



Joint Donor Minimum Standards for effective aid management in agriculture and rural development (ARD) programmes

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This is a first working draft for the attention of Platform members and participants of the EU Forum on Rural Development (June 2007) to facilitate a structured formulation process

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development is facilitating the **process towards joint donor minimums standards for effective ARD programs**. These standards, once agreed upon by the members of the Platform, are intended to serve as a **Code of Conduct to demonstrate ‘the way we (the members of the Platform) mean to do business in ARD’**. The Joint Donor Minimum Standards are based on the **‘Joint Donor Rural Concept’**, established by the Platform members in 2006, and derived from the document **‘Cornerstones for effective ARD programmes under a programme-based approach’**. The standards follow the principles of the **Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness.** *

1. All stakeholders (government, donors, private sector, civil society) commit to a **common vision, agenda and scope of the national ARD program embedded within a national development policy under the lead of the partner government.**
2. **Donors accept that leadership is with the partner government.** The lead ministry and the coordination with other key ministries involved in national ARD programs, especially Ministry of Finance, is defined from the outset and respected throughout the programmes.
3. Donors recognise the **crucial role of the private sector** as drivers of economic growth in rural areas and promote the **inclusion of the private sector from the outset of any ARD program.**
4. Donors commit to **align their entire portfolio of on-going projects** in accordance with the national ARD sectoral strategy. Aligned traditional projects are an option, traditional ‘stand-alone’ projects are not.
5. **Lead donors in the ARD sector are identified** based on comparative advantages; delegated cooperation and silent partnerships should be considered.
6. Coordinated preferably by a Government sectoral agency, donors commit to **joint missions** with jointly prepared ToR, **joint analytical and study work, joint arrangements of technical assistance** (using various modalities, **joint programmatic support modalities**, such as budget support and basket funding) and **joint assistance strategies.**
7. Stakeholders include **joint institutional assessment** and consider **decentralization and devolution dimensions** from the outset.
8. The relevant ARD strategy must be accompanied by a **respective medium term expenditure framework** that includes prioritization criteria and all the sources of funding, and provides the basis for the annual budgets.
9. Donors provide to partner government **credible medium-term aid commitments**, and **minimise the variability over the partner government’s fiscal cycle.**
10. A common frame of **result indicators consistent with the PRSP and sectoral ARD strategy** is set up from the beginning of any joint program to which M&E is aligned accordingly.

* The ‘Concept for the Platform facilitated process towards a Code of Conduct’ as well as the other documents mentioned are available at www.donorplatform.org.