Capturing the 2030 Agenda in development co-operation results: SDGs, targets, indicators, and ''Leave no one behind''

Concept paper for two Task Teams of the DAC Results Community, April-September 2017

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1. SDG targets and *Leave no one behind* as results frameworks

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers two integrated, yet distinct challenges to development co-operation and its results. First, the Agenda includes 17 goals with 169 tasks to be achieved at all levels by 2030. They constitute an integrated whole of goals, targets, deadlines, indicators and data that are the prerequisites of a coherent results framework at macro level. It is a framework for development results (see Section 3) and to some degree also for the results of development co-operation in its contributing role (see Section 4).

Second, the Agenda emphasizes *Leave no one behind*, which is a political imperative and may involve targets that set a very high bar in terms of disaggregated development results, endeavouring ''to reach the furthest behind first''.[1] In the 2030 Agenda, *Leave no one behind* lacks the in-built results framework that the SDGs have. *Leave no one behind* has no targets, deadlines, indicators or data. The text is unclear on whether it is *people and communities* or also *countries* that shall not be left behind. Paragraph 4 says: "We pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first."

The underlying question for the upcoming results work is whether and how these two elements of the 2030 Agenda can be captured by the results of development co-operation, and whether and how they bring something different and complementary to development co-operation results. The question as regards the SDGs and targets concerns the scope of development co-operation's *contribution* to the achievement of SDGs and targets. The question as regards *Leave no one behind* concerns prioritization of particular target groups, and how to aggregate and sustain targeted efforts.

2. Introducing two Task Teams

At a workshop on *Mutual Accountability through Results: Supporting partner countries' development goals and results frameworks* (9-10 February 2017, Brussels, co-hosted by the EU and the OECD), the DAC Results Community pointed to three priority tasks for the coming six months:

1) Summarising providers' and partners' reference to the *SDGs, SDG targets and indicators* in their country programming and results frameworks
2) Incorporating the *Leave no one behind* principle of the 2030 Agenda in the results frameworks of providers of development co-operation
3) Strengthening *results communication* around development co-operation's contribution to SDG progress towards 2030

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[1] *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United Nations, New York, September 2015, paragraph 4.

It is proposed to establish two Task Teams of the DAC Results Community, to consider the issues and set the agenda for the next workshop (tentatively scheduled for Paris, 9-10 October 2017). The two Teams would deal with tasks 1) and 2), respectively, and both teams would address the issue of results communication.

The *purpose* of the work is to prepare policy issues for discussion at the October workshop of the DAC Results Community. The *scope* involves interaction with partner countries through some case studies (Task Team 1) and innovative work with data specialists and development agencies on the results implications of *Leave no one behind* (Task Team 2). Some of the key questions for the two Task Teams are:

1. Enhancing country level results programming with SDG targets and indicators

- What benefits and challenges do partners face from incorporating the SDGs, targets and indicators into their national plans, strategies and results frameworks?
- What benefits and challenges do providers face from incorporating the SDGs, targets and indicators into their development co-operation results frameworks?
- How can mutual accountability be enhanced through results frameworks that are based on the SDGs, targets and indicators?
- What data are needed on SDG progress and development co-operation, to enable assessments of the contribution, fit and relevance of development co-operation to the SDGs?
- How can providers and partners engage in results communication on SDG achievements, aimed at different target groups (beneficiaries, decision makers, and constituents)?

2. Achieving "Leave no one behind" through results-based development co-operation

- How can *Leave no one behind* be operationalised in the goals and results frameworks of partners and providers in development co-operation?
- What theories of change, methodologies and disaggregated indicators / data are needed to consider *Leave no one behind* in results frameworks?
- How can results frameworks incorporate both the SDGs (with targets and indicators) and *Leave no one behind* (with social and economic disaggregation and empowerment)?
- How can the data and results of project-level efforts to *Leave no one behind* be aggregated to national and provider-specific results frameworks?
- What narratives can providers and partners use in results communication on *Leave no one behind*, aimed at beneficiaries, decision makers, and constituents in provider countries?

