Accelerating progress toward the SDGs through effective development cooperation

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Background

International development cooperation is a powerful tool to help countries realise their own development goals and ambitions.

Effective development cooperation unites the efforts and resources of domestic and external actors, from government, bilateral and multilateral donors, NGOs, CSOs and philanthropies, to achieve the most impact with the resources available.
Sometimes development cooperation doesn’t work as well as it should.

Often, actors within a sector agree on what needs to be achieved. What they don’t agree on is how to get there.

Individual actors may have their own understanding of which needs and target groups are most important or which strategies and approaches are most effective.

When this happens, despite everybody wanting the same thing, individual efforts can result in duplication of effort, contradictory actions and weak or unsustainable impact.
The need for effective development cooperation is more urgent than ever.

A challenge under normal circumstances, the Covid-19 pandemic made it more difficult for development partners to collaborate with each other and with government effectively.

However, it also underscored the importance of international cooperation. The international response to Covid-19 was most effective when it built upon principles of effective development cooperation and in environments where development agencies could coordinate rapid, flexible and creative responses.
Effective development cooperation can deliver better results faster.

Achieve more with the resources we have. With only a decade to deliver the SDGs and a financing gap that will only grow due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we need to move from merely advocating and encouraging political change to a new strategic approach focused on demonstrating, achieving and replicating better development impact in practice.

Ensure greater coherence. Coordinating and aligning the many different, and potentially contradictory, sectoral approaches, strategies and activities can help identify gaps in support or areas of duplication.

Balance short-term needs with longer-term capacity building to achieve the SDGs. Now more than ever, developing countries must balance short-term recovery actions with capacity building to manage emerging threats and achieve longer-term development goals.

Accelerate progress toward the SDGs. The effectiveness of development cooperation is ultimately measured by achieving greater impact on the SDGs. Greater effectiveness means better, faster and more sustainable impact.
What does effective development cooperation look like?

**Country Ownership**
Countries set their own national development priorities.

**Development partners align their support to national priorities using country systems.**

**Focus On Results**
Development support is directed to achieving measureable results & progress is monitored.

**Inclusive Partnerships**
Development partnerships are inclusive recognising & building on the different and complementary roles of all factors.

**Transparency & Accountability**
Countries & development partners are jointly responsible for achieving these goals & ensuring that information is available to partners, citizen & beneficiaries.
What’s needed?

- Good national and sectoral policies and inclusive policy processes.
- Robust and realistic results frameworks and operational plans.
- Alignment of external support and national resources.
- Use and strengthening of country systems and institutions.
- Coordinated development cooperation.
Building better partnerships: Effectiveness to Impact Initiatives (E2I)

An E2I is a government-led institutional support project that focuses on improving the effectiveness of development cooperation within a priority sector, such as education, health, and agriculture. The project provides specialised technical assistance to existing institutions and systems with the ultimate goal of accelerating sectoral progress towards SDG targets.
Outcomes

1. Increase government demand for effective development cooperation.
2. Improve performance in critical sectors and SDG areas in pilot countries.
3. Identify good practices and develop guidance for replicating successful approaches.
4. Build an evidence base that demonstrates the value of development effectiveness in achieving the SDGs.
In most countries, there are systems and processes already in place within sectors to coordinate and manage development cooperation. However, they often don’t operate as well as they could.

Developing effective coordination mechanisms takes time and effort – resources that are usually in short supply. To provide government and their partners with extra support, E2I can provide tailored technical assistance at a sectoral level that focuses on strengthening six essential areas for improving effectiveness and impact.
Inclusive dialogue
Getting broad national ownership of sector policies and strategies means engaging all relevant sector stakeholders in dialogue to agree on sector priorities and responsibilities.

Joint policy-making and review process
Policy-making and review processes should be grounded in a solid evidence base. Jointly analysing sector performance and reviewing progress helps build consensus on what works and what doesn’t.
**Results frameworks**
Good results frameworks define sector targets and milestones and provide a roadmap for achieving them. Results frameworks are the basis for planning and sequencing actions and for reviewing, assessing and reporting progress.

**Joint planning and budgeting**
When sector stakeholders plan and budget their resources jointly, it’s easier to identify areas where there are gaps or duplication of effort. Joint planning is critical for the development of complementary, coherent and mutually supportive action plans.
Implementation modalities (that use country systems)
The ability of a sector to deliver services and investments is critical for achieving and sustaining development impact. Effective implementation modalities that strengthen (and don't bypass) sector service delivery mechanisms help build capacity, ensure sustainability and reduce donor dependency.

Transparent monitoring and review processes
Sector development efforts are more efficient and accountable when monitoring and review processes use real-time data to adjust action plans and priorities.
The Effectivness to Impact team is currently looking for candidates to pilot the E2I.
Is there room for improvement in your sector? Is there a willingness to discuss, negotiate and compromise?

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