



October 2021

MDF Training & Consultancy BV  
in cooperation with Ecorys

HNK Horapark, Bennekomseweg 41  
6717 LL Ede  
The Netherlands



[mdf@mdf.nl](mailto:mdf@mdf.nl)  
[www.mdf.nl](http://www.mdf.nl)

# TABLE OF CONTENT

ABBREVIATIONS	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1 INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 Expectations, purpose and deliverables of the review	9
1.2 Scope of the review	10
1.3 Structure of the report	11
1.4 Limitations of the review	11
2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	13
2.1 Objectives of Performance review and Governance review	13
2.2 Process steps	14
3 GPEDC: FACTS AND FIGURES	15
3.1 Vision, mandate, and approach of the GPEDC	15
3.2 GPEDC's conceptual framework	16
3.3 Implementation modalities	18
3.4 Governance arrangements	21
4 PERFORMANCE REVIEW	24
4.1 Relevance	24
4.2 Effectiveness and Impact	35
4.3 Efficiency	49
5 GOVERNANCE REVIEW	52
5.1 Strategy and plans	52
5.2 Cooperation and Engagement	56
5.3 Steering structure and processes	63
5.4 Learning Capacity	68
6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	74
6.1 Relevance	74
6.2 Effectiveness at the global level	75
6.3 Effectiveness and impact at the country level	75
6.4 Cost-benefit ratio and efficiency	76
6.5 Governance	77
7 RECOMMENDATIONS	80

# Abbreviations

AA	Action area
AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
AE	Aid effectiveness
CC	Co-Chair
COM-B	Capacity, Opportunity, Motivation – Behaviour (model)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee, OECD
DC	Development cooperation
DE	Development effectiveness
EDC	Effective development co-operation
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FCAS	Fragile and conflict-affected states
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
GPI	Global partnership initiative
HLF	High level forum
HLM	High level meeting
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
IFI	International financial institution
JST	Joint Support Team
LAP	Learning and Acceleration Programme
MAG	Monitoring Advisory Group
MS	Member States
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBIG	Post-Busan Interim Group
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFM	Public finance management
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
SC	Steering committee
SCM	Steering Committee meeting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLM	Senior level meeting
ToC	Theory of Change
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# Executive Summary

## REVIEW PURPOSE AND APPROACH

Under the leadership and guidance of the four co-chairs, the GPEDC review assesses and offers recommendations for the realisation of the current mandate of the GPEDC, *supporting the implementation of the 2030 agenda by maximising the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development*. The review is expected to consider its findings in light of important contextual changes that have influenced the work of the GPEDC in the past decade, while taking into account concerns that interest and engagement in the GPEDC may be fading.

In light of this, the review set out to achieve the following:

- a. offer options on ways to enable/support a refreshed momentum at the political and technical level so that the desired key behavioural changes – stakeholders of the various constituency groups re-investing and re-engaging – take place and contribute to delivering on the existing Global Partnership mandate from 2016; and
- b. facilitate gaining insights into “what works, and what doesn’t” in terms of implementation modalities and governance arrangements, as well as the reasons why.

In practice, this means that the GPEDC review comprises two interlinked components: (1) **performance review** and (2) **governance review**. The objective of the **performance review** is to answer the question: “*to what extent has GPEDC delivered on its mandate, and how can this be improved?*” In doing so, the performance review assessed the (continued) relevance and effectiveness/impact of the GPEDC at the global and country level. Besides, the performance review set out to understand how and why the momentum (vibrancy in constituency engagement) of the partnership has changed over time. The objective of the **governance review** is to answer the question: “*to what extent and how can the functioning of the GPEDC’s leadership and governance arrangements be improved in support of the GPEDC’s mandate?*” In doing so, the review examined five success factors of a ‘cooperation system’:<sup>1</sup> strategy, cooperation, steering structure, processes, and learning capacity.

Data collection took place through desk study and interviews (perception study) followed by a small survey among a broad group of GPEDC stakeholders, representing the various constituencies that make up the partnership. The review set out to look at the GPEDC performance and governance at both the global and country level, although in-country primary data collection remained limited due to Covid-related limitations. In addition, the GPEDC review took place in parallel to the ongoing monitoring reform process. To avoid duplication, the GPEDC review refrains from formulating separate conclusions and recommendations directed at the monitoring exercise, which we recognise as one of the flagship interventions and a key component of the GPEDC’s performance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Using the Capacity Works model, GmbH, G. Z. (2015). Cooperation Management for Practitioners: Managing Social Change with Capacity Works (1st ed. 2015, Corr. 5th printing 2017 ed.). GiZ GmbH.

Upon completion of the data collection process, and in line with the learning purpose of the review, a sense-making workshop<sup>2</sup> took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 to validate and jointly reflect on initial conclusions and strategic dilemmas to generate ideas about the GPEDC's best way forward. Following this event and comments on the draft report, a final review report was developed including a set of actionable recommendations to address the identified challenges of the GPEDC to deliver on its mandate and related shortcomings in its governance structure.

## CONCLUSIONS PER REVIEW CRITERIA

The conclusions from review findings related to relevance, effectiveness and impact, cost-benefit ratio and efficiency, and governance are as follows.

### RELEVANCE

**The GPEDC's mandate** to maximise the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development remains relevant, particularly in a world dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic with increasingly scarce resources and progress towards the SDGs getting further behind schedule. The GPEDC's expanded promotion of the Paris principles (2005) from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness has helped to retain its relevance as the share of ODA in financing for development has continued to decline during the past decade, even though ODA also remains highly relevant in many contexts. However, this expansion has not been fully internalised by the GPEDC's constituencies, as many still perceive the GPEDC as being primarily focused on improving the effectiveness of grant aid in a conventional North-South cooperation system, which clearly affects the perceived relevance of the GPEDC in middle-income countries for whom grant aid holds marginal significance.

Similarly, **the validity and relevance of the four development cooperation principles** remain undisputed. Nevertheless, with the changes in the context such as the increasing concern of shrinking civic space in many countries, the practical meaning of principles like 'country ownership' and 'inclusiveness' have become issues for debate, questioning the centrality of government in development cooperation and proposing to broaden the term ownership more in line with the whole-of-society approach. Besides, 'transparency and mutual accountability' remain complex principles, especially in situations of tension or a lack of trust between different constituencies.