The Task Teams should each include a few DAC Results Community members, supported by the OECD-DCD Results Team. The Teams are meant to meet virtually to discuss key challenges, based on inputs from the Results Team, and guide the investigations over the next six months. Each Task Team may schedule a face-to-face meeting before the workshop in October 2017. Preliminary indications of participation are:

Enhancing country level results programming	Achieving *Leave no one behind*
Belgium	Ireland
EU Joint Programming	Switzerland
Other bilateral / multilateral providers (tbc)	Other bilateral / multilateral providers (tbc)
Partner country representatives	NEPAD or AfDB (tbc)
GPEDC + GPI on Results	Cordaid
Development Gateway	Development Initiatives

3. The 2030 Agenda is about *development results*

The 17 SDGs and their 169 targets offer an integrated approach for international co-operation to achieve sustainable development results. They map out goals to be achieved, changes to be pursued, and impact to be sustained. Development results are about demonstrable change across economic, social, environmental and political dimensions. The SDG targets aim at real life outcomes and change, and the 2030 Agenda expresses the common aspirations of the world community with respect to development change. Progress on the SDGs, and especially their targets, reflects achievement of development results, to which international development co-operation is contributing.

This also applies to the *Leave no one behind* imperative, which aims to secure adequate services to, social protection and empowerment of disadvantaged human beings, social and economic groups. They are about quantifiable and qualitative development results in a context of equity.

However, not all 17 SDGs and 169 SDG targets are about outcomes and change on the ground. Some are about the necessary policies and partnerships to achieve the goals and outcomes. The 2030 Agenda makes explicit this difference between SDG outcomes and processes. In a results context, the SDG targets that focus on outcomes and change present *intended results*, while other SDG targets focus on the *means of implementation*. A preliminary assessment undertaken by the DCD suggests that approximately *half* of the SDG targets are about outcome change – and therefore constitute a set of results to be achieved by 2030.

A similar analysis has yet to be made for *Leave no one behind*. The *P20 Initiative – Data to leave no one behind*[2] by *Development Initiatives* focuses on "how the SDGs … can work with the data revolution to deliver progress for the people in the poorest 20% of the world's population – the P20." The P20 Initiative is data-driven and is still lacking the links to interventions and results in general and development co-operation results in particular.

Few SDG targets have clear end-values for the 2030 target date. Some dimensions of sustainable development are difficult to quantify, e.g. issues of equality and sustainability, whereas eradication of poverty and improved health more easily can be given clear target values. Furthermore, the SDGs and their targets represent universal aspirations and compromises, which should be integrated with the visions, goals and priorities set by national authorities in line with their own starting-points and development trajectories. The UN Statistical Commission has established some 230 SDG indicators, for countries and international organisations to monitor progress towards the 169 SDG targets.

The same applies to *Leave no one behind*. Some dimensions are clearly quantifiable through disaggregated data for the SDG outcome targets, while the equality and empowerment dimensions of *Leave no one behind* can best be assessed through case-studies and evidence-based narratives.

Each country will decide whether it needs more precise target values for 2030 for some or all of the SDG targets and *Leave no one behind*. If the country has clear priorities for its development path, it may be sufficient to monitor *progress* along the path towards the prioritised 2030 targets. If, however, the government or other stakeholders (including development co-operation providers) desire to assess evidence-based priorities across targets, then *comparable* development targets are needed for 2030.

