



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

**Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices**

**TASK TEAM ON HARMONISATION AND ALIGNMENT OF DONOR PRACTICES**

**SUMMARY OF THE FIRST MEETING**

**Held in Paris on 2 and 3 July 2003**

*On the basis of Members' comments received at the 2nd Task Team Meeting on 4-5 September, the summary record of the First Meeting held on 2-3 July 2002 has been amended and it is now officially approved.*

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**JT00150603**

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## SUMMARY

### OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE WP-EFF TASK TEAM ON HARMONISATION AND ALIGNMENT OF DONOR PRACTICES (OECD, Paris, 2-3 July 2003)

#### 1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA [DCD/DAC/EFF/A(2003)2]

1. The agenda was adopted.

#### 2. OVERVIEW OF THE TASK TEAM PROPOSALS [ANNEX 1, DCD/DAC/EFF/A(2003)2]

2. The first day of the meeting was presided by Michel Reveyrand (France) and Ikufumi Tomimoto, newly elected Chair and co-Chair of the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices (WP-EFF). It was proposed that the two candidates for the Task Team co-leadership (Bo Westman from Sweden and Colin Bruce from the World Bank) be nominated at the end of the day with the understanding that they would co-chair the meeting on the next day.

3. Three main messages emerged from the discussion on the overall work programme of the Task Team (TT), namely the need to:

- **Focus on implementation starting with dissemination.** In spite of dissemination efforts following the Rome High-Level Forum (HLF), members noted a significant information gap on the Rome process both at headquarters and at country-level. They stressed the need to make information available not only on the Rome commitments but also on practical models that can inspire practitioners engaged in formulating and implementing country Action Plans.
- **Give equal weight to harmonisation and alignment.** The two are interdependent. Alignment issues should be embedded in all the Task Team work including indicators. The Task Team would have to define also the scope of work on alignment (e.g alignment with PRS processes and partner country systems, procedures and practices).
- **Lay the basis for reporting on progress.** While some members insisted on the need to achieve progress before producing a report (mandated by the DAC for end –2004 and the HLF by 2005), others argued that there would be enough to report since several donors had already started work on harmonisation and alignment for some time. The reporting exercise should be forward-looking, focusing both on on-going constraints and opportunities and keep in mind the key issue of capacity building.

4. It came out of the discussion that the various components of the work programme (agenda items 3 to 9) would be best organised into two major strands of work: one focusing on implementation (including dissemination, country Action Plans, regional workshops) and the other one on reporting and monitoring progress (indicators, self – reporting, peer reviews/ Joint Country Assessments, SLM/HLF report).

### 3. DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

#### a) Exchange of information on dissemination activities

5. Members exchanged information on their initiatives to spread information on the Rome agenda and disseminate the DAC Good Practice Papers on harmonising donor practices. Beyond the distribution of the relevant documents at Headquarters and Embassies, Members reported on the following means to sensitize and train agency staff:

- **Dissemination material and training**
  - *Power Point slides, CD ROMs and other training modules* (France, EC, UNDP). In addition, Canada has produced a summary of the Good Practice Papers that attracted the interest of other members keen to use it in their dissemination and training activities.
  - *Dedicated websites* have been set up by the World Bank and the EC to help staff and aid practitioners keep up to speed with developments on the harmonisation/alignment front.
  - *Training seminars* (France, AfDB, AsDB). Drawing up Action Plans is also a way for some Members to involve staff in the elaboration process. Members requested that the training material be put together and circulated in order to benefit from each other's experience.
- **Management and institutional change**
  - *Leadership from management.* Several members emphasized the crucial role of management in sending strong messages and setting the training and implementation process in motion (particularly Ambassadors, Heads of missions and middle management in Ministries/Agencies). In this regard, Canada is considering identifying a leadership champion to foster implementation of the harmonisation agenda.
  - *Meetings of Heads of Missions and Heads of Aid.* Several members have held (or will hold) special sessions on harmonisation in the context of Heads of missions and Heads of Aid meetings held periodically at Headquarters (Belgium, France, Norway) or at joint meetings of field officers (Australia: regional meeting in the South Pacific to be attended by the DAC Chair in October). Some have sent instructions to their Embassies to make the harmonisation and alignment agenda a cross-cutting issue (Norway) and a strategic priority (Sweden). Others (IDB, IMF) are taking actions to bring their country offices on board.
  - *Staff guidelines.* Denmark has set up guidelines for staff that are incorporated in the agency reporting system. The AfDB is also moving towards including harmonisation as part of its staff evaluation system.
  - *Delegation of authority to the field.* Several members stressed that field staff need to be empowered to work with others at country level to implement the Rome agenda pointing to decentralisation as the key issue. Some are engaged in this path (Netherlands, Norway). Others are contemplating actions to change procedures at Headquarters (Belgium, Switzerland).

