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DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
Development Assistance Committee

Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE JOINT VENTURE ON PUBLIC
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Held on 13 March 2008 at the OECD in Paris

This draft summary is submitted FOR APPROVAL at the next meeting of the Joint Venture on Public Financial Management

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DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE JOINT VENTURE ON PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda and Summary of last meeting

1. The Co-Chairs, Anthony Hegarty (World Bank) and Riccardo Maggi (European Commission) welcomed participants to the tenth meeting of the Joint Venture on Public Financial Management.

2. The agenda and summary of the last meeting of the Joint Venture [DCD/DAC/EFF/M(2007)16/PROV] were adopted pending the following adjustment:

- Reference to Denmark's new PFM website should be amended to refer instead to a PFM e-learning course.

Item 2: Preparations and Reporting for Accra

3. The OECD Secretariat updated members on ongoing preparations for Accra including the structure of the HLF, the roundtables, the regional preparatory events and inputs that will inform the High Level Forum. These include the Evaluation report, the 2008 Monitoring Survey, Donor Self-Reporting and the Accra Progress Report. Inputs relating specifically to the Joint Venture's work include:

- The Alignment Roundtable 2 co-chaired by the EC and Bangladesh and which will include a discussion on the use of country PFM systems.
- The report on the use of PFM country systems which will feed into the Accra Progress Report and its key messages will be discussed in the Alignment Roundtable.
- The Accra Agenda for Action will review progress in implementing the Paris Declaration and will include statements about PFM and the use of country PFM systems.

Item 3: Report on the Use of Country Systems and Chapter Two: Using Country PFM Systems

4. The co-chair of the Joint Venture (Riccardo Maggi) introduced the report on the Use of Country PFM Systems. The co-chairs reiterated that this was a very early draft and as a result outlined a number of caveats:

- The Chapters were prepared by individual authors on the basis of the concept note and comments received from members at the last meeting of the Joint Venture. As a result, the four chapters were neither consolidated nor edited prior to the JV meeting.
- The chapters are not framed by a first chapter (to be drafted) outlining the rationale and benefits of using country systems. This chapter will recall the importance of a strengthened country PFM system and balance the technical discussions in previous chapters.

- Two key work streams (the SPA/CABRI study on putting aid on budget; and the stock take of donor approaches to risk) were not as yet fully integrated into the draft report. Moreover, stronger linkages needed to be made with the Joint Venture's previous outputs including on harmonisation and capacity development.

5. The Co-Chairs requested that members identify good case studies for each of the chapters of the report. They also noted the need to:

- Ensure that the report should allow space for partner country views to ensure that it is not donor centred.
- Highlight progress achieved so far and focus on the key positive messages that should be brought out.

6. In the ensuing general discussion, Joint Venture members welcomed the report and noted that it will be a key contribution to the Accra High Level Forum. Remarks focused both on the content and structure of the report.

7. *Structure of the report.* The opportunity of restructuring the report so as to bring into greater relief the importance of strengthening country PFM systems for both partners and donors as well as the progress recorded so far was raised.

8. *Content of the report.* The co-chair (World Bank) suggested that the Paris Declaration targets be stretched and the key messages be more ambitious in nature. In this regard, donors could focus on moving towards the use of country PFM systems where appropriate as the default position. Other comments focused on the need to:

- Ensure a focus on capacity development as a key factor in moving from diagnostics to implementation in the use of country PFM systems.
- Highlight the importance of PFM reform strategies and commitment to these strategies as an adjunct to moving towards a default position on using country PFM systems.
- Recommend that partner countries should have a clear strategy linked to overall PFM reform strategies (as outlined in the SPA/CABRI report).
- Recognize the need to ensure transparency in the information on the quality of a country's PFM system. Failing this, donors will be able to justify their non-use of country systems.

9. Following the discussion, it was agreed that partner country perspectives should be further highlighted in the report. The co-chairs agreed to consider the opportunity of changing the structure of the report in the context of the revision of the draft (and the addition of a first introductory chapter) and with the benefit of the results from the 2008 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration.

