



**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE**

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Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices

**DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE JOINT VENTURE ON
PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Held in Paris on 25-26 February 2004

This document is submitted FOR APPROVAL at the third meeting of the Joint Venture on Public Financial Management to be held on 8-9 July 2004.

It is proposed that this document, once approved, be declassified and made available on the external website.

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DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EFFECTIVENESS AND DONOR PRACTICES

**DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE
JOINT VENTURE ON PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

HELD IN PARIS ON 25-26 FEBRUARY 2004

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA & SUMMARY RECORD

1. The Chair (Paul Bermingham) welcomed participants to the second meeting of the Joint Venture on Public Financial Management (PFM). The agenda of the current meeting and summary of the last meeting were adopted.

II. MONITORING COMMITMENTS MADE AT ROME

2. The OECD Secretariat invited comments and guidance on the framework of indicators on progress in harmonisation and alignment that it was elaborating in close collaboration with the Joint Venture and Task Team on Harmonisation and Alignment.

3. Members expressed broad agreement and noted areas where the framework required clarification or further refinements. The following two indicators were felt to be difficult to measure (i) the indicator on the reliance on the Supreme Audit Institution and (ii) the indicator on the number of financial reports.

4. Other indicators, members suggested, were relevant only in the context of specific forms of aid delivery. For example, the indicator on alignment on the budget cycle was felt to be more relevant in the context of budget support. Conversely, the indicator measuring reliance on partner systems was mainly applicable in the case of project support.

5. It was agreed that the indicator measuring performance in public financial management (indicator 3 in Room Document 1) could be removed from the framework as it duplicated indicators under development by the Public Expenditure on Financial Accountability (PEFA) (see below).

6. Following observations made by Vietnam and Bangladesh, it was also agreed that partner governments should be provided an opportunity to express an opinion on each individual donor in each of the main categories included in the framework of indicators.

III. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

7. The Chair reminded members that PEFA was currently elaborating – in close collaboration with the Joint Venture – a framework for measuring performance of PFM systems. Nicola Smithers (PEFA), presented an update on the overall approach adopted (Room Document 2). The Chair noted that a more detailed informative session on PEFA's indicators would be held the following day.

8. While there was broad agreement and support for the approach described by PEFA, some members expressed concerns on the following issues:

- *Clarity on how the framework fits in the overall framework of aid delivery.* The vocation of this framework with regard to other diagnostic tools that are currently being used (e.g. Country Financial Accountability Assessments, Country Procurement Assessment Reviews, Public Expenditure Review etc.) was unclear to a number of participants.

- *Reconciliation of fiduciary and development functions.* PEFA's framework pursues two independent functions. The *fiduciary function* provides donors with the assurance that external resources are managed effectively for agreed purposes. The *development function* seeks to promote better management of public finances — an essential condition for achieving the developmental goals. Members were concerned that the framework provided too much emphasis on the fiduciary function and not enough on the development function. It was suggested that promoting the role of capacity building would be one way of achieving a better balance between both of these objectives.
- *Inclusiveness and field-testing of framework.* It was suggested that in taking work forward, PEFA should seek to include a broader range of donor and partner country concerns and perspectives. It was also suggested that the framework would benefit from field-testing.
- *Scope of indicators* — It was noted that revenue, debt, private sector and central bank issues were not currently included within the scope of PEFA's indicators. The challenge was to be comprehensive in scope while keeping a manageable set of indicators.
- *Indicators are valuable for a broad range of instruments* — It was recognised that the indicators would be of real value to a broad range of modalities of aid delivery and not only budget support.
- *Burden of the indicators* — Need to be clearer on the impact of the current diagnostic burden on partner.

9. The question as to how these indicators would be reflected in a good practice papers was left unresolved.

IV. PREDICTABILITY OF AID FLOWS & CAPACITY BUILDING

10. At the last meeting of the Joint Venture, it was agreed that DfID would take the lead in elaborating two good practice notes. The first would deal with improving overall predictability of aid flows. The second would focus on how donors can more effectively support partner country efforts to strengthen the performance of their PFM institutions. Simon Gill (DfID) presented work that had been commissioned in both of these areas (Room Documents 3 & 4).