- **Policy dialogue and dissemination in international fora**

- *Policy dialogue* Sweden is putting a strong emphasis on discussing harmonisation and alignment with partner countries. The AfDB will organise an Africa workshop in Tunis on 28-29 August. Japan in collaboration with the UK will hold a workshop on aid effectiveness in Hanoi in October. The AsDB found dissemination to be most effective through the Viet Nam pilot study undertaken with Japan.
- *Dissemination at international events.* The Netherlands seized the opportunity of the WB meeting on public financial management (Washington, June 2003) to present the concrete example of harmonization in Zambia. Norway is also planning dissemination in important events.

**b) Suggestions for co-ordinated actions in the future:**

- The Co-Chairs encouraged the Secretariat to **collect information from each member** as a basis for sharing experience and monitoring progress.
- The Netherlands proposed to **appoint one lead DAC member in each partner country** who would be responsible for promoting the DAC Good Practice Papers and volunteered to take the lead in one or two countries. Denmark and Norway supported the proposal and Ireland subsequently expressed its interest in writing. Norway emphasised that the promotion should take place within already existing fora.
- The UK supported a joint endeavour on dissemination and the idea that the Secretariat would draw **a list of major upcoming international events** where Members would commit to promote dissemination on behalf of the DAC.

<p><b>4. PROPOSAL FOR A FRAMEWORK OF INDICATORS ON HARMONISATION AND ALIGNMENT [DCD/DAC/EFF(2003)4]</b></p>
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6. The Netherlands opened the discussion by asking a series of basic questions that the Task Team ought to address in selecting indicators: What kind of information is needed? Is it going to change donor behaviour? Does change in behaviour lead to a lowering of transaction costs (for donors? for recipients?) Which approach to harmonisation leads to the largest increase in aid effectiveness?

7. Members agreed on the questions and expressed broad support for the Secretariat paper setting out **suggestions for the elaboration of a set of indicators**. On this basis, they emphasised the need to:

- Involve partner countries in the work on indicators.
- Establish a baseline and some benchmarks.
- Focus on process indicators as well as on outcome indicators.
- Link to Peer Reviews and Joint Country Assessments (JCA).
- Take into account work done in other fora (particularly the SPA and the indicators set out by partner countries for the annual PRSP reviews).

8. **Regarding the selection of indicators**, members suggested including the following:

- Indicators that would track progress on donor Action Plans and on joint country analytical work (Japan).
- Indicators on PRS alignment which would focus not only on process but also on content (IMF).
- An indicator on capacity development (AfDB).

- An indicator on public financial management (France).

9. Several members expressed interest in joining a group working on indicators (Australia, Belgium, Canada, EC, Finland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom, UNDP, World Bank).