10. *Chapter Two: The Use of Country PFM Systems.* The Secretariat outlined the purpose and key messages of the Chapter including:

- The definition of the use of country systems in policy guidance
- Documenting current practices in the use of country PFM systems

- Outlining key messages for HLF-3

11. In the ensuing discussion, members welcomed the chapter's recognition that the use of country systems in practice is on a continuum since both donors and countries differ in their use of country systems. Members also welcomed the conclusion that specific guidance is lacking on this issue. Specific comments focused on the following:

- Further analysis of the underlying reasons behind the poor correlation between quality of a country's PFM system and its use was required. This would, inter alia, highlight the different ways donors come to a decision with regard to use of country PFM systems (see below) and the role that expected benefits play in such decisions (with the case of budget support in fragile states being highlighted)
- The need to acknowledge up front that some donors will use country treasury systems faster than others. In this sense, two different positions emerge: one tending to draw a threshold in terms of quality for any use of country PFM systems and another relying more on the quality and pace of PFM reforms as a justification for the use of country systems. These different approaches seem to reflect different assessments of vulnerability and risk tolerances in donor country parliaments. The importance of credible PFM assessment and visible PFM reform results to underpin both types of methodology was underlined.
- The need to recognise from a partner country perspective the costs and benefits of requiring that donors use country PFM systems (as some donors are not able to provide aid in this manner).
- The need to draw further on the SPA/CABRI study on putting aid on budget and update data from the SPA 2007 Budget Support Survey.
- The need to frame the discussion on the (partial) use of country PFM systems in the context of the different risks and benefits that partial use entails. In this context, it was noted that putting aid on plan and ensuring that it is properly reflected on budget should lead to consensus among donors and yet had not been achieved. Putting aid on treasury, on the contrary, constitutes a challenge of a different magnitude.
- The need to keep the discussions focused on the use of country systems rather than on specific aid modalities.

12. *Key Messages.* Members suggested the following revisions to the key messages:

- Better analyse the factors underlying the link between the quality and use of country systems (in the decision to move towards a default use of country systems).
- Improve the transparency in donors' decisions in the use of country systems. This also entails being more transparent in relation to the guidance on the use of country systems.
- The possibility of proposing putting aid on plan (and possibly on budget) as a common goal.
- The importance of ensuring ownership of PFM strategies by partner countries.

Item 4: Stock Take on Donor Approaches to Managing Risk when Using Country Systems

13. The co-chair (World Bank) introduced the DFID commissioned study undertaken by Mokoro and CIPFA and expressed their appreciation for the work and the sharing of an early draft of the report with chapter authors.

14. Stephen Lister (Mokoro) made a presentation outlining the challenges; analytical framework; and key findings and issues from the study on the stock take on donor approaches to managing risk. In particular, the report argued that:

- The commitment to use country systems is not limited to budget support. However, there is a tendency for donors to conflate risks and benefits of using country systems with budget support.
- Donors state a clear policy for using country systems as a general target but not all of them clearly and transparently set out criteria for risk assessments in the use of country systems.
- There is scope for clarifying the terminology relating to both financial and non-financial risks as perceived by the donor community.
- An asymmetry of benefits and risks exists as donor representatives are aware of the latter whilst potential benefits of using country systems are perceived as more distant priorities.
- Risk management is a continuous process where monitoring and managing risk affect the way country systems are used and designed.
- Risk assessments affect a myriad of different stakeholders including partner country governments. However, it remains a challenge for partner countries to find information about the implications of those risk assessments.
- The benefits of using country systems are not well articulated and there remains scope for clarifying definitions and joint learning from developing shared terminology on risk.

15. In the ensuing discussion, JV members thanked DFID for commissioning the work and Mokoro and CIPFA for undertaking the study and noted that it is a key input into the report on the use of country systems. They noted that it provided a key opportunity for identifying the different typologies of risks between agencies. Members also focused on the:

- Need for a communication strategy to better communicate the use of country systems to external accountability bodies including donor country parliaments.
- Following a question regarding the recent review by the Independent Evaluation Group of CFAA and CPAR and PERs, the World Bank noted that it is currently preparing guidance in relation to assessing PFM risks in the use of country systems.
- The relationship between use and quality is important but not the only factor as shown by the use of country systems in fragile states.
- The opportunity of reflecting about how better to measure corruption as this goes beyond the information provided by existing PFM diagnostics. For instance, corruption indicators are not specifically included in PEFA assessments as the framework is intended to assess performance of the PFM system in a measurable way.

- Members requested that country examples from the stock take report be used in the report on the use of country systems.
- In future iterations of the report, it was suggested that other stakeholders such as Vertical Funds be included.
- ADB noted that is currently finalising guidance on risk assessment focusing on PFM, procurement and anti-corruption systems and will share the guidance with the Joint Venture in due course.

16. Members were asked to provide comments on the stock take report no later than the 21 March [this was later extended to the 28 March]. It was also brought to members' attention that the draft Good Practice Note on using country budget systems (commissioned by SPA/CABRI) will be distributed to JV members and comments would be welcomed.

