

## Effective Institutions Platform Mapping current trends

The *Busan Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation*, endorsed in December 2011, included a number of commitments relating to Effective Institutions (§29):

- Support the implementation of institutional and policy changes led by developing countries, resulting in effective resource mobilisation and service delivery, including national and sub-national institutions, regional organisations, parliaments and civil society.
- Assess country institutions, systems and capacity development needs, led by developing countries.
- Support the development of improved evidence on institutional performance to inform policy formulation, implementation and accountability, led by developing countries.
- Deepen our learning on the determinants of success for institutional reform, exchanging knowledge and experience at the regional and global levels.

In addition, a voluntary agreement, a ‘New Consensus on Effective Institutions’, was reached in Busan encompassing 35 countries and organisations (see Annex) which called on specific actions in support of these commitments.

Based on the agreements in the Busan Partnership document and the ‘New Consensus’, an initial mapping exercise was undertaken to determine the objectives of this voluntary initiative; the substantive contributions to this agenda including monitoring of relevant commitments; and initial working arrangements. This mapping exercise reflects the responses received from members of the Platform as well as current evidence on progress in strengthening public sector institutions and monitoring and evaluating results.

**Please Note that this is a living document- and expected to be updated periodically.**

## 1. Why a Refocusing on Institutions matters

### a) A prominent agenda since the 1990s

Focusing on the role of institutions in supporting development is hardly new (March and Olsen (1984); North, 1990; Rodrik, 1997). For more than twenty years, policy makers and practitioners have argued that institutions matter for growth, poverty reduction and creating the enabling political and social environment for sustainable development. Effective institutions, defined as ‘rules of the game’ (North, 1990), determine economic, social and political interactions in a sustainable and predictable manner (IPPG). Many development agencies and organisations have increased their financial support to the strengthening of public sector institutions in light of these findings. They have also included institutional strengthening in their research and corporate strategies (for example: DFID 2003, World Bank 2002, OECD 2003; IMF 2005)

### b) Despite significant effort and financing, results are mixed

It is generally accepted that despite the focus on public sector institutions and increased funding to support this agenda, implementation or impact has not been what was hoped. The general and most cited reasons for this include:

- ❖ reform approaches are too technical and do not address underlying issues relating to the political economy of institutional reforms (including linkages between formal and informal governance systems)
- ❖ Donor support to parliaments, CSOs and media has been ad-hoc reducing their impact on real and sustainable change
- ❖ Reform approaches are often not well sequenced- tending to focus primarily on ‘best practices’ that are transferred without regard for social, economic and political context
- ❖ There is little attention to the ‘demand side’ beyond central government administration (line ministries; regional and local level; civil society; and the private sector)
- ❖ Despite efforts since the Paris Declaration, there is little evidence of a correlation between the strengthening of financial governance institutions (e.g. procurement, public financial management), and the decision by external partners to use them
- ❖ Un-coordinated donor assessments of institutions coupled with inconsistent, unreliable and unmeasurable indicators undermine understanding and ownership over evidence of what works and what doesn’t.
- ❖ There is a lack of integration between monitoring mechanisms and those that regulate planning or capacity development processes.

### c) Understanding what an effective institution looks like, what works, what doesn’t and why

Understanding when, how and why institutions work involves understanding how they are negotiated, how they evolve and the conditions of their effective implementation (IPPG, 2010). Current lessons point to the need to:

- ✓ Understand how to sequence reform programmes and taking into consideration existing institutions (taking the debate beyond the rejection of ‘best practices’)

- ✓ Recognise that institutional reform and change is often resisted and ‘institutional stickiness’ can only be addressed by understanding current beneficiaries, cultural and moral objections
- ✓ Build and support the political capacity of organisations in areas such as negotiation and generation of constructive policy options
- ✓ Support developing countries’ own financial and economic governance institutions by using and not bypassing them
- ✓ Build the capacity of accountability institutions- such as Supreme Audit Institutions, Anti-Corruption agencies, and the legislative
- ✓ Build national statistical and monitoring systems to understand opportunities and challenges in governance and institutional reforms
- ✓ Develop donor understanding of institutions beyond their own corporate procedures and practices
- ✓ Undertake joint monitoring processes and assessments to address governance and institutional reforms in a more sustainable manner

