pledge to LNOB): a couple are concerned with its difficult operationalisation (i.e. how to actually integrate related monitoring mechanisms in RBM systems and how to focus more on people and communities). In contrast, others would like to see the pledge mentioned upfront, with some recognizing that the principle of LNOB requires identifying results metrics that ensure that baselines identify who an intervention or investment is targeting, and underlying those metrics, data that is disaggregated appropriately.

- **Participation**: Results-based management must evolve to “fully and respectfully” involve all individuals – with preference to beneficiaries, using adequately technologies like “last mile digital identities” and “distributed ledger”, with more space given to active civic engagement. The person should be at the core with interventions adapted to their needs. This implies taking into account the principle of intersectionality.

- **Specific suggestions made by individual respondents**:
  - emphasise the relation between results management and decision-making at intervention level (adapting interventions), but also beyond – as a result of aggregated analysis – on development strategies/policies or corporate strategies.
  - stress the country level: RBM methodologies should also apply at country level (and take into account rural contexts); result goals of all stakeholders – not just development cooperation providers – should consider and align to the specific country priorities.
  - be careful that the term “maximizing” may send a wrong message of focusing on short term, easy to achieve results.
  - ensure that key elements 1.2 and 1.3 do not dilute the message of focusing on the SDGs. A couple of respondents question the need to have the first part of 1.3 related to adaptability and learning as a distinct point, or to remove it as it is well documented in other principles. Another respondent suggests including a reference to incentives of external and internal stakeholders/implementers/actors.
  - Key element 1.3 should specify clearly that organisations need to set their own context-specific targets, objectives and indicators. The objective is to get measurable results aligned to the SDGs, supported by adequate information systems.
Principle 2. Adapt to Context

Management methods and approaches should be tailored to different organisational levels, operational contexts and types of partnerships.

Key elements:

2.1 A balanced approach to compliance and empowerment allows staff to adapt to country-specific contexts, change processes and types of partnerships. Trust and mutual learning among partners are valued.

2.2 Focus is put on achieving end outcomes rather than short-term outputs, which requires a sound understanding of the local dynamics, clear outcome goals and adaptable output results.

2.3 Wherever relevant, cross-sector approaches are promoted and incorporated into the measurement and reporting systems, in line with the integrated approach of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Only 12 survey respondents (6%) disagreed with this principle and its key elements. Out of these, only three respondents made substantive comments. They would like to see greater emphasis on the complex nature of development and the increasingly volatile reality of unpredictable contexts; more focus put on context-based analysis; and more guidance on management methods and approaches that support non-linear processes towards achieving outcomes.

Respondents agreeing with the principle (see below) also made this comment.

Those who agreed or fully agreed that adaptation is the way to go made the following comments:

- Donors' tendency to promote standardisation with a "one size fits all" approach to problem solving works against adaptation to context. This also applies to the focus on accountability and trend towards a more control-based and audit-driven practice, which is very hard to counteract.

- The text of the principle does not reflect enough the complexity of interventions mentioned in Principle 1. It rather implies a too simplistic view and understanding of the results hierarchy. Ensuring space for understanding the context and conducting a political economy analysis – capturing as many views as possible – and for experimentation is essential. In turn, evaluations should look back at the design phase and not only at the implementation phase and results achieved.

- The emphasis on outcomes is crucial, and management methods need to enable adaptation of the intervention along the way, with flexible results chains. However, this requires a long-term approach and remains challenging for a number of organisations that only report on outputs.
There might be tensions between adapting and “maximizing” results — which assumes a short-term perspective. There are also limitations to only focusing on outcomes: outputs cannot be underestimated as they are equally essential to measure progress towards achieving outcomes — inputs and processes are important reference points and can be adjusted depending on the evolution of the context. There are some tensions between adapting and being able to aggregate results: flexibility and adaptability are essential, though within defined boundaries/framework which ensure key indicators are measured consistently. Harmonisation within similar contexts between donors and implementing agencies is also a key part of making this workable and maintaining a proportional reporting burden.

