

Basis for discussion

Harmonised and Aligned Development Communication

A proposal on information flow-back models to
increase public support for ODA

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Issues to discuss in Paris:

Is public opinion on ODA in donor countries only a matter for the donor countries or is it a shared concern between donor and partner countries?

Should, according to harmonisation guidelines for donor practises and alignment policies, the partner country own the process with input and support from donor countries? Does this put too much burden on the partner country?

Which approach generates the best output for the public in donor countries?

Can the model proposed in this paper function? What are the strong and weak parts in the proposed model? How can it be improved?

What should be the next step?

Contextual definitions of concepts and acronyms

Alignment. Initiatives where donors harmonise practices with the partner countries. Harmonisation and alignment are thus closely interconnected.

Harmonised Donor Practises. Initiatives where donors cooperate in development support. Most common forms today are sector programme support and budget support, but the proposed models should function in any kind of harmonised initiatives. Another example is the donor cooperation in Central America, formed after hurricane Mitch.

ODA. Official Development Assistance

Development Communication. Communication surrounding development issues to raise awareness and maintain support for development cooperation. In this context, the concept mainly refers to communication processes in donor countries.

Programme support. There are two types of programme support, based on the purpose of the support:

- Budget support, or support for economic reforms/debt relief
- Sector programme support

Information Flow-back. In this context the concept describes flow of information from development cooperation characterised by harmonisation to information departments at HQs. Furthermore, the information that flows back is adapted to be efficient for the public in the donor countries.

Donor Support Group. The group of donors that cooperate in a sector programme support, budget support or similar process.

Lead Agency. The bilateral or multilateral donor that is heading the donor support group.

Dialogue programme support. Verbal and written exchanges of facts and ideas. In the context of harmonisation and alignment processes, the dialogue perspective is often very closely linked to the organisation perspective. A dialogue can be characterised as good when it consists of an exchange of information that leads to an increased level of result achievement with respect to the overall goals of the programme support.

Communication in Development Programmes. The use of communication processes to create participation, to achieve objectives and to contribute to dialogue and good quality in development programmes.

1. Objectives and Methodology

1.1 Objective and scope of the study

During the High Level Meeting at DAC 2004, Mr Marc Verwilghen, Minister of Development Cooperation in Belgium, the chair country of the EU at the time, Mr Mark Malloch Brown, Head of UNDP and Ms. Louka Katseli, Director of the OECD Development Centre, proposed that the network of DAC Heads of Information should make a particular effort to consider how donors can enlarge and sustain public support in donor countries as aid investments shift from project to programme funding. Public support is considered to be absolutely necessary for international development cooperation in the long term.

At a meeting with The Network of DAC Heads of Information, the Chair of DAC, Richard Manning, raised the issue of how DAC could assist in informing about the advantages and outcomes of programmatic approaches to aid.

SWAps, budget support and other initiatives characterised by alignment and donor harmonisation embrace a growing share of the total ODA, but there is little information adapted to the public in donor countries about the results of these initiatives. There might be a risk of declining support for ODA if an increase of programmatic approaches is not coordinated with a similar increase in adapted, high-quality information to the decision makers and the public in the donor countries.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has taken the initiative to look into developing a model for an information flow-back system on donor-harmonised initiatives.

Structures for harmonised and aligned ODA exist or are currently being constructed in many partner countries. This provides a possible basis to develop models for information flow-back that result in lower costs and enhanced information for the public in the donor countries as well as in partner countries.

The issue can be categorised as part of the agenda of DAC's Task Team for Harmonisation and Alignment, with close links to one of the Task Teams sub-groups, Joint venture for the Development of Result.

The assignment is, against this background, to create a model to secure enhanced information flow-back, both in quality and quantity, from harmonised donor initiatives. The information produced will be adapted to decision makers and public in the donor and partner countries. The overall objective of such an information flow-back model is to increase public awareness and support for development cooperation.

1.2 Team and time schedule

The study was carried out by two Swedish based communication consultant agencies: Global Reporting and Amazonas Relationship Management. The project team comprised of four communication specialists: Klas Palm and Olle Wiklund from Amazonas Relationship Management, Lars Tallert and David Isaksson from Global Reporting.