10. **Links with NEPAD.** In the context of the discussion, the Secretariat updated members on OECD-DAC work with NEPAD and UNECA to develop a “Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness” to promote mutual accountability among African countries and their development partners regarding their respective commitments to African development and partnership. The proposed biennial consultative process would inter alia review progress regarding performance indicators. For African countries, these indicators could cover political and economic governance and socio-economic development (MDGs) and, for donors, they could cover policy coherence, aid flows, capacity development and aid effectiveness. The Task Team work on monitoring donor harmonization and alignment should ultimately be a key pillar of “Mutual Review” reports<sup>1</sup>. The process and parameters of this new mechanism will be finalized over the coming months.

11. **Co-operation with SPA.** The SPA representative highlighted relevant work undertaken in the context of the Budget Support Working Group. It is now launching an initiative to promote greater in-country alignment of donor budget support with national PRS and budget processes. A questionnaire will be sent out to collect information from donors. The findings would be fed back to the Task Team including indicators on the alignment of budget support. In order to maintain close links, it was agreed to have shared participation in respective Task Team and SPA meetings.

## 5. SUPPORTING AND ASSESSING PROGRESS ON COUNTRY- BASED ACTION PLANS

12. As a first step, members suggested to get information on the status of preparation of country-based Action Plans and related country level initiatives. It was suggested that this could be done in various ways:

- Review the agreements already reached and use the codes of conduct, prototypes and templates that are available as possible models.
- The World Bank suggested using the information gathered through the regional workshops on capacity building for PRSPs and other on-going processes to assess alignment and harmonisation. It further offered to share a first draft of its inventory of country-driven processes as a basis for the Task Team assessment.
- UNDP mentioned the possibility of earmarking funds for work on supporting country Action Plans in the context of Capacity 2015 and expressed interest in being involved.

13. The Chair concluded from the discussion that the work on country-based Action Plans was closely linked to dissemination and that the two work components should be combined into a single group. He also noted that while there would not be a standard model of a Country Action Plan, the Task Team might want to offer a general framework for use by field offices.

<sup>1</sup> African nations have expressed keen interest in harmonisation performance indicators covering joint missions, common reporting formats and/or joint financing/delegated co-operation and alignment performance indicators relating to donor use of, and reporting within, Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks.

## 6. DONOR SELF-REPORTING

### a) Donor self reporting

14. In Discussing the Rome commitment to assess and report on progress in applying good practices as part of self-evaluation processes, members stressed the following points:

- Both bilaterals and multilaterals should undertake self-reporting.
- Reports should be based on Donor Action Plans.
- Using a common format for reporting would be helpful.
- While Action Plans set out intentions, self-reporting should focus on what has been achieved.
- Reporting should capture joint actions.
- Reporting and sharing information should be a regular feature of Task Team meetings.
- Each member should aim to have a self-report completed by September 2004.

15. Members also noted that, at some point, the Task Team should discuss the reports and make recommendations on improving implementation. In addition, work would have to be done to extract key elements, analyze contents and provide a consolidated overview to be eventually integrated in the 2004 DAC SLM Report.

### b) Progress with Action Plans

16. It was further agreed that Members who have completed their Action Plans should send them to the Secretariat for broader dissemination among Task Team Members and posting on the website. In this connection, the following members updated the Task Team on the status of preparations: Switzerland has completed its Action Plan. France has designed it together with a matrix of policy measures associated with a timetable for monitoring progress (to be approved at Ministerial level in July). Canada has a draft and Belgium is in the process of elaborating it. The UK proposes to host in September a seminar on common approaches to training.

## 7. PROPOSALS FOR PEER REVIEWS ON HARMONISATION/ALIGNMENT PROGRESS AND ISSUES (JCA- JOINT COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS) [ROOM DOCUMENT NO 2]

17. The Secretariat presented the main lines of a DAC proposal to focus the 2004 Joint Country Assessment on harmonisation and alignment for consideration by the Task Team. In sharing initial reactions, Members made the following points:

- The added value of a DAC JCA as compared to other exercises such as monitoring MDG 8 would have to be carefully assessed.
- The JCA should keep a focus on the « peer » aspect of the review given this is a unique OECD feature. It should cover multilateral organisations as well.
- Taking stock of progress should not be the sole objective, the JCA should also serve to help foster change. Drawing from the recent example of SPA pilots on budget support, it would be useful to involve senior officials.
- The Task Team needs to make sure that the JCA adds value to partner countries, contributes to what is going on locally and builds on some genuine local process. This will require a technical judgement on whether the exercise does not impose more transaction costs.

