Global Partnership
for Effective Development Co-operation

Global Partnership Monitoring Reform: Defining Ambitions and Approach

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This document outlines key aspects of the proposal of the Global Partnership Co-Chairs for the reform of the monitoring exercise during the 2020-2022 Work Programme. It is shared with Steering Committee members, to endorse:

- The strategic level of ambition for the monitoring reform
- The scope of the monitoring reform
- Managing the transition phase to the next High-Level Meeting in 2022
- Leadership of the reform process

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Introduction

The original vision of the Global Partnership monitoring exercise was to: (i) drive behaviour change towards more effective development co-operation; and (ii) support global accountability for implementation of Busan commitments. The exercise was intended to complement and build on existing country-level efforts around effectiveness (a "global light and country focused" approach).

In taking forward this vision, the Global Partnership monitoring exercise generates unique evidence, through a multi-stakeholder process, used to maximise the impact of joint action towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over three rounds, 99 partner countries and territories have participated in Global Partnership monitoring, including 86 in the 2018 Round, demonstrating the continued value stakeholders find in the resulting data and evidence. Further, the monitoring acts as a key tool for global accountability around effective development co-operation commitments and is the source of evidence for three SDG targets.[1]

These achievements have been accompanied by challenges. Stakeholder feedback suggests that while the vision remains valid, the monitoring exercise has not been implemented such that both its country- and global-level aims have been fully met. Following the 2018 Monitoring Round, the third since Busan, and in the lead-up to the Global Partnership's 2022 High-Level Meeting (HLM3) – which will also mark the halfway point of SDG implementation – the moment is right to reflect on the monitoring exercise. It is important to ensure it delivers on its original promise while meeting the evolving needs of its stakeholders and producing evidence relevant to the effectiveness challenges of today.

A reform of the monitoring exercise will thus take place during 2020-2022, resulting in a new monitoring proposal, for endorsement at HLM3. It will build on the commitment made in Nairobi to update the monitoring framework.[2]

Given the scope of the reform, there is a need for a "period of transition", during which there will not be a global monitoring round. This period of transition will be necessary to ensure that the reform not only meets the level of ambition for the new monitoring proposal, but also that there is sufficient opportunity to engage with and consult stakeholders.

This period of transition will carve out the necessary time and space to undertake a reform process which is inclusive and consultative, as well as comprehensive in scope. In addition to the monitoring reform, there will be a focus on supporting the use of 2018 monitoring results: to drive action on results, generate country-level success stories for HLM3 that spur political momentum, and harvest insights to inform the new monitoring proposal that will be developed. Together, these two components (monitoring reform and use of results) make up Strategic Priority 3 of the 2020-2022 Work Programme.[3]

Against this backdrop, the objectives of this document are as follows:

1. To propose the strategic level of ambition for the monitoring reform [Part I]
2. To outline the proposed scope of the reform [Part II]
3. To present how the transition phase will be managed, including describing the evidence that will be generated during this phase, to be presented at HLM3 [Part III]
4. To clarify the leadership of the reform process [Part IV]

[1] **Target 5.c:** on adopting and strengthening policies and legislation for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment; **Target 17.15**: on respecting countries' policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for the SDGs; and **Target 17.16**: on enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships for development in support of the achievement of the SDGs.

[2] The Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD) spells out a renewed mandate for the Global Partnership, calling to "*update the Monitoring Framework to reflect the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, including the pledge to leave no-one behind*". More on the history and background of the monitoring is in Annex A of the Strategic Priority 3 proposal (hyperlink in footnote 3).

[3] The proposal for Strategic Priority 3 of the Global Partnership 2020-2022 Work Programme, "*Leveraging monitoring for action",* can be found here.

Part I. Strategic Level of Ambition

The new monitoring proposal will aim to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement, further drive behaviour change and generate increased political momentum. With reference to this overall objective, it is first important to define success criteria for the reform and the new monitoring proposal it will produce. In this vein, the following **strategic aims** are proposed to serve as guideposts throughout the reform.

- **Respond to country and global level aims.** Balance will be achieved between a monitoring exercise – including both its implementation and outputs – that drives country-level learning and behaviour change and an exercise that acts as a mechanism for upholding effectiveness commitments, spurring political accountability of all stakeholders both at country and global levels.

- **Facilitate integration with national processes and use of country systems.** The monitoring exercise will be designed to better allow for integration with country-level efforts, including drawing on national data and using national multi-stakeholder engagement platforms. It will build on country systems whenever possible. At the same time, the need for some level of standardisation will be reflected, as the exercise remains global in nature.