The study was initiated in November 2004. This Working Paper was distributed to the members of the Informal Network of Heads of Information from the DAC countries in February 2005. It will be discussed at their Annual Meeting in Paris March 4, 2005. A Final Report will be produced in March 2005.

The study was initiated and financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Sida does not necessarily share the views expressed in this report. Responsibility for its content rests entirely with the authors.

1.3 Data collecting methodology

The data collecting has been carried out in cooperation with representatives from:

- Information and policy departments at development agencies headquarters and ministries in donor countries and multi-lateral organisations.
- The World Bank's office in Paris.
- DAC Secretariat involved in harmonising donor practices and public opinion.
- Donor countries' field offices.
- Governments in partner countries involved in sector and budget support programmes.
- International NGO "Plan".

To achieve the established goals and taking into consideration the complexity of harmonised information flow-back, the work has entailed:

- In-depth interviews with above-mentioned representatives.
- Visit to Nicaragua.
- Reviewing DAC's policy documents.
- Reviewing documentation and literature on donor harmonisation processes, information flow-back and public opinion about development cooperation.

The mission has functioned in a participatory manner. The mission started out with an open-minded approach, absorbing the views of the respondents. At the second stage, some preliminary models and reports were distributed. The views

of the respondents on these preliminary drafts were taken into consideration when formulating this Working Paper.

The mission began by interviewing representatives at the information and policy departments at development agencies' headquarters and the ministries in donor countries involved. The respondents suggested representatives at field offices. The field offices proposed representatives in the partner governments. All respondents have been given a possibility to provide feed back at the second stage.

A total of more than 40 persons have been interviewed.

2. Present Situation

2.1 Donor countries' needs of harmonised information flow-back

The present trend is undoubtedly that programme support and other donor-harmonised practices constitute a growing share of ODA. This sets new demands on development communication and requires re-thinking.

One basic assumption of this study is that it is possible to provide information that is useful to donor countries, partner countries and multilateral agencies, despite the cultural differences. If CNN, Sony, MTV, the international NGO Plan can find models, it should not be impossible for the donor community to do likewise.

Most respondents in this study agree on this assumption, underlining that there must be a certain flexibility, including possibilities for each information department to edit or translate the material produced.

A prerequisite for efficient harmonised information flow-back is that the information departments at HQ request more or less the same kind of information. According to this study there seems to be a need for primarily three different types of information:

- Success stories with a human interest feature. Stories on how the life of individuals and groups has changed for the better due to ODA.
- Easily understandable statistics on progress in sectors, programmes or other processes.
- Arguments on advantages with harmonisation and alignment in ODA.

Even though it is not within the scope of the study to specify target groups in the donor countries, discussions with respondents have covered these issues. It is interesting to note that two target groups in donor countries seem to stand out as prioritised:

- *Decision makers/opinion leaders.* There is a trend for ODA to be seen in a broader context, where coherence with other policy areas is desired, particularly on trade and FDIs. Consequently, decision-making on development issues is spread out on several ministries, implying that many more politicians need adapted information. Another trend is that the private sector is more involved in development processes. Thirdly, artists have to a larger extent become engaged, in fundraising activities in particular.
- *Public interested in international issues.* These groups can be found in NGOs, schools and universities etc. The size of this target group varies substantially in different donor countries.

2.2 Partner countries' needs of information flow-back

When designing a model for information flow-back the needs of information flow-back within the partner countries cannot be ignored, at government level or among the public. On the contrary, there should be a common interest by the public in both donor and partner countries for better access to information describing results achieved by ODA.

A developed system of information flow-back towards different stake holders in partner countries can contribute to a higher level of goal fulfilment of the programme support.

2.3 Examples of present information flow-back systems

The mission has so far not found any example of aligned harmonised information flow-back adapted to the public in donor and partner countries. Below are a few of many interesting examples of information flow-back models that can serve as inspiration.

