

SUMMARY

Enhanced Effectiveness at Country Level Pilot Launch Workshop

22-23 February 2018

Intercontinental Hotel, Kazanchis Area, Guinea Conakry (Tito) Street
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Enhanced Effectiveness at Country Level - Pilot Launch Workshop

Representatives from ten¹ pilot countries (including governmental and civil society stakeholders) and Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs) met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 22-23 February 2018 to kick off activities under Strategic Output 1 of the 2017-2018 GPEDC Work Programme: "Enhanced support to effective development co-operation at country level".

The workshop provided an interactive space to review common challenges and exchange lessons learned in the implementation of effective development co-operation commitments. Participants also developed a common understanding of the conceptual approach for the piloting work and agreed on the next steps for the implementation process.

What does development effectiveness at country level mean for you?



I. Introduction

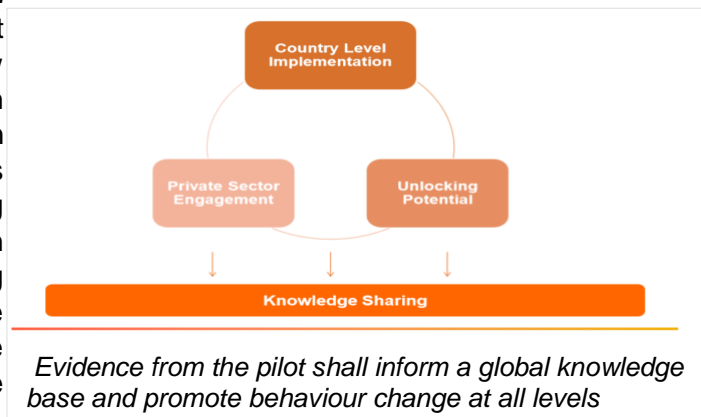
The aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda require a sustained contribution of effective development co-operation in an increasingly complex development landscape. More than ever, development effectiveness needs to take place and provide impact at country level, allowing all stakeholders to make their full contribution in line with national contexts and priorities. As emphasized by the 2016 Nairobi Outcome Document, work at country level must ensure that all stakeholders are held accountable for their respective commitments and contributions. This also includes an increased focus on the respect of ownership, as well as on the strengthening of country systems, capacities, inclusive partnerships and an enabling environment.

Representatives of the Co-leads of the GPEDC Working Group on Enhanced Effectiveness at Country Level, Mr. Aftab Ahmad from Bangladesh and Ms. Nicoletta Merlo from the European Commission, recalled that the country level implementation pilots should be framed through a common understanding of mechanisms, priorities and methods that can be used to improve effectiveness at country level. While the design of each country pilot will vary in line with the respective country context, selected approaches and priorities, a joint conceptual approach and maximum synergies with other aspects of the effectiveness agenda are crucial to ensure that evidence resulting from the pilots drives political decisions and promotes behaviour change at all levels.

¹ Bangladesh, Cambodia, Georgia, Kenya, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mexico, Rwanda, Uganda were represented through Government and CSO Representatives; Participation from El Salvador had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, but a representative from UNDP El Salvador contributed to the workshop. However, El Salvador underlined its willingness to participate in the pilot initiative; Participation as a pilot country from Cambodia and Lao PDR will be confirmed following internal approval processes.

II. Overall Context and key takeaways

Enhanced effectiveness at country level is an integral part of the 2017-2018 Work Programme which transfers the effectiveness commitments of the Nairobi Outcome Document into six strategic priority areas. Close interlinkages with work-stream 2 on *Unlocking the potential of development effectiveness* and work-stream 4 on *Private sector engagement leveraged through development co-operation* throughout the implementation period shall allow to generate valuable evidence, which will then feed into work-stream 3 on *Knowledge sharing*. Altogether, this should also allow for a strong contribution towards a Global Action Plan which the GPEDC Steering Committee plans to develop in the coming year in order to address the unfinished business of the effectiveness agenda.



Over the past months, the Working Group on Enhanced Effectiveness at Country Level has prepared the pilot exercise through a global mapping of country experiences and established a set of selection criteria to ensure government commitment to participate, regional balance and a diversity of country typologies. As such, the support to country-level activities for the 10 selected countries aims to enhance the strategic management and multi-stakeholder dialogue around development cooperation in order to eventually feed into a Global Compendium of Good Practices, drive political decision making and promote behaviour change in line with the commitments of the Nairobi Outcome Document. In line with the country specific approach, it is expected that implementation will take place throughout the next year.