- **Incentivise and foster multi-stakeholder participation.** Meaningful engagement and dialogue among diverse actors throughout the monitoring process – from defining aims to acting on findings – will be a central aspect of the exercise, rather than engagement only as a means for data collection. This involves engagement of actors at country and global levels.

- **Build capacity.** In addition to providing clear and consistent reporting tools and guidance, the importance of training for relevant government officials and other stakeholder groups will be emphasised, facilitating deeper engagement throughout the exercise.

- **In-build a focus on use of results, including through strengthened follow-up to their use.** Monitoring is most valuable when results are used to spur action to accelerate sustainable development. Looking at the monitoring process, as well as the relevance of evidence generated and how this evidence is presented, increased emphasis will be put on use of results for action and decision-making at both political and technical levels. This will include concerted attention to how results are shared with country-level stakeholders and how they are supported and incentivised to take action.

- **Take into account the diversity of modalities and contexts, providing more relevant evidence.** Development of the new monitoring proposal will consider how to reflect diverse co-operation modalities and contexts – exploring inclusion of issues such as multilateral support, South-South and triangular co-operation, and fragile and conflict-affected situations. Doing so, it will aim to provide evidence that is relevant and actionable for diverse development settings and stakeholder groups. At the same time, it will continue to address the 'unfinished business' of the effectiveness agenda.

- **Maintain role in global reporting.** A key feature of the monitoring exercise is its role as a source of evidence for three SDG targets. It also provides valuable evidence on international development co-operation for Financing for Development (FfD) follow-up and review. The monitoring reform will aim at maintaining such linkages with regional and global processes.

- **Strengthen linkages with the 2030 Agenda.** The monitoring exercise will be responsive to the 2030 development context, from exploring linkages with evolving country-level SDG architecture and reporting processes to responding to what effectiveness means in emerging global narratives around international development co-operation.

In moving towards these **strategic aims** it is necessary to consider **past challenges** experienced in the implementation of and follow up to the monitoring exercise, as well as **emerging gaps** related to the changing development co-operation landscape. Validation and prioritisation of these challenges and gaps will further guide the monitoring reform, highlighting areas in which to first focus efforts. At the same time, it is important to recognise that some challenges or gaps – particularly those of a political nature – cannot be resolved through the monitoring reform and need to be taken up in other spaces of the Global Partnership (e.g. the Global Partnership review), or are external to it.

Many of the challenges and gaps included here are **interrelated and reinforcing** and impact both the monitoring framework (what we measure) and the monitoring process (how we measure). A holistic approach will be needed throughout the monitoring reform to review and address these issue areas and their underlying causes.

Past challenges:

- **Limited flexibility** in timeframes, hindering possibilities for institutionalisation and adaptation to country contexts. This results in the monitoring being undertaken in an ad-hoc manner and in some cases prevents participation altogether.

- **Complexity of the exercise, including the framework and process.** While some complexity is unavoidable, targeted guidance, training and other support is not always available, often due to resource issues. This impacts the ability of stakeholders to participate equally and meaningfully, as well as affecting data quality and comprehensiveness.

- **Capacity constraints among some stakeholders participating in the exercise.** Linked also to the complexity of the exercise, this is another factor which limits the equal, meaningful and full participation of relevant actors in the process.

- **Difficulty ensuring inclusive participation in the exercise,** including of all development partners and other actors at country level. This leads to an incomplete picture of the state of effectiveness in a given country or for a given development partner, in addition to constraining ownership of results by all actors.

- **Limited use of results** for learning and behaviour change, related to both the relevance of evidence and how it is presented. This creates disincentives for future engagement on the part of all stakeholders.

Emerging Gaps:

- **Responsiveness to the diverse contexts and co-operation modalities** that characterise the evolving development landscape. While the effectiveness principles remain steadfast, how they are applied and therefore how they are monitored requires continuous thinking as the world continues to change, building on work to date, including adaptations of the monitoring for Southern co-operation providers and in fragile and conflict-affected situations.[4]

- **Limited linkages to the 2030 Agenda** to showcase how sustainable development results can be achieved through more effective co-operation and how more effective co-operation can be achieved through participation in the monitoring exercise.

- **Ability to bridge the gap between country and global levels, reflecting effectiveness considerations in critical challenges, such as the COVID-19 response,** based on the understanding that institutions, policies and processes at one level are affected by the other. This relationship – how global responses to global events, from pandemics to climate change, impact effectiveness at the country level – is becoming increasingly apparent.

[4] Over 2018 and 2019, an open working group was convened to guide the development of a tailored approach to monitoring effectiveness in fragile contexts that was presented at the Senior Level Meeting (New York, 2019). Further, the Global Partnership supported work led by Mexico to pilot an approach to monitor the effectiveness of South-South co-operation (SSC) from the provider's perspective.