18. Some members expressed interest in the exercise. Others called attention to the tight timetable which mandates the Task Team to produce a report on progress with harmonisation/alignment in 2004. If the JCA were to be a component of this report, work on the methodology would have to start quickly.

<p><b>8. INTERACTION WITH PARTNER COUNTRIES: SELECTION PROCESS</b>  <b>[DCD/DAC/EFF(2003)2- PART II]</b></p>
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19. Based on the Secretariat note on modalities for interacting with Partner Countries, Members agreed to select partner countries that would meet the following criteria:

- **Representative sample of countries from good to weak performers.** Some members favoured the participation of fragile States arguing that in such countries, where capacity is the weakest, harmonisation is all the more important and that it is a donor responsibility not to leave them aside. Others, on the contrary, preferred picking countries where there is a PRS in place and a willingness to lead and cautioned against inviting failed States where there was little perspective to move forward. These countries, they noted, would be part of the DAC Learning Advisory Group, and the Task Team should establish links with this group rather than duplicate. It was agreed finally that the Task Team would not invite only the champions of harmonisation but also those who have a mixed record including, thus, a couple of weaker performers. This would also allow participating countries to learn from each other.
- **Regional balance.** Members agreed to maintain a representative balance between Africa, Asia (South and East), South Pacific, Latin and Central America.
- **Individuals.** The selection should take into account the individuals themselves who are asked to participate in a personal capacity. Members should identify participants who have the qualities needed to make active and solid contributions. The AfDB offered to use the upcoming Africa Workshop on Harmonisation to identify relevant officials.
- **Central vs. line ministries.** It was important also to nominate participants from line ministries which in some cases may have more knowledge about actual hindrances and be more engaged in promoting the harmonisation agenda than central ministries.

20. It was agreed that the Task Team would aim to invite 8-12 partner countries selected from within the existing pool of countries who were present at the Rome HLF, with possible adjustments, and to apply the above set of criteria. Members were asked to forward their proposals to the Secretariat who would compile them together with the initial suggestions made at the meeting.

21. The WB also recalled that, besides participation in Paris meetings, the Task Team would seek the active involvement of partners through a range of modalities including dissemination events, regional workshops, joint country assessments and video conferencing.



## 9. REPORT TO THE 2004 DAC SENIOR LEVEL MEETING AND 2005 HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON HARMONISATION

22. It was agreed that the Task Team would generate a single report to which all DAC Members and multilateral organisations would contribute. The report would draw on the contributions of partner countries and their work on Action Plans. It would also integrate anecdotal information illustrating good (and bad) examples of harmonization in different areas and contexts.

23. France recalled its proposal at the Rome HLF to work on a DAC Recommendation on harmonization indicating that, while this task should be kept in mind, it would not be realistic to have it ready by the time of the 2005 HLF. Recalling the agreed mandate and work programme for the WP-EFF, some members emphasised that a DAC Recommendation is still to be considered as a major target

## 10. BUDGET AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE 2003-2004 WORK PROGRAMME (ROOM DOCUMENT NO 1)

24. Based on the budget estimates circulated at the meeting, members provided preliminary indications of their support:

- Several members committed to finance the **participation of partner countries in Task Team meetings** (budget item II): Belgium, Germany, Japan (5 countries), Switzerland and AsDB.
- Some Members argued in favour of basket funding but were not in a position yet to pledge specific amounts: France, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland. Given that funding for item II seemed to be secured, Canada and Sweden stated their willingness to convert their pledge for partner countries into fungible support in order to help cover **core funding for Secretariat staff and consultants** (item I).
- Regarding the **funding of work programme activities** (item III), members made the following commitments: Germany (provide in-kind support); the EC (fund the work of experts and seminars); the AsDB (co-host a regional workshop). UNDP (facilitate work at country level through field offices and provide resources); and the World Bank (make a voluntary contribution in support of implementation). Members requested estimates on the level of expected expenditure for item III before making specific pledges.