Throughout the workshop, participants exchanged on common challenges and their respective experiences in the mainstreaming of effectiveness commitments into national development efforts. There was strong interest in learning from each other on widely experienced bottlenecks, such as mutual accountability, the reliability and mobilization of data from development partners at country level, capacity constraints of CSOs or the involvement of the private sector. Going forward, the meeting agreed on a common set of guiding questions to frame coherent planning and reporting across all countries. It was suggested that, in line with the implementation progress in each country, light updates and flexible knowledge exchange should be facilitated through an Online Community of Practice.

The workshop put a strong accent on synergies with other regional and global initiatives aimed at enhancing multi-stakeholder dialogue and knowledge-sharing. As such, representatives from Global Partnership Initiatives (Results & Accountability, Task Team on Development Effectiveness), the CSO Partnership on Development Effectiveness and the Global Delivery Initiative - a global knowledge sharing platform currently discussing synergies with the GPEDC work on knowledge-sharing - presented updates around their latest activities. It became clear that an important stage to construct such synergies will be at country level in line with the specific context. As such it was considered essential that all GPEDC stakeholders and development partners shall inform their respective constituencies and activate appropriate support across silos to the pilot exercise in the respective countries.

III. KEY ELEMENTS FOR COUNTRY LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

COMMON CHALLENGES AND PEER EXCHANGE ON LESSONS LEARNED

Participating countries are not at their first attempt of mainstreaming effectiveness principles into their respective country contexts. While the status of dialogue platforms, policies and strategic frameworks differs widely, all participants contributed valuable experience on the progress and challenges encountered in the past.

These dynamics allowed for an interactive exchange on common challenges and potential solutions. In line with the findings of the 2016 Monitoring Exercise, progress varies widely between regions and countries. Yet, most of the well-known challenges related to the use and alignment to national systems and priorities, data collection, predictability and inclusive partnerships persist at different levels. These need to be resolved whilst doing justice to a rapidly changing development co-operation context. It was agreed that technical know-how, peer exchange and dialogue are crucial tools to address them. There is also need to build on lessons learned from what has and what has not worked in the past.

A snapshot of the most recurrent challenges and solution avenues can be found in Annex 1.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Initial elements of the individual country roadmaps were thoroughly discussed in breakout sessions. In line with the guiding questions of the common reference framework, participating countries took stock of their existing development co-operation architecture and provided peer-to-peer feedback on the priority areas and on implementation approaches of the country pilots. The final goals and details of country concept notes will be developed as a next step at country level.

The following table provides an initial overview of priorities for pilot countries.

Challenge (not country specific)	Priority Implementation Area	Country (indicatory)	Way forward / Strategic GPEDC support & learning
Strengthen Coordination Systems / Partnership Architecture			
Gaps in a common and inclusive M&E / Results frameworks	Strengthen existing coordination mechanisms, and ongoing integrated / inclusive dialogue	All	Develop concept note / roadmap through a country specific multi-stakeholder process (mid-April 2018)
Ownership / Results / Use of Country Systems			
Insufficient use of country systems; Low recording of Aid on national / sectoral budgets; Lack of predictability;	Integrating development resources into government systems; Enhance budget support & Alignment of all stakeholders to National Development Strategy;	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malawi, Rwanda	Mobilize DPs; Build knowledge base around structured coordination & understanding of development effectiveness among all development partners, including SSC partners;