Despite these shifting insights, the GPEDC demonstrates reinforced efforts since the HLM in Nairobi (2016) to become more operational and results oriented. In its recent 2020-2022 work programme, the GPEDC has created an operating framework focusing on three priorities that all have their own specific logic and relevance.

- i) The **relevance of the GPEDC promoting development effectiveness in the 2030 agenda** lies in the GPEDC providing a unique, inclusive, open space to debate the effectiveness of development cooperation in the pursuit of the SDGs. Despite being co-hosted by the OECD and UNDP, the GPEDC is not an institutionalised part of the UN architecture for the implementation of the 2030 agenda. This 'informality' helps in keeping the GPEDC accessible and relatively free from becoming politicised, but at the same time it leads to questions about the 'status' of the GPEDC and the extent to which constituents are bound by its agreements.

---

<sup>2</sup> Including co-chairs, representatives of the various constituency groups and JST members.

- ii) The GPEDC's **relevance in building better partnerships** most strongly lies in demonstrating the GPEDC's resolve to maximise *all forms of development cooperation*, and not limiting itself to traditional aid effectiveness. This priority area – comprising seven AAs related to the GPEDC's diverse constituencies – is relevant in offering a more obvious and coherent space to its diverse members to contribute to the GPEDC's mandate. At the same time, these seven AAs on top of GPEDC's other and newly-emerging priorities are perceived as spreading the limited GPEDC resources (too) thin, raising (unrealistic) expectations about results of the partnership and demands on the JST for support.
- iii) The **relevance of the GPEDC's ongoing monitoring reform** lies in the earlier-mentioned contention about how the four principles of EDC are to be practised and measured. **The monitoring reports have the potential to be relevant as a tool for both accountability and learning from progress.** The inclusiveness of the process means that the monitoring exercise provides unique broadly validated insights into achievements and challenges in development effectiveness. These insights can trigger an accountability-driven political debate to keep the quality of development cooperation high on the global development agenda, but we see limited appetite to take part in such a debate, in particular among middle-income countries. These same insights can also be relevant for learning, if fed into an open and more technical debate and followed up by a successful 'action dialogue' process, which is a process that has recently been initiated but still has to prove itself.

## **EFFECTIVENESS and IMPACT**

Reasonable **GPEDC effectiveness in delivering on expected results at the global level** is demonstrated by 1) new evidence and knowledge being produced (subsequent monitoring reports, a compendium of best practices, etc.), 2) a growing community with agreed principles for private sector engagement through development cooperation, and 3) a range of global events and outreach efforts dedicated to (specific aspects of) development effectiveness. At the same time, apart from the AA on South-South Cooperation led by Colombia, we see limited participation and engagement of middle-income countries in delivering these results. This illustrates the continued challenge of creating a global community dedicated to furthering the development effectiveness principles as set out in the Busan Partnership agreement of 2011.

The GPEDC has difficulty demonstrating **effectiveness at the country level**, as country-level results are highly diverse and at most partially documented. Nevertheless, we see an increasing number of in-county dialogues in the context of the monitoring exercise, while eighteen countries confirmed leading action dialogues in 2021. Besides, various pilots and country case studies have been conducted to document lessons about effective development cooperation.

In terms of **impact (behavioural change) at the country level**, the monitoring reports provide a unique insight into *progress towards the practising of the EDC principles in an increasing number of countries (i.e., outcome-level results)*. Highlights from these reports illustrate progress in putting national development strategies in place, but also declining alignment and predictability of support by development partners, and stagnating consultation with non-state actors in a deteriorating space for civil society. Unfortunately, there is no attribution of these results to the GPEDC, which makes the monitoring reports of limited use for assessing the performance and governance of the GPEDC.

However, from the interviews the review has found clear but inherently anecdotal **signs of progress towards behaviour change of constituencies**. Particular examples include the development of national strategies or guidelines for development cooperation, and the DAC using the critical findings on alignment to reinvigorate discussions about EDC among its members. Nevertheless, evidence of attributable progress towards the desired behavioural change of the GPEDC's constituencies is limited and sketchy, which means that the causal logic of the GPEDC's remains to be proven, as is currently attempted through one of the AAs. Meanwhile, unless and until more convincing proof is produced, the real added value of the GPEDC for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda continues to be questioned.

### **COST-BENEFIT RATIO AND EFFICIENCY**

When reviewing the **cost-benefit ratio of the GPEDC**, we observe different perceptions among the various constituencies. Partner and dual countries appear largely satisfied, as their costs for participation are limited to voluntary time investments, while they consider it important to be connected and benefit from the global debate and knowledge exchange related to effective development cooperation. Various non-state constituencies (CSOs, trade unions, foundations) largely also perceive the cost-benefit ratio of their participation to be positive. They see the GPEDC as a unique space to access and influence policy-makers, but only insofar that there are reasonable prospects of contributing to meaningful results that justify these time investments. In the absence of clear results, the future of their engagement is uncertain. The private sector is less positive, as they have other channels to influence decision-makers and the benefits of being part of GPEDC are less direct or clear at this stage. Moreover, the global debate holds less importance to them than its practical implications in the marketplace. Finally, the so-called provider countries are the most critical constituency in terms of assessing cost-benefits of their participation in the GPEDC, as many of them feel that they invest both time and funding without having a clear insight into the returns of these investments. Nonetheless, they value the multi-stakeholder nature of the GPEDC and the opportunity to discuss EDC issues with different constituencies.

Concerning the **financial efficiency of the JST institutional support services** to which the GPEDC budget is dedicated, we see a relatively small secretariat providing a range of support services at a cost of around US\$ 3 million per year, which is positively appreciated by the majority of interviewees. The cost-efficiency of the JST is therefore seen as adequate, while time-efficiency is challenged at times by the part-time availability of the co-chairs.

### **GOVERNANCE**

The GPEDC's **strategic ambitions** are articulated and regularly updated and adapted to important changes in context, albeit without an explicit conceptual framework reflecting the expected pathways of change towards those ambitions. This complicates the translation of ambitions in operational plans. Nevertheless, progress has been made from 'limited operationalisation' (before 2016) to SC/CC/JST-centred operationalisation (2017 – 2018 work programme), to an increasingly coherent and member-centred operationalisation (2020 – 2022 work programme) with three priorities and nine AAs in pursuit of a distinct set of global and country results. However, the work under those AAs remains at the level of global results (i.e., guidelines or lessons learned) as these take more time than expected and precede country-specific results. Besides, progress is based on voluntary engagement and contributions, whereby it appears to be difficult to secure the active engagement of partner countries

(except in South-South and triangular cooperation). This complicates the implementation and subsequent demonstration of meaningful progress towards the GPEDC's ambitions at the country level.