Adapting to context implies involving local actors and stakeholders with enhanced participatory/subsidiarity approaches supported by greater attention to the cultural dimension and appropriate capacity enhancement — of which the process should be described further. Adaptation should not contradict supporting partner country development priorities within the context of the SDGs, using country systems and setting up a collaborative information sharing system amongst stakeholders.

Specific suggestions:

- The chapeau would be stronger and clearer if it said that management methods and approaches should be flexible to allow tailoring to different organisational levels, operational contexts and types of partnerships.
- It could be useful to state that adaptations must be explicit and justified.
- The key element on learning from failure stated in principle 4 would fit better within principle 2 because it relates to the agility of the system.
- It would be useful to include 2.2. in the main headline, e.g. 'focus on long term change and adapt to context'.
- In 2.3, cross-sector approaches are important, but it is addressing a slightly different point and dilutes the message. It would fit better in Principle 1, and the learning dimension should be added.
- Text should be simplified, avoiding unclear language ("A balanced approach to compliance and empowerment (to do what? at what level? informed by what?), “country-specific contexts”) and unclear concepts ("end outcomes", "short term outputs", “organizational level”). The sentence “tailored to different organisational levels, operational contexts and types of partnerships” needs to be clarified to avoid misunderstandings.

Principle 3. Enhance national ownership and foster mutual accountability

Results-based management should enhance national ownership and foster mutual accountability, aligning to national results frameworks, strengthening and using partner countries’ statistical and monitoring systems, and promoting participatory approaches and transparency.

Key elements:

3.1 Providers’ internal reporting is aligned to national results frameworks. Providers prioritise national
indicators that are aligned to the SDGs and synchronise planning cycles with partner countries’ own cycles to minimise costs and avoid duplications.

3.2 Providers strengthen and maximise use of partner countries’ monitoring and statistical systems, enhancing national capacity to produce and analyse data, including disaggregated data to capture results related to populations left behind.

3.3 Dialogue among partners focuses on results at all phases of any development initiative, and broad involvement – supported by appropriate capacity building – is sought in design, planning, monitoring, evaluation and use of results to foster ownership and ensure sustainability.

3.4 Development partners foster mutual accountability when engaging in partnerships, with a clear understanding of the common goal and each parties’ contribution to achieving shared outcomes.

3.5 Transparency is promoted, results frameworks are shared, and data and results information are available to all stakeholders.

Figure 5: Degree of agreement for Principle 3

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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There were 13 respondents (8%) disagreeing with this principle; three because they considered that this principle did not apply to them (a development finance institution and two CSOs) and two others because they consider that partner countries’ national results frameworks and statistical systems are not robust enough. A think tank suggested making the point on transparency in active voice, to specify who should be transparent. They also wondered how mutual accountability works in practice. A UN agency noted that they already report against their internal strategic framework and donors’ specific requirements – but suggested that their next strategic plan could be drafted in a way that would allow for more direct alignment at the country level.

Other respondents provided the following comments:

- Many participants strongly support this principle, which is in line with the development effectiveness principles. Several would like to see this principle as a higher priority principle that all other principles support. Others suggest to make explicit reference to the development effectiveness principles. National ownership and alignment to national strategies are considered as key factors for ensuring the long-term sustainability of results. Some respondents mention the importance of localising the SDGs and their indicators.

- However, other respondents note that, in practice, a number of development agencies do not want a variety of approaches in dealing with different partner countries and are not willing to align to different national statistical and monitoring systems (also due to their internal accountability rules). Country offices face tensions in wanting to align but not being supported by headquarters. Respondents from partner countries mention that many development projects fail to align to local
practices that are not meeting donor agencies’ criteria and that would require a long time to evolve, and thereby disrupt local systems.

- A number of respondents also point that the ownership dimension should be broadened to include all stakeholders and support locally-owned systems: “Who owns what on behalf of whom remains a significant challenge.” Two respondents suggest using “country ownership” or “partner ownership” instead of “national ownership”. They claim that a shift is needed towards putting local communities at the centre of the development process. In certain areas, it might be useful not to rely only on national statistical systems and administrative data, but include data directly provided by beneficiaries. Respondents also note that in many least developed countries, capacities of beneficiaries are limited and undue burden should be avoided. Strengthening their capacity is a requisite.