Tanzania

Tanzania Online is an Internet based database that allows donors, Government, civil society, academics and others access to a wide-ranging set of analytic documents and reports on development in Tanzania, priorities, progress in poverty reduction and sector reforms. UNDP, the Government of Tanzania and the Economic and Social Research Foundation established the initiative. www.tzonline.org to improve access to, and promote, the exchange of information on analysis of development issues in Tanzania.

This is a good example of a harmonised and aligned information flow-back initiative. However, the information produced in this model is not adapted to the public. It is primarily for readers with a high knowledge of development issues.

Uganda

A World Bank survey discovered that only a fraction (13%) of funds disbursed by central government for schools' non-wage expenditure was actually received. Funds were diverted to other purposes by local government officials or used for private gain. The monitoring instruments were revised and government policy is now to publish details of all funds released to district authorities. Transfers are detailed in newspapers, radio broadcasts and on public notice boards to enable local communities to check funds are actually received and spent as intended. As a result of this initiative, 90% of allocated funds reached schools.

This is a good example of a harmonised information flow-back, owned by the partner government and directed to the public in the partner country. The public in donor countries were not a target group in this information flow-back model.

Nicaragua

During the politically turbulent years in Nicaragua around 2000 several donors focused on the need for transparency and the fight against corruption. One part of this process was the funding of the Nicaraguan government website in which all development programmes are listed. The website (partly financed by Norway, Japan and UNDP) and accessible at <http://cancilleria.gob.ni/> lists all ongoing development programmes in a very detailed manner. The statistics show both what has been agreed upon and actual disbursements.

This is a good example of a harmonised and aligned information flow-back initiative. However, the information produced in this system is not adapted to the public.

Plan – a communication flow-back example

Plan is one of the world's largest NGOs, operating in 15 donor countries and 45 partner countries. Plan is mainly financed through child sponsorship. When a new sponsor is signed up a digital file is created and sent to the database where information about possible sponsor children is stored. A matching takes place and at the same time a to-do-list is created. The following process is then set in motion:

A welcome letter from the field director is written and sent to the sponsor. The letter often includes a presentation of the programmes in the areas, local conditions etc.

- A photo of the child and a presentation of his/her family, their condition, the community where they live etc. is sent to the sponsor.
- Contact is made with the sponsored child and information is given about the sponsor (which country etc.). The child is encouraged to write to the sponsor (often with the help of a volunteer, as many sponsored children and their families can not write).
- The child writes the first letter, which is translated into English in the Plan field office and then sent to the country office in the donor country. The letter is registered and matched with the sponsor's profile. In the case of the sponsor not speaking English, the letter is translated to the local language by one of Plan's volunteers.
- An annual progress report is written (either by the field office or by the country office).

Plan provides an excellent example of a complex information flow-back model that not only works in different countries; it actually sets the entire framework of the organisation. See www.plan-international.org

Norway and Nepal

In 2002, NORAD initiated a two-year pilot project in Nepal and Uganda. The objective was to improve understanding and to strengthen the follow-up of results in SWAps. By collecting learning experiences from the project, NORAD strived to improve external communication of results. The project did not aim at changing the existing reporting mechanisms of the partner countries.

Norwegian teams of communication consultants were sent out to Nepal and Uganda. In Nepal, where the project focused on the education sector, staff were interviewed from the Ministry of Education along with teachers and students in schools and representatives from the Nepalese Central Bureau of Statistics. Staff at the Norwegian Embassy were also interviewed on how results were reported back to the HQ.

In Nepal, the project found that extensive compilation and different kinds of reporting of results was carried out at all levels, but with little coordination. Few reporting mechanisms paid attention to the very simple indicator that the Nepalese Ministry of Education had set up, namely: “How many children go to school?”

At the embassies, little attention was paid to reporting results. Instead, much of the reporting focused on how many activities were carried out and how much money that was spent.

The team from NORAD also wrote human interest stories combined with hard facts to be published in Norwegian newspapers. This did not succeed, but the material has been used by NORAD in internal channels such as speeches, intranet etc.

The aim of NORAD was to improve the information flow-back on the basis of the pilot project, but as the operational work was transferred from NORAD to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the project could not continue.

