

WORKSHOP ON THE RESULTS AGENDA

29 & 30 October 2013, OECD Headquarters, Paris

WORKSHOP REPORT

DAY 1:

OPENING SESSION: ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL CONCERNS FOR DAC MEMBERS AND PARTNER COUNTRIES

1. Hans Lundgren (Secretariat) opened the workshop by welcoming the participants and outlining the workshop objectives. Over 80 attended originating from DAC member countries, partner countries, multilateral banks and research institutions. The workshop's objectives were to provide an opportunity for mutual learning and sharing of experiences in development agency practice; identify how to overcome current challenges; and help shape future direction of work in results management and measurement. The workshop was targeted at senior results managers and results specialists in development agencies and comprised of panel discussions around a number of challenges experienced by DAC Members and partners in results management and measurement. The workshop was moderated by Mark Keen from IOD PARC.

2. Two keynote addresses set the context of the workshop by identifying the political and practical concerns driving the results agenda in DAC member and partner countries. Sulley Gariba (Senior Policy Coordinator/Advisor, Office of the President, Ghana) opened the workshop by providing some insights on bottlenecks experienced in results management in Ghana. During his address he pointed to past challenges with results approaches experienced by partner country governments. Senior politicians needed to understand this new "results approach" and results based management needed to be retrofitted into government planning systems which were not results focused. Nowadays, developing country populations are demanding more accountability for results encouraging governments to be more results oriented and demonstrate the positive development changes during their term in office.

3. In his address, Gariba also highlighted a number of prerequisites for developing a results culture. Strategic leadership at a politically high level which provides direction to all government ministries through a national development plan is critical. A multi-stakeholder participatory process also is required to develop a theory of change to define the pathways towards clear results.

4. In her keynote address, Susanne Wadstein (Director of Organisational Development, Swedish International Development Agency - SIDA) highlighted SIDA's recent reorganization to respond better to

the results agenda. A newly formed Organizational Department now manages all aspects of the programme cycle from strategy development to evaluation, and focuses on developing new tools for results management. For instance, during this recent reorganization the results culture needed to be promoted without putting additional pressure on staff resources. Accordingly, new instruments and systems were developed to manage this. All staff needed to manage results in the same manner and a contribution management system was established to ensure this. SIDA is also transitioning from supporting sectors to focusing on specific target groups spanning across a number of sectors in an effort to be more results specific.

5. In order to move towards a strong results culture institutionally, Wadstein recommended that having systems in place and changing staff behaviour to think about results were both important. Being clear on how results information will be used and ensuring a balance between short and long term information needs are also crucial. In addition, being realistic about the resource requirements for results management and encouraging departments responsible for internal reporting and external communication on results to be in constant liaison are essential.

6. In the discussion which followed, participants outlined the need for long term country-owned results. They also highlighted the reality that while partner country results focused on the long term, governments also needed to report quick gains to their own parliaments and the public.

SESSION 1: HOW CAN WE OVERCOME BOTTLENECKS WHEN BUILDING A RESULTS CULTURE?

7. This session highlighted the main bottlenecks when creating an institutional results culture and the necessary steps to overcome them. Olivier Thery (Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs) highlighted that within the Department of Development Cooperation, the knowledge and expertise of managing for development results on project and programme level was built up to a good level in recent years. The challenge now is to build up expertise in aggregating data beyond project and programme level as there is little experience with aggregation in the past. One of the reasons for this is that there is little internal demand for result information beyond the project and programme level. This can in turn be explained by a lack of external demand for agency wide result information. External assessments, such as the OECD DAC Peer Review, and international initiatives, such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), are helpful however to increase the demand for results data and improve the systems to produce those.

8. In her intervention, Tara Carney (Canadian International Development Agency - CIDA) highlighted the main bottlenecks faced by CIDA, an agency with a mature results culture, as it joins with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Canada. Carney highlighted that institutionalizing a result culture means that results should be part of how all staff within an organisation approaches its daily work. She also indicated that ensuring results information is valued and used for management purposes, and keeping systems user-friendly for all staff are important in reducing bottlenecks.