#### **d) Taking more coherent action -- linking aid quality (use of country systems, mutual accountability) and development effectiveness (financial and political governance)**

Whilst there is a general consensus on the above challenges and opportunities, the ways in which countries and external partners should respond is a more contested affair. In particular, if institutions are governed by their own countries’ social/economic/political context, what, if any, actions can be taken at a global or regional level? And what type of cross-country policy recommendations, analysis or indicators could help practitioners derive ‘better results from public sector institutions’? Finally, is this agenda too broad in its remit for it to have practical and sustainable results on the ground?

The Effective Institutions commitments agreed at the Fourth High Level on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, whilst recognising these challenges, foresee the need to create more coherent responses to partner country needs in order to sustain their public sector institutions and related reform efforts. The commitments reflect this in a number of ways.

First, the traditional Aid Effectiveness agendas of ‘accountability’, ‘capacity development’, and ‘country systems’, were often treated separately- diminishing their effectiveness in practice. The New Consensus on More Effective Institutions for Development draws on evidence collected since Paris and Accra on the evolution of governance and capacity development efforts: including but not limited to the more traditional fiduciary focus (with core functions such as public financial management and procurement). It recognised that the use country systems continues to play a catalytic role in building the effectiveness of institutions; that oversight bodies should be strengthened to catalyse the use of those resources; and importantly that there is no single best practice for institutional reform.

Second, the importance of accountability institutions and politics was brought to the fore. The Busan agreement as well as the New Consensus on Effective Institutions recognised the importance of sequenced reform efforts responding to the political and social contexts; joint assessments of partner

country institutions and capacity development needs; the need for evidence on institutional performance; and systematic knowledge sharing efforts. The Busan Partnership document included focus on the use and strengthening of developing country systems (§19), to support parliaments and local governments (§21) and to strengthen the effectiveness of institutions and policies (§29).

Third, it was also recognised that in order to be effective, a broader array of stakeholders needed to help shape this agenda, including civil society, parliamentarians and others (private sector, media, etc). Whilst their involvement has often been acknowledged, it has often been limited to being perceived as ‘users’ of more effective institutions rather than as stakeholders in their own right -- helping to shape and strengthen the way public sector institutions operate.

## 2. Mapping substantive priorities to the Effective Institutions Platform

The Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness gave rise to a number of voluntary to facilitate the implementation of commitments in specific areas (from climate change to south-south cooperation). The Effective Institutions Platform includes over 35 countries and organisations that endorsed the New Consensus: Cambodia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Israel, Korea, Malawi, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Zambia, African Capacity Building Foundation, Africa Union/NEPAD, Asian Development Bank, CARICOM, Collaborative African Budget Reform Initiative, European Commission, International Federation of Accountancy, International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions, LenCD, OECD, UNDP and the World Bank.

The following substantive priorities are based on responses received from platform members following an informal consultation (March-February 2012) and a formal meeting held in Paris on June 26, 2012.

### The main objective of the Platform

The main objective within the voluntary initiative on Effective Institutions, as defined by its members in the initial consultation, is to promote the implementation of the commitments in the Busan Partnership document (§19 and §29) by increasing the coherence, effectiveness and sustainability of efforts to strengthen public sector institutions.

#### **Objectives of the Platform: Member perspectives**

The overall objective of this platform is to steer the direction and content of public sector reforms, taking country context and leadership into account; and by extension to support recipient country negotiation of and roles in reform design and implementation (Collaborative African Budget Reform Initiative)

Identifying good practices in public service reforms, country systems strengthening, and capacity development (Cambodia)

To uncover successful approaches for building effective institutions and ensuring that mutual learning processes are in place to allow strengthening of country systems and institutions, and tracking and assessing results (African Capacity Building Foundation)

Ensuring that country and development partner stakeholders can have access to knowledge and experiences which go beyond -- or cut across -- the specialised aspects underpinning effective institutions (LenCD) focusing instead on system-wide reform (SIDA)

Within this broad objective, four substantive priorities have emerged based on the commitments in the New Consensus and in the Busan Partnership – and in response to the need to prioritise within this broad agenda.

