



Concept “Harvesting the Platform’s experiences”

(A) Background

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (Platform) was created in 2004 with the objective to enhance the fight against poverty in developing countries by enhancing sustainable economic growth in rural areas and by improved donor cooperation, coherence and coordinated dialogue with partner countries; thus better and more investments in the fight against rural poverty.

The Platform, consisting of 29 donors, international financing institutions and development agencies, clusters its activities along three outputs:

Output 1: Advocacy and Outreach;

Output 2: Knowledge management and innovation;

Output 3: Aid effectiveness (previously in-country facilitation).

Platform activities are either led by a Platform member institution or the Platform secretariat on behalf of its board and steering committee. In addition to providing a platform for networking, the Platform is involved in the implementation of studies, conferences/workshops and supports pilot aid harmonisation activities in four countries.

(B) Objectives

Since its inception, the Platform has made a great deal of experiences and lessons learned, implementing activities in all three lines of outputs, be they process or content related. Some of these are well documented, others not. Based on a Board decision¹, the Platform attempts to consolidate these experiences and lessons learned to avail them to identified stakeholders in a target group specific format and to refine Platform products.

An evaluation of the Platform is currently ongoing and will advise its members, among others, on its capacity as a network and explores opportunities for future development. Besides the evaluation, the Platform wants to consolidate its experiences and lessons learned with a view to:

1. Consolidate the Platform’s experiences and lessons learned, process them and avail them to identified stakeholders in a target group specific format;
2. Utilise the consolidated experiences and lessons learned to refine Platform products, such as the Joint Principles, as well as to better focus, plan and implement its output thus to increase impact and relevance.

The consolidated Platform experiences and lessons learned will consist of the following three sets of experiences and lessons learned:

¹ Board meeting Paris, December 2007

Concept prepared by Platform Secretariat and presented for discussion to Platform Board, March 14, 2008.

- The Platform as an evolving and learning network²
This part is largely covered by the current (1st semester 2008) evaluation and will prepare recommendations, including proposals to advance the initiative;
- Platform sponsored/implemented publications and studies
A number of publications and studies have been and are being implemented, including the *Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development, Indicator study, PRSP study, SWAp study, CSO study, gender study, Platform Policy Briefs* etc. The lessons and messages from these studies (process and contend) will be synthesised and adapted for practical use of identified stakeholders;
- The Platform's in-country facilitation
Harmonisation and alignment (H&A) is supported at national level in four countries with the aim to advance H&A in ARD and to gain practical (hands-on) experience. The generic lessons are being synthesised to advance the ARD aid effectiveness (AE) and the general development debate. In-country facilitation is being phased out while country specific lessons learned have been or are being compiled. The experiences and lessons learned (process and contend) will be synthesised further and the specific and generic lessons be adapted for use by identified stakeholders.

More details on: the current status of experiences and lessons learned, the process to further consolidate these, and on additional outputs concerning the sets of experiences and lessons learned, are presented in the annex.

(C) Uptake of lessons learned and experiences

Based on the three sets of experiences and lessons learned, a dissemination package will be developed. The dissemination package will consist of:

1. Overall dissemination concept
The dissemination concept will identify target groups (broadly clustered into: ARD professionals [policy practitioners], management level and the general development community) and approaches for the dissemination of contend. Dissemination activities include the use of different media (web, print etc.) and forms (workshop, training, presentation etc.). The dissemination concept is linked to the upcoming knowledge management strategy and the communication strategy.
2. Consolidated and contextualised content
Based on the three sets of analysis, experiences and lessons learned are synthesised, contextualised and the content adapted to target groups for dissemination. It is essential to contextualise experiences and lessons learned to assure that they remain relevant in a fast changing environment.

² Please note: this set of experiences is covered by the evaluation and will not be covered in this concept.

Annex

Set 2: Platform sponsored/implemented publications and studies

Background

A number of publications and studies have been and are being implemented, including the *Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development*, *Indicator study*, *PRSP study*, *SWAp study*, *CSO study*, *gender study*, *Platform Policy Briefs* etc. The lessons and messages from these studies (process and content) will be synthesised and adapted for practical use of identified stakeholders and to advance Platform products.

Objective

The experiences, lessons learned from and messages from publications and studies (process and content) are synthesised, contextualised and edited for use of different stakeholders and Platform products.

Review Questions

General review questions are:

- How does ARD contribute to poverty eradication and how do Platform publication and studies contribute to this?
- What improves aid effectiveness in the ARD sector and do Platform products contribute to this?

Process review questions:

- Which processes are effective and do lead to publications/studies that possess a broad ownership within Platform membership?
- What factors make FPs to engage and build ownership?
- What is the Platform's comparative advantage concerning publications and studies?

Content review questions:

- What are the important messages that contribute to the attainment of the overall objective and do advance the ARD agenda?
- What are the key messages to the (ARD) policy practitioners, the management level and the general development community?

Output

A synthesis report that outlines the following:

- The main output are the edited messages, stemming from the Platform's publication and studies. It is essential that these messages are contextualised and up-dated (so to not preach yesterday's message).

- Recommendations for a refined process for Platform publications and studies (selection of theme, format, implementation and presentation).
- Advance of the Platform Joint Principles.

Process

- Review of process documentation;
- Review Platform publication and studies;
- Conduct stakeholder interviews (process, content, relevance);
- Synthesise findings.

