



## **Workshop Minutes**

### **‘The Platform facilitated process towards a Code of Conduct for effective ARD programs’**

Poggiovalle/Italy, September 26-27, 2007

#### **Objective of the workshop:**

The Platform CoC Task Team discusses jointly and in detail the CoC and works on the following issues:

- a) added-value, substance and application of the CoC
- b) formulation of the initial joint donor minimum standards (see annex)..

#### **CoC Task Force:**

- Marc Debois (EC), Michael Wales (FAO), Willi Graf (SDC), Christian Henckes (GTZ), Susan Thompson (USAID) & Tiina Huvio (Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Finland, based in Nicaragua) – both connected via phone conference for 2 hrs at the beginning of the workshop - Sonja Bartelt and Miriam Heidtmann (Platform Secretariat), Helen Wedgwood/Liz Drake (CLEAR team, DFID, not present)

#### **Moderator:**

Klaus Talvela (Platform consultant)

#### **Agenda:**

##### **Friday afternoon, September 26:**

- Status of CoC process
- Capturing the ‘state of mind’ of each CoC Task Team: collecting inputs on purpose, added-value and scope of CoC

##### **Saturday morning, September 27:**

- Reviewing and adapting the Joint Donor Minimum Standards

#### **1. Status of CoC process:**

According to the concept for the Platform-facilitated process towards a CoC (see annex), the CoC is meant to provide a basis for effective coordination and mutual accountability among donors engaged ARD programs, to demonstrate the way we (Platform donor members) mean to do business in ARD, with the objective to be conducive to attract increased investments in ARD. So far, the Joint Donor Minimum Standards are a compilation of proven principles (derived from the Platform publication ‘Cornerstones for effective ARD programs’) and in line with the Paris Declaration (PD).

A Task Force on the CoC was established which had previous exchanges via phone on the general scope of the CoC. The Task Forces work objective is to jointly propose for discussion and endorsement an updated and consensed version of the ‘Joint Donor Minimum Standards for



effective ARD programs' at the Platforms Annual Meeting on December 12-13. The actual CoC will be accompanied by a concept note on the application and use of the CoC.

## **2. Capturing the 'state of mind' of each CoC Task Team: collecting inputs on added-value, substance and application of CoC**

### **Comments:**

*Tiina* (via phone): A more general CoC such as the Platform CoC would add the following value to country processes: establish practical sector links to PD (which implications are not always fully known by donor staff in the countries). The process towards a CoC and a CoC itself should improve communication between field level staff and HQ, there are still too little internal incentives for donor staff to harmonize and align according to the PD. Donor HQ endorsed guidelines on public financial management would be useful to have for country programs.

*Susan* (via phone): Will the CoC be one more layer of paper to implement? Are we duplicating issues and processes? There is the need to articulate why we need the CoC, and links with OECD DAC should be established in this regard. A CoC should state good business practices.

*Michael*: CoC must be applicable in many countries, but it should not become too banal – we need to find the right basis. The One UN process is more related to working among different agencies in one country, of which different aspects can be incorporated in the Platform CoC process.

*Christian*: i) All principles stated in the PD must be more broken down into themes and sectors, maybe also into regions to be implemented. Therefore our 'thematic' CoC, which is in line with the PD, adds value to the whole Aid Effectiveness (AE) agenda. The present Joint Donor Minimum Standards are already more specific than PD, see private sector, decentralization issues. ii) Donors must communicate messages from policy units to the sector unit in regard to AE, and we can support this through the Platform CoC. iii) It is helpful for the drafting of individual country CoCs to have a reference/benchmark for the country processes through the Platform CoC. iv) In our Platform communication to the policy units we must prove that we are discussing the general AE issues at the sector level to show that the way we do business is effective and makes it attractive to invest in the rural sector.

*Willi*: CoC should not repeat PD principles and must be more specific to ARD. At HQ level we should not think that we can develop a blueprint CoC. The Platform should not invest too much time in developing CoC as it will not be a legally binding document (see Nicaragua example, where an even legally binding document did not prevent signatory donors to invest outside the agreed modalities). We might want to spend more time to develop 'elements' to be included in legally binding contracts with partner countries or among donors. Such elements should include issues on behaviour between HQ and field level interventions.