#### **a) Partnership to measure the effectiveness of institutions: building capacity to measure what works and why**

As outlined above, there is ample evidence pointing to factors that impact upon the implementation of public sector reforms and efforts to strengthen related institutions. Gaps remain, however, in the measurement of success in terms of development outcomes when attribution is difficult and strengthening institutions is a long-drawn out process. In addition, a ‘whole of government’ perspective is often lacking, when indicators tend to focus on a subset of public sector institutions and regulations (PFM, procurement, civil service reform, etc). Finally, the lack of partner country ownership and validation of these indicators may impede their use and weaken incentives for them to inform policy change.

**Substantive Priority:** 1) Collecting data on strengthening institutions in a more coherent manner (linking assessments (eg PEFA, Open Budget Initiative) and identifying gaps as well as validating results at country level (CABRI); 2) promoting partner-led and joint assessments on the strength of public sector institutions (SIDA, New Zealand, Cambodia), and strengthening domestic statistical systems (Paris 21), including those of CSOs (Better Aid); more systematic approach to evaluating Public Sector Reforms (OECD).

‘Measuring what works and why’ has been identified by a number of countries and organisations as one of the substantive priorities of the Platform which could draw on the following efforts (organisations leading each are identified below).

The World Bank is leading efforts to **develop Indicators of the Strength of Public Management Systems (ISPMS)** to improve the ways in which we measure success in this area. The main aim is to help governments design and monitor the results of public sector management reforms; as well as improving the ways in which donors support these reforms. This includes setting reasonable targets for donor-supported reform projects and drawing on pre-existing indicator sets (for example PEFA, Doing Business, ILO Labor Statistics). What sets ISPMS apart is the measurement not only of de jure reforms but of function and behavioural change – thereby helping to determine what works and why.

Another related initiative is the **development of data systems to track and measure the impact of different approaches to strengthening institutions**. The African Capacity Indicators (ACI) are being used as a tool to capture better ways of assessing institutions. The African Capacity Building Foundation is currently working with the World Bank on refining related indicators- and is working on institutional strengthening for agricultural institutions under CAADP with NEPAD and the African Union.

Other initiatives are focusing on **specific technical areas** (OECD's Budget Practices and Procedures Survey and Study on Governance and National Well-Being) as well as at the **local level** (for instance strengthening the International Federation of Red Cross's national societies).

Another initiative focuses on helping **Harmonise indicators in the evaluation of progress** through for instance the harmonisation charter of statistics (NEPAD); and better connecting Capacity Development Indicators (LenCD).

Finally, suggested work under this substantive priority also relates to the **monitoring of the Busan commitments on using and strengthening country systems**. Work is underway to review the PEFA indicators (PEFA) and platform members (Honduras, Ghana, PEFA, laDB, Germany) have expressed interest in supporting the strengthening of related indicators (eg on the quality of PFM systems) through a technical review process beginning in 2012.

### **b) Making Reform Happen: how to design and sequence reforms**

Another substantive priority area recognised by members of the platform is the need to focus on those factors that make reforms and capacity development happen including political economy, country leadership, change management, and sequencing of institutional and policy change. Gaps remain in how to operationalise policy recommendations in these areas. For example, whilst practitioners increasingly recognise the importance of politics in determining impact- it is less clear what practical recommendations might help policy-makers determine how to use this knowledge for more sustainable development outcomes.