Set 3: The Platform's in-country facilitation

Background:

1. Under its Output 3 "Aid Effectiveness" (previously in-country facilitation), members have agreed to provide an independent 'facilitation service' to support donors and partners alike in the transformation process after the Paris Declaration in line with the recommendation of the OECD/DAC with the intention to improve and intensify donor cooperation for rural development.
2. In 2005, the Platform started a facilitation service in four pilot countries with the aim to contribute to the harmonisation and alignment of development assistance in A&RD, to decreased transaction costs for stakeholders and enhanced impacts, as stipulated in the Paris Declaration. The purpose of this exercise was stipulated as to³: i) determine in practice what is possible in H&A in ARD and what not; ii) identify what are the conditions that abet donor coordination in practice; iii) identify ways in which donor coordination at global level can give support to coordination at country level; iv) propose an Operational Code of Conduct for donors.
3. Activities have taken place in four identified "pilot-countries": Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Cambodia and Tanzania. In all four countries a "H&A assessment" was being conducted. Kick-off workshops with the aim to launch processes towards greater H&A in the agricultural sector were conducted in Burkina Faso (February 2006), Nicaragua (February 2005) and Cambodia (January 2006). Facilitation services were rendered in Nicaragua March 2005-December 2007 and in Cambodia February 2006-August 2008.
4. Results and products so far out of the exercise include:
 - The four H&A assessments, 2005,
 - Mission reports of the international facilitators in Cambodia and Nicaragua, informing about developments in the country, 2005-2008;
 - Self-evaluation assessment of Platform engagement in Nicaragua, October 2006;
 - Platform facilitation note, October 2006;
 - State of the Art Platform facilitation in Nicaragua and Cambodia, November 2006
 - Cornerstones for effective PBA preparation, May 2007;
 - "Platform Joint principles for more effective ARD programs", first introduced June 2007, discussed during the AGM in December 2007, to be further refined in 2008;
 - Final reports due in Nicaragua March 2008 and Cambodia September 2008.

³ See GDPRD Action Plan Output III, November 2004.

Objective:

- To identify and document the lessons learned from the pilot countries to inform future Platform support for the operational implementation of the Paris Declaration principles in the ARD sector; and,
- To contribute to shape international best practices;
- To feed into the external evaluation assessment of the Platform 's effectiveness/lessons learned.

Main review questions:Content:

- Are the objectives set in Output 3 Action plan relevant? To what extent have the pilot project activities contributed to those objectives?
- What have been the most significant contributions/added value of the pilots? What have been the main disappointments:
 1. for the Donors
 2. For the Partner countries
 - In terms of Ownership
 - In terms of Alignment
 - In terms of Harmonization
- What emerging best practices in the implementation of the Paris Declaration Principles to the ARD sector can be derived from the pilots? What best and worst concrete examples can be identified for each PD principle in its application to the ARD sector?

Process:

- What aspects of the pilot project process worked well and which ones need improvement:
 - Initiation-identification
 - Planning
 - Implementation
 - Monitoring

Key lessons learned:

- Under what conditions should the Platform get involved in country activities with a view to support national efforts towards greater aid effectiveness in ARD in the future?
- What should be the results of such an engagement?
- What should be avoided?

- What are the critical factors for success (stage of process, stakeholder, issue specific)?
- What are the bottlenecks for AE in ARD?
- How can divergent views/positions within and between stakeholder groups overcome (best practices)?
- Which role do incentives (for actors) play for H&A in ARD and what can be done to create incentives for AE in ARD?
- Who are the key actors for H&A in ARD? Who is driving the agenda and why?
- How are NSA stakeholders involved, and are rural institutions CSOs are involved?
- How are crosscutting issues considered in H&A in ARD?

Output:

- Synthesis of experiences and lessons learned from the pilots in relation to the PD principles applied to ARD (specific, generic and best practice);
- Prepare suggestions and recommendations for the Platform 's future action in its Aid Effectiveness output;
- Refinement of existing Platform products such as the Joint Principles (best and worst concrete examples identified for each PD principle in its application to the ARD sector).

Process:

- Process documentation:
 - Review of contextual information (e.g. what other organizations/groups are developing aid effectiveness services, etc internationally and in the specific countries);
 - Review of initial documents starting 2005, highlighting objectives of Output 3, expected outputs target groups and timeline;
 - Identification of actions and activities taken to perform the task;
 - Identification of changes in the original concept;
- Analysis:
 - Synthesis report on opportunities and lessons learned, as well as challenges and bottlenecks in H&A efforts in agricultural programs;
- The exercise will be conducted in parallel and in close collaboration with the external evaluation team in order to further develop the synergies between the two exercises.

Dissemination Package: Overall dissemination concept and contextualised content

Background

The Platform wants to take stock of its experiences and lessons learned and wants to make this available to key stakeholder, including through several regional workshops / trainings in a structured and target group specific format.

Uptake of lessons learned and experiences

Based on the three sets of experiences and lessons learned, a dissemination package will be developed. The dissemination package will consist of:

1. Overall dissemination concept

The dissemination concept will identify target groups (broadly clustered into: ARD professionals, management level and the general development community) and approaches for the dissemination of content. Dissemination activities include the use of different media (web, print etc.) and forms (workshop, training, presentation etc.). The dissemination concept is linked to the knowledge management strategy and the communication strategy.

2. Consolidated and contextualised content

The experiences and lessons learned are synthesised, contextualised and the content adapted to specific target groups for dissemination.

A key output is the concept and the content for the planned Platform's regional dissemination workshops / trainings. Regional workshops are planned for Africa, Asia and Latin America. The dissemination concept needs to explore opportunities to collaborate with regional partners to the maximum extent possible, i.e. with RUTA, Le Hub, CIRDP, Train4dev, CTA etc.