The project particularly identified the need of good routines for reporting results from the field to the HQ. The project is an interesting example of a donor based, non-aligned model, even though it was not in cooperation with other donors.

Sweden

Gapminder is a non-profit venture for development and provision of free software that visualises human development. This is done in collaboration with universities, UN organisations, public agencies and non-governmental organisations. Funding is by grants from sources such as Sida, WHO, Save the Children Fund and UNDP. As a producer of global public goods, Gapminder benefits from free and creative inputs from pilot-testers and other end-users in a variety of institutions and organisations.

Gapminder is an interesting example of how complex statistics can be presented as easily understandable graphics. See more at www.gapminder.org

3. Harmonised Donor Practices

3.1 The Rome Declaration

The Rome Declaration on Harmonisation, endorsed by 28 partner countries and more than 40 multilateral and bilateral development institutions, declares:

We attach high importance to partner countries' assuming a stronger leadership role in the coordination of development assistance, and to assisting in building their capacity to do so. Partner countries on their part will undertake necessary reforms to enable progressive reliance by donors on their systems as they adopt international principles or standards and apply good practices. The key element that will guide this work is a country-based approach that emphasizes country ownership and Government leadership...

Rome, February 2003

3.2 DAC Harmonising Donor Practices

The Good Practice Paper DAC Harmonising Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery, based its work on the DAC Task Force on Donor Practices, chaired by Richard Manning.

The DAC-Paper suggests four key areas for improvements. They reflect the need to strengthen national ownership and address the problem of the high transaction costs arising from multiple and uncoordinated donor practices: Donors should simplify their procedures.

- Donors should harmonise their procedures.
- Donors should align procedures.
- Donors should be more transparent.

The DAC Paper also outlines guiding principles for reporting and monitoring. This is of particular interest considering harmonised information flow-back models:

- Reporting and monitoring systems should be country-owned and led.
- A small amount of reliable data is more useful than a large volume of questionable data.
- Focus continuity in monitoring and reporting on a small set of core indicators.
- Tailored monitoring arrangements suit local needs, while "off-the-shelf models" rarely fit.
- Donors should work with partner countries to rely on country owned reporting and monitoring systems – reporting and monitoring systems have too often been established and geared towards satisfying donor

interests and concerns; often they have been carried out by donor personnel or consultants without appropriately involving partner countries. Donors should work with their partners in a participatory approach to strengthen country capacities and demand for result-based management.

- Reporting and monitoring systems should support partners' own information needs – Partner Governments – and in-country stakeholders (civil society, legislators, etc.) – should hold a rolling dialogue about their accountability needs. Donors should work with partner governments to support this dialogue while agreeing on arrangements that provide an adequate basis for external accountability to donors. Both partner governments and donors need to be accountable to the ultimate beneficiaries of development cooperation.
- Simplification and harmonisation of systems is a key challenge. As donors increasingly rely on partner country systems, it is important that their information requirements do not overburden those systems, or divert existing capacity. One way of achieving this is by ensuring that the reporting and monitoring systems used by donors are simplified, harmonised, and appropriately timed in relation to national policy and budget processes.

Among good practices in making the information more transparent, the need to share and disseminate information is underlined. The norm for donors and partners is that all monitoring results for publicly funded projects are openly available to the public.

The DAC Paper also outlines some future challenges that are important to bear in mind:

- Reporting and monitoring systems should be built on local capacities, demands and leadership.
- The opportunity costs of participatory approaches for the participants themselves should be taken into account.
- Project monitoring towards programme and policy monitoring should, wherever possible, be done within the PRS framework.