Aid fragmentation / Lack of respect of DoL ² agreements;	Strengthen harmonized approaches by all stakeholders	Malawi	Learn from other countries on the strengthening of social accountability
Transparency and Accountability			
Data consistency challenges on AIMS ² (technical; costs; double counting; compatibility of IATI ² data)	Adjust aid information system (quality and completeness of data), especially in view of new partners/financing flows/blended finance; Fast-track and compel the data input by all constituencies	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malawi, Rwanda	Mobilize DPs; Build knowledge base around integrated approaches, common understanding and mobilization of all stakeholders around development effectiveness;
Lack of harmonization of data entries due to separate systems;	Integrate multiple data entry processes for harmonized usage and reporting	Kenya	Need for support for capacity strengthening and harmonized dialogue of all stakeholders
Pool long-standing donor support behind government priorities; Optimization of existing policy and aid mechanisms;	Reduce duplication between different coordination mechanisms; Develop a MoU to ensure automatic reporting and long-standing collaboration with DPs.	Georgia	Enhance mobilization around harmonized systems and long-standing collaboration with DPs
Changing Development Finance Landscape and Inclusive Partnerships			
Managing financial flows and activities of all stakeholders	Improve reporting procedures and facilitate integrated dialogue with PS, DPs and CSOs; Adjusting development effectiveness indicators to Mexico context as a MIC;	Mexico	Conceptualize the impact, approaches, indicators of development cooperation for Mexico and other MICs
Effective Engagement of all stakeholders (PS, CSO, local governments); Enhance SSC engagement	Capacity strengthening (financial, technical) Create common understanding of all stakeholder on DE agenda; Incentivize PS & SSC engagement in development relevant areas;	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Rwanda Uganda	Build knowledge base around PS and CSO engagement (link with work of PS work-stream and CSO Task Team/CPDE)
Inclusive dialogue / accountability mechanisms at all	Revive the local consultative group mechanism; Enhance devolution / alignment	Bangladesh, Kenya, Cambodia	Build knowledge base around structured coordination at local level

² Acronyms: DoL - Division of Labour; AIMS: Aid Information Management ; IATI – International Aid Transparency Initiative

levels and with all
partners

between national & local levels

IV. WAY FORWARD: A COHERENT APPROACH TO COUNTRY PILOTS

COMMON REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

Consistency and comparability of the implementation approach are crucial to ensure that country-level evidence on progress and challenges drives mutual learning, political decision making and addresses bottlenecks at relevant levels. A common reference framework for the pilot activities needs to leave enough flexibility for each country to address country specific challenges in line with existing procedures, policies and frameworks. It is not aimed at providing strict content, policy or reporting requirements, but rather as a common structural set-up around key elements that should be addressed and investigated in each pilot country. Priority areas and specific approaches to implementation can be adjusted individually to each country context.

In this light, participants commented on a set of guiding questions that shall allow for a common understanding of such elements during the country level implementation. All countries are invited and encouraged to discuss and include answers to the guiding questions into their planning and reporting tools. Together with the agreed reporting and knowledge sharing mechanisms, these questions shall serve as a common reference framework (see Annex 2³) based on the following elements:

A) Country context

These elements are mainly answered through an initial stocktaking of the scope and activities in each country and a corresponding section in the respective country report. It was emphasized that such a stocktaking needs to go beyond specific development effectiveness tools and should also cover national systems, namely data collection and statistical systems, to which effectiveness tools are anchored.

B) Underlying principles and key elements "Challenges and Solutions"

Section 2 on "Challenges and solutions", is designed to ensure a shared understanding of how effectiveness principles can be spelled out and implemented at country level, ensuring that country dialogues, pilot activities and national roadmaps are built around them.

Participants suggested to include questions that target the following elements:

- aspects of monitoring & evaluation of pilot initiatives at country level
- ensure that the process is government-led and based on a multi-stakeholder approach
- best practices that can be shared with other countries
- experiences that have NOT worked to avoid errors of the past

³ The final consolidated version of the Common Reference Framework is included in Annex 2. It shall serve as a common ground for implementation and reporting.

C) Synthesis and sharing of information

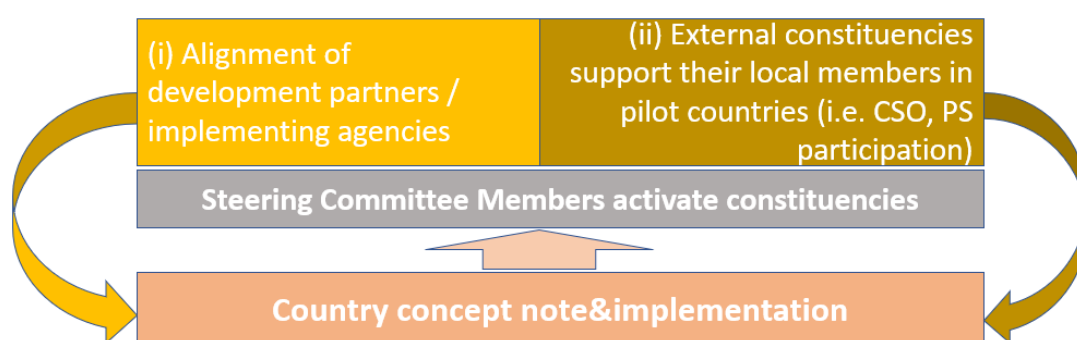
The meeting discussed that reporting structures need to stay flexible in line with country preferences, but should be organized around effectiveness principles and commitments, also to ensure clear linkages with the GPEDC Working Group on Unlocking the Potential of Effectiveness and the Global Action Plan.