Item 5: Report on the Use of Country Systems and Chapter Three: Constraints and Challenges in the Use of Country Systems

17. As the lead author, the European Commission (Riccardo Maggi) outlined the purpose and key messages of chapter three on the key constraints and challenges in the use of country systems. In particular the key messages include the need to:

- Highlight the reasons that underline the differentiated approaches in use of country systems and in particular relating to risk.
- Identify a set of proposals that can ensure that when donors assess and manage risk they do so within the commitments adhered to by the Paris Declaration.
- Focus on better communication of the benefits of using country systems to external accountability bodies.
- When special conditions are imposed on partner countries, this is undertaken in a manner which facilitates the strengthening of country PFM systems rather than undermining them (including an exit strategy).

18. The author also noted that in future iterations, the partner country perspective will be highlighted in particular with regards to domestic accountability at the country level. The author also requested that JV members provide case studies for the next draft.

19. In the ensuing discussion, members welcomed the comprehensiveness of the analysis and noted the following:

- Since, at times, the country institutions themselves resist the use of their own systems, the perceived risks from the country perspective should be recognised in the chapter.
- The need to be self-critical in noting that donors have only now started to create a framework for assessing risks.
- The potential usefulness of detailing the relevant risks and how this could be managed for each PFM component.

- References should be made to the specific cases of fragile states as well as Middle Income Countries (where 70% of the world's poor reside).
- One of the key messages needs to be more strongly highlighted in this chapter upfront, namely the fact that the best approach to managing risk is strengthening country systems as we move from donor accountability to development accountability. This would set the context for the remainder of the chapter.
- Highlighting the different approaches to risk existing within the same donor organisation (for instance among policy makers, programmers, and technical officials), implying that corporate level decisions might be needed to see real progress.
- The need to also include reference to how NGOs and CSOs impact upon the assessment of risk at the country level.
- Include 'opportunities' in the title of this chapter to reflect the positive story in the use of country PFM systems.

Item 6: Report on the Use of Country Systems and Chapter Four: Assessing country PFM systems

20. The author (PEFA) outlined the main purpose and key messages stemming from chapter four on assessing country PFM systems. The key messages from the report include:

- The PEFA framework is an opportunity for joint work at the country level and must be fully utilised. This could be supported by a decision at the Accra HLF to officially adopt the framework as a core tool for measuring and monitoring PFM performance.
- Focus should be on helping country governments take the leading role in assessment work, and to ensure their input into the process with technical support from donors.
- Both donors and governments should work together to provide multi-year plans at country level.
- Public access to the assessment reports should be improved, both by governments having the ownership and willingness to share the reports, and donors ensuring that their internal processes ensure the reports are available.

21. Members thanked PEFA for the presentation and outlined the following issues:

- The chapter needed to begin by introducing PEFA (as some audiences may not be familiar with the initiative).
- This chapter should further highlight PEFA's positive impact and provide a clear and optimistic message.
- The need to ensure that the PEFA initiative was attractive not only to IDA countries but to MICs as well.
- The chapter remained very PEFA focused and members requested that it mention other assessments undertaken by donors and assessments of PFM systems at the country level (the SPA Budget Support Survey provides some material in this regard).

- It was also recognized that PEFA should remain the main focus of the report given its positive impact in assessing PFM systems. Recommendations could focus on the complementarities between different PFM assessment tools: for instance, PEFA could become the core assessment within an agreed multi-annual programme of diagnostic work as indicated by the SPA survey.
- This chapter should note that PEFA is not only a tool for fiduciary assessment but one which is inherent to partner countries' capacity development agendas.
- Case studies should highlight how some countries have requested that PEFA be undertaken on a regular basis (Mozambique) and that the onus is shifting to partner countries. Moreover, the Norwegian example provided an opportunity to highlight the relevance of PEFA to both OECD and MIC countries.
- References needed to be included on the linkages between the PEFA initiative and the Joint Venture on PFM.
- It was also noted that PEFA should not be referred to as a decision-making document but rather as facilitating dialogue.

22. The author noted that they look forward to Norway's publication of the PEFA report and agreed to include further case studies in the subsequent iteration of the chapter. Other case studies could also highlight the positive impact of PEFA (such as Zambia's incorporation of the PEFA indicators in the M&E of the PFM programme).

Item 7: Report on the Use of Country Systems and Chapter Five: Strengthening Country PFM Systems

23. The author of the Chapter Five (World Bank) summarised and outlined its key messages. In particular the following five issues were stressed as being key to successful efforts to strengthen country PFM systems:

- Strong country leadership and ownership;
- Coordinated donor support aligned with country programmes;
- Focus on prioritising and sequencing of reform programmes;
- Existence of strong political leadership and commitment; and
- Strong demand for reforms.