**Substantive Priorities:** 1) Taking country context and leadership into account; and support recipient country negotiation of and roles in reform design and implementation (Collaborative African Budget Reform Initiative); identifying ways in which political economy shapes reform (OECD, Korea, EU) including role of civil society (Israel, Philippines) ; 2) facilitating joint learning to help partner countries devise and implement politically feasible solutions (Korea and LenCD); 3) More holistic approaches to reforms; i.e. finding ways to better link public expenditure with domestic revenue management (budget and revenue authorities) (Effective Institutions Informal meeting, Feb 2012; and SIDA); 4) identifying governance and institutional factors that help sectors perform better (UK)

Under this substantive priority area, members of the Effective Institutions platform highlighted the need to develop a more coherent approach to sequencing of reform and to building a more holistic view in building capacity of public sector institutions. Evidence from the **Making Reform Happen project** (currently undertaken by the Korean Development Institute and OECD) shows that whilst reforms are context specific, reform processes share similar traits, including: ex ante evaluation on the potential

impact of the reform revealing identities of the likely winners and losers (planning stage); making citizens the main stakeholders – i.e. demonstrating the need or desirability of the proposed solutions to the public (planning stage); preparing legal procedures to adopt reforms well in advance (adoption stage); designing systems to co-ordinate implementation among different levels of government (implementation stage). In addition, work is underway to develop an assessment tool for **incorporating political-economy analysis** into the design and implementation of programs to strengthen domestic accountability systems as well as governance assessment and principles (OECD-DAC GOVNET). The Task Force on Public Financial Management (through the PEFA Secretariat) is also finalising **good practices on sequencing reform in PFM** which, it was suggested, could be applied to other public sector functions and areas.

Related to this issue is the need to **better link different institutional reform efforts**- and donors' support to them. Effective capacity development requires a holistic approach that includes but also goes beyond focusing on a few core state functions. For instance, public expenditure and domestic revenue management are often treated separately- however, stronger public expenditure systems create an increased fiscal space by generating expenditure savings that can be deployed in ways that promote development effectiveness. The Task Force on Tax and Development could contribute with substantive inputs to this agenda.

### c) Modalities of support: using country systems

The evidence prior to Busan clearly showed that there is much yet to do if commitments on the use of country systems are to be reached with an increase of only 8% in the use of PFM systems between 2005 and 2011. Based on quantitative and qualitative analysis, the Manila Statement on Effective states recognised that the use of country systems is not an end in itself, but that Development Partners and countries should work together to increase the flow of external assistance using national systems and procedures as a means to enhance development effectiveness. It also highlighted that the use of country systems was not only linked to a specific aid modality (budget support).

**Substantive priorities:** 1) Communicating the tangible benefits of using country systems for public service delivery (LenCD, SIDA, USAID, ODI, CABRI). 2) Promoting the use of country systems with the objective of strengthening them for countries' own governance purposes (CABRI). 3) Increasing the use of program support and use of country systems in project support (SIDA). 4) Ensuring the Use of Country Systems work goes beyond PFM and Procurement to include other Public Sector Management Systems such as Strategic Planning, Human Resources, Public Information Systems and Monitoring and Evaluation. (DFID, OECD, and SIDA); 5) Use of Country Systems with non-state actors (USAID) and at local level (DeLOG and IFRC); 6) Political dialogue on use of country systems (DFID)

Members of the platform highlighted the need to continue facilitating an increase in the use of country systems, as well as broadening it beyond areas of PFM and Procurement. This includes **promoting transparency behind decisions to not use country systems at country level**; and collaborating further in the **development of fiduciary reviews and risk assessments** through the sharing of findings, data gathering and coordination of assessment missions. The Collaborative African Budget Reform Initiative is



currently undertaking further analytical work on the use of country systems as is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with ODI on the delivery of development assistance to and through local actors, including private firms and civil society organisations. DeLOG is also undertaking a study on the use of country systems at local level. These and other initiatives are building on existing guidance (e.g. Practitioner's Guide to Using Country Systems) in efforts to strengthen the approach to supporting effective institutions through specific aid modalities. Agencies are also reviewing aid modality guidelines (e.g. EU budget support guidelines) including strengthening their risk frameworks.

At country level, efforts are underway to integrate within existing assessment frameworks actions that assess Development Partner policies, strategies and procedures in terms of their flexibility to use country systems (Ghana).