9. During the discussion, participants raised important issues for building a results culture. The presence of an organizational management culture with a safe environment in which positive and negative performance can be reported is important. This management culture should also respond to different results needs across an organization, balancing requirements for short and long term results information. Participants also suggested measuring performance both at programme and individual levels and the introduction of incentives which can encourage the creation of results systems and capacities within an organisation. Finally participants raised the issue of risk and whether development partners are becoming more risk averse when making decisions because of a fear of poor performance.

SESSION 2: RESULTS FRAMEWORKS: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT AND HOW DO WE IMPROVE?

10. This session focused on the main challenges in designing and managing the systems that measure and aggregate results information, presenting an opportunity to share experiences and lessons learnt. In his intervention, Adrian Maître (Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation - SDC) recommended keeping results frameworks simple so that they can be used as management tools. He also underlined the importance of ensuring their alignment with partner country results frameworks. Maître proposed focusing on measuring contribution rather than attribution when reporting on aid flows with the aim of improving aid contributions. He also suggested using management responses on results achieved as incentives to improve frameworks.

11. When managing frameworks with unclear or missing data, Maître suggested treating frameworks as living documents which can be improved over time. He recommended using baseline statements, proxy indicators and beneficiary results assessments when planning for “softer development issues” such as human rights and governance. SDC aggregates results data from countries to report on aid effectiveness objectives at the corporate level.

12. Mehaka Rountree (New Zealand Aid Programme) provided insights on New Zealand Aid’s new strategic framework which is in its infancy and focused mostly on learning. Rountree emphasized the need to build staff capacity in designing and implementing results frameworks. He recommended strengthening data collection systems when designing programmes to reduce missing data in frameworks particularly emphasizing the importance of a specific budget for data collection when monitoring. Rountree suggested partnering with other organizations to share information on indicators.

13. Rountree agreed that developing a results culture is challenging and requires strengthening at all levels. Leadership, finding ‘results champions’ institutionally, and gaining support from other organisations are essential. Finally, Rountree recommended that in order to improve results frameworks, a safe environment in which both positive and negative performance can be openly discussed is important.

14. In the discussion which followed, participants agreed that keeping results frameworks simple while maintaining their usefulness as a management tool is a challenge faced by all development practitioners. Panel interveners provided some possible solutions to this issue such as being strategic

when choosing indicators and relying on expertise and experience to keep results frameworks simple. They also recommended maintaining a balance between management use and capturing development complexity. Participants felt that aggregating data for corporate level reporting tends to emphasise measuring results at the output level instead of focusing on longer-term outcomes. Maintaining the long term focus on results is key. Finally participants agreed that closer linkages between strategy, results frameworks and budgets were important in results management although a large number of DAC Members are struggling to link results to resources.

SESSION 3: USING PARTNER COUNTRY RESULTS SYSTEMS: WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS IN PRACTICE?

15. This session concentrated on the opportunities and limitations using partner country results systems with a focus on issues of alignment, capacity and leadership in results. Velayuthan Sivagnanasothy (Ministry of Traditional Industries and Small Enterprise Development, Sri Lanka) presented the Sri Lankan experience. Reforms were introduced in 2002 following an increasing demand from citizens, parliamentarians and media for information on development outcomes. A national development plan was drafted from which ministries were requested to build their own results frameworks highlighting key performance indicators.

16. During this time, the main challenge was to ensure that ministries focused their results on achieving outcomes instead of outputs. Outcomes were more difficult to measure and implied working in partnership with other line ministries across other government sectors. Key lessons learned from this process pointed to the need for strong political will and government policy. Capacity of staff in results management was essential. In addition, statistical data was required to inform baselines, and indicators were kept specific and low in number at the strategic level.

17. In his intervention, Franco Conzato (European Commission (EC) – EuropeAid) suggested that the method used to deliver aid can have a direct correlation on how easily partner country results systems can be used. Conzato cited the EC example of supporting and using statistical systems, a requirement when providing budget support. While this might be a solution as far as budget support is concerned, it may be more complicated for individual projects which produce their own results information. Conzato also emphasized the importance of trust and mutual accountability to facilitate the use of partner country results systems.