24. Members welcomed the paper's conclusions. In the ensuing discussion, members focused on the following:

- This chapter should be more explicit about the challenges that arise when countries 'purchase' advice from donors and the ensuing disconnect between the problem and the high-tech solution (including MTEF and performance based budgeting for example).
- The difficulty of offering suitably strong external incentives for what is a long term reform process ("there are no more EU accession prizes out there").

- More clarity was needed in relation to the key messages for the High Level Forum in Accra, including what donors can commit to, in order to support credible PFM programmes.
- The key lessons should also include a focus on the role of civil society and parliaments (including in the demand for reform and the involvement of other stakeholders such as the International Budget Project).
- It was also noted that the chapter should recognize that there are many different goals of PFM reform and that these may not always be compatible in the short term: poverty alleviation, national governance, for growth pro-poor or not.
- The Chapter should focus not only on the ‘don’ts’ but on the ‘do’s’: what can be done to ensure a successful PFM reform and the recommendations which can feed into the Accra Agenda for Action.
- It was also noted that the role of the Supreme Auditing Institutions (SAIs) should be recognized in the discussion on strengthening PFM systems especially since the figures remain low for using SAIs (although there is progress, it is limited, for instance, with only 35% of World Bank projects audited by SAIs). A Multi Donor Trust Fund is one way in which SAIs can be strengthened to support the sustainability of PFM reforms.
- Another key lesson relates to capacity building and in particular with respect to the professionalization of PFM cadres (with the involvement of institutions such as CIPFA).
- Members also noted the importance of coordination between the JV on PFM and the Joint Venture on Procurement given that many of the messages stemming from chapter five were also relevant for procurement.

25. *Summary of Discussions.* Prior to summing up, the co-chair (Riccardo Maggi) noted that the JV on procurement was currently working on a good practice paper on diagnostic methodology and that the division between the JV on PFM and procurement was partly artificial. As a result, it was noted that it was important to share drafts of future iterations of the report on the use of country systems with the JV on procurement co-chairs to ensure that there are no overlaps between both. It was also noted that both work streams would be brought together and represented in Roundtable 2.

26. The co-chairs of the Joint Venture concluded the discussion on the report on the use of country systems by outlining the following:

- noting the positive reception received on the report and in particular on the key messages stemming from the report.
- The need to stress that the use of country systems is a progressive and incremental agenda. At the same time, it was key to ensure that progress did not stop at the implementation of marginal changes.
- The importance to accommodate different definitions in donors' guidance and at country level on the use of country systems but also understanding the challenges that this also implied.
- The need to highlight that the use of country system agenda and aid modality agendas are overlapping but are not the same.

- The need to broaden this agenda beyond low income countries to include MICs.
- Obstacles for faster implementation of the Paris Declaration were identified. Related discussions highlighted in particular those recommendations which would ensure consensus for instance: increasing transparency, putting aid on plan, and using PEFA as a core tool.
- As for more ambitious issues, these included: change of incentives at corporate level; the need to influence the accountability framework under which donors and partner countries act; and the need to outline positive stories relating to achieving results in the use of country PFM systems.
- There is a need to recognise the current asymmetry in donors' behaviour between the need to comply with short-term fiduciary requirements and the need to recognise the more general (and longer term) benefits of using country systems.

Item 8: Other Business and Next Steps

27. Members were requested to send comments on the report by the 28th of March. The following table highlights the timeline for completion of the report. The final version will be included for consideration at the next Working Party on Aid Effectiveness meeting (9-10 July). The timetable would also allow time for the key conclusions and messages to feed into the revised draft of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). The co-Chair (EC) proposed that a short one page document be prepared outlining the key messages which could be included in the AAA.

Timing	Process and Output
28 March 2008	Written comments on Zero Draft received from Joint Venture on PFM Members
25 April	First Draft of Report sent to Peer Reviewers
2 May	Peer Reviewer send Comments on First Draft
16 May	Second Draft sent to Peer Reviewers and Joint Venture Members
28 May	<i><u>Joint Venture on PFM Meeting [To be Confirmed]</u></i>
10 June	Electronic Review of Final Draft by Joint Venture Members
20 June	Final Draft of Report on Country PFM Systems
9-10 July	<i>Submitted to Working Party on Aid Effectiveness</i>

28. In light of comments made at previous JV meetings, it was suggested that the next meeting be held in a partner country to ensure greater participation and consultation with partner country representatives. South Africa was suggested as a possible venue given the opportunities it presented for linkages with networks such as CABRI and ESAAG.

Participants list for WP-EFF Joint Venture on Public Financial Management/

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13 March 2008

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