Similarly, if governments and their partners (including development co-operation providers) desire to assess the effectiveness of interventions, in the form of outcomes and results across the SDGs and *Leave no one behind*, then an approach is needed to monitor changes in the "distance" to be covered to reach the 2030 targets. Data are needed on each country's current status on the SDGs (disaggregated for *Leave no one behind*) and the 2030 end-values, in order to assess the distance to be covered. To assess the promise and potential use of an analysis of distance to 2030, the DCD

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[2] http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/P20-Initiative-leaflet.pdf

undertook a pilot. The pilot, which also aimed to link development co-operation to SDG progress and distance, met with several methodological challenges.[3]

4. The 2030 Agenda is also about *development co-operation results*

Development co-operation makes a contribution to development results. In December 2016, the 2nd High-level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) agreed that: "To strengthen the focus on results, we will further develop, support and use country-level results frameworks; progressively adapt results frameworks to reflect the targets and indicators of the SDGs; and make data on results publicly available." In addition, "We are committed to ensuring that no-one is left behind by the development process and by development co-operation specifically." (GPEDC Nairobi Outcome Document, December 2016, paras 10 and 13)[4]

Providers of development co-operation apply results frameworks that span results at several levels, including: 1) long-term development impact and change; 2) impact affected by provider operations; and the performance of 3) operations and 4) organisations. Many providers and partners have come far in establishing results frameworks that, to varying degrees, reference or incorporate the SDGs and the SDG targets and indicators. This is done by individual providers and partners in accordance with their own goals and priorities. Consequently, there are multiple, overlapping results frameworks in each partner country. The evolving results frameworks of national authorities – in the form of visions, strategies and sector plans and budgets – interact with the corporate and country-specific results frameworks of a multitude of providers.

Provider supported programmes and projects are typically formulated in a way that reflects selected SDG *targets*, rather than the broader SDG goals or *Leave no one behind*. Development co-operation contributes to the achievement of a diversity of SDG targets in and by partner countries. But to what degree? And with what effectiveness? The answer depends on whether development co-operation "fits with" the 2030 Agenda, and whether development co-operation addresses the biggest SDG challenges identified by partner countries.

As the SDGs and *Leave no one behind* cover all dimensions of sustainable development, it would be necessary to capture all dimensions of development co-operation, not just official development assistance.[5] ODA has "the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective", which is clearly within the purpose of the 2030 Agenda. However, the ODA classification is built around inputs and sectors, not around outcomes and results. The paper referenced above outlined a pilot attempt by the Results Team to use ODA codes and markers to link ODA allocations to SDG outcomes. For various methodological reasons, this was possible only for one third of ODA, which led to significant data deficiencies. Other actors, including SIDA, have made similar attempts to link their portfolio to the SDG targets (but not directly to *Leave no one behind*).[6]

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[3] *Development co-operation results under the 2030 Agenda: Challenges and opportunities in results monitoring* Draft, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD), January 2017. (https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Results%20and%20development%20co-operation%20for%202030.pdf)

[4] In Para 9 of Part One, the parties ''reaffirm in particular the 2030 Agenda's pledge to leave no-one behind as a philosophy that imbues our work and recognise that development co-operation must leave no-one behind to be effective.'' Moving from pledge and philosophy to results-based management is a challenge.

[5] The concept of Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) aims to capture all channels and dimensions of development co-operation. Unfortunately, TOSSD data are not yet available.

[6] The OECD-DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics is taking small steps to adjust some ODA codes so they fit better with the SDGs, but the aim is not a merger or complete fit.

5. Towards an analytical framework

The goals, targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are gradually being applied in the national strategies and plans of partner countries and in the results frameworks of many providers of development co-operation. As discussed above, the 2030 Agenda includes two elements that relate to development co-operation results in supplementary ways:

1. The 17 SDGs and especially the 169 SDG targets offer partly quantifiable results to be achieved by or before 2030. They are the intended development results of the people, private sector and institutions of developing countries, with development co-operation providers as contributors.
2. The commitment to *Leave no one behind* focuses on results that reach the most vulnerable and disadvantaged human beings. It also aims at non-quantifiable results in the form of empowerment, equity and rights.

The question is how the SDGs and their targets as well as the *Leave no one behind* commitment relate to development co-operation results. Figure 1 places the four above-mentioned levels of results frameworks at the centre, with the SDG goals and targets to the left and *Leave no one behind* in the right column.