Instead of dedicating additional resources and consultations to joint mid-term reporting, participants preferred to focus efforts on the implementation and include all results into a final report. It was suggested that light implementation updates and continuous exchange of lessons learned between pilot countries are facilitated through an Online Community of Practice.

D) Other

The workshop further recommended that⁴

- **GPEDC Steering Committee members** take an active role and responsibility to mobilize their constituencies' support to the multi-stakeholder pilot exercise. Only an accelerated support at all levels will allow to scale up existing efforts towards effective multi-stakeholder cooperation and generate tangible results through the pilot approach.
- **The responsibility of development partners needs to be addressed explicitly.** Headquarters should authorize and support their corresponding delegations and agencies at country level adequately, so that they can align their support to country procedures - e.g. by providing data, coordinate their support through national platforms, etc - and take fully part in all activities, arrangements and proceedings that relate to the pilot approach.
- A **Global Compendium of Good Practices** shall be organized around effectiveness principles, common challenges and proposed solutions in each of these areas (in line structure of the final report). It should feature lessons learned (on both, what works and what does NOT work) from the pilot exercise and beyond.



⁴ Going beyond the responsibility of pilot countries, these elements are not mentioned in the guiding questions. Yet, they should be acknowledged and actively supported by SC Members as part of the workshop agreements.

UPCOMING MILESTONES

Launch and support at country level

- Pilot countries will be supported by the European Commission⁵ or Germany⁶.
- Each country will submit a **country specific concept note** to the Joint Support Team⁷ to confirm interest to participate (by mid-April 2018). Taking into account the guiding questions of the common reference framework, the concept will include (i) country context and challenges; and (ii) country priorities, including activities to be supported, implementation mechanisms and an overall roadmap/timeline.

Implementation phase

- All constituencies are invited to mobilize their stakeholders at country level for maximum support
- Countries are invited to provide light updates on progress / bottlenecks and to actively participate in the Online Community of Practice. Results of national workshops, pilot events / activities and other updates / requests should be submitted to the Joint Support Team⁷. This will allow to provide regular updates to the Steering Committee and the broader public (blog posts, GPEDC newsletter, etc.)

After completion

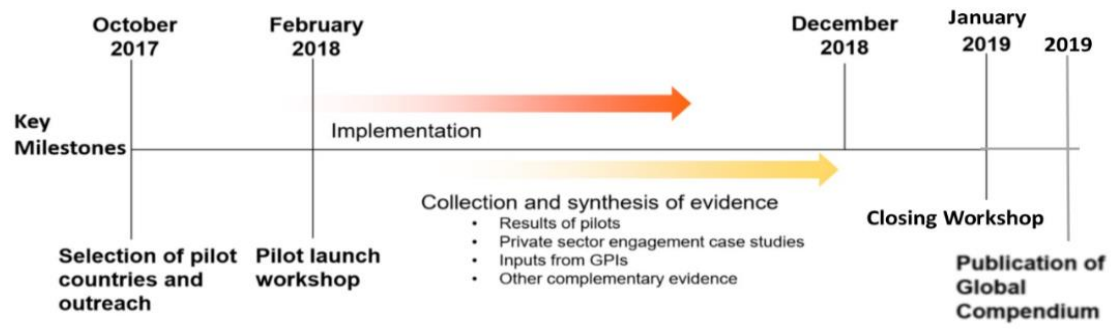
- A closing workshop in January 2019 (t.b.c.) will provide the opportunity to discuss the results and conclusions of the pilot exercise.
- Each country will submit a **final report in early 2019**⁸. Taking into account the guiding questions of the common reference framework, it will cover: (i) lessons learned, good practices and experiences to be shared; and (ii) overall results achieved, which will be organized around effectiveness principles and commitments.
- Findings from the Community of Practice and the final report will feed into the Global Compendium of Good Practices as a reference for advancing effectiveness principles at national level.