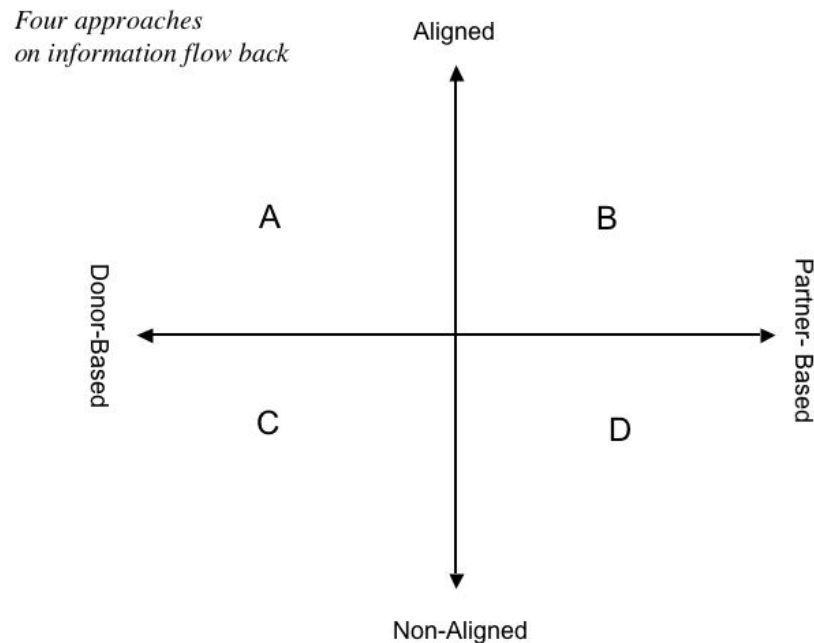
The DAC Harmonisation & Alignment Task Force has agreed to develop a Facilitation Network that will support harmonisation processes at country level.

4. Discussion on Different Models of Information Flow-back Systems

When analysing possibilities for effective, harmonised information flow-back, two aspects are essential: ownership and alignment. Is the public opinion on ODA in donor countries only a matter for the donor countries? Is it a shared task between donors and partner countries, or in accordance with harmonisation guidelines for donor practises and alignment policies, should the partner country own the process with input and support from donor countries? Does this put too much burden on the partner country? Which approach generates the best output for the public in donor countries? Is it just as important to provide the public in partner countries with adapted and understandable information?

The answers to these questions will also have an effect on to what extent communication is seen as an integrated part of ODA. Should it strive to create an information system that is integrated in harmonising and alignment processes or should development communication be seen as a separate structure?

On a theoretical level, a distinction can be made between four different approaches.



A: This field represents approaches that are owned by donors and aligned to partner country government procedures. In reality, it is hard to image a model that is owned by the donor and aligned, as this is contrary to other harmonising and alignment processes.

B: This field represents models that are owned by the partner country government and aligned to its procedures. Information flows in both directions from information departments at HQ, field offices and the government in the partner country. Models in this field are adapted to harmonisation and alignment processes in ODA. A model within this field is outlined in Chapter 5 of this study.

C: This field represents models that are owned by donors and not aligned, run by information departments at HQ and/or field offices. In this field, most current procedures in bi-lateral information flow-back processes are found.

The advantage of this model is that it will not put any burden on cooperation countries.

A possible example of a conceptual model in this field:

The heads of information from DAC countries assign a coordinating group. Partner countries and field offices are consulted to provide input on programmes fit for information flow-back. The coordinating group decides on the basis of this information a limited number of programmes. Communication consultants are contracted by the lead agency of the donor support group to compile and produce information adapted to the public in the donor countries. A communication plan is elaborated. Different set-ups are chosen, depending on the characteristics of the programme. A global website, a portal, is set up, preferably by one of the donors in the coordinating group. Every time a new story is produced, an e-mail is distributed to the info departments at HQ. The administrator of the website also handles distribution of DVDs that can be ordered from the website.

In a somewhat more integrated model, a paragraph in each programme support agreement can be included, requiring each programme to have a readiness to organise information flow-back if this is requested by the coordinating group.

D: In this field, no models can exist in reality, as a model can hardly be owned by the partner country and not aligned.

5. Proposed Model for Information Flow-back

5.1 A general description of the information flow-back model

On the basis of all the interviews carried out during this study, and on our analysis of needs, problems and opportunities we herewith suggest a model for information flow-back. This model fits into field B in the figure above.