Figure 1: The 2030 Agenda and development co-operation results: Where do the SDGs, the SDG targets, and the "Leave no one behind" imperative fit in?

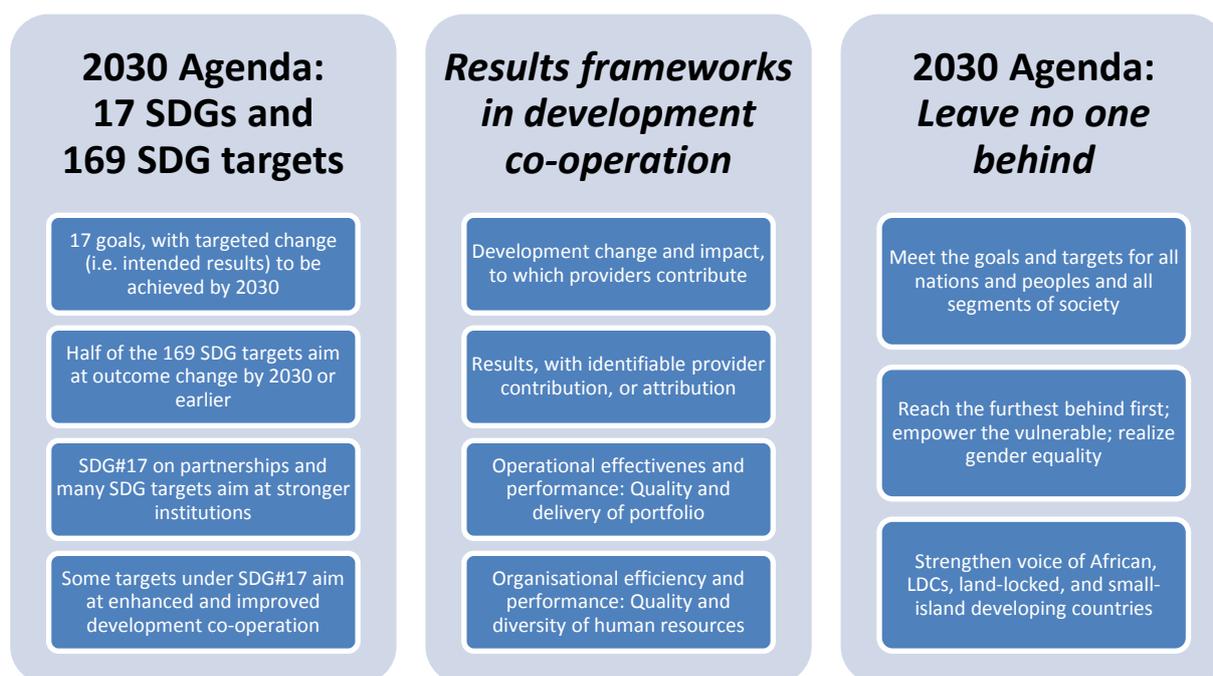| 2030 Agenda: 17 SDGs and 169 SDG targets	Results frameworks in development co-operation	2030 Agenda: Leave no one behind
17 goals, with targeted change (i.e. intended results) to be achieved by 2030	Development change and impact, to which providers contribute	Meet the goals and targets for all nations and peoples and all segments of society
Half of the 169 SDG targets aim at outcome change by 2030 or earlier	Results, with identifiable provider contribution, or attribution	Reach the furthest behind first; empower the vulnerable; realize gender equality
SDG#17 on partnerships and many SDG targets aim at stronger institutions	Operational effectivenes and performance: Quality and delivery of portfolio	Strengthen voice of African, LDCs, land-locked, and small-island developing countries
Some targets under SDG#17 aim at enhanced and improved development co-operation	Organisational efficiency and performance: Quality and diversity of human resources	

Figure 1 suggests that there is a neat fit between the SDG goals and targets and the four levels of results frameworks. As was done in the pilot analysis by the Results Team, the SDG targets need to be analysed for whether they aim at *outcome change*, i.e. development results, or whether they deal with partnerships and processes for operational effectiveness and operational efficiency. The targets are all needed for sustainable development impact (level 1 of the results frameworks), but different targets yield different results at different levels of the results frameworks.