Other potential initiatives are the development of an international platform to share knowledge and co-ordinate responses on country systems in a more comprehensive manner (Germany, OECD, Vietnam) including partial use (laDB) and review of current indicators (PEFA), and learn lessons from regional peer review efforts (New Zealand and Pacific Islands Forum).

Other suggestions included the support of country level compacts guiding strategic choices on the use (and non-use) of country systems (Ghana, ACBF, Philippines), and including CSOs (IFRC).

#### d) Overseeing implementation of reform: role of accountability institutions

**Substantive Priority:** 1) Better scrutiny by parliament, civil society, and Supreme Audit Institutions of financial flows; 2) building support for vertical and horizontal accountability systems, eg: guidance on supporting CSO participation in reform processes (Better Aid, Philippines); sharing information on supreme audit institutions (INTOSAI); 3) supporting systems of accountability and greater use of political economy analysis (OECD-DAC GOVNET);

The Busan Partnership document highlighted the need for stronger accountability institutions to engage in the governmental process by enhancing their oversight capacity over all public resources and not only those derived from external partners. The Manila Statement on Effective States included recommendations on the need for legislators to take a proactive role in participating in discussions around strengthening public sector institutions. In addition, it recognized that building effective states requires an inclusive approach and strong non-state institutions, including civil society and media. Members of the platform have highlighted the need to support external accountability institutions (be they parliament, supreme audit, or civil society) in a more holistic manner. The following are ongoing efforts that could contribute to the platform's future work programme.

The INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation is based on a Memorandum of Understanding between INTOSAI and 17 donors, and provides a strategic focus for donors and the SAI community in supporting the capacity development of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). Its guiding principles are based on sustainable capacity development and aid effectiveness. Among the objectives for the cooperation are more SAI-



executed projects based on SAIs' own identification of needs, and improved coordination through harmonized calls for project proposals and pooled funding.

Current projects in this area from platform members include the development by INTOSAI (within the remit of the donor-INTOSAI Memorandum of Understanding) of a SAI Capacity Development Database which aims to improve coordination in the planning and delivery of support to SAIs, in addition to a new Supreme Audit Institutions Performance Measurement Framework. The OECD-DAC (GOVNET) is also undertaking evidence-based work on horizontal accountability and piloting guidelines on domestic accountability institutions.

### 3) Proposals for supporting the substantive priority areas

Taking the four substantive priority areas (measuring effectiveness of institutions; making reform happen; modalities of support; role of accountability institutions) into account, the following outlines working modalities and proposed activities going forward based on proposals from members of the platform. In general this includes:

- 1) **Establishing a platform** which links practitioners committed to making progress in this area based on existing groups and networks to share knowledge and engage in mutual learning.
- 2) **Sharing knowledge and experience** in applying different tools and mechanisms that contribute to strengthening institutions and to promote the use of country systems.
- 3) Contributing to **measuring performance and progress** with country's core institutions for public management.
- 4) **Raising political attention** to issues that require collective action from all stakeholders.

The following reflects in more detail country and organization responses to the questions of working modalities to support the substantive priorities.

#### a) Knowledge sharing modalities

The Platform should act as a mechanism for policy dialogue with respect to the issues at stake, particularly regarding south-South and country/development partner exchange (CABRI, EU), including private sector and CSOs (Germany)

Most members recognised the need to use the platform as a mechanism for dialogue and mutual learning to help reduce the 'implementation gap', between policy recommendations and practice. Some suggested the platform act as a global forum bringing lessons and evidence together from regional networks (CABRI, ACBF) existing communities of practice (LenCD, Task Force on PFM). The ACBF, World Bank, AfDB, African Union and NEPAD are currently engaging a series of sessions on south-south cooperation for effective institution building as well as discussions on how to measure and assess institutions.

Members highlighted that this was one of the main objectives of the platform– adding value to regional and sub-system fora, and allowing for engagement between different sets of practitioners. In this regard, a number of members suggested a web-portal be created to provide a platform for documenting lessons learnt. Others suggested the coordination, facilitation of research/guidance that cuts across system silos, and a consultation forum for the development of indicators to measure public sector institutions.