- Operationalisation remains challenging for a number of reasons:
  - Collecting and processing data: This includes the issues of lack of (reliable, disaggregated) data, limited capacity of national statistical and M&E systems in many partner countries and weak results systems. In the short term, donors face pressure to report results using national systems, yet national statistical offices are not yet equipped and resourced to provide the required information. Strengthening national results and statistical systems is essential and should be mainstreamed across sectoral approaches and linked to governance aspects. One respondent notes that this needs to be matched by a substantial uplifting of development partners’ information systems, but the offer needs to be in response to clearly articulated requests from National Statistical Offices.
  - Timeframes or production of national statistics may not be compatible with donors’ reporting needs. Synchronising planning cycles with partners is difficult when multiple partners are on different schedules. A mapping of the full picture of donor inputs (cash and technical assistance) and programme cycles would be useful.
  - They are challenges related to SDG indicator alignment for both partner country (weak or absence of SDG-aligned national results frameworks) and development partner (proliferation of indicators – not all of them being useful). Alignment can be enhanced by establishing a quality dialogue between development partners and the government when there is disagreement on a strategy.
  - Alignment requires an important investment of time, personnel and resources, including having the necessary leadership, and the right incentives and competency to focus on M&E as well as on implementation supervision. There are often multiple – donor, implementing partner, government – monitoring and reporting processes with scarce resources.
  - Too little attention is paid to building the capacity of partners to use RBM, and adapt it to their own context. As a result, partners do not use result systems for their own benefit, but just to comply with donor agency requirements. Keeping systems simple is crucial for partners to make full use of them.
  - Mutual accountability between donors and national governments requires concrete mechanisms to go beyond what is considered by a number of respondents as an asymmetrical relationship. A respondent suggests involving national parliaments.

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4 One respondent though noted that inclusive, democratic ownership cannot be imposed externally.
Transparency should be promoted by making information accessible and clear to all audiences including beneficiaries (people and communities). Accountability and participation of non-state actors are crucial pillars of good governance.

Specific suggestions

- Clarify key elements 3.1 and 3.2, including the terminology: are "providers" the same as "development partners"?
- Donor harmonisation is missing and could be added in 3.1.
- Dialogue should happen at all stages, as in the start of a programme (e.g. covering the necessary political economy analysis) rather than focusing only on results.

Principle 4. Maximise the use of results information for learning and decision-making

While responding to communication and accountability needs, results information should systematically be used for learning and decision-making in order to improve delivery and enhance impact.

Key elements:

4.1 Results information is used for learning and decision-making, alongside communication and accountability.

4.2. The purpose and ways in which results evidence from monitoring and evaluation is used are clearly specified; in particular how management, staff and partners use data for:

- Steering and learning:
  - Steering the development co-operation programme and allocating resources to maximize effectiveness and impact
  - Adapting the implementation of a programme to evolving situations
  - Learning what works and what does not work and make changes where needed

- Communication: communicating on the programme, at different levels, and to various audiences, to raise awareness, build public trust in international co-operation and mobilise citizens into action for the SDGs.

- Reporting and accountability: providing feedback to beneficiaries and other constituencies on achievements and challenges of the programme.

4.3. Whether the interventions are successful or not, results information is used to foster learning and to support constructive and proactive management decisions.

Figure 6: Degree of agreement for Principle 4

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Nine respondents (5%) disagreed. Four respondents explained that many organisations (and partner governments) will struggle with implementing this principle – in particular in using evaluations for steering and learning – since supporting mechanisms and a structured approach to learning are missing. Another said that the principle does not add value to the other principles.

Those agreeing with the principle confirmed the need to make better use of results information for decision-making, learning and adaptation, pointed to specific examples of good practice, and made the following observations:

- **RBM remains primarily used for reporting, and much needs to be done to promote evidence-based learning and decision making:**
  - The issue of **data quality and transparency** needs to be emphasized – as well as the related need to support data generation and management. Results information often comes too late. Collection of data needs to be at the right level, and be available in time for useful learning and decision making.
  - It is important to promote a **constructive feedback and learning culture** without fears of reprisals (e.g. cuts in funding). This requires a change in the incentives for partners to be able to jointly acknowledge and learn from failure. This approach needs to be led by senior management and also needs to be built into the design of country-level strategies and programmes, with time taken to undertake an honest and transparent assessment of past performance and lessons learned.
  - It requires establishing **mechanisms for lesson-sharing during implementation** when changes can be made, avoiding top-down approaches and engaging actors at the local level, with enough time, resources and willingness for honest conversation between partners. A respondent notes that “lessons learned” as a concept is of little utility, unless these lessons are really acted upon in some visible manner – then those actions assessed to see if they made a difference to results. Equally, reporting to beneficiaries is only worthwhile if the beneficiaries were consulted on the metrics used for reporting. Ensuring that local stakeholders have the tools to analyse results information and a structured approach to learning is also required.
  - **Evaluation** is a key source of evidence. Monitoring and evaluation systems would benefit from being designed for learning from the onset, collecting only information that will be used in order to have complete but lean data for management. The cost of the M&E and reporting systems must be affordable and consistent with local institutional capacity (e.g. maximize web based or cell phone based applications to drive down costs). One respondent suggested to include this principle in the OECD Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and another to align the language further to the concept of learning from evaluation.

- **Communication** should be considered from the planning stage. All project evaluation (ex ante and ex post reports) should be published online and available to all stakeholders with no restriction including for blended finance projects.

- If genuine **capacity development with partners** was made evident, and if partners could see the utility of using RBM to help them learn lessons and make better decisions, then sustainable implementation would be a much greater possibility.
Specific suggestions

- A couple of respondents have different views on the introductory statement: for one respondent, it conveys that communication and accountability are the primary focus. Another respondent suggests to list all four purposes – learning, decision making, communication and accountability in the headline as communication and accountability remain important. A third respondent suggests to list first "decision making" and then "learning".

- In the current phrasing, Accountability is limited to reporting on results. A significant improvement would be to mention also the need for being accountable for learning, i.e., reporting on what has been learned and changed as a consequence.

- Using results for policy influencing is important to both the providers and partners points of view and could be better reflected. But there is a need to clarify how results information can serve to allocate resources (and at which level) and does not detract for LNOB.

- Specifying the level at which learning is taking place (e.g. project, portfolio, policy), ensuring it happens across the agency (including beyond the intervention level); and leading to evolving paradigms of how things work, and to evolving policies and evolving collective knowledge.

- Mention beneficiaries/populations amongst the communication stream.

- Add a mention for accountability to domestic constituencies under reporting and accountability.

- Note that beyond simple communication, strategic communication about results is needed, in particular in partner countries, and specify who should publish the results and within which deadline in order to clarify responsibilities.

- Clarify whether principle 4 focuses on project/programme level and principle 5 on the institutional and strategic level.

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Principle 5. Foster a culture of results and learning

A culture of results should be promoted and sustained through consistent leadership, and supported by appropriate guidance, tools and capacity building as well as proper staff incentives.

Key elements:

5.1. Leadership widely communicates the purpose of results-based management. It uses results information effectively for programme management at the corporate level and strategically for policy influencing at a political level.

5.2. A results and learning culture is promoted within the institution and with partners, and is supported by appropriate guidance and tools on how to implement results-based management.

5.3. Promoting a corporate results and learning culture also requires a sound and coherent change management process, focusing on strengthening capacity; ensuring enough space for analysis of results information and peer learning on both successes and failures; and providing incentives to motivate staff to collect, report and use data and results information adequately to adapt and improve programme interventions.

5.4. Careful experimentation and learning is valued to foster innovation for better results.
Out of the ten respondents (6%) that disagreed with this principle, two provided substantive comments. One respondent in the consultation considered that the culture of results was already well embedded in many development agencies. Another respondent noted that this principle misses the partnership dimension and the need to support a culture of learning with beneficiaries and local communities, through peer to peer learning and dedicated spaces of engagement.

Those who agreed with the principle and its key elements made the following comments and suggestions:

- In a context where institutional inertia is high, identifying and applying effective incentives is essential to foster a culture of results/learning, with leadership (often lacking, though the driving force to sustain an organisational culture of results and learning), perseverance and motivation being all critical factors. Agencies should strive to ensure that learning is included as a core element of staff roles. Several respondents point out the importance of tailoring incentives to the different purposes to avoid distorting effects (e.g. over-reporting success). They also note that the learning culture should build on the evaluation culture.

