

DRAFT CO-CHAIRS' RESPONSE TO THE 2021 GPEDC REVIEW

Background document for Session 2: “Responding to Review recommendations in run up to the 2022 GPEDC HLM”

22nd Steering Committee Meeting, 15 – 16 December 2021

This document presents the Global Partnership Co-Chairs' response to the GPEDC Review, which was conducted by an external review team. It provides a basis for Steering Committee members' discussion on the response to Review recommendations in session II.

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A. Co-Chairs appreciation of the Review's findings and recommendations

Co-Chairs welcome the GPEDC Review (undertaken by MDF Consultancy). It is an important vehicle to ensure the GPEDC is fit for supporting all partners to help achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The conclusion that the mandate and the effectiveness principles are as relevant as ever, provides a solid basis to consider how to accelerate progress on development cooperation partnerships.

- **Co-Chairs note the sustained efforts that have been made since the High-Level Meeting in Nairobi (2016) to make the GPEDC more operational and results-oriented, while remaining open and inclusive.** These improvements cement the position of the GPEDC as a unique global platform to maximize the effectiveness of all forms of development co-operation. Case studies are taking stock of relevant lessons.
- **Co-Chairs share the Review's findings that the current governing structure and arrangements offer opportunities for all members to engage.** The clear governing structure, and voluntary financial contributions, have kept the threshold for stakeholders to participate and engage low, keeping the Partnership inclusive.
- **Co-Chairs welcome the GPEDC members' perception of the JST to be efficient and relatively 'light' when compared to other global partnerships.** Persistent funding and capacity constraints have not impeded the JST from delivering on its mandate of providing light coordination function, advancing the GPEDC monitoring, supporting to anchor GPEDC work at country level, maintaining GPEDC's communication tools and Knowledge Sharing Platform, and providing secretariat support to Co-Chairs and the Steering Committee.

Acknowledging these qualities of the GPEDC, Co-Chairs also recognize some of the **critical challenges the Review has brought to the fore.**

- **Despite dedicated efforts to make the GPEDC a balanced and inclusive stakeholder-led partnership, the external perception by some remains that the GPEDC is donor-driven.** Co-Chairs agree that strengthening the global community dedicated to pursuing the effectiveness principles will require renewed political commitment across all constituencies, and suggest that this be based on a common, clear narrative of why development effectiveness matters for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Recognizing the need to be responsive to emerging priorities, the GPEDC has moved into more member-led programmatic work, without fully reflecting on the appropriate capacity to deliver.** The 2020-22 GPEDC Work Programme managed to transfer leadership of specific activities to some Steering Committee members, with support from the JST. Co-Chairs agree that this effort, while welcome, has led to too many 'Action Areas' and spread resources too thin, and risks frustrating expectations. More clearly defining responsibilities and identifying the accompanying resources would improve implementation of future work programmes around a small number of strategic priorities and the subsequent demonstration of meaningful progress on development effectiveness at the country level.

- **Co-Chairs acknowledge that significant differences exist in the capacity and willingness of members in leadership roles to engage with the GPEDC, and the corresponding capacity and resources required and appreciate that the present Review sheds a light on this issue.**

The Review took place in parallel to important ongoing reforms and reorientations of the GPEDC, namely the GPEDC monitoring reform and the start of the partner country-led action dialogue initiative. That meant that the Review could not take fully into account those new developments and planned actions to address some of the GPEDC’s shortcomings.

The Review was conducted in a time heavily affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some constituencies were not able to coordinate activities as planned. This hampered progress on the work at local level, with many action dialogues having to be postponed, while others are still on hold.

B. Co-Chairs proposal to follow-up to the Review

Co-Chairs support the recommendation to **improve GPEDC’s demonstrated achievements more strongly at country level and strengthen its impact for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.** In order to do so, there will be need of changes in *what* GPEDC will deliver (functions, instruments, and strategic priorities) and *how* it will do so (in terms of operating modality, governance arrangements and the mandate/functions of the Joint Support Team).