Figure 1 suggests a less direct link between *Leave no one behind* and the results levels. On the one hand, *Leave no one behind* requires political choices on equity and empowerment that cut through the levels, and which may not lead to quantifiable results. On the other hand, *Leave no one behind* can in

principle be quantified, pointing to results for each of the SDG targets, by assessing whether, for example, particular target groups, or the bottom 20 percent of the population, have been reached with various public services, whether or not supported by development co-operation.

A third element of *Leave no one behind* concerns the focus on the weakest *countries*, e.g. through the share of ODA going to least developed countries or strengthened membership by African countries in international organisations. These issues lie outside the results-based management discussed here.

Another results-related difference between the SDG targets and *Leave no one behind* may lie in the relative vs. absolute formulation of the two sets of goals. For the SDG targets, it is possible to monitor *progress* towards the 2030 target situations, and such progress reflects development results. For *Leave no one behind*, one would first need to define the targets and then decide whether or not to adhere to the commitment ''to reach the furthest behind first''. As mentioned, this implies setting the results bar very high – or it is a political goal and starting-point, which is not results-related.

Finally, *Leave no one behind* can in a results context serve as a corrective on any perverse incentives, which the 2030 Agenda may foster, to focus development co-operation on the easiest, most quantifiable SDG targets and low-hanging fruits. If an SDG-focused approach goes too much for low-hanging fruits, *Leave no one behind* can ensure that those most difficult to reach are being considered. In this case, the results measurement and reporting challenges may be different for the two elements of the 2030 Agenda:

1. For the SDGs and SDG targets, the challenge is one of contribution / attribution: What is the link between progress on the SDGs (towards the 2030 targets) and the allocation and use of development co-operation? This relates to a challenge of aggregation: Progress on SDG targets is a macro issue, while the contribution of development co-operation is demonstrable mainly at project level.
2. For *Leave no one behind*, the opportunity and the challenge is to monitor and report on political results, i.e. results obtained from decisions to reach and empower the ones who are left out in market-based or generalised (as opposed to targeted) approaches. Unless those left behind are quantitatively defined (e.g. the bottom 20 percent), results can be reported through *narratives*: X number of a particular target group (who are left behind socially, economically or politically) have been reached with particular services.

At workshops in 2016-17, the DAC Results Community[7] considered the first-mentioned challenges of aggregation and contribution from development co-operation to SDG progress. They pointed to the partner country level to identify optimum ways for providers and partners to collaborate on results frameworks that benefit from the SDGs, targets and indicators. More analysis is needed of the links between the 2030 Agenda and the results frameworks of providers and partners, based on a few country case-studies, including of fragile contexts. This will provide an overview of the actual use of SDGs, SDG targets and SDG indicators in the goals and results frameworks of providers and partners at country level. It will also pursue alternatives to the pilot analysis of measuring ''distance to the 2030 targets'', seeking a way to compare results across goals and targets.

The analysis of *Leave no one behind* in a results context will examine the questions listed on page 2 above. Because of the opportunity to emphasize evidence-based narratives in results reporting on political decisions to *Leave no one behind*, the work to be done here will examine what good *results communication* looks like to *Leave no one behind*. The focus will be on the results information needed when communicating with ultimate beneficiaries, decision-makers in partner and provider countries, and domestic constituencies in provider countries.

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[7] The DAC Results Community held workshops in Paris in February and September 2016 and in Brussels on 9-10 February 2017 (co-hosted by the EU and the OECD) on *Mutual Accountability through Results: Supporting partner countries' development goals and results frameworks*. https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Results%20workshop%20February%202017%20Key%20Messages.pdf