- Change management is very important and requires several elements (e.g. readiness assessment, communication planning, sponsor activities and roadmap, change management training, training development and delivery, resistance management). It also relates to behaviour change which needs (a) awareness, (b) capacity; (c) motivation; (d) confidence; and (e) and some form of benefits. Innovative financing tools can help to promote organisational and systemic change.

- Maintaining the technical capacity and level of expertise in RBM inside the organisation, while keeping connections within all the other levels within the organisation is also vital. This may call for setting an institutional co-ordination arrangement through which effective implementation of the results approach are discussed, and for reducing turnover among RBM-skilled staff.

- Consistency between donors and agencies will be an essential element of success, with co-ordination needed at the highest level to overcome political pressures, ensure transparency and move past accountability. Use of harmonised platforms such as IATI should be promoted.

- The results culture is not just for development agencies. While not imposing specific requirements, it should be fostered in all partnering organisations at national and local levels, with appropriate capacity building of all key stakeholders and feedback loops to generate learning. Innovative reporting frameworks including careful use of non-official– or citizen– generated data could help enhance SDG monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning. One respondent notes that parliamentarians could be involved in fostering a results culture.
Specific suggestions

- Element 5.4 on experimentation and innovation could potentially be a principle on its own—or may fit better under principle 2 on adaptation. The element should better reflect that innovation is part of a learning process that leads to achieve the expected results.

- Transparency (mentioned in principle 3) as well as problem-driven political economy analysis could be introduced as useful key elements that guide results-based management.

- There are several overlaps with principle 4 and principle 2. It might be more useful to distinguish between the corporate and programme levels.

Principle 6. Keep the results system manageable

Measurement and reporting systems and frameworks need to be suitable to each organisation’s capacities and needs.

Key elements:

6.1 Measurement and reporting on results is kept as straightforward as possible, being tailored to focus on key results, ensure clear purpose for any data that is collected and support effective communication between stakeholders while minimising reporting burden.

6.2 Monitoring and evaluation systems are set up to produce credible quantitative and qualitative evidence that meets the needs and capacities of the institution.

6.3 The results-based management system is reviewed on a regular basis, including the quality and use of the results information that is generated, in order to improve the system gradually, and maintain it fit for purpose, user-friendly and lean.

Only eleven survey respondents (7%) disagreed with the principle, although for different reasons. One respondent explained that the principle is not going far enough: the measures used for results either can have profound effects—influencing priorities and behaviour—or can be narrow tick-box exercises. It would be good to reflect the role that results frameworks and measures have on behaviours—and how they relate to the political economy of organisations. Another respondent considers that principles 6 and 2 are very close and can be merged, while another notes that principles 5 and 6 are closely interconnected. Other respondents are more critical, questioning what is meant by “manageable” and seeing a contradiction between focusing on long-term impact and keeping the results system manageable. Finally, a respondent considers that this principle is siloed and ineffective as it does not embrace local communities in fostering
a culture of learning. This requires regular consultation, interaction planning and engagement with all individuals in local communities, and finding ways to regularly share results with the communities. Disruptive change and agility with communities and individuals are required to address the problems, through peer to peer engagement using distributed trust technology.

Those who agreed that principle 6 is important made the following comments:

- It would be good to acknowledge the measurement challenges while trying to keep things as straightforward as possible: measuring what works and what does not work, and assessing the contribution made to high-level goals is not straightforward. Pointing to the need to keep to a manageable set of indicators (which is fine) conveys the risk that readers infer that tracking a few ‘key results’ (i.e. indicators) is enough, which is not true if the purpose is to really learn and manage. Focus should be put on keeping a balance between simplicity and utility, recognising that keeping the systems manageable and adaptable requires continuous capacity building effort at all levels.

- A frequent challenge in RBM systems is the IT systems that are meant to process and share the results information. It is important to keep updated on the technological progress and solutions that can be incorporated in the results-based management system to gain the efficiencies and user-friendliness that the principle calls for. Still information technology can handle simple indicators, but remains challenging to deal with qualitative results information. Data confidentiality has to be addressed: data needs to be stored safely and clear protocols should be established about how long data will be kept and how it will be disposed of.