11. Following a rich set of comments, the Chair noted the following elements of agreement:

- *Scaling-up of aid makes predictability even more important* — Following the Monterrey Consensus, indications suggest that the global volume of official development assistance might increase by USD 19 billion by 2006. This means that many partner countries will have to plan and budget significant increases in the aggregate volume of aid they receive.
- *Transparency and reliance on partner systems*— The representatives from partner countries (Vietnam, Bangladesh, Morocco, South-Africa, Senegal) all noted the importance of comprehensive and predictable accounting of aid as a means of improving accountability to their legislature and people. Partners countries also made an appeal for greater reliance on their systems as a measure that contributes to strengthening their PFM systems.
- *New challenges for donors* — It was recognised that greater reliance on partner country systems would create new challenges for donors, especially when this means that donors have to adopt partner country procedures.

12. It was agreed that responsibilities for producing the two good practice papers would be shared between (i) DfID who will be taking leadership on the paper on the overall predictability of aid and (ii) Japan who would explore the possibility of taking on a leadership role in elaborating the GPP on capacity building..

13. In taking forward the first paper on overall predictability of aid, it was agreed that particular attention would be given to the following issues:

- *Scope of the paper* — The paper would cover all forms of aid delivery including both programme and non-programme aid, technical assistance and in-kind delivery of aid.
- *Clarity on definitions and conceptual framework* — The paper would need to elaborate a conceptual framework that clarifies the notion of predictability and in particular how it supports ownership, enhanced budgeting and planning and generally more effective management of development assistance.
- *Articulating key activities* — The paper would need to examine how the following activities might contribute to more predictable aid: qualitative dimensions of predictability (e.g. pledges vs. commitments and the link to conditionality); and linking predictability to country capacity, such as budgeting, planning, disbursements and evaluation.

14. It was agreed that the second paper on capacity building would elaborate good practice on how donors might provide effective support to strengthen partner country PFM systems. It was recognised that the performance of partner country PFM systems was of central importance to improving the impact of aid not only in the case of budget support but more generally for all modalities of aid delivery. Sweden, South Africa, Japan and the Netherlands indicated that they were interested in getting involved in this task.

D. BUDGET SUPPORT

15. The Chair reminded members that it had been agreed at the last meeting that the EC in close collaboration with the World Bank and IMF would take the lead in producing a good practice paper on budget support. Gilles Hervio (EC) introduced the scoping note that was put forward for discussions (Room Document 5).

16. At the last meeting of the Joint Venture it had been suggested that the paper should adopt a narrow scope that focused on financial management aspects of budget support. However, there was a general agreement that there would be greater benefit in looking at budget support with a broader lens recognising that budget support and financial management issues were inextricably linked. It was agreed that the paper would provide practical guidance on how donors can provide effective budget support. In taking work forward careful consideration would be given to the following issues:

- *Recognition of the importance of financial management issues* — Financial management issues are of particular relevance in the context of budget support. This needs to be recognised by the good practice paper while avoiding duplicating content of other good practice papers.
- *Aid effectiveness matters* — There is a need to position budget support, and aid instrument choice in general, firmly in the context of aid effectiveness, and not only donor fiduciary concerns.
- *Evaluation of budget support* — The good practice paper would take into consideration findings by the multi-donor evaluation on general budget support currently being carried out by the DAC Network on Development Evaluation.

- *Consistency with SPA work* — Consistency would be sought with the findings of the SPA Budget Support Working Group (BSWG).

E. ACCOUNTING STANDARD ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

17. Bengt Ekman (Sweden), the Joint Venture's representative on IFAC-PSC's Project Advisory Panel (PAP), briefed members on progress accomplished in developing accounting standards on development assistance (Room Document 6). The PAP was established in January 2004 to assist the Public Sector Committee (PSC) in the development of an exposure draft on the accounting standards. In addition to representation from the Joint Venture, it includes members of the MDB Financial Management Working Group and 18 representatives from partner countries. A first draft will be issued in time for the next Joint Venture meeting with a view to finalising the accounting standard by January 2005.

18. The PAP was seeking clarity on the following issues:

- Relevance of definitions used and their consistency with DAC definitions on development assistance.
- Treatment of indirect payments for technical assistance goods.
- Treatment of humanitarian assistance. Should it be recorded in financial statements?
- Defining an appropriate level of detail and disaggregation of accounts.