With that in mind, **Co-Chairs propose six priority responses** that directly link to the activities foreseen to prepare the GPEDC HLM 2022 and to the changes proposed in the Global Partnership monitoring reform. The annex details the practical actions under each recommendation.

Demonstrating and achieving stronger impact at the country level:

1. **Refine the vision and develop a compelling narrative that drives strategic communication, advocacy and political outreach for the 2022 GPEDC High-Level Meeting.** The planned concise, action-focused outcome document of the HLM should convey an updated narrative with a strong focus on country-level action and the ambition to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda at all levels, particularly in the context of building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. This requires developing a joint narrative that focuses on a key common understanding of effectiveness that unites all the stakeholders. The political and stakeholder engagement process to the 2022 GPEDC HLM - “Road to the 2022 GPEDC HLM” - will be the vehicle to convey the political vision of the GPEDC to all relevant actors, refine the effectiveness narrative through a well negotiated outcome document.
2. **Better anchor GPEDC at country level by harnessing existing work, institutionalizing Action Dialogues and advancing the reform of the Global Partnership monitoring.** Mutual accountability in the spirit of a whole-of-society approach to development is at the heart of effective development co-operation. The 2022 GPEDC HLM and its outcomes and outputs are expected to demonstrate how

greater mutual accountability can become a reality in future, including by showcasing the achievements of the Action Dialogues and the outcomes under the work programme's Action Areas and by launching the new monitoring framework. In addition, as envisaged in the monitoring reform, institutionalization of the Action Dialogues within the monitoring process will be one of the key instruments to better integrate effectiveness into country-level multi-stakeholder dialogue and establish operational links of the GPEDC programme to the existing country mechanisms. However, there are opportunities for better aligning the results governments and other partners have achieved on development effectiveness to existing country level processes, such as Voluntary National Reviews, the SDG Financing Strategy, and other follow-up and review actions related to the 2030 Agenda. This goes hand in hand with the need for the GPEDC to provide more tailored and demand-driven support to inclusive country-level activities, as envisaged in the monitoring reform.

3. **Strengthen the member-led approach to implement the GPEDC Work Programme by assessing progress more systematically.** Co-Chairs believe that the member-led modality to deliver the GPEDC work programme should continue to be pursued and structured around strategic priorities instead of four effectiveness principles. Such an approach ensures stakeholder leadership, allows for more inclusivity and the leveraging of a broader base of resources. However, a more rigorous results framework is needed to track progress in implementing the GPEDC Work Programme, including: intended impact, outputs and measures of success of programme areas (i.e. Action Areas), and inputs/resources needed. This would also help to pivot towards fully funding future work and broadening the ownership among all stakeholders, beyond donors. At the same time, a member-led work programme requires further thinking on how to balance the need for more formal structures and clearer responsibilities with the benefits of the current model, whilst ensuring low barriers-of-entry for development actors. Lessons learned from the current implementation model could inform an appropriate and functional set-up for relevant Action Areas to support the next work programme.

Revisiting the functioning of the GPEDC's leadership and governance arrangements to deliver its mandate:

4. **Revisit current stakeholder engagement patterns and strengthen and adapt governance arrangements.** The significant differences in the capacity and willingness of members to engage with the GPEDC are a major challenge. Further, engagement has been highly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The underlying assumption for the current composition of the Steering Committee and its representational model was based on a classification of countries and partners as providers, provider-recipients, recipients, and other non-executive stakeholders. The Review revealed that this assumption should be revisited, including by reflecting on roles and functions of regional organizations. Co-Chairs will make a proposal by 2022.
5. **Reflect on implications for the Joint Support Team's mandate and functions.** The JST currently provides the minimum institutional core support to the GPEDC, focusing on monitoring, communication, a light coordination and country anchoring, and secretariat work. While the JST is perceived to be efficient and relatively 'light' compared to other, similar global partnerships, it is not without severe funding and capacity constraints. The changes proposed through the Global

Partnership monitoring reform as well as the recommendation to strengthen the GPEDC's impact including at the country level signals a need for stronger support functions, which implies a significant increase in funding requirements. To this end, the Co-Chairs will discuss the implications of the Review for the JST functions with the two host organizations OECD and UNDP.