### **b) Peer reviews and Joint Assessments**

Joint assessments of country institutions to determine the gaps/inadequacies/challenges in their service delivery processes (Ghana); Developing joint assessments, monitoring and measurement tools (Cambodia); building on existing efforts to harmonise assessments (eg Cairns Compact, NEPAD), and local institutional self-assessments (IFRC)

Members also highlighted the potential for individual members to undertake peer reviews and joint assessments using mutually agreed diagnostic tools of specific substantive priorities under the building block. Building Block members interested in playing an active role in a peer review on, for instance, the use of country systems (including but not limited to PFM/Procurement), would identify concrete steps to apply good practice at country level and share the results with other members of the building block. This would allow for the building block to play a part in strengthening mutual accountability for results.

### **c) Support to country-focused activities**

Provide facilitation (where requested), mapping exercises (to see where resources can best be utilized) and assist in the implementation of guidelines and toolkits (Ghana); Promote the Use of Country Systems within individual countries (SIDA)

Some members suggested that interested building block members could be called upon to facilitate a dialogue at country level on implementation gaps, and how other countries have managed and assessed change. In particular, issues such as the use of country systems, or holistic assessments of government reform programmes (including a broad set of stakeholders).

### **d) Advice centre**

Verification of indicators developed to monitor improvements in the quality and effectiveness of development cooperation (Ghana); Learning and exchanges around relevant indicators once these have emerged from relevant global and local processes (LenCD)

Members requested that the platform also act as an advice centre on specific technical issues – of particular current interest is the monitoring of effective institutions commitments. Technical experts could provide their perspective on what is feasible to monitor under the Effective Institutions commitments given methodological constraints.

The table below summarises the substantive priorities that have emerged from this mapping exercise and specific ongoing activities reported in the first consultations. It also includes a summary of proposed working modalities for each of the substantive areas.

#### **e) Linkages with existing platforms and initiatives**

At the meeting of the Effective Institutions Platform on 26 of June 2012, a number of platform members underscored the need for this work to effectively link with a number of other fora including the Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation; other building blocks (in particular Transparency); and the OECD-DAC's Governance Network which is currently revising its mandate (including broadening participation to non-member countries).

Priority Areas	Ongoing Activities	Working Modalities	Organisations
<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing Public Sector Management Indicators</li> <li>▪ Developing data systems to track and measure different approaches to strengthening institutions</li> <li>▪ Systematic approaches to evaluating public sector reforms</li> <li>▪ Support to monitoring related Busan commitments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Knowledge Sharing</li> <li>✓ Advice Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ World Bank</li> <li>✓ ACBF</li> <li>✓ NEPAD</li> <li>✓ OECD</li> <li>✓ Germany</li> </ul>
<b>Making Reform Happen: Designing and Sequencing Reforms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Making Reform Happen Project</li> <li>▪ Guidance on Sequencing Reform (including but not only linked to PFM reform)</li> <li>▪ Policy recommendations on linking support to PFM and Domestic Revenue Mobilisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Knowledge Sharing</li> <li>✓ Peer Reviews and Joint Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Korea</li> <li>✓ OECD-DAC</li> <li>✓ World Bank</li> <li>✓ CABRI</li> <li>✓ Task Force on PFM</li> <li>✓ Task Force on Tax and Development</li> <li>✓ Philippines</li> <li>✓ LenCD</li> </ul>
<b>Modalities of Support: Using Country Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of Joint Assessments</li> <li>▪ Peer review and country dialogues on Aid Modalities and Use of Country Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Knowledge Sharing</li> <li>✓ Peer Reviews and Joint Assessments</li> <li>✓ Support to Country-Focused activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ USAID</li> <li>✓ Cambodia</li> <li>✓ Ghana</li> <li>✓ Malawi</li> <li>✓ CABRI</li> <li>✓ SIDA</li> <li>✓ OECD</li> <li>✓ Philippines</li> <li>✓ Israel</li> <li>✓ DeLoG</li> </ul>
<b>Overseeing Reform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Database of capacity building projects for SAIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Knowledge Sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ INTOSAI</li> <li>✓ OECD-DAC</li> </ul>

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