Action Dialogues 2021 for Effective Development Co-operation: Call to Action

Background document for Session 3: “Launching ‘Action Dialogues 2021’”

20th Steering Committee Meeting
9-10 December 2020 [virtual meeting]

This document introduces and outlines expectations for Action Dialogues 2021 to inform the launching of this initiative following the 20th Steering Committee; it specifically aims to facilitate discussion on:

- The expected outcomes of the country-led Action Dialogues and ways in which they can promote and support countries and stakeholder’s actions for effective development co-operation;
- The envisaged role for Steering Committee members to mobilise stakeholders to engage and support the Dialogues; and
- The support needed to help Steering Committee members and the Global Partnership stakeholders to undertake the Action Dialogues.

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Introduction

During the current ‘period of transition’ with no global monitoring round, it is crucial for the Global Partnership to continue facilitating action and harvesting evidence from efforts for more effective development co-operation at the country level, building on results from the Global Partnership monitoring where available as well as other relevant country experiences. This was also highlighted during the recent stakeholder consultations on the monitoring reform (see background document for Session 1) that underscored the importance of the use of monitoring results and the need for strengthened follow-up to leverage those results for action. To this end, the Global Partnership is launching “Country-led Action Dialogues 2021 for Effective Development Co-operation”.

Why Action Dialogues?

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in times of COVID-19, with its wide-ranging implications, will require, now more than ever, the scaling up of effective co-operation and partnerships across public, private, international and national stakeholders. In light of the pandemic’s impact on the broader SDG financing landscape and with a view to supporting those most in need, the four principles for effective development co-operation – country ownership, inclusive partnerships, focus on results and transparency and mutual accountability, are of critical importance. They help ensure a more effective multi-stakeholder response and encourage joint actions that maximize sustainable results, as part of broad efforts to ‘build back better’.

Many countries and territories have in the past undertaken the Global Partnership Monitoring; which involves tracking progress against these four principles, agreeing on effectiveness commitments, and taking action for more effective development co-operation. Many of these countries have used the monitoring process and results to directly inform their development co-operation policies and architecture. The Action Dialogues 2021 will draw upon the evidence, learnings and data from the monitoring of effective development co-operation (where available) and build on the four effectiveness principles.

In the run-up to the Global Partnership’s next High-Level Meeting in 2022 (HLM 3), the Action Dialogues will bring country-level experience and partnerships to the centre stage, to generate further political momentum and scale-up action to address effectiveness challenges.

What is an Action Dialogue?

An Action Dialogue is a multi-stakeholder dialogue at the country level, which aims to:

i) build a shared understanding of the state of effective development co-operation, based on an assessment of the challenges of the evolving development co-operation and partnership landscape (e.g. new partners, new/aggravated challenges in times of COVID-19, etc.)

ii) agree on concrete steps to strengthen the effectiveness of co-operation and partnerships, by drawing on the four effectiveness principles that guide how stakeholders can work and partner together better, as well as building on evidence from the Global Partnership monitoring (where available).

Action Dialogues are foreseen to take place throughout 2021. They will be led by partner country governments as a means to engage with all relevant national stakeholders and partners.

1 Previously discussed under the concept/name of country level ‘deep dives’
More specifically, Action Dialogue can reflect upon the following key questions:

- What are the reasons for progress or lack thereof on agreed effectiveness commitments? (reflecting on 2018 monitoring results, where available)
- What are key opportunities for leveraging the effectiveness principles to drive development co-operation efforts and cultivate stronger and more inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships in view of the new co-operation landscape and co-ordination mechanisms?
- What opportunities exist and actions are needed to increase the effectiveness of co-operation and partnerships to deliver sustainable development impact?

In the longer term, the outcomes of Action Dialogues are intended to promote policy, system, and behavioural changes, as an integral part of the cycle to advance the effectiveness of development co-operation (see figure on the right). The launch of the Action Dialogues, as critical part of this effectiveness cycle, is a testament to the broader efforts by the Global Partnership towards a more holistic and multi-phased approach to the monitoring that places even greater importance on the use of results and monitoring follow up at the national level (see also monitoring background document for Session 1).

What could an Action Dialogue look like?

Development co-operation contexts vary from country to country, as do the actions required by governments and their partners to improve the effectiveness and impact of development co-operation. Each country will therefore determine the scope and focus of its Action Dialogue to tailor it to specific country needs. A successful Action Dialogue 2021 does not require countries to have prior experience with the Global Partnership or to have participated in the Global Partnership’s past monitoring rounds. Countries at all stages of effectiveness and engagement with the Global Partnership will be encouraged to undertake an Action Dialogue.