6. **The potential actions and changes needed to strengthen GPEDC's impact will have significant resource implications.** It will require much higher investments and efforts to catalyse resources by GPEDC partners, both at country level and into support functions of the JST. Without commitments of partners to invest for GPEDC activities, any changes will not lead to the desired impact.

In addition, while noting the proposal for a conceptual framework to help clarify the repositioning of the GPEDC and its operating model, the Co-Chairs are concerned that it could become a negotiating and resource-heavy process to develop a framework in a complex multi-stakeholder platform operating at the global/regional and country levels. Co-Chairs chose not to invest heavily in developing a conceptual framework and rather to focus on practical political and stakeholder engagement and stronger communication efforts as part of the "Road to the 2022 GPEDC HLM". As part of this process, Co-Chairs suggest to develop an *initial* and *light* conceptual framework as a practical tool to inform the design of the next work programme. This should build on the political (re-)interpretation of the effectiveness principles and their application in different contexts and by different stakeholders. However, this process will need to be an integral part of the HLM planning with engagement from a new set of Co-Chair leadership.

Guiding questions to the Steering Committee:

- *Do you agree with the overall direction to strengthen GPEDC's impact? What should we prioritise? Are there any major missing actions to address key challenges in the current GPEDC set-up and approach? Are there any major partners we should engage?*
- *Do you agree with the proposed approach to consider and advance actions to address the challenges as integral part of the preparation for the 2022 GPEDC HLM?*
- *What actions will you take to support the GPEDC reforming its way of working?*

ANNEX: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic Recommendation 1		
<i>Reposition and equip the GPEDC to promote and support EDC in specific development areas prioritised by countries.</i>		
Management Response		
<p>The GPEDC has already undertaken critical steps towards repositioning itself at the country level by launching the partner country-led “Action Dialogues” initiative and the reform of the Global Partnership monitoring. The ongoing Action Dialogues have demonstrated that there are a variety of existing or emerging coordination mechanisms at country level, which link up effective development cooperation to the 2030 Agenda or have a potential to better integrate effectiveness into multi-stakeholder dialogues around SDG financing and SDG coordination fora. However, further efforts are needed to encourage countries to better link the results around effectiveness to the VNR process, SDG financing and other issues related to the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the EDC principles can underpin various national processes designed to implement the SDGs, including national and sectoral development strategies.</p> <p>The GPEDC Action Areas (AAs) that are part of the 2020-2022 GPEDC Work Programme connect the global and country levels. They produce country studies and develop toolkits and guidance materials to underpin more effective development cooperation partnerships across different modalities (e.g. the toolkit for the Kampala Principles on Effective Private Sector Engagement). This member-led implementation model organised around strategic priorities of the Work Programme should be continuously pursued. However, in the next iteration of AAs, and with the results coming from the AAs, processes should be strengthened to better connect AA work to the country level. This includes support to bring AA results to country level, while at the same time making AA work more responsive to countries needs and experiences.</p>		
Key proposed actions	Responsibility & timeline	Comments
1.1 Institutionalize the Action Dialogues as key element of the process of the reformed Global Partnership monitoring exercise.	Decision at SC and HLM	Upon approval of the proposed GPEDC monitoring reform informed from piloting of the new monitoring approach, the Action Dialogues will become an integral part of the monitoring exercise. This will require corresponding guidance and support to ensure they are being institutionalized within relevant national SDG coordination and financing processes and mechanisms.
1.2. Take stock of all country level outputs and evidence to display at the 2022 GPEDC HLM.		This exercise should cover the outputs across the three strategic priority areas of the programme of work, including Action Dialogues. It aims to inform a more systematic approach by the GPEDC to collect evidence on the impact of the effectiveness principles and the use of monitoring results.
1.3. Review the AA implementation arrangement to support national capacity and country level work.	CCs, AAs, JST	Action Areas could support country level work by responding to the specific effectiveness issues countries raise through their Action Dialogues. Such an approach requires considering a more systematic and sustainable financing modality for the Action Areas.