*Marc*: The linkages between HQ and field is important to clarify in the CoC, a focus should be put on internal bottlenecks (in partner gov, at country level, at HQ level).

*Tiina*: CoC in Nicaragua needed the right political environment to become of use and to be accepted by government and donors alike (which took about 2-3 years...) A 'global' Platform CoC would give also a wider perspective to country CoCs.



*Sonja:* Platform CoC should establish link to CAADP where the needs for a CoC should be assessed and aligned to the current Platform process. Also, it should consider the added value for decentralized donor agencies which operate differently than centralized donor HQs.

*Michael:* the Joint Donor Minimum Standards are already sufficiently focused on ARD. We need to encourage greater inclusiveness in the formulation process of the sector wide approaches, which are especially expensive in rural space. We must focus more on cross-sectoral issues especially in ARD (more than for example in the education or health sector): transport, roads, electricity which makes our sector so special. The CoC should be geared not just to be applicable for SWAPs/PBAs, but also for project work.

### Summary:

#### Comments on added-value of CoC:

- PD must be broken down to sectors;
- we have to demonstrate willingness and move towards greater effectiveness in ARD which will attract more investment,
- give through our CoC a wider perspective to country CoCs,
- attended is clearly another joint donor document
- CoC should add to internal institutional coherency among donors (in ARD)

#### Comments on substance of CoC:

- CoC should include: internal incentives for AE for donors,
- include subtext on standards filled with Best Practices (tool kit),
- include coordination behaviour among ourselves in the field,
- consider ARD specific versus general PD principles,
- include general issues outside of ARD sector e.g. public financial management;
- highlight ARD specifics: cross-sector and multi-sector, private engagement, institutional capacity building, decentralization
- have 2 CoCs: one for the Platform itself and one general donor in ARD CoC.
- Promote inclusiveness in processes, meaning the rural population
- Include in the intro that it is not a blueprint, rather a vision and may serve as a benchmark for country contexts.

#### Comments on application of CoC:

CoC should be geared towards the following aspects:

- allow to be adapted country-specific context,
- is the central product that the Platform should strive for, it does not matter so much what is written in it but we can always refer to it (like the JDRC) and get the attention that the Platform was able to draw up such an document.
- be a practical tool for staff in the field,
- have an impact on Platform member institutions,
- link to CAADP, but only as a second step when we have something finished
- link to new aid modalities,
- should consider the implications of centralized vs. decentralized donor agencies,
- CoC should not only be applicable for SWAPs/PBAs situations,
- should piggy-back on on-going processes (country CoCs, One UN, division of labour)



- geared towards donor ownership of CoC- not partner governments,
- constitute a reference document and not a legally binding document,
- be flexible and practical,
- help trigger dialogue between HQ/field,
- CoC should be an inherent part of Platform Charter,
- Platform does not impose anything with a CoC, Platform members (FPs) suggest CoC/or elements of CoC to field offices/ARD programs as standard setting. value lies in the CoC process itself - that we donors do something jointly - not so much in the final product (like the JDRC)
- CoC is part of Platforms communication strategy, could be a discussion tool to get stakeholders in different areas of the world to engage in discussion
- CoC should be presented at Annual Meeting to convince OECD DAC that CoC is a product for Accra. After Accra, CoC will be regularly updated and monitored by Platform
- The CoC has an advocacy element and is political.. A CoC one pager would be sufficient, complemented by practical tool kit for country level.
- The CoC contains generally accepted principles, like the messages in the JDRC. The CoC is complementary to the JDRC – the twin to JDRC on modalities.
- Lets sign it as a non-legally binding vision at HQ level.

### **Open questions to be answered/decided before Paris Annual Meeting:**

The members of the Task Force agree to the basic elements on substance and application of the CoC, but the endorsement/commitment/signatory process is still unclear. The following issues need to be agreed upon among the Task Force members before the Annual Meeting in Paris:

#### **Question:**

How do we (Platform members) endorse the CoC? Do we need to sign it?

#### **Comments:**

- Let's see it simple: CoC is a reference document, it has a guiding character, therefore it is not legally binding and nothing needs to be signed.
- Adoption of the general assembly is like a signature.

#### **Question:**

What do we need to do from Platform side to create commitment to the CoC?