An Action Dialogue can be a stand-alone workshop/dialogue or organised as part of ongoing efforts and embedded in existing/planned dialogue fora and mechanisms relating for example to national development planning, financing for development discussions, development co-operation and partnership co-ordination. Where possible, embedding with ongoing efforts is preferable as it helps institutionalise such dialogue within existing structures. Many partner country governments are currently also undertaking very specific efforts to finance and implement the SDGs in a more holistic way, such as through pioneering work on Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs). These constitute another entry point for Action Dialogues.

An impactful Action Dialogue is one that (1) is led by partner country governments at high political level, securing engagement across all relevant institutions, (2) builds on existing country development processes and efforts, (3) ensures meaningful engagement of all relevant stakeholders, (4) draws on evidence, (5) is results-oriented, and (5) promotes transparency and accountability.
With this in mind, the below table outlines the suggested steps for undertaking a successful Action Dialogue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning for Dialogue</th>
<th>Multi-stakeholder Dialogue</th>
<th>Sharing Outcomes &amp; Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner country governments</strong> to:</td>
<td><strong>The Dialogue can be used to:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Partner country governments</strong> share the experience of their Dialogue to inform the Global Partnership Progress Report:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Confirm interest to undertake an Action Dialogue;</td>
<td>• Build a shared understanding on key effectiveness challenges; or/and</td>
<td>• How is the scope and the agenda for development co-operation and its effectiveness changing? (e.g. new partners, COVID-19 implications)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Determine scope and focus of the Dialogue;</td>
<td>• Co-design action plans/roadmaps for policy, systems and behaviour change; or/and</td>
<td>• Where do you stand on the implementation of the effectiveness principles?</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Identify relevant existing mechanisms/processes (if any) to embed the Dialogue in;</td>
<td>• Accelerate previously agreed actions and mobilize support of partners.</td>
<td>• What are the reasons for progress or lack thereof on effectiveness commitments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify lead Ministry/department, key national stakeholders to engage and include in planning;</td>
<td>Some countries may choose to dive into very specific priority issues, (i.e. improving transparency, enhancing support to statistical capacity, predictability, fragmentation, alignment, domestic accountability, etc.).</td>
<td>• In what ways have or will the implementation of the effectiveness principles strengthen the resilience of country systems and capacity, and deliver sustainable results?</td>
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<td>• Identify relevant existing data and analysis to inform the Dialogue;</td>
<td>Countries may also choose to focus the Dialogue on strengthening engagement and partnerships with specific stakeholders, such as private sector, civil society, foundations, South-South and triangular co-operation partners, multilateral partners; and/or discuss effectiveness issues at sub-national levels.</td>
<td>• What actions are needed to meet the effectiveness commitments?</td>
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<td>• Undertake self-assessment of the 2018 monitoring results (where relevant) using available tools and guides.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• What policy and system changes do you foresee to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships/co-operation for the 2030 Agenda?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Other stakeholders** to:
- Communicate and engage with constituencies at the country level;
- Identify focal points on the ground to mobilise stakeholders;
- Identify relevant data and analysis to inform the Dialogue;
- Undertake self-assessment of the 2018 monitoring results (where relevant) using available tools and guides.

**Action Areas** to:
- Explore synergies with their planned country level work to support Action Dialogues.
- Share the experience of their Dialogue to inform the Global Partnership Progress Report.
- Identify relevant existing data and analysis to inform the Dialogue;
- Plan and guides.

While partner country governments will lead the Action Dialogue 2021 at the country level, inclusive engagement and support of all types of development actors is critical for impactful results. To this end, the Global Partnership stakeholders/constituencies are invited to mobilise their members to actively engage and support the Action Dialogues at country level.

**Questions for Session 3 discussion:**

- What do you see as the main opportunities to undertake the Action Dialogues and strengthen the use of monitoring results, expanding stakeholder engagement on effectiveness issues at country level?
- What type of evidence would need to emerge from the Action Dialogues to build political momentum at HLM3? Do you agree with the broad focus of the questions that would be used to report on the Action Dialogues (see third column of the table above), with a view to informing the Global Partnership Progress Report that will be launched at HLM 3? What (if anything) is missing?
- As a Steering Committee member, how do you plan to engage in, and support, the Action Dialogues? What kind of support would you need from the Co-Chairs and the Joint Support Team to mobilise your constituency for the Action Dialogues?