Questions for Discussion:

- *Do the challenges broadly capture the perspectives of members or are there significant challenges which are missing? Among the challenges to be addressed through the reform, which should be prioritised, recognising that there will be trade-offs to be contended with in developing a new monitoring proposal?*
- *Do these strategic aims reflect an appropriate level of ambition for what the new monitoring proposal should achieve?*

Part II. Scope of Reform

Meeting the high ambition set for the new monitoring proposal requires openness to a **comprehensive scope of reform**, inclusive of both *adaptations of the monitoring framework* and improvements to the monitoring process. Challenges and gaps of the current exercise are rooted in both aspects. As such, the goals of the reform can be achieved only with a broad mandate to look at both elements.

In this vein, adaptations to the monitoring framework may include refining existing indicators, as well as adding and/or removing indicators. Improving the monitoring process will require careful consideration of the trade-offs and benefits inherent to addressing multi-dimensional and interrelated challenges and gaps. Together, this work on the framework and process may have broader implications, including the possibility of global and context-specific modules.

The new monitoring proposal must address expectations for a *technically* robust exercise which also generates momentum at a *political* level. The scope of the reform will have to be sufficiently open to allow for addressing this duality.

Part III. Managing the Transition

While there will not be a global monitoring round during the transition period, other forms of country-level monitoring evidence will be gathered to support dialogue, anchor the reform to current needs and realities and continue driving global accountability on effectiveness commitments. The following monitoring products and evidence will be produced for HLM3:

- **Evidence on the state of effectiveness from country initiatives to take action on 2018 results**: Monitoring “deep dives” will be carried out in several countries to understand the drivers of effectiveness successes and challenges and will bring partners together to strengthen their joint work. These efforts, complemented by similar stakeholder-led work, will help to demonstrate the added value of Global Partnership monitoring, further building political buy-in.
- **Evidence from country piloting:** Elements of the new monitoring proposal will be piloted to ensure robustness and responsiveness of the post-HLM3 offer to constituents while also generating political buy-in and demand for future monitoring. The country pilots will provide snapshots of progress on different effectiveness issues to inform discussion at HLM3.
- **Evidence from testing of new indicators:** Where possible, new or refined indicators (this may include private sector engagement, South-South and triangular co-operation, multilateral support, support from foundations, sub-national co-operation, as well as those related to specific effectiveness issues, including statistics and impact) will draw substantively from the work of relevant action areas.
- **A new monitoring proposal**: The proposal, inclusive of both an adapted framework and an improved process, will be presented for high-level endorsement at HLM3 and rolled out shortly thereafter as an offer to constituents.

Part IV. Leadership of the Reform Process

The reform process will be **transparent and inclusive**. Global consultation workshops are envisaged, as well as smaller formal and informal consultations, virtual outreach (e.g. webinars, online surveys) and use of the Global Partnership Knowledge Sharing Platform, all with a view to provide opportunities for interested stakeholders to follow and engage in this work. Close interaction with the action areas will harness synergies and facilitate ongoing exchange and feedback.

Throughout the monitoring reform, Global Partnership Co-Chairs will provide overall leadership and will oversee the implementation of activities and overall process. The Steering Committee will be consulted for strategic guidance and will take key decisions. The Joint Support Team will provide the technical and advisory support to Co-Chairs. Technical experts and ad hoc informal technical advisory bodies will be identified to provide as-needed guidance on specific technical considerations related to the monitoring reform. Political support from different constituencies during the implementation of all phases of the monitoring reform will also be crucial to facilitate endorsement of the new proposal at HLM3.

The reform of the Global Partnership monitoring exercise will advance over three phases, broadly aligned to the three-year period of the 2020-2022 Work Programme:

- **Conceptual work (2020):** This phase includes defining the vision and strategic aims of the reform, validating and prioritising the challenges it will seek to address. The scope of the reform (both framework and process) will be detailed through desk work and consultations. The Steering Committee will provide guidance on the broad conceptual framework and direction of the reform.

- **Refinement and piloting (2021):** This phase includes the detailed design of the new monitoring process and methodological review and revision of the framework. Where possible, this will include testing and country piloting.

- **Consolidation of evidence and preparation for HLM3 (2022):** This phase focuses on consolidation and validation of the evidence emerging from the country pilots and testing. This will feed into the development of a new monitoring proposal, prepared for endorsement at HLM3.

Question for Discussion:

- *Do you agree with the Co-Chairs' proposed strategy to manage the transition phase to HLM3?*