#### **Comments:**

- We have to formulate it in a way that most can commit to it, but not too generic. It needs to be ambitious enough to make a difference.
- The CoC could be an inherent part of the Platform Charter, every new paying member has to subscribe to the CoC (as well as to the JDRC?)
- Is the name 'CoC' appropriate for such a document, or is eg. 'partnership principles' more appropriate?
- Should FPs (on behalf of their institutions/colleagues) be held accountable for complying with the CoC?
- How about a "golden plough" or the 'golden Platform logo' for ARD aid effectiveness achievements?



### 3. Reviewing and adapting the Joint Donor Minimum Standards/CoC

Please refer to the attached updated version of the Joint Donor Minimum Standards for the results of the reviewing session.

#### **Excursion: Brainstorm on substance and application of a Platform CoC/Best Practices for working together**

Out of the discussions of the first day, the need/request by Task Force members emerged to draft also a Platform CoC, in addition to the CoC for effective ARD programs.

Such a CoC should demonstrate how we as Platform members work with each other on practical terms (coordination behaviour), through the Platform Secretariat but also as individual donors, especially with the field level offices; to shape our image as a donor group who is devoted to practice and promote AE principles in ARD. The document title could be – instead of another CoC – ‘Best Practices for working together’ (BPs).

#### **Suggestions on substance for Platform BPs:**

- Secretariat commits to regular communication through VC, TC to provide update on processes, includes regional updates on Platform activities
- Platform members commit to inform field offices on Platform in-country processes (e.g. field study in the frame of Platform commissioned studies)
- Engage members to show commitment to Platform products/positions
- Commit members to transparency/information-sharing

The following comments by the participants are already reflected in the Platforms ‘guidelines for in-country facilitation’:

- Platform commits to coordinate and consult with local donor coordination group in case of country activities
- Platform should not finance activities in countries which could be covered by either partner governments or local donors.

#### **Suggestions on application for the Platform BPs:**

- Should be endorsed by each member institution (e.g. when making financial commitments to Platform)
- BPs should foster mutual accountability among Platform donor members
- Provide internal incentives for better coordination among Platform members. Reference to ODI study on incentives of aid effectiveness: some agencies have perverse incentives for staff to comply with job requirements and AE agenda. But it is difficult for the Platform to come up with options/solutions in a document such as the Platform BPs.
- Consider indicators for achievements of aid effectiveness – to measure quality of impact. These would have to be derived from the PD indicators and adapted to fit specifically to the ARD sector
- Consider how to give credit and prominence to AE champions (‘golden Platform logo’)



### **Open questions to be put forward to the participants of the Business Meeting in Paris:**

It was also suggested to prepare two further products where decision needs to be made by the SC if the Platform wants to engage on these products:

2. Suggestions for legal puzzle pieces for new aid modalities in donor contracts with partner governments.
3. A narrative of Best Practices/stories from people who practice AE principles in ARD including a process description.

### **Next steps**

#### Joint Donor Minimum Standards/CoC:

The Secretariat will adapt the Introduction and Preamble of the Standards according to the comments received once the minutes have been endorsed by the participants of the workshop. The updated document will then be discussed and finalized for presentation at the Annual Meeting during a VC (mid November) among the Task Force members.

#### Concept note on application of CoC:

The Secretariat will draft a concept note on the application of the CoC according to the comments received once the minutes have been endorsed by the participants of the workshop. The concept note document will then be discussed and finalized for presentation at the Annual Meeting during a VC (mid November) among the Task Force members.

#### Open questions

The open questions stated above should be answered/decided upon by the Task Force to allow for an informed discussion among all Platform members at the Annual Meeting (during VC mid-November).

As Miriam will leave the Platform Secretariat beginning of November, Sonja and Klaus will take over and lead the process.

#### Platform 'Best Practices for working together':

It was agreed that the Platform 'Best Practices' (BPs) should be an annex to the charter. The Charter Task Force will be informed by the Secretariat about the above suggestions and will take these into consideration in the on-going review process of the Charter. The Secretariat will formulate a first draft for discussion at the upcoming Business Meeting based on the suggestions below. The BPs are work in process, whereas the Charter will be presented as a finished product in Paris.

#### Annex:

- a) adapted Joint Donor Minimum Standards
- b) Concept for Platform facilitated-process towards a Code of Conduct for effective ARD programs (August 07)