⁵ Cambodia, Laos PDR, El Salvador, Kenya, Malawi

⁶ Bangladesh, Rwanda, Uganda, Mexico, Georgia

⁷ Concept notes and updates should be sent to Ms. Piper Hart from the Joint Support Team: piper.hart@undp.org

⁸ Exact timeline will be submitted for approval at the April 2018 Steering Committee Meeting



ANNEX 1: Common Challenges & Lessons learned

The following issues were highlighted as some of the most recurrent challenges and solution avenues:

A) Ownership, Results and Use of Country Systems

Common challenges:

- Aid remains fragmented in many countries, even when donors have committed to division of labour agreements. In many sectors development partners continue to multiply small projects instead of coming together for a coherent approach.
- Traditional challenges such as the alignment to national priorities, the use of country systems and the lack of predictability remain a long-standing common challenge, undermining development planning efforts and corroborating weak institutional capacities.
- Low level of linkages of all financial resources to results.
- Weak institutional capacities to absorb development assistance which often comes with restrictive conditionalities.

Good Practices shared:

Rwanda has successfully addressed aid fragmentation through a high level dialogue between CSOs, Government and Development Partners in their annual retreats. The obligation of development partners to engage in a maximum of 3 sectors has allowed to establish a well-functioning division of labour and regular results reviews per sector.

B) Transparency & Accountability

Common challenges:

- Reporting and usage of data on aid information management systems remains low and often not reflective of the development partners that are active (also SSC). In many cases data from country representations is difficult to obtain and shows discrepancies with HQ data.
- Registration of aid into national and sector budgets remains low among some traditional donors, even when they share information about their planned disbursements.
- Inconsistency of data for IATI interconnected systems.

Good Practices shared:

Georgia and Cambodia presented their respective "home-grown" aid management platforms⁹ which are publicly accessible and allow every interested party to create their own reporting system.

Responding to common questions from the audience, Georgia explained that double counting is avoided through a "first come, first serve" procedure. Under the high level leadership of the Prime Minister, the country will sign a MoU with Development Partners to ensure regular reporting from development partners.

In the case of Cambodia, the data validation process is ongoing throughout the year, allowing development partners to work towards several deadlines. This includes an annual ODA report which, in addition to a ministerial focal point for every partner, has proven as a good tool to incentivize development partners to provide data if they don't want their support to be under-represented. Only data that has been submitted to the national aid management platform is included into the report.

C) Changing Development Finance Landscape and Inclusive Partnerships

Common challenges:

- Adapting the functions and relevance of Coordination structures and Working Groups to the changes in countries' development & financing context
- Need for a government-led multi-stakeholder approach, which is suited to promote mutual accountability and inclusive partnerships
- Lack of institutional support to CSOs, who need to be a) technically qualified in this complex topic , b) an organized and accountable interlocutor for Governments
- Lack of accountability and engagement of private sector stakeholders in technical dialogue structures and in development relevant sectors in general . Private sector interest remains often limited to highest level political dialogue and high profit sectors.

Good Practices shared:

In Cambodia, a CSO Coordination Committee (CCC¹⁰) is in charge of ensuring coordination between nearly 170 local and international Non-Governmental Organizations to ensure an enabling environment where CSOs can make a vital and accountable contribution to national development. Nevertheless, financial sustainability challenges remain, especially since Cambodia has graduated from the LDC status.

Rwanda has developed an International NGO database where all CSOs report their activities and results. This data is then directly imported into the national aid information management platform to feed into national development planning. Representatives from the Private Sector are actively taking part in its Development Partner Coordination Group.

In Bangladesh, the NGO BRAC has successfully attractive private sector investment into refugee camps.