The model is based on the following conditions:

- There is a need for some sort of a coordinated canalisation of information needs from donor countries.
- The model shall deliver information to information departments at bilateral cooperation agencies.
- The model will deliver:
 - Success stories with a human interest feature. Stories on how the life of individuals and groups has changed for the better due to ODA.
 - Easily understandable statistics on progress in sectors, programmes or other processes.
 - Arguments on advantages with harmonisation and alignment.
- The model should be flexible. The model should provide a framework that is adaptable to each given situation in both donor and partner countries.
- The process needs to be harmonized with other donor practises.
- A minimum of new bureaucratic structures.
- Alignment with partner countries' practises.
- Harmonisation with MDG and PRS processes.
- Cost saving for all stakeholders involved.
- Effective monitoring mechanisms on both processes and results.
- Sustainability.

The model is based on already existing reporting structures between partner and donor countries. The partner country - which already produces statistics and economical information – shall produce easily understood result-oriented information¹, and in addition produce human interests stories that can exemplify the statistics and economic result-oriented information.

The Donor Support Group is - from the donor country's point of view - the responsible part to discuss this issue. The Donor Support Group can in the same discussions raise both the donor countries' needs of information flow back and the needs and opportunities with a developed national communication strategy

¹ The development of higher degree of result orientation in reports are one of the main issues discussed by the Task Team for Harmonisation and Alignment

for the same programme. It is important that the Donor Support Group perceive that this initiative can contribute to a better programme and that the partner country can benefit from the system.

There are other arguments for why information flow-back is not only an issue for donor countries, but for partner countries as well:

- The quality of the programme support is enhanced by a good dialogue and planned, strategic communication processes.
- The democratic process and transparency is improved.
- The information flow-back system can be related to participatory and alignment processes as well as other communication for developments processes.

It is therefore crucial that the Donor Support Group at the field offices understands the needs of information flow-back system and that they can argue for this kind of cooperation. A major challenge in this model would thus be to support the field representatives so they can take part in the discussions into “why” and “how” the information flow-back system should be arranged in their countries. One measure could be to follow the example of Dfid and mainstream the development communication responsibility into the job description of all relevant staff at the field offices. Information departments at HQs can cooperate to provide communication training for the staff at the field offices.

In the proposed model, the partner countries need to develop flow back functions, established at the same authorities that bear the responsibility for the already existing reporting towards donor countries.

A standard passage in each support agreement would regulate how the information flow-back is organised. The practical procedure would be in the shape of a dialogue with donor countries and partner country. The partner country would be responsible for production and compilation of result-oriented information.

The partner, within each programme or coordinated at a national level, publishes the information on a website and sends an e-mail to contact persons at each DAC bilateral information office. This e-mail contains information about new information at their website.

One possibility is to organise a subscription system whereby the subscriber (DAC bilateral information office) selects the countries and sectors from which information is required.

At the national info flow-back function, they are of course free to develop their own flow-back structures towards different local stakeholders.

5.2 Description of each component of the information flow-back model

Coordinated canalisation of needs from information departments

It is important that the partner knows what kind of information the information departments in the donor countries request. The study suggests that the canalisation of the information needs should be done through existing reporting structures. A system for how this could be set up could be taken into consideration by the DAC Task Team for Harmonisation and Alignment.

Ownership based on harmonisation and alignment processes

An information flow-back model should as far as possible be built on existing reporting systems and other aligned and harmonised processes. Double structures should be avoided. Harmonisation with MDG and PRS processes is particularly important. Coordination is not only beneficial for the information flow-back but might also improve the MDG and PRS reports by including human interest stories and more easily understandable statistics on results in these reporting procedures.

As a consequence, the partner country should be responsible for compilation, production and distribution of information. Competence in the field of communication has increased at a rapid pace in most partner countries and the trend seems to be strengthened, providing a solid base for good quality.

Improving information flow-back to the public, both in donor and partner countries, should be in dialogue with information departments, field offices and governments in partner countries. The dialogue could also result in an exchange of knowledge and a better understanding of each office's priorities on how reporting should be carried out.

An aligned approach on compilation, production and distribution of information

The partner government has the responsibility of providing information flow-back results according to the needs of the public in donor countries and partner countries. If need be, the partner country can contract communication consultants.