19. Members expressed the following concerns:

- Absence of clarity on the objectives for developing the standards and its potential implications.
- Risk of inconsistency between IFAC and DAC definitions and standards.
- Need for more time to allow for appropriate consultation with partner countries and other development agencies. In this regard the UNDP representative volunteered to liaise with the UN system (UNHCR, WHO) on a number of important issues such as accounting for humanitarian assistance and non-cash aid.
- Need to appropriately account for non-cash aid.

20. The Chair informed members that a process is currently underway to reconcile the whole set of international public sector accounting standards with Government Finance Statistic and System of National Accountants. This exercise would include the standard on development assistance. He also noted that an evaluation of IFAC-PSC was being undertaken, which would address, inter alia, the extent of international adoption for the PSC's standards and participation in the standard-setting process. The findings would be available within a few months.

21. It was agreed that the Chair, in close consultation with the Secretariat, would apprise the PSC on the recommendations made by members (see above) and would emphasise the following points:

- Request that PSC draft an explanatory note that describes the objectives of the standards and explains how they fit in the broader framework.
- Request that the PSC provides more time for broader and in-depth consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- Importance of having an open channel of dialogue between the PSC and DAC on definitions and standards of development assistance. The PSC would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Joint Venture.

VI. NEXT STEPS & OTHER ISSUES

22. It was agreed that first drafts of the three good practice papers would be put forward for discussion in time for the next meeting of the Joint Venture scheduled to be held on 8-9 July 2004.

23. The format and approach of these papers would be consistent with previous papers produced by the DAC -- a brief document that sets out operational guidance on how donors can enhance delivery of aid in ways that supports partner countries' efforts to reach their own development goals. In this respect, a good practice paper might be characterised as follows:

- *Guidance to donors.* The primary target the good practice paper is the donor community; however, it should also be of value to the broader development community.
- *A non-prescriptive document.* The good practice paper is a point of reference rather than a matter of prescription for all development agencies.
- *Recognises diverse modalities of aid delivery.* The good practice paper acknowledges that development assistance can be provided in many forms, with different management structures, accounting arrangements and mechanisms for funding.
- *Emphasis on operational guidance.* The focus of the good practice paper is on the practical steps that — if applied by development agencies — should significantly improve the effectiveness of aid delivery.
- *Reliance on cases studies.* Good practices are illustrated with practical examples drawn from a variety of countries illustrating how they have been applied in different country circumstances.
- *A short document.* A good practice paper is typically a brief document that does not exceed 12 pages. More detailed guidance (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding) is provided in technical guidance notes included in the appendix.

**DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EFFECTIVENESS AND DONOR PRACTICES
JOINT VENTURE ON PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT WORK PROGRAMME**

As of 20 April 2004

OBJECTIVES			
The objective of the Joint Venture (JV) on Public Financial Management (PFM) is to support government-led strategies for improving overall management of public finances including accounting for the use of external resources.			
ACTIVITIES			
Tasks	Lead	Deadline	Next Step
▶ Task A: Harmonisation & Alignment — Framework of indicators for measuring progress in harmonisation and alignment.	▶ OECD Secretariat	▶ Sept. 04	▶ Finalisation of framework and questionnaire by April 2004 . Tentative results available by June 2004 .
▶ Task B: Performance in PFM — Framework of indicators for measuring performance of PFM systems.	▶ PEFA Secretariat	▶ Dec. 2004	▶ Progress report in July 2004.
▶ Task C: Predictability — Good practice paper on overall predictability of aid flows.	▶ UK	▶ Dec. 2004	▶ First draft of GPP by July 2004.
▶ Task D: PFM Capacity — Good practice paper on how donors can help partner countries build PFM capacity.	▶ Germany	▶ Dec. 2004	▶ First draft of GPP by July 2004
▶ Task E: Budget Support — Good practice paper on budget support with a special focus on PFM issues.	▶ EC	▶ Dec. 2004	▶ First draft of GPP by July 2004.
▶ Task F: Accounting standards — Elaboration of accounting standards on development assistance for aid recipients.	▶ IFAC-PSC	▶ Jan. 2005	▶ Progress report by July 2004.



DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EFFECTIVENESS AND DONOR PRACTICES

JOINT-VENTURE ON PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SECOND MEETING 25-26 FEBRUARY 2004

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