18. The discussion which followed highlighted that establishing a results culture and operationalizing this, as exemplified by the Sri Lanka experience, was an incremental process requiring pilots and capacity development before roll out to all ministries. Currently Sri Lanka is in the process of linking provincial level results frameworks to national level development plans. The discussion underlined the importance of country ownership to facilitate and ensure alignment of partner country results systems, and suggested that external partners should coordinate their support and align their priorities to national plans.

SESSION 4: ARE WE READY TO USE RESULTS INFORMATION?

19. This session highlighted the various uses for results information within an organisation and externally, discussing the types of challenges encountered and possible solutions. In her panel intervention, Ruth Buckley (United States Agency for International Development - USAID) highlighted USAID's commitment to using performance information in all programmes in a bottom-up manner focusing on priorities shared with partner countries to drive performance.

20. In USAID results information at the field level is used for decision making in programming. At the headquarter level, an annual results report is produced and results are published on a development experience clearing house. USAID uses results information to account for how public contributions are spent in partner countries. Information is also used for dialogue with partners during the lifetime of a programme but discussions can vary greatly depending on the partner's capacity.

21. Bernard Woods (Asian Development Bank - ADB) provided an insight on annual performance reporting at the ADB referring to the five elements of this process. These are: reviewing frameworks with result indicators, targets and sources; using signals with information on indicator performance (traffic light approach); discussion with high level management once a year; learning which looks at reasons behind lack of performance; and decision-making which feeds into planning process.

22. Woods highlighted the need for good information in results frameworks to inform indicators and baselines, and set realistic performance targets. The ADB has done much work on promoting an environment based on trust to discuss low performance when reporting at the corporate level. However further work is needed to analyse factors contributing to positive programme performance. Incentives are used to reward performance. An example was provided of discretionary measures provided to reward progress towards targets. Resources are also reallocated based on strategic needs or assist where improvements in performance are required.

23. The ADB reports on results through several channels. Each year it produces the ADB Development Effectiveness Review, and publishes success stories through briefs developed per country. Furthermore, the ADB responds to more specific requests for information from DAC members. This is common practice among all multilateral banks.

Group Work

24. During the second half of this session, participants were organized into small groups to discuss examples of where they are using results information, and where challenges remain. Participants indicated that often they use results information to discuss development strategy with government and inform projects and programmes. Participants also indicated using results information to monitor aid delivery and organizational performance, communicate aid expenditures, and pilot test results based financing initiatives.

25. Challenges remaining in results management are many. Participants highlighted experiencing difficulties in measuring attribution at the outcome and impact level, and in tracking progress in “softer development issues”. They also referred to the lack of trust in the quality of statistical data needed for results measurement and management and IT support systems for data analysis. Linking evaluation recommendations and resources to results, and measuring capacity building remain challenging. Finally, some participants indicated that they were grappling with issues of mutual accountability and how to communicate poor performance to parliament and the wider public in times of austerity.

DAY 2:

OPENING SESSION - CONTINUED¹: ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL CONCERNS FOR DAC MEMBERS AND PARTNER COUNTRIES

26. Paul Lupunga (Chief Economist, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Zambia) spoke on the political and practical concerns driving the results agenda, stressing the importance of considering the political dimension of results management. He referred to the need to understand who the decision makers in development cooperation are, and the types of political influences in developed and developing countries which can impact outcomes in developing countries. Countries in receipt of development assistance have different constructs where decision making is often not results influenced. Members of Parliament usually originate from the private sector and would have limited knowledge on results information from development cooperation.

27. Lupunga highlighted that in reality results are perceived differently by different stakeholders. The Ministry of Finance and National Planning Annual Progress Report attempts to manage and unify ministries in Zambia under one development vision for the country. However, coordination among development partners is also required. Finally Lupunga appreciated the need to reconcile donors’ needs for short term results with partner country long term development outcomes and suggested providing development education to the public.

SESSION 5: RESULTS IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS: HOW DO WE ADDRESS SPECIFIC CHALLENGES?