Strategic Recommendation 2		
<i>Develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for improved planning and communication.</i>		
<p>Management Response</p> <p>GPEDC's work to date is based on the assumption that a wider application of the EDC Principles across all forms of cooperation, promoted through the Global Partnership monitoring and assessment of progress, will lead to more effective development cooperation and thus better development results and impact. The GPEDC has not elaborated a conceptual framework that is explicit and formally agreed, nor does it have a Theory of Change that looks at 'differentiated' application of the Principles and the types of development cooperation relationships suitable for diverse partners and country contexts.</p> <p>Re-adjusting the GPEDC's framework outcomes based on what worked and what did not could improve the performance of GPEDC's key functions and instruments. Such a more clear and explicit operating framework would support strategic communication to better link the GPEDC to the 2030 Agenda and mainstream effectiveness processes at the country level.</p> <p>Elaborating an ambitious new conceptual framework, however, risks being a time consuming and resource-intensive exercise. We propose therefore to use the preparation for the 2022 GPEDC HLM to develop a clear political vision towards 2030 and a compelling narrative for the GPEDC, coupled with stronger communication tools</p>		
Key proposed actions	Responsibility & timeline	Comments
2.1. Deliver a concise, action-focused political Outcome document.	CCs, SC, JST	The HLM's Outcome document should be visionary and forceful to sharpen the GPEDC's role and strengthen its contribution to the 2030 Agenda. The CC consultation process and related outreach (See 2.2.) will clarify the GPEDC's joint vision towards 2030, along with the key reforms required to realize its vision.
2.2. Re-establish a constructive dialogue with key missing actors.	CCs	This builds on the political analysis for the HLM, to engage with actors such as the BRICS to harvest their views on development effectiveness in the changing development co-operation landscape.
2.3. Develop an overarching communication strategy for the GPEDC towards 2030.	JST	Use the HLM preparation process to revisit the GPEDCs communication instruments and strategy. This includes strengthening existing tools/platform (i.e. launching of a set of country pages on the GPEDC website, establishing 'organisation' profiles' in the Knowledge Platform); developing quality standards for GPEDC communication and for the HLM, to clearly show what the GPEDC stands for.
2.4. Develop an initial and light conceptual framework as a practical planning tool to design the next work programme.	CCs	Developing this light conceptual framework should build on technical GPEDC outputs and be part of the HLM preparatory process to invite stakeholder contributions and perspectives. Subsequently it will have to be validated by the new GPEDC leadership as the planning tool to develop the new programme of work and results-framework.
Strategic Recommendation 3		

Adapt GPEDC’s operating model and funding structure to provide a clearer connection between global and country-level operationalisation of GPEDC’s mandate.

Management Response

The current operating model of the GPEDC is member-led implementation of the GPEDC Work Programme through the Action Areas, underpinned by the five core functions of the GPEDC¹, and that of a JST aimed at driving coherence and impact across the Work Programme. The described dichotomy “global – country level” does not give full justice to the structure and membership of the GPEDC. It might be useful to distinguish between global level (addressing global normative processes) – constituency level (constituency specific processes which might include regional) – country level.

In this context, Co-Chairs agree that member-led implementation modality of the Work Programme’s strategic priorities should continue to be pursued, with stronger and explicit operating links between the deliberations at GPEDC global level with that of country-level multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms.

The proposed elements of the monitoring reform – institutionalization of Action Dialogues – will be a key step to strengthen explicit operational links, coupled with a deliberate effort to connect with relevant work of the Action Areas and Action Dialogues, based on priority issues/areas of effectiveness in which countries are pursuing to bring multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement.

Key proposed actions	Responsibility & timeline	Comments
3.1. Implement the institutionalization of Action Dialogues to explicitly identify country-multi stakeholder mechanisms.	All	If Action Dialogues are embedded in the monitoring process and the timing of the exercise provides flexibility for partner countries to embed the Dialogue into existing mechanisms, then this part of the monitoring process could be used to identify and map out the different types of multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms where countries anchor the monitoring exercise. This information could be made available in revamped GPEDC country pages.
3.2. Consider establishing a dedicated resource pool or alternative modalities to support collective identification and implementation of priorities at country level.	CCs, SC	The current approach for various action areas that rely on ad-hoc funding arrangements has proven to be a challenge. The GPEDC provides services as a catalyst partnership for country level demands and resources, based on needs identified by country level mechanism. It could look to identify relevant modalities and themes (i.e. sector-level work, SSC, private sector engagement, statistical capacity, etc.)
3.3. Define an approach within the monitoring reform on how country-level action/progress linked to Action Dialogues and AA work plans can be reported.	CCs, JST	Revamped country profiles should include such information in addition to monitoring results.