25. Members were encouraged to provide fungible support to the extent possible and to indicate the exact amount of their commitments to the Secretariat before 15 August.

## 11. NEXT STEPS

26. The Task Team agreed to establish two Subgroups to work on specific areas of the work programme. The first subgroup will seek to support the implementation of the harmonisation and alignment agenda and will be led by Colin Bruce (World Bank). The second Subgroup will look at reporting and tracking progress on the Rome agenda and will be led by Bo Westman (Sweden).

27. Members indicated interest in joining the Subgroups as follows:

<b>TASK TEAM SUBGROUPS</b>		
<b>SUBGROUP ON SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>SUBGROUP ON TRACKING PROGRESS</b>	
<b>Dissemination Country Action Plans Regional Workshops</b>	<b>Self-reporting Indicators Joint Country Assessments</b>	
<b>Report to the DAC SLM (2004) and Rome Follow-up (2005)</b>		
World Bank (Lead)	Sweden (Lead)	Netherlands
Denmark	Belgium	Norway
Norway	Canada	Spain
Netherlands	Denmark	Switzerland
UNDP	EC	United Kingdom
African Dev. Bank	Finland	UNDP
Asian Dev. Bank	France	World Bank
Inter-American Dev. Bank	Germany	Asian Dev. Bank
Partner Countries	Japan	Partner Countries
EC		

28. Regarding the timetable for member's inputs, the co-leaders recalled the following commitments:

- Nominate partner countries and recommend individual participants by 10 July.
- Indicate the amount of voluntary contributions by 15 August.
- Submit information on events planned for 2003/04 (meetings, workshops, conferences) or activities (training) related to the harmonization/alignment agenda and role of respective agencies (chair, speaker, participation) by 15 August.
- Forward Action Plans by 15 August.

29. The next meeting of the Task Team and its Subgroups was set for the first week of September.

## LIST OF MEETING DOCUMENTS

Draft Annotated Agenda of the First Meeting	DCD/DAC/EFF/A(2003)2
Implementing the Rome Agenda on Harmonisation and Alignment: Preliminary Work Plan and Modalities for Interacting with Partner Countries (Note by the Secretariat)	DCD/DAC/EFF(2003)2
Proposal for a Framework of Indicators on Harmonisation and Alignment (Note by the Secretariat)	DCD/DAC/EFF(2003)4
Working party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices: Election of Chairs	DCD/DIR(2003)29
Preliminary Budget Estimate for the Task Team Work Programme 2003-2004 (Note by the Secretariat)	Room Document 1
DAC Joint Country Assessments Future Focus and Methodology [see Part II in the <i>“Proposed Focus for Joint Country Assessments in 2004 — Harmonisation of Donor Practices”</i> ]. Note by the Secretariat.	Room Document 2
Follow-up Letter by the Co-Sponsors of the High-Level Forum on Harmonisation	Room Document 3
Progress in Alignment and Harmonisation at a Country Level (Note by the SPA — Budget Support Working Group)	Room Document 4
Dissemination of the DAC Good Practice Papers on <i>Harmonising Aid for Effective Aid Delivery</i> (Note by the Secretariat)	Room Document 5

**DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EFFECTIVENESS AND DONOR PRACTICES  
TASK TEAM ON HARMONISATION AND ALIGNMENT OF DONOR PRACTICES**

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