A communication plan is elaborated, setting the communication ambition of the programme. Different set-ups are chosen, depending on the characteristics of the programme. This provides the programme not only with a mechanism for information flow-back but also with a framework for planned, strategic communication. It also provides possible coordination with communication for development in the partner countries.

Information flow-back is included in programme support agreement

The basis for the model is that all procedures for information flow-back are

included in each programme support agreement or other similar agreements built on harmonisation and alignment. This implies that information flow-back is carried out in all countries where programme support occurs.

Costs are shared by programme donors

Costs for compilation, production and distribution of information would be covered within the programme agreement. This requires costs being shared between the countries supporting the programme according to the same principle as other costs.

Possibility to edit information

As a consequence of the need for flexibility, information departments in donor and partner countries and at multilateral organisations should have the possibility to edit and translate the information according to the specific needs of their public. The study has not perceived it as feasible to construct a model whereby all different information needs can be integrated and communicated directly to the public.

In this proposal, further dissemination of information to the public in donor countries rests with the information departments at the HQ. Equally, the partner country should decide on how to disseminate the information further to their public.

The information should be produced bearing different needs in mind, allowing the information departments to select the information required.

Coordinated content, output and distribution

As stated above, the content and output must be coordinated according to the needs expressed by the information departments at HQs. According to the respondents in this study, the needs seem to be similar:

- Success stories with a human interest feature. Stories on how the life of individuals and groups has changed for the better due to ODA.
- Easily understandable statistics on progress in sectors, programmes or other processes, presented primarily as graphs. This also includes economic statistics. The UNDP Human Development Trends sets a good example. See <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics>.
- Arguments on advantages with harmonisation and alignment in ODA.

Success stories with a human feature are presently hard to find, indicating that such information cannot be derived from existing reporting. There seems to be a consensus that information should be presented as articles with text and photos or as films. The quantity may vary from a total of 15 to several hundred articles or films a year depending on the needs of the information departments at HQs.

Statistics on progress exist in present reporting, particularly within the MDG and PRS processes. These statistics can be extracted and used in information flow-back processes. However, they need to be elaborated and simplified to suit the needs of the public. This task is closely connected to the work of the Joint venture for the Development of Result, a sub-group of the DAC Task Team for Harmonisation and Alignment.

Arguments on advantages with harmonisation and alignment are similar to all harmonised and aligned support and can thus be handled centrally.

One observation of particular interest is the possibility for donor countries with limited resources for development communication to use the information produced in the information flow-back process. A functioning model could substantially lower the development communication costs for each donor country.

Organisation for crisis management

Crisis management can be described as the process of handling unexpected and unwanted results such as corruption, inefficiency, badly allocated resources etc. The respondents of the study are generally supportive of organised crisis management both at HQs, field offices and in partner countries. As unwanted results tend to appear, formulation of a crisis management policy, preparing the procedure for action in a crisis for the programme, should also be organised by the partner government as part of the information flow-back model.

Monitoring and quality assurance

An international communication consultant can be contracted by the partner country to monitor the information produced. The cost is included in the programme agreement.

The information departments in the donor countries and multi-lateral organisations involved cooperate in monitoring the output according to other harmonised monitoring mechanisms.

Sustainability

Sustainability is accounted for by a planned, formalised procedure on information flow-back, formulated in a standard passage on information flow-back included in all programme agreements.

6 Conclusions

The possible harmonisation, alignment, synergetic and spin-off effects of the model outlined above can be summarised as:

- Harmonisation of procedures at information departments at HQ, field offices and partner country governments.
- Harmonisation with MDG and PRS processes in producing statistics.
- Harmonisation with other donor practices and structures.
- Coordination with communication in development projects in the partner countries.
- Coordination with communication for development in the partner countries.
- Alignment with other development processes towards ownership by partner country
- Increase of communication competence in partner countries and at field offices.
- Cost saving for all stakeholders involved.
- Possibilities for donor countries with little resources for development communication to use the information produced.

A final report will be available at the end of March 2005, including final conclusions, following the discussions at the Annual Meeting of the Informal Network of DAC Heads of Information.