¹ Five core functions as outlined in the Nairobi Outcome Document include: (1) supporting effectiveness at the country level; (2) generating evidence for accountability and SDG follow-up; (3) sharing knowledge and lessons; (4) facilitating specialized dialogue; and (5) building political momentum for effective development cooperation.

Strategic Recommendation 4

Establish a better overview and broader understanding of the GPEDC's contribution to country-level outcomes.

Management Response

In the lead up to the 2022 GPEDC HLM, an overview of country-level outcomes of the Action Areas is expected. A synthesis of key outcomes from the Action Dialogue, along with the country-level outcomes that are planned and/or delivered by the Action Areas, will form substantive components for the preparation for the HLM.

A package of publications, communication and knowledge products developed for the 2022 GPEDC HLM, will provide a space to establish a better overview of country-level activities, and would include specific knowledge/communication products developed by Action Areas. They will be showcased through the GPEDC website and the Knowledge Sharing Platform. At the 2022 GPEDC HLM, partner countries will also have space to showcase and discuss the GPEDC's contribution to country-level outcomes.

Furthermore, the evidence generated through the Action Area 1.1. through their analysis of the relationship between the application of effectiveness principles at sectorial level and achieved sustainable development/SDG results can further help sharpen GPEDC's contribution to country-level outcomes.

Key proposed actions	Responsibility & timeline	Comments
4.1. Produce a Progress/Synthesis Report, coupled with preparation of country briefs of the Action Dialogue.	JST, (Q2 & Q3 2022)	The Report will capture country-level findings and outputs of the Action Dialogues along with actions agreed at the country level for promoting changes in EDC practices.
4.2. Produce knowledge/communication products that focus on country-level outcomes.	Action Areas, (Q3 2022)	As part of the preparation for the HLM, it will be useful to establish a regular coordination across AAs on planned knowledge and communication products.
4.3. Engage in the research component of the Action Area 1.1.	AA 1.1, CCs and SC	There is a plan for a workshop to discuss findings of the research component. This provides an opportunity to deepen engagement with think-tanks and academia to help understand manifestations of changed EDC practices and their impact on SDGs.
4.4. Feature country level outcomes more regularly and prominently on key GPEDC communication platforms including the KSP.	JST, (2022)	This will enable all actors at country level to feature their contributions, learnings and practices.

Strategic Recommendation 5

Improve engagement by stimulating the vibrancy of the AA working groups.

Management Response

Increasing the relevance and outputs of the Action Areas vs. country-level impact could make an important contribution towards a more 'local heavy, global light' GPEDC. This recommendation would require further thinking on how to achieve this over the medium term, while balancing the need for more formal structures and clearer responsibilities, with the benefits of the current model – being low barriers to entry for development actors to participate in the work of the GPEDC. This also needs to consider how to ensure any future AA work is member-driven and fully funded.

In the current context, it will be hard to expect real changes to any division of labour in AAs that could accelerate progress. Specific options will have to be considered for each AA differently and upon the initiative of the AA leads in order to be able to make a difference. In the current duration of the work programme, most Action Areas are already in the process of revising their work plans to aim for realistic contributions to the HLM.

However, it is important to establish what 'stakeholder-led' model would be most appropriate in the complex multi-stakeholder context of the GPEDC. The current stakeholder-type model of organization has posed its own challenges, progressed unevenly and in some ways undermined the multi-stakeholder approach on which the Partnership is premised. Centering member-led implementation of the AAs around strategic priorities could address some of these challenges by better focusing capacity and resources.