- In line with a comment mentioned above, several respondents stress that the principle neglects the capacities and needs of developing countries in terms of RBM systems.

- The importance of harmonising agency and country reporting tools to ease reporting burden is also stressed, as well as the need to strengthen national M&E frameworks. The SDGs M&E and reporting framework ought to be simple and manageable and based on sound data metrics and global indicators reporting framework or complementary national indicators for SDGs based on data availability.

Specific suggestions:

- Swap “needs” with “capacities” in the sub-title.

- Mention that systems should be cost-effective: “Ensure that such systems are not overly costly and are not beyond the local institutional capacity”.

- Key element 6.1., the system should not only meet the needs of the institution; it should meet the needs and capacities of the institution and the local partners.

- Highlight the importance of feedback mechanisms and follow-up in providing updated information to allow for timely corrections, detect evaluation needs/gaps, and inform design and implementation.

3.3. Supporting tools

A number of participants in the consultation noted that operationalising the principles can be challenging, in general and for specific actors. There is a strong call for more detailed guidance. For instance, respondents would like to receive guidance on how to enhance a culture of results and learning, and how to support the feedback learning process on the RBM system itself. Meanwhile a number of participants have mentioned good practices or existing tools (e.g. the use of M&E/RBM policy statements in partnering
agreements; quick response mechanism to address emergency results the *Standard for Results Measurement* developed by the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development, information that will be used to develop support tools).

### Figure 9: Proposed supporting tools
(percentage of respondents who proposed the following tools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Tool</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Modules*</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repository of good practices*</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines*</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops*</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary*</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to Partner Countries</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* listed on the survey page as an example of a potential tool

### 4. Conclusion and way forward

The open consultation showed a broad level of consensus around the set of draft guiding principles. There are however a number of relevant comments and suggestions made by several actors repeatedly - indicating a convergence of views, that can be usefully taken into account in a new version of the Guiding Principles.

A revised version of the Guiding Principles was prepared by the Results Secretariat and the multi-donor Reference Group guiding this work. In addition to revisiting key elements of each principle in light of the comments received through the consultation, the former “chapeau” is turned into a preamble. It becomes an integral part of the principles, clarifying the context, purpose, status and scope of the principles, and confirming that tools will be developed to help with their operationalisation. The preamble further stresses the importance of the guiding principles. It also clarifies that the principles are aspirational, can be applied in different ways depending on the organisations, and are closely inter-related.

The new version of the Guiding Principles is now shared with the OECD/DAC Results Community. If no formal objection is received by 24 June, a final version of the Guiding Principles will be shared with the DAC for approval at its meeting on 10 July.

Once approved, the Guiding Principles on Managing for Sustainable Development Results will be published on this website, and a dissemination strategy will be implemented. A guidance note supporting the operationalisation of the Guiding Principles will be developed, taking into account the feedback received through the consultation on the most useful supporting tools.
Annex A: Geographical spread of survey respondents

Europe
Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Portugal, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ukraine

The Americas
Barbados
Brazil
Canada
Colombia
Ecuador
Honduras
Mexico
Panama
United States

Africa
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Côte d’Ivoire
Egypt
Ethiopia
Kenya
Malawi
Mauritania
Mauritius
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
South Africa
Togo
Uganda
Zimbabwe

Asia and the Pacific
Australia
Cambodia
China
Fiji
India
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Korea
New Zealand
Pakistan
Philippines
Samoa
Sri Lanka
Annex B: List of institutions that participated in the consultation

We are deeply grateful for the many contributions from the following countries, organisations and networks:

National Governments and Organisations

Belgium: Belgian Development Agency (ENABEL) ● European Commission: Directorate-General of International Co-operation and Development ● Benin: Ministry of Finance ● Brazil: CLEAR Center for Brazil; Getulio Vargas Foundation ● Burkina Faso: Institute of National Statistics for Development; Burkina’s Community of Practice on MDPR; Burkinese Association for Family Wellbeing ● Burundi: Ministry of Finance, Budget and Development Co-operation; Permanent Secretariat for Economic and Social Reforms Monitoring; Future Thinking think-tank ● Cambodia: Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board ● Cameroon: Investment Watch ● Canada: Global Affairs Canada; Community of Practice ● Côte d’Ivoire: Prime Minister’s Cabinet; Ministry of Planning; Permanent Secretariat for the National Council for Nutrition; National Secretariat for Capacity Building; Côte d’Ivoire Community of Practice on MDPR ● Croatia: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs ● Czech Republic: Czech Development Agency ● Democratic Republic of the Congo: Secretariat for National Capacity Building ● Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Danida ● Ecuador: Egypt ● Ethiopia: Planning and Development Commission; Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy; Self Help Africa NGO ● Fiji: Bua Urban Youth Network ● Finland: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Finnish Evaluation Society; Business Finland; Finnish Refugee Council; World Vision Finland; University of Helsinki ● France: Sorbonne University; Kering Foundation ● Germany: Ministry of Development Co-operation (BMZ); GIZ; German Investment and Development Company (DEG); German Development Institute ● Honduras: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation ● Iceland: Ministry of Foreign Affairs ● India: PJTSAU (Hyderabad) ● Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade ● Italy: Italian Agency for Development Co-operation (AICS); ActionAid Italy; Center of Research on Social Investements think-tank; University of Rome; Amapola Association for the Safety of Peoples and Communities ● Kenya: State Department for Planning; National Treasury and Planning; Kenyan Community of Practice on MDPR; CGIAR Kenya ● Luxembourg: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs; MoFEA Directorate of Development Co-operation ● Malawi: Office of The President and Cabinet; Performance Enforcement Department ● Mauritania: Mauritania’s Community of Practice on MDPR ● Mauritius: Public Sector Management Network ● Mexico: CLEAR Center for Latin America ● Montenegro ● Netherlands: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Foundation for Climate Friendly Procurement and Business (SKAO) ● New Zealand: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade ● Niger: Programme PromAP ● Nigeria: Ministry of Budget and National Planning; Nigerian M&E Network ● Panama: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Directorate of International Co-operation ● Philippines ● Portugal: Camões - Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua; Portuguese D-NGO Platform ● Samoa: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade ● Senegal: Ministry of Finance; Senegalese chapter of the Africa Community of Practice on MDPR; Secours Islamique NGO ● Slovenia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs ● Spain: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation; Spanish Agency of International Co-operation for Development (AECID); Ministry of Justice; AECID’s Country Office in Ecuador; Subnational Government of Andalusia; Subnational Government of Navarra; Subnational Government of Valencia; Bilbao City Council; Energy Without Borders Foundation; Autonomous University of Madrid (International Co-operation Office); King Juan Carlos University; Lleida University; Polytechnic University of Valencia; Miguel Hernandez University ● Sri Lanka: Ministry of Sustainable Development; Sustainable Development Council ● Sweden: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Swedish Aid Agency (SIDA); Act Church of Sweden NGO; Urban Institute’s Center on International Development and Governance ● Switzerland: Ministry of Finance, Trade, Development and Economic Planning; Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation (SDC); SWISSAID; Swiss Red Cross; Solidar Suisse NGO; SwissContact NGO; Brücke Le Pont NGO; Unité – Swiss Association for People’s Exchanges in International Co-operation; Hinrondelle Foundation; Jacobs Foundation; Philanthropy Advisors ● Togo: Ministry of Development Planning and Co-operation ● Uganda: Office of the Prime Minister ● Ukraine: Partnership for Transparency Fund ● United Kingdom: Department for International Development (DFID); Care International UK; British Council; Tearfund NGO; Development Initiatives think-tank ● United States: Development Gateway; George Washington University; Rogers University

Multilateral Bodies and Networks

Annex C: List of DAC members that were involved in the consultation

Belgium  
Canada  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
European Union  
Finland  
Germany  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Luxembourg

Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Norway*  
Portugal  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden*  
Switzerland*  
United Kingdom  
United States*

* participated as a member of the Reference Group

Annex D: Level of Agreement across all Principles

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nr.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Nr.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Nr.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Nr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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</table>