⁹ Available on: <http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/aid-management-cambodia.html> and <https://eaims.ge/#MTt8MQ==> ; In addition, Bangladesh's aid management system was developed following Cambodia's model and is interconnected with the IATI system: <http://aims.erd.gov.bd/>

¹⁰ Coordination Committee of Cambodia <http://www.ccc-cambodia.org/en>

Lao PDR has signed a partnership declaration with development partners where, in addition to the five effectiveness principles, it has added three more principles addressing the changing development finance landscape: (1) Counter corruption, tax evasion and IFFs; (2) SSC/TrC / Knowledge-sharing; (3) Business as partner in development;

ANNEX 2: Revised Guiding Questions

Guiding Questions for Discussion and Reporting at country level

The following guiding questions shall allow to develop a shared understanding of guiding principles and overall results during the country level implementation. Together with the agreed reporting and knowledge-sharing mechanisms of the country pilots, these elements serve as basis for a common reference framework to ensure consistency and comparability across pilots. Countries are invited to include answers to these questions in their planning and reporting documentation adjusting the structure of reports to the needs of each country.

➤ Country Context: Initial overview and stocktaking for pilot background papers

- What is the country context (social and political situation, regional dynamics, etc.) and what impact does this have on effective development cooperation in the pilot country?
- What institutional arrangements for effective development cooperation, including multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogue exist in the pilot country?
 - Which stakeholder groups are involved?
 - Does an enabling environment for an active involvement of civil society and of other non-executive stakeholders such as the private sector, local governments and trade unions exist?
- What can be learned from the 2016 monitoring results? What national assessment of the monitoring results has been done, what actions have been taken or are planned to address the findings?
- What data collection mechanisms and information management systems (both national data collection and statistical systems; as well as ODA related databases) exist in the pilot country?
- Which national policies and strategies, for effective development cooperation exist in the pilot country (e.g. national development cooperation policy)?
- What initiatives are already underway to strengthen effective development cooperation in the pilot country?

➤ Challenges and Solutions:

Discussions of this section shall ensure a joint understanding of underlying principles and key elements for effective multi-stakeholder cooperation and further requisites for effective development cooperation at country level. It shall also allow to identify possible entry points to generate increased effectiveness.

- Based on country context, what priority areas related to effective development cooperation were identified? What kind of policies, strategies, mechanisms or systems may be helpful to strengthen effective development cooperation?
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- Does the current approach respond to national needs and include all relevant stakeholders?
 - Which are possible models and approaches for multi-stakeholder coordination at country level and which approach may be the most suitable for specific country requirements?
 - How do the implementation arrangements at country level reflect the government lead and the multi-stakeholder approach?
- What kind of supporting activities by the GPEDC/GPEDC stakeholders/development co-operation providers are necessary for the pilot implementation? Are there any recommendations/and or lessons learned for further support to similar activities?
- Are there successful experiences in the area of development effectiveness in your country that other countries can learn from? In which areas would you benefit from lessons learned from other countries (please also indicate if you know of countries who could share them)?
- Are there experiences -in and beyond the pilot - that have NOT worked or have been very challenging that other countries, providers and stakeholders should be aware of to avoid errors of the past?
- Are there any existing regional, inter-regional or other further exchange mechanisms that could be considered for the pilot country?
- Which monitoring and evaluation mechanisms - if any - have been applied at national level/by national stakeholders during the pilot initiative? How did this affect implementation activities and/or mutual accountability?

Annex 1: Suggested structure for country pilot concept notes

It is suggested that the following be considered in creation of the country concept notes:

- What are the expected results?
- What activities will be implemented to achieve these results/timeline?
- What additional support is required to implement these activities?
- What stakeholders need to be consulted and at what stages?
- Which elements for effective multi-stakeholder cooperation at country level shall be established or strengthened?
- How shall the implementation at country-level be organized? (e.g. by setting up initial country-level workshops with all relevant stakeholders, by creating a national working group etc.)

- Which reporting mechanisms need to be in place? (at national level/with national authorities and towards the JST as well as exchange/communication with the supporting consultant), and who will be in charge of the (draft) country report? (as an input for the final compilation of preliminary pilot results to be edited by the supporting consultant for the overall pilot approach)
 - Is there any need for a local consultant to facilitate the process?
If not, which organization/who should be the focal point for communication and coordination with the piloting framework? (JST, working group leaders, supporting consultant, financing partners)
- What are the expected challenges and how will they be mitigated (e.g. accessibility of data, political willingness, coordination, resources, etc.)?