28. Diego Garrido (World Bank) and Jennifer Leith (United Kingdom Department for International Development - DfID) presented their experience on the bottlenecks encountered by development partners in fragile contexts. Garrido provided some examples of how to solve challenges around data availability and reliability, finding the right indicators for fragility and state building, and collecting evidence on what works in fragile states. Third party monitoring, sharing information with other stakeholders, using innovative technologies for collecting information, tapping into international indices, and collaborating with universities were highlighted as examples of such solutions.

¹ Amendment to the agenda: Paul Lupunga (Chief Economist, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Zambia) provided his keynote address on Day 2 of the workshop due to late arrival following poor weather conditions.

29. Leith focused her presentation on the political challenges of results management stressing that each conflict had a unique history and culture which can influence the pathways towards results in highly dynamic and complex environments. In such contexts, aggregation of data might not be relevant as pathways face dynamic environments, objectives can change, and feedback loops sometimes undermine theories of change. DfID is looking to adopt a new approach focusing on identifying sets of typical incidents, drivers of change and testing connections between these drivers to address these challenges.

30. The discussion which followed outlined the need for flexibility when working out the causal pathway towards results in fragile contexts, keeping outputs flexible for change without losing sight of long term outcomes. During programme implementation, closer monitoring to manage risk and conducting evaluations was emphasized. Panel interveners also discussed the cost of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) recommending developing detailed M&E budget lines during programme planning, obtaining additional funds from other funding sources, and pooling projects together which required the same reviews to reduce costs. Building M&E capacity in partner governments and reaching common understanding on results are also critical.

SESSION 6: SUMMING UP AND NEXT STEPS

31. This session took the form of an open discussion on the emerging lessons from each workshop session and concrete steps to be taken forward by DAC members. Participants agreed that in order to build a results culture, leadership and adequate resources are needed.

32. Participants agreed that aligning to partner country owned priorities and supporting partner country governments in building a results culture was important. Simultaneously achieving results and alignment according to the Busan Principles on Aid Effectiveness is possible. They also agreed that understanding partner country needs was essential.

33. Participants highlighted the need to be realistic when reconciling demands for short and long term results information. Development education was mentioned as an important element to inform DAC member country parliaments and the public on the long term complex nature of development.

34. Participants understood that there are many ways to look at results at corporate, organizational, programme and project level, in differing DAC member country and partner country contexts. They also highlighted that although accountability was an important use for results information, decision making and learning were also essential.

35. Participants agreed that in fragile contexts the pathway towards results is often complex and therefore flexibility in reprogramming the results system is required. Linking results to risk is important. Having a safe environment in which to discuss risk and poor performance would be useful.

Future Work

36. It is clear from the workshop that there is appetite among participants for joint work. Next steps include the following:

- Participants are keen to organize technical workshops around a number of specific challenging issues. Topics suggested include: indicators, results frameworks (designing the frameworks and reporting on results, and how best to link with partner country results systems); Knowledge management with a specific focus on more results focused decision making; and Linking results to risk (suggested by Belgium). Sweden has kindly offered to take the lead in organizing a technical workshop on the first two topics.
- Ireland suggested that a smaller group should examine whether country level planning and reporting supports partner country results management.
- Switzerland is currently supporting the co-chair of the Building Block on Results and Mutual Accountability (Bangladesh) to find ways to input into the Ministerial Meeting in Mexico next year. Switzerland will take points discussed in this workshop back to colleagues working in the Building Block. The Secretariat will continue to link with colleagues taking part in the Building Block on Results and Mutual Accountability.
- It is envisaged that the OECD will organize a technical workshop on Results Based Financing in 2014. Further details on this will be circulated in due course.
- Following from a request by DAC Members, a password-protected Community Space has been developed on which information can be shared and views exchanged among workshop participants and results specialists.
- The workshop report will be circulated to all participants for comment. Survey findings and workshop discussions will feed into the review on agency practice in results management. The Secretariat will be in contact with a number of DAC members for further information to inform this review.

ANNEX 1

Participants List for Workshop on the Results Agenda Liste des Participants pour Atelier sur l'agenda des résultats

29/10/2013 - 30/10/2013

All Sessions

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