Key proposed actions	Responsibility & timeline	Comments
5.1 Reflect challenges of implementation and country engagement in AA work plan.	AAs	This could be done in a process of revising work plans of the AAs
5.2. Decision on an appropriate 'stakeholder-led' model.	CCs (including future CCs), SC	To be informed from lessons learned on the current approach as well as consideration of resources implication and the benefits of the current model.

Strategic Recommendation 60		
<i>Improve the quality of engagement and representation of constituencies in the GPEDC's main governing bodies, starting with the Co-Chairs and expanded to the SC.</i>		
Management Response		
<p>Revitalizing the different constituencies and enabling their active participation to GPEDC work has been a longstanding objective. The suggestion for each constituency group to undertake a self-assessment of its own coordination mechanisms and practices may work for some constituency groups. But some groups do not have easily identified existing institutional mechanisms (i.e. countries that have a dual role in development cooperation or partner countries). Also, not all regions are currently represented, making it harder to pursue a more consistent regional approach.</p> <p>The underlying assumption for the current Steering Committee composition will have to be revisited, including the roles and functions of regional organisation. Currently Co-Chairs are rolling out consultation with SC constituency representatives to discuss incentives for their members to engage in the 2022 GPEDC HLM. To this end, Co-Chairs propose to engage SC members and others as part of the political and stakeholder outreach/engagement to discuss possible changes to the current governance composition, as part of the political track for the 2022 GPEDC HLM. This will also need to be discussed with potential new Co-Chairs (a next GPEDC leadership), in the context of leadership transition.</p>		
Key proposed actions	Responsibility & timeline	Comments
6.1 Review ToRs and institutional support mechanisms for a smooth transition and continuity in representation roles.	CCs, (2022)	Co-Chairs will jointly review their ToRs to further specify their mandate, clarify the related resource implications and establish a transparent process for succession.
6.2. Organise preparatory meetings with constituency groups and regional organisations as part of the “Road to the HLM”.	CCs, SCs, Regional Organisations, (2022)	Through the preparatory meetings constituency groups will coordinate their contribution to the political outcome document (see 2.1). They will also assess the existing engagement mechanisms, institutions and capacities to consider appropriate support structures for constituency engagement (e.g. a Partner Country Caucus). This will require SC constituency groups to identify an adequate space to hold preparatory meetings and reach out to the various regional organisations that are not currently engaged in the GPEDC as part of the political/stakeholder engagement for the HLM.
6.3. Revisit the assumption for the current constituency-model, and assess alternative constituency-models as part of the preparation for the HLM.	CCs, SCs	This is to be done based on the political outreach/engagement led by the Co-Chairs for the 2022 GPEDC HLM and in close collaboration with the SC members’ assessment of existing engagement mechanisms, institutions, and capacities (see 6.2).

Strategic Recommendation 7

Strengthen the management support function of the JST by providing a stronger mandate in administrative leadership.

Management Response

While there are on-going efforts to stimulate synergies and coordination of activities across Action Areas (i.e. AA coordination calls, AA registers), more rigorous process and management support are needed to help planning, monitoring, reporting of results achieved through the Action Areas.

The strengthened management support function is considered additional to the current core support provided by the JST, with the need to strengthen coordination support to the Action Areas/Work Programme to ensure effective planning, monitoring and reporting of the entire GPEDC Work Programme based on a more robust results-based programming/management. While the informal finance committee undertakes efforts to monitor the status of resource mobilization and actively support efforts to meet the resource needs of the JST, JST continues to face resource constraints, at times being stretched to deliver the increasing demand.

The needed changes in the Global Partnership monitoring as well as the proposed recommendations to strengthen the GPEDC's impact would require much stronger support functions to the GPEDC. Co-Chairs will discuss with the two host organisations implications of taking forward the full set of key proposed actions on the JST functions, including its resource and capacity implications.

Key proposed actions	Responsibility & timeline	Comments
7.1. Discuss future implications for the mandate and functions of the JST.	CCs, OECD and UNDP (Q1 2022)	This discussion should be informed from key changes proposed/expected in terms of JST functions as well as resourcing and staffing implications.