The overall **GPEDC governing structure and arrangements** are relatively clear and sufficiently flexible to make the partnership easily accessible to (new) members. The SC and CCs provide adequate and widely-supported clarity about GPEDC's strategic ambitions, albeit without clearly setting priorities in light of its limited sphere of influence and resources. As multi-stakeholder cooperation system, the GPEDC lacks a clearly-defined and well-resourced 'operating core' that is directly responsible for implementation of action and delivery of outputs at the global and country level as foreseen in the subsequent work programmes. This makes the feasibility and realisation of the GPEDC's intended results uncertain and unpredictable.

**Member cooperation and engagement** differs between and within constituencies and has been changing over time, for both the right and wrong reasons. This is partly caused by contextual factors beyond the sphere of influence of the GPEDC, and partly by the capacity, willingness and opportunities to engage. The *capacity to engage* significantly differs between constituencies, although current arrangements for coordination, consultation and engagement do not take these differences into account. The *willingness to engage* is largely determined by the clarity and complementarity of expected contributions, which has gained increased attention and improved over time, but expectations remain too abstract, varied and voluntary to have much motivational power. In terms of providing *opportunities to engage*, the GPEDC is positively appraised for being unique in offering an open and safe space to debate global development effectiveness concerns, while the nine AAs offer increasing opportunities for members to engage on topics of interest, although engagement remains voluntary here.

**Financial contributions** are also voluntary, which keeps the threshold for membership low but leads to unpredictable contributions from a shrinking number of traditional donors. This affects the work of the JST and confirms the image of the GPEDC primarily remaining a conventional ODA mechanism. The **engagement of co-chairs** is varied due to differences in capacity and support systems that could not be resolved to date. Finally, the **contribution of the host organisations** in providing thought and practical leadership to the GPEDC's operation – in particular at the country level – remains more limited than expected, partly due to a lack of demand and resources and partly to avoid the GPEDC becoming secretariat- rather than member-driven.

Besides the biennial monitoring exercise that maps unattributed results towards EDC beyond the sphere of control of the GPEDC, there is no systematic functional **monitoring and reporting system** that convincingly and comprehensively captures and communicates results that are closer to the GPEDC's sphere of influence.

**Communications efforts** use a range of – mostly web-based – modalities and channels to create awareness, share experiences and inform readers about upcoming and past GPEDC activities. However, reaching a relevant audience at scale – in particular outside the development partners/provider countries – remains a challenge, while a gap remains between what the GPEDC sets out to do on paper and what it is perceived as doing in practice.

The GPEDC demonstrates a variety of deliberate **knowledge-sharing** efforts to facilitate learning among its constituencies. The reach and coverage of these efforts vary, while it is difficult to assess the success of these efforts in the absence of targets, benchmarks and information about the effect of these knowledge-sharing efforts on the behaviour of the GPEDC's constituency. Nevertheless, we see the GPEDC becoming increasingly serious about the importance of learning in executing its mandate at the global and country level. The introduction of the action dialogues is a clear step forward in completing the learning loop of the global monitoring exercise, while some of the key causal connections that form the essence of the GPEDC's work will be examined under AA 1.1. Besides, continued and deliberate learning efforts are also visible under AAs related to private sector engagement, triangular and South-South cooperation. In terms of **internal learning capacity**, we see clear examples of adaptations to context, and changing practices in the planning and management of the GPEDC's operations. These changes illustrate the results of regular and organic reflection processes but also follow from more deliberate fundamental reflection processes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall conclusion of the GPEDC review is that the **GPEDC needs to improve its demonstrated achievements at the country level**. In light of this, we present seven recommendations, with the first three being more strategic and foundational. The subsequent four recommendations are more operational, calling for improvements under the ongoing 2020-2022 work programme.

### STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The three strategic recommendations are connected and relate to the positioning, conceptual framework, and the operating model of the GPEDC.

#### **1. Reposition and equip the GPEDC to promote and support EDC in specific development areas prioritised by countries.**

EDC at the country level is best pursued in combination with, and in support of other existing in-country multi-stakeholder partnerships dedicated to the implementation of the 2030 agenda that struggle with the implementation of the EDC principles. The GPEDC can demonstrate stronger added value to those partnerships by offering credible and practical advice on how to put the EDC principles into practice. For this purpose, the GPEDC can assign EDC principles to dedicated working groups that translate relevant state-of-the-art applied research into practical tools and guidelines. These are shared with country members of the GPEDC who prioritise development areas and partnerships at the country level to work with.

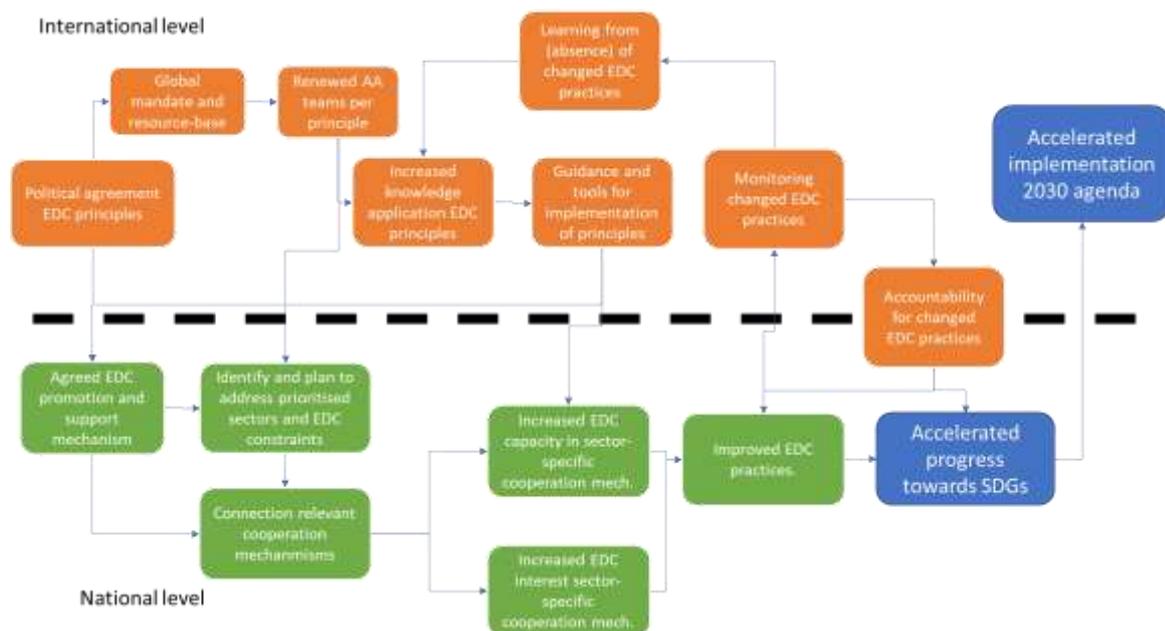
*Besides, we encourage the GPEDC to continue advocating for EDC and its agreed principles at the global level to ascertain that this remains a key issue for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 agenda. This advocacy effort is strengthened by the evidence on which it is based, and hence the continued monitoring of EDC progress will remain valuable.*

#### **2. Develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for improved planning and communication.**

The GPEDC's vision to maximise all forms of development cooperation through the four EDC principles is clear on paper, but insufficiently worked out and internalised to hold practical and convincing use in communicating and planning its operations. We therefore recommend the elaboration of the GPEDC's conceptual framework so that it:

- **communicates** the importance and **continued relevance of the GPEDC** by clearly defining its vision of EDC, its underlying principles and objectives, and articulating its contribution to the successful implementation of the 2030 agenda;
- **clarifies how** the GPEDC intends to complement and **connect to other key actors/cooperation mechanisms at the country level** in furthering the successful implementation of the 2030 agenda; and
- offers an overall framework that **guides the planning and monitoring of progress** towards intermediate and ultimate results at the country level, clearly linking the GPEDC's international knowledge-building efforts to national development cooperation processes.

Initial conceptual framework GPEDC at the global and country level.



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

**At the global level**, this means retaining the AA working group structure as an inclusive member-driven implementation model but organising them around the four EDC principles with the mandate to 1) develop and share knowledge about the operationalisation of the principles, and 2) assist in-country teams in the design and planning of interventions to improve the implementation of the EDC principles.

**At the country level**, this means continuing recent practices to stimulate action dialogues in countries by encouraging the explicit nomination of an (existing) in-country multi-stakeholder development partnership/coordination mechanism, as a critical success factor for leading the pursuit of EDC at the country level. This nominated entity is expected to identify country-specific EDC priorities and related partnerships and design costed interventions for which contributions can be mobilised from GPEDC members in the country. This entity would have a designated and resourced member to report on progress, and it could also be instrumental in the implementation of future monitoring rounds.

The interrelation of the three strategic recommendations is reflected in the figure above, which is also meant as a starting point for a renewed conceptual framework.

## OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the run up to the next HLM, we recommend the following.

4. **Establish a better overview and broader understanding of the GPEDC's contribution to country-level outcomes** by initiating a systematic mapping of changed EDC practices, including a rigorous analysis of the GPEDC's contribution to results in a number of representative cases.
5. **Improve engagement by stimulating the vibrancy of the AA working groups** by addressing the need for 1) an improved perception of the cost-benefit ratio of engagement by redirecting work plans and monitoring practices towards country-level change, 2) more clarity about **what** is expected from individual members, demonstrating a stronger recognition and use of their (potential) complementary contributions, and 3) more clarity about the **when and how** contributions are expected and accounted for, creating a better balance of voluntarism with formalised cooperation.
6. **Improve the quality of engagement and representation of constituencies in GPEDC's main governing bodies.** This means providing (potential) co-chairs more clarity about the expected (time) demands of being a co-chair along with the minimal support requirements. Ideally, co-chairs would mobilise their own support, but have the option call on additional support from other co-chairs and/or the JST as needed. In addition, co-chairs and SC members representing dual and recipient countries – and others as possible – should undertake a self-assessment to determine priority needs for improved coordination and learning. In doing so, they could build on the relative positive experiences of the working groups for South-South and triangular cooperation and using insights from other global partnership, including cost implications, as collected by the JST.
7. **Strengthen the management support function of the JST by providing a stronger mandate in administrative leadership** to ensure the availability and stimulation of more uniform use of user-friendly planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting systems, and facilitate more results-oriented management of the GPEDC's work programme implementation.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Expectations, purpose and deliverables of the review

The **essence of the GPEDC review** is to **assess and offer recommendations for the realisation of the current mandate of GPEDC** - supporting the implementation of the 2030 agenda by maximising the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development. These forms of cooperation rest on the promotion of practising [four principles](#) of development effectiveness (DE) and demonstrating implementation of the principles in all and across sectors rather than in selected ones.

This review is part of the GPEDC 2020- 2022 work program and provides inputs to a discussion about GPEDC’s future in preparation for the third High Level Meeting (HLM) scheduled in 2022. The review is expected to consider its findings in light of important contextual changes that influence the work of the GPEDC. This includes the emergence of the 2030 agenda, the increasing prominence of new actors in the international development arena (including Southern providers, private sector, foundation and civil society organisations), evolving development cooperation (DC) modalities, and a shifting emphasis towards increasing prominence of national resources.

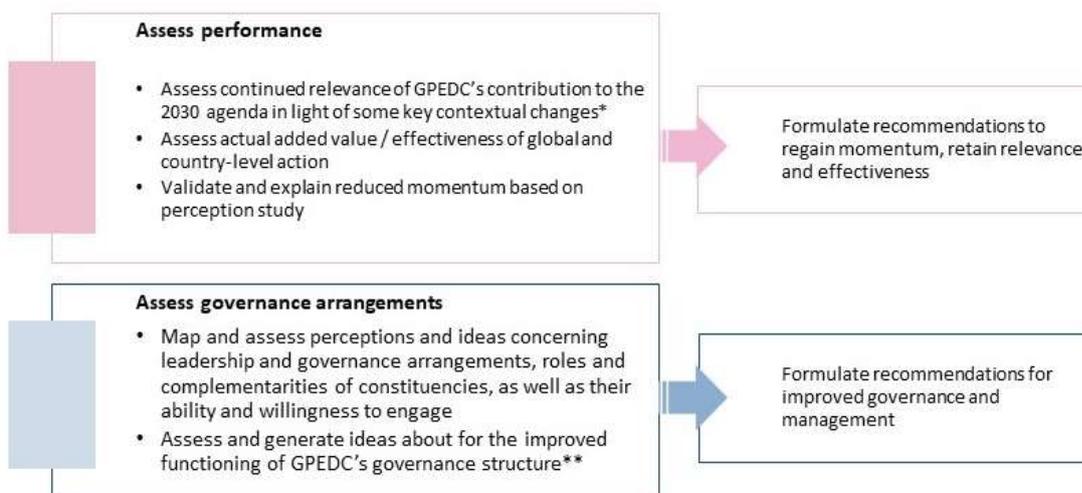
The importance of the review is further emphasized by concerns expressed by the GPEDC Co-Chairs at the start of the review that attention for EDC appears to be waning, who therefore stressed that the review needs to collect and reflect insights from all relevant stakeholders/constituencies. Notwithstanding those concerns, the Co-Chairs believe in the continued high relevance of EDC principles and are dedicated to their implementation, through stimulating and guiding their application at the country level.

In light of this, the review set out – under the leadership and guidance of the four Co-Chairs of GPEDC – to do the following:

- a) offer options on ways to enable/support a refreshed momentum at the political and technical level so that the desired key behavioural changes – stakeholders of the various constituency groups re-investing and re-engaging – take place and contribute to delivering on the existing Global Partnership mandate from 2016; and
- b) facilitate getting insights into “what works, what doesn’t” in terms of implementation modalities and governance arrangements as well as reasons why.

**Specific purposes** of the review are the assessment of the **two components**: (1) GPEDC performance and (2) its governance arrangements, geared towards offering recommendations for the realisation of GPEDC’s mandate (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Purposes of the review, per component<sup>3</sup>



## 1.2 Scope of the review

The review follows the ToR which organises the review questions into (a) evaluation of the current situation in the implementation of the mandate – referred to in this report as a Performance review, and (b) reinforcing the governance approach – referred to in this report as Governance review. The inception process resulted in the reorganisation of the original questions on performance review - including the ones investigating perceptions and expectations of the GPEDC's contributions to the 2030 agenda - in line with the criteria of relevance, effectiveness/impact, and efficiency. In addition, questions on how and why the momentum/ vibrancy of the partnership has changed over time have been sharpened to help formulate recommendations on regaining GPEDC's momentum, retaining the relevance and improving the effectiveness of GPEDC's performance in implementing its mandate.

The main question for the Performance review is *“to what extent has GPEDC delivered on its mandate to support the implementation of the 2030 agenda by maximising the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development, and how can this be improved”?* In doing so, the review maps and assesses the (continued) relevance of GPEDC functions in light of important contextual changes, the effectiveness/impact of GPEDC's work at the global and country-level within the existing mandate from 2016, and the efficiency / cost-benefit ratio of GPEDC's efforts.

Similarly, refinement of the ToR has resulted in re-organising the original questions on governance review along the lines of five success factors for the functioning of a complex cooperation system: strategy, cooperation, steering structure, processes, and learning capacity.

<sup>3</sup> \* The review has recognised that there is a range of far-reaching contextual factors influencing the performance but, instead of making an exhaustive inventory of all relevant contextual factors (which has been put beyond the scope of this review), focus on key ones only. An example of such factor is a general change in the political appetite for ODA/development cooperation of providers at the global level, influenced by 1) a shifting emphasis to the country level and increasing prominence of national resources (with many countries becoming increasingly fewer dependents on ODA), and 2) emergence of actors/development cooperation modalities as well as other global partnerships.

\*\* Improved functioning of GPEDC's governance structure includes topics of task distribution and coordination arrangements among Co-chairs, Steering Committee, and Joint Support Team (JST) as well as member-driven implementation models.

The main question for the Governance review is “to what extent and how can the functioning of GPEDC’s leadership and governance arrangements be improved”? In doing so, attention is paid, in particular, to understanding and assessing leadership and governance arrangements including strategies, plans, the steering structure and existing constituency model, and the capacity, willingness and opportunities of the various constituencies to engage and learn.

The review focuses on GPEDC’s performance/governance since the Nairobi conference in 2016, hence concentrates on the period 2016 – 2021 except for questions related to the (continued) relevance and momentum of the partnership, which will be regarded from its inception in 2011.

The performance and governance review are informed by relevant documentation but rely heavily on a perception analysis of relevant stakeholders, which include constituency representatives: (former and current) Steering Committee (SC) members, co-chairs (CCs), selected work programme participants, external experts, and key staff of the Joint Support Team (JST) and the JST host organisations (OECD and UNDP).

### 1.3 Structure of the report

Following this introductory chapter, the report elaborates on the methodological approach (chapter 2). It proceeds to present facts and figures of the GPEDC performance and governance most pertinent to this review (chapter 3), followed by a presentation of findings from performance (chapter 4) and governance review (chapter 5). Conclusive sections are part of chapters 4 and 5. The report concludes with recommendations (chapter 6). Annexes reference in this report can be found in a separate document.

### 1.4 Limitations of the review

The review relies on a combination of desk-study and interviews, to ascertain we capture both what is documented and what is perceived about the performance and governance of the GPEDC. The perception study is informed by a variety of resource persons that are identified by the GPEDC CC offices and mobilised with the help of the JST. In doing so, the effort was made to identify and mobilise resource persons that offer a fair representation of GPEDC’s diverse constituencies and stakeholders. One challenge, however, has been the part-time involvement and significant turnover in staff representing the various stakeholders in GPEDC. This made it difficult to mobilize well-informed resource persons with longer-term engagement that at the same time form a fair and equal representation of all of GPEDC’s stakeholders. In particular, it has proven to be a challenge to mobilise resource persons that represent recipient countries and that have had extensive exposure to GPEDC’s efforts and results at the country level.

In terms of the representation of recipient countries, this challenge has been addressed by persevering in repeated attempts to mobilise the necessary informants and the inclusion of a survey to provide an alternative option for contributing views. This ultimately has led to a group of recipient country informants that we believe provide a good representation of this particular constituency in informing the review.

The review however has not been able to access a balanced group of informants at both the global and the country level but has had to rely mostly on the inputs of people engaged with the GPEDC at the global level. This has resulted in an informant bias of views that particularly relate to GPEDC's performance at the global level. However, the challenge of mobilising informants that can provide informed views about GPEDC performance at the country level is also indicative of GPEDC's efforts still being more prominent at the global than at the country level. Additional efforts to capture the performance of the GPEDC at the country level, including undertaking a number of country case studies, have been discussed. Such efforts would have certainly helped in deepening the assessment of the in-country dimension of GPEDC's work but were not considered feasible within the scope of this review, partly because of the continuing limitations related to the Covid-pandemic.

Another limitation has been the fact that all data collection, client coordination and consultations among the review team members had to take place virtually due to Covid restrictions. Even though remote interactions with informants, client representatives and among review team members have been quite successful, it does affect the depth of discussions and the nuanced understanding of findings. Nevertheless, the review team feels we have been able to arrive at a balanced and well-argued assessment of GPEDC's performance and governance that provides a valid basis for formulating recommendations for GPEDC's future.

A final limitation to the scope of the review has been the on-going reform of the monitoring exercise. The GPEDC review acknowledges the monitoring exercise as one of the flagship interventions of the GPEDC and a key element to be considered when reviewing its performance. However, to avoid overlap with the on-going monitoring reform, the review has not examined the monitoring exercise and therefore refrains from formulating conclusions or recommendations directed to the monitoring exercise.

# 2 Methodological Approach

The GPEDC review consists of a (1) **Performance review** and a (2) **Governance review**. The two review components have complementary objectives and were carried out according to the methodological approach described below.

## 2.1 Objectives of Performance review and Governance review

### 2.1.1 Performance review

The main objective of the performance review is to answer the question: “to what extent has GPEDC delivered on its mandate to support the implementation of the 2030 agenda by maximising the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development, and how can this be improved?” In doing so, the performance review will assess the (continued) relevance and effectiveness/impact of the GPEDC at the global and country level. Based on these insights, the performance review aims to formulate recommendations to regain GPEDC’s momentum, and how best to retain the relevance and effectiveness of GPEDC’s performance in implementing its mandate. A detailed design of the performance review can be found in Annex 1.

### 2.1.2 Governance review

The main objective of the governance review is to answer the question: “to what extent and how can the functioning of GPEDC’s leadership and governance arrangements be improved?” In doing so, the governance review examines the GPEDC<sup>4</sup> by analysing the following factors:

- 1) **Strategy**: clear and shared ambition translated in a realistic strategy/action-plan
- 2) **Cooperation and Engagement**: optimal use of ‘member’ contributions in line with their diverse capacities and complementarities, including financial engagement.  
This part of the governance review will pay deliberate attention to the ‘active engagement in implementation action’ of the GPEDC membership. Given that engagement concerns the behaviour of GPEDC’s members/constituencies, this analysis will be structured using the COM-B behaviour change model<sup>5</sup>. This means that we will specifically look at how **C**apacities, **O**pportunities and **M**otivation for active engagement are considered and stimulated by GPEDC’s governance arrangements.
- 3) **Steering structure**: governance structure with clear and logical distribution and coordination of responsibilities.
- 4) **Processes**: member-driven ways of working that ensure a results-oriented and accountable implementation of agreed action.
- 5) **Learning capacity**: demonstrated ability to gather and adapt to new insights.

A detailed design of the governance review can be found in Annex 1.

---

<sup>4</sup> GmbH, G. Z. (2015). Cooperation Management for Practitioners: Managing Social Change with Capacity WORKS (1st ed. 2015, Corr. 5th printing 2017 ed.). GiZ GmbH.

<sup>5</sup>Mayne, J. (2015). Useful Theory of Change Models. Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 30(2), 119–142.  
<https://doi.org/10.3138/cjpe.230>

Ultimately, the governance review aims to formulate recommendations for improved governance and management arrangements that are meant to reinvigorate member engagement and performance of the GPEDC in pursuit of its mandate and in line with the multi-stakeholder nature of the Global Partnership. A detailed design of the governance review can be found in Annex 1.

## 2.2 Process steps

The review process encompassed four phases: inception; data collection; data analysis and sense-making; and reporting.

### 2.2.1 Inception

During the inception phase (March – April 2021), the review team conducted an initial desk-study to get familiarised with the GPEDC and elaborated - in consultation with the CCs and the JST - a detailed methodological approach to this review (Annex 1). This formed the basis for the creation of a list of interviewees by the JST and for the development of data collection tools and guidelines.

### 2.2.2 Data collection and processing

The review has used a variety of data collection methods including desk study, Key Informant Interviews (primarily on-distance, both individual and in groups), and a survey (see Annex 1). The desk study included outcome documents and statements from subsequent HLMs, SC meeting minutes, work programmes, action area work plans, budget overviews, and a range of publications by or related to the GPEDC. An overview of the documents consulted can be found in Annex 3. Key informants included (former) representatives of the GPEDC leadership (CCs and SC members), representatives from the provider, recipient, and dual countries, as well as local and regional governments, CSOs, Parliaments, Trade Unions, the private sector and foundations, multilateral and regional organisations, specialised entities associated with the GPEDC, academics, the JST host organisations (OECD and UNDP) and JST members. In addition, a group meeting with AA leads was organized to gain a more in-depth understanding of the particular challenges faced in the implementation of the AAs. A complete list of interviewees can be found in Annex 2.

The review team has consolidated its findings from the desk study and the interviews/survey in the data collection matrix. This document provides a crude, yet concise overview of the findings organised by the review criteria and main questions, which has been used as a basis for the consolidation of findings from the diverse review team members.

### 2.2.3 Data analysis, sense-making and reporting.

Upon completing its findings, the review team has undertaken an initial analysis leading to draft conclusions and the identification of four strategic issues related to GPEDC's future. These four issues were subjected to a joint sense-making workshop on 22 September 2021 with a diverse group of around 25 informed GPEDC stakeholders. During this workshop, participants engaged in discussion to validate and identify possible responses to the strategic issues, which helped enrich the final formulation of conclusions and recommendations that have found their way in this review report.

# 3 GPEDC: facts and figures

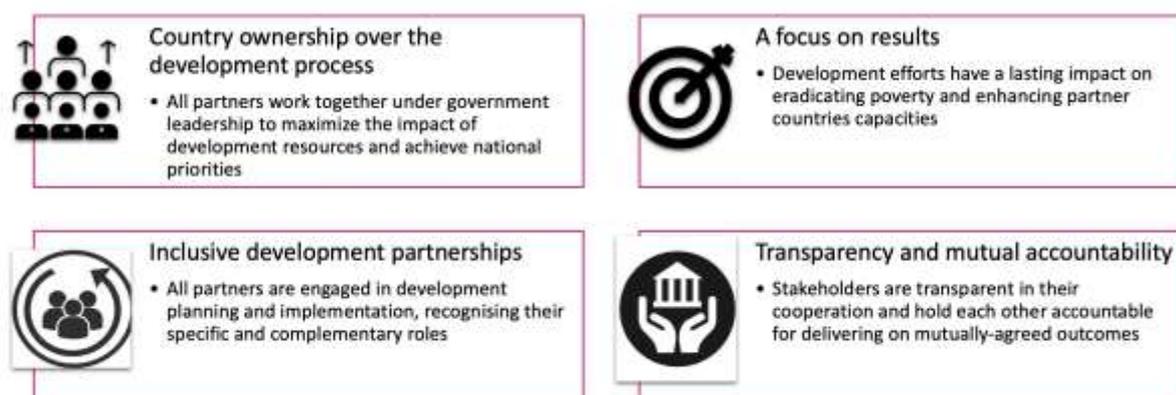
This chapter provides a factual description of the documented ambitions of the GPEDC, summarises its conceptual thinking and core activities and provides an overview of its current governance arrangements.

## 3.1 Vision, mandate, and approach of the GPEDC

The Partnership - formally constituted in July 2012 - emerged from the 2011 **Busan Partnership Agreement, endorsed by 161 countries and 56 international organizations**, including representatives of civil society and the private sector, and other actors with a stake in development efforts. The Busan outcome document<sup>6</sup> served as a key reference for policymakers and practitioners, and guidance for GPEDC work<sup>7</sup>. The GPEDC mandate, specifying how it would be organised and operated, and how the progress in meeting commitments would be monitored has been worked out by the Post-Busan Interim Group (PBIG) and its recommendations on the GPEDC’s mandate (objectives and functions) endorsed without amendment at the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness meeting on June 28–29, 2012, attended by more than 250 delegates and guests.

The vision of the Global Partnership is to maximize the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development for the shared benefit of people, planet, prosperity and peace, putting into practice four principles: (i) country ownership over the development process; (ii) a focus on results; (iii) inclusive development partnerships; and (iv) transparency and mutual accountability (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Four principles of EDC<sup>8</sup>



<sup>6</sup> The document consisting of four sections on (i) principles and commitments/pledges endorsed by all stakeholders; (ii) actions to reach common goals; (iii) stipulations related to the broader agenda of development cooperation; and (iv) monitoring and follow-up articles. *Busan Partnership Outcome Document*. (2011).

[https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/OUTCOME\\_DOCUMENT\\_-\\_FINAL\\_EN2.pdf](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN2.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Abdel-Malek, T. (2015). The global partnership for effective development cooperation: origins, actions and future prospects. *German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut Für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)*, 88. [https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/Studies\\_88.pdf](https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/Studies_88.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> GPEDC At a Glance | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/gpedc-glance-0>

The GPEDC mandate, endorsed in 2012, specified that - within the global architecture - the partnership would focus on EDC at both global and local levels. Currently, the mandate reads as “the Global Partnership contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by promoting effective development co-operation, geared towards ending all forms of poverty and inequality, advancing sustainable development and ensuring that no-one is left behind”.

Four core functions, defined in the initial mandate have undergone rethinking<sup>9</sup> to illustrate redirecting the partnership’s focus on strengthening the effectiveness and quality of all types of cooperation to achieve the SDGs, with an emphasis on actions with country-level impact<sup>10</sup> (Table 1).

Table 1 Core functions of GPEDC

The current core functions of GPEDC <sup>11</sup>	Core functions of GPEDC defined in 2012
Supporting effectiveness at country level	Support implementation of Busan commitments at the country level
Generating evidence for accountability and SDG follow-up	Ensure accountability for implementing Busan commitments
Sharing knowledge and lessons to drive innovation	Facilitate knowledge exchange and sharing of lessons learned
Advocating for relevant, effective and timely practices <sup>12</sup>	Maintain and strengthen political momentum for more effective development co-operation
Facilitating specialised dialogue on key issues for SDGs achievement	

### 3.2 GPEDC’s conceptual framework

The essence of GPEDC’s conceptual thinking behind its vision is described in its foundational documents and is based on the assumption that a wider application of the Paris principles in all forms of cooperation will lead to more effective development cooperation. This logic has not been elaborated in an explicit and formally agreed Theory of Change that could serve as a frame of reference in this review. Instead, we derive our understanding of the essential causal logic and key assumptions behind GPEDC work from the desk study and interviews held during this review. A simplified illustration of our understanding (Figure 3) and explanation are briefly presented below:

<sup>9</sup> GPEDC. (2015). *Discussion paper on the GPEDC mandate and working arrangements*.

<https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/GPEDC-working-arrangements-16-02-05.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> *Nairobi Outcome Document | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (2016, January). GPEDC.

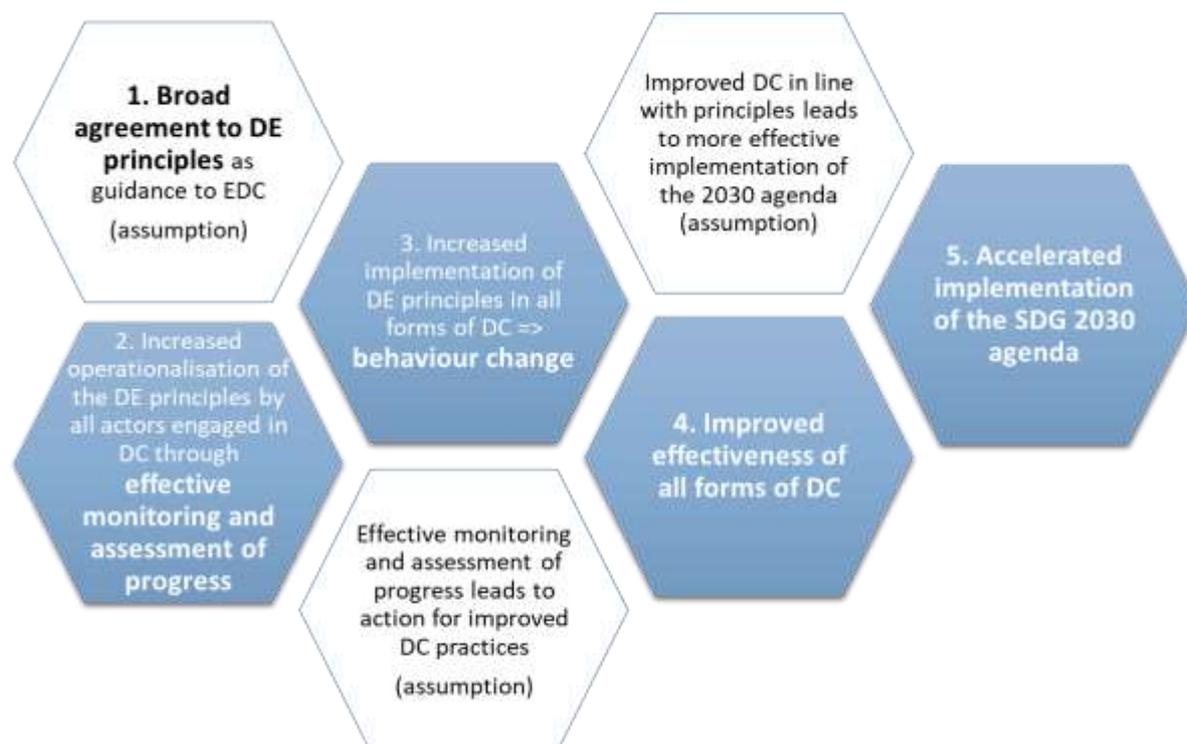
<https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/nairobi-outcome-document>

<sup>11</sup> GPEDC. (2020a). *GPEDC: 10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*.

<https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/gpedc-10-things-you-need-know>

<sup>12</sup> In NOD the formulation is “Building political momentum for effective development co-operation”

Figure 3 Causal logic and key assumptions behind GPEDC work



#### **AGREEING TO EDC PRINCIPLES AS GUIDANCE TO EFFECTIVE DC = ASSUMED STARTING POINT**

The EDC principles, defined at the Busan High Level Forum (2011) build on the aid effectiveness principles in the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and further reinforced in the Mexico communiqué (2014) and the Nairobi outcome document (2016). They remain a set of widely agreed guiding principles on which all forms of effective development cooperation (EDC) should be founded. The existence of these norms for development, and DC, provides a basis for pursuing commitments, action and concrete activities to achieve a more coherent, inclusive, efficient, and effective approach to the development process. The operationalisation of these principles is a core of GPEDC’s work and, arguably, a starting point for its action-oriented work.

#### **EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS**

Key stakeholders start operationalizing these principles taking into consideration context-specifics. Development change driven at a country level is supported by inclusive country-led monitoring and progress assessment – that are believed to be essential for encouraging and sustaining behaviour change and institutional reforms for improved DE. In this process, following its mandate, GPEDC supports effectiveness monitoring and assessment of progress by developing/adjusting tools for the country-led (and voluntary) monitoring exercise, which is intended to provide the evidence for in-country ongoing analysis, leading to a dialogue and consequent decision-making on improvement of development policy/practice.

#### **BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

It is believed that the implementation of EDC principles, over time, results in behaviour change of key stakeholders in line with EDC principles such as partners working together under government leadership to maximize the impact of development resources and achieve national priorities, engaging in development planning and implementation, recognising their specific and complementary roles, being transparent in their cooperation and holding each other accountable for delivering on mutually-

agreed outcomes. The assumed logic here is that these behaviours are supported by introducing improved DC policies and practices, which based on progress and learnings captured in a periodic joint monitoring exercise, get institutionalised over time. In addition to supporting a dialogue-based monitoring process, GPEDC further stimulates effective partnerships between development actors through e.g., country-level implementation groups, knowledge-sharing platforms and relevant policy work. The GPEDC does not prescribe expected institutional arrangements at the country level to embed or stimulate these behavioural changes. Instead, the GPEDC deliberately leaves freedom and flexibility to tailor institutional arrangements to context, and only suggests that optimal use will be made of existing consultation mechanisms and dialogue platforms. An example of how this has worked out in practice is illustrated in the box below.

Textbox 1 Example: behaviour change at the country level, the case of Rwanda

Triggered by its commitments to the EDC principles as a member of the GPEDC, the Government of Rwanda has requested UNDP to support its efforts towards Effective Development Cooperation for Results. With the use of this support, Rwanda has institutionalized a regular dialogue with donors based on an agreed donor performance assessment framework that include indicators that are influenced by GPEDC standards. In this way, Rwanda pursues increased harmonization and alignment of external aid, whilst strengthening its evidence for future policy planning and analysis

#### IMPROVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ALL FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The implied logic of further change is that when key stakeholders have improved their DC practices and behaviour, consistent with a commonly agreed set of global standards, monitored with country-specific data, this enables improved effectiveness of development cooperation (i.e. faster and/or better delivery of intended development results). A key assumption here is that monitoring and assessment lead to action for improving DC practices through an implied feedback loop between behaviour change and monitoring mentioned above. Furthermore, the monitoring process strengthens multi-stakeholders dialogue and engagement, and together with effective partnerships created at the country-level, contributes to fostering trust and encouraging accountability.

#### ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDG2030 AGENDA

Finally, it is believed that the consequence of operationalising democratic ownership of development policies and processes, strengthening joint efforts towards concrete and sustainable results, and increased trust and mutual accountability will lead to an improved development impact. The proof of the pudding is, therefore, in seeing that development cooperation designed and implemented in line with the EDC principles will be more successful and contributes to accelerated progress towards the SDGs.

## 3.3 Implementation modalities

### 3.3.1 Building Blocks and Voluntary Initiatives

The Busan High Level Forum (HLF) in 2011 also served as an arena for countries and organisations to come together around a variety of thematic issues or “**Building Blocks**”<sup>13</sup>, uniting those interested in

<sup>13</sup> *Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness: Proceedings*. (2011). OECD.  
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/HLF4%20proceedings%20entire%20doc%20for%20web.pdf>

accelerating progress in ten key areas<sup>14</sup>. Some of these were picked up at the first HLM of the GPEDC in Mexico City (2014), by several stakeholders agreeing to make concerted efforts to accelerate progress in key development areas through 39 “**Voluntary Initiatives**”, grouped into ten categories<sup>15</sup>. Both – “Building Blocks” and “Voluntary Initiative” have served as ways to translate agreements reached at the global level into action and impact on the ground in line with the Busan commitments.

### 3.3.2 Global Partnership Initiatives

At Nairobi HLM (2016), Busan Building Blocks and Mexico Voluntary Initiatives were regrouped into 28 **Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs)**, which – similar to the former two - were voluntary alliances to identify and share lessons, best practices