A major component of POVNET's 2007-08 Work Programme on the theme of Scaling Up for Effective Pro-Poor Growth is the pro-active dissemination of its policy guidance for donors on promoting pro-poor growth (available at: www.oecd.org/dac/poverty). One means of doing this is the organisation, in collaboration with the Train4Dev Network, of a series of Learning Events essentially for staff from donor agencies (at both headquarters and field levels) responsible for the design and implementation of projects and programmes that contribute to promoting pro-poor growth.

A Pilot Learning Event, to test the approach envisaged, is scheduled to take place in November 2007 (the proposed dates are 26 to 28 November). Lessons will be drawn after the pilot to help determine how the Learning Event can be scaled up to promote greater understanding of pro-poor growth tools, policy messages and implementation challenges.

This Concept Note has been revised to take account of comments made at the POVNET meeting on 17-18 April 2007 as well as at the meeting on 21 May 2007 of the Steering Committee guiding preparation of the Pilot Learning Event.

Contact person: Michael Laird - Tel.: +33 (0)1 45 24 90 33 - E-mail: michael.laird@oecd.org
JOINT POVNET/TRAIN-4-DEV LEARNING EVENT ON PROMOTING PRO-POOR GROWTH

I. Background and rationale

1. To help promote poverty reduction, both the DAC Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET) and the Joint Donors’ Competence Development Network (“Train4Dev”) aim to strengthen organisational and staff capacities in development agencies and enhance donor co-ordination. POVNET stresses that donors need to enhance their organisational capacities to effectively support country-led, pro-poor growth initiatives and that donor co-ordination is essential to address this broad agenda. 1 Train4Dev’s overall objective is to promote improved aid effectiveness for poverty reduction through enhanced donor co-operation in the field of competence development and training. Both Networks are committed to implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

2. Preparation of a Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth is currently on the agenda of both POVNET and Train4Dev and it is proposed to prepare this as a partnership between the two Networks. A major component of POVNET’s Work Programme for 2007-08 is the pro-active dissemination and operationalisation of its pro-poor growth policy guidance, including through the development of a training module. A proposal to develop a pro-poor growth training course was supported at the Train4Dev Annual Workshop in 2006. This proposal was based on some initial work by donors supporting the Operationalising Pro-Poor Growth (OPPG) Research Programme (AfD, DFID, GTZ and the World Bank). As the Learning Event will help support poverty reduction strategy (PRS) and similar processes in developing countries, it will contribute to promoting alignment and greater harmonisation.

3. The development of a joint POVNET/Train4Dev Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth will mobilise complementary sets of skills and expertise. POVNET has recently developed policy guidance for donors on promoting pro-poor growth (i.e. increasing the impact of growth on poverty reduction), particularly in the areas of private sector development, agriculture and infrastructure (see: www.oecd.org/dac/poverty). Since 2003, Train4Dev members have pooled their resources to develop and run joint training modules on various themes including PRSs, sector-wide approaches and public financial management (see: www.train4dev.net).

4. This initiative will progress in two phases:
   - The first phase will involve preparation of a Pilot Learning Event with a focus on East Africa.
   - In the second phase, and based on lessons learnt in preparing the pilot exercise, the Learning Event can be scaled up across a larger number of donors and developing countries.

5. At their respective meetings held in April 2007, both POVNET and Train4Dev agreed to join forces to develop, during 2007, a Pilot Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth. The aim of this Event is to train essentially staff from donor agencies (at both headquarters and field levels) responsible for the design and implementation of projects and programmes that contribute to promoting pro-poor growth. Box 1 presents the goal and key messages for the Pilot Learning Event.

6. If the Pilot Learning Event takes place, as planned, in late November 2007, proposals can be made to POVNET and Train4Dev in early 2008 concerning its further scaling up.

---

Box 1. Strategic Orientations for the Pilot Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth

The goal of the POVNET/Train4Dev Pilot Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth is to build participants’ understanding of the variable impact of economic growth on poverty reduction, share experiences with implementing activities that contribute to promoting pro-poor growth and gain greater awareness of how donors can enhance their staffing and organisational capacities and development policies to support country-led, pro-poor growth processes. Given the crucial importance of ownership, the starting point for donor agency staff will be to act without substituting for developing country partners or imposing their own ideas or agendas. Particular attention will be paid to private sector development, agriculture and infrastructure, areas that used to be neglected by many donors but whose contribution to promoting pro-poor growth is now being recognised.

Key messages for the Pilot Learning Event include:

• Developing countries with similar rates of economic growth have experienced quite different levels of economic poverty reduction, depending in part on whether growth occurs in areas and sectors where the poor live and are economically active. Consequently, both the pace and pattern of growth are critical for long-term and sustainable poverty reduction. Policy trade offs still exist, but can be better managed, including through PRS processes, so as to lower the barriers to poor men and women’s fuller integration into economic, social and political processes.

• Inequality of assets and opportunity hinders the ability of poor men and women to participate in and contribute to growth. Women face particular barriers concerning assets, access and participation in the growth process, with serious implications for the ability of growth to be pro-poor. Policies to promote environmental sustainability are also integral to promoting pro-poor growth because poor people often depend heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods. In many developing countries, changing the current political settlement among the diverse segments of society is needed to achieve pro-poor reform. Political empowerment of the poor, and especially of women and rural poor, to engage in and follow policy processes is essential to bring about reforms.

• The informal economy forms a large part of the economies in many developing countries. Although it provides employment and income to many poor households, informality is not conducive to sustained growth and poverty reduction. In practice, there is a continuum between formality and informality and donors need to ensure that their efforts to improve livelihoods for those in the informal economy do not hold back tendencies towards greater formalisation.

• The poor are not a homogeneous group, country contexts vary considerably and policy implementation must be based on a sound understanding of who the poor are and how they earn their livelihoods. Donors and their developing country partners need to tailor their development interventions to the local context and to pursue policies that are politically feasible.

• The use of evidence-based analyses and tools, including ex ante Poverty Impact Assessment (PIA), is important for both policy makers and donors, to improve their understanding of the transmission mechanisms through which interventions contribute to promoting pro-poor growth and of how interventions affect different stakeholders in relation to different capabilities (economic, human, political, socio-cultural and protective). Progress on the income poverty Millennium Development Goal (MDG) facilitates progress on other MDGS and vice versa.

• For donors, the pro-poor growth agenda is not business as usual – staff, especially in field offices, need to be able to engage effectively with partner countries and other donors and to take the risks inherent in promoting pro-poor policy change. Donor agency incentives should consequently encourage staff to take on new approaches and initiatives developed in dialogue with partner country counterparts. Mutual lesson learning between countries and donors will help reduce the risks inherent in innovation.
II. Indicative programme outline

7. Box 2 presents an indicative outline for the 3-day Pilot Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth. Day 1 will provide a theoretical background, Day 2 will apply this background to some specific country contexts while Day 3 will focus on implementation. The outline will be adjusted to take account of the specific needs of participants and the challenges being faced in the countries from which the case studies are drawn.

```
Box 2. Pilot Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth – Indicative Programme Outline

Day 1: Assessing pro-poor growth
- Discussion of the pro-poor growth concept and the relationship between growth, poverty and inequality.
- Definitions, measures, indicators, data (possible sources and associated measurement and estimation issues) and tools (such as ex ante poverty impact assessment, OPPG toolkit, integrated economic analysis, growth diagnosis and growth incidence curves).

Day 2: Pro-poor growth in practice
- Presentation and discussion of country case studies.
- Specific issues with practical examples from country contexts (looking through a lens of the constraints on private sector development, agriculture and infrastructure, issues that could be addressed include access to services and markets, assets, the monetary and fiscal policy framework, informal economy, empowerment, dialogue, ownership, risk and vulnerability, gender and sustainability of the growth process).
- Group exercises based on thematic case studies related to the countries being considered. An important element will be process design for pro-poor growth reform.

Day 3: Implementation of reforms: Drivers of change
- Links to PRS processes, governance assessments, drivers of change and influencing the political agenda.
- Which instruments to address which barriers to promoting pro-poor growth? The focus will be on the complementarity of practical tools and methods and policy advice for decision makers on the formulation and monitoring of programmes related to promoting pro-poor growth.
- Implications for donors – co-ordination, partnership, programme implementation.
- Course evaluation and feedback from participants.
```

III. Evaluation and lesson learning

8. Lessons will be drawn after the Pilot Learning Event to help determine how a series of Learning Events could promote greater understanding of pro-poor growth tools, policy messages and implementation challenges. In particular, an overall evaluation will be obtained through feedback from participants on: fulfilment of expectations, increased knowledge on pro-poor growth issues, lessons learnt, the quality of the course materials, the balance between theory and practice, and performance of the facilitators and event managers.

IV. Practical issues

9. The following organisational arrangements are being put in place for the Pilot Learning Event on Promoting Pro-Poor Growth:
a) The Pilot Learning Event will be a multi-donor initiative, prepared jointly by POVNET and Train4Dev, and placed under the responsibility of a Steering Committee constituted by France [their Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) and the French Development Agency (AfD)] and Germany [the German Technical Co-operation Agency (GTZ)] as major contributors together with other donors financing and contributing to the organisation of the Pilot Learning Event and the OECD Secretariat. The Steering Committee will be chaired by Hitoshi Shoji (Japan), POVNET Vice-Chair.

b) A consultant will be contracted to assist the Steering Committee to prepare the Pilot Learning Event, both pedagogically and logistically, and to act as facilitator during its implementation. The consultant will prepare a trainer’s manual and a pack of course materials for participants. GTZ envisages handling contracting arrangements with the consultant for the design phase.

c) AfD offers to host the Pilot Learning Event at its training centre, the CEFEB (Centre d’Etudes Financières, Economiques et Bancaires), located in Marseille. This offer includes provision of training facilities but does not include accommodation and meals for participants. The exact division of labour between AfD, the CEFEB and the consultant is still to be determined.

d) GTZ offers to advise on course preparations, based on its experience with the Train4Dev Joint Staff Training on Poverty Reduction Strategies.

e) The Pilot Learning Event will be 3 days in duration and is planned to take place in November 2007 (the proposed dates are 26 to 28 November).

f) The working language for the Pilot Learning Event is English.

g) The Pilot Learning Event will include case studies from 2 countries in East Africa, most likely Tanzania and Uganda (unless suitable materials for preparing the case study material are not available). The OPPG work provides useful source material that can be drawn upon for these. Other possible sources include outputs from the Diagnostic Facility for Shared Growth and Sida’s Integrated Economic Analysis country studies, poverty reduction strategies or other national development plans and Joint Assistance Strategies.

h) A maximum of 30 people will participate in the Pilot Learning Event (25 people would be optimal), a number of whom should be representatives from developing countries (past experience suggests that about one third of participants from developing countries works well). Participants, largely from the field but also some from headquarters, will have experience related to at least one of the countries covered by the case studies, to ensure a critical mass of participants for each country-based break-out session. The ideal participant from a donor agency will be a senior sector specialist, with some experience of PRS processes, currently or recently based in a developing country, who is facing challenges in operationalising pro-poor growth approaches. The ideal partner country participant will be a counterpart from a developing country with whom such donor staff work on a regular basis.

i) Steering Committee members will be able to nominate between 2 and 4 participants to take part in the Pilot Learning Event, mostly from within their own agencies but also among their developing country counterparts in government, the private sector and civil society. The Steering Committee will retain the right to veto nominations, so as to ensure that participants have the knowledge and

---
2. As of 8 June 2007, pledges of support had been received from France, Ireland, Japan the Netherlands and Switzerland. Additional pledges were expected from Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
experience that should enable them to participate in, contribute to and benefit from the Pilot Learning Event. The Steering Committee will also ensure that the group includes a critical mass of people for each of the country-based break-out groups. Participants will come from as many donor agencies as possible. Any remaining places will be sold to other agencies at a cost-covering rate.

j) Participants from development agencies will be expected to pay their own travel, accommodation and meal costs. Participants from developing countries will have their travel, accommodation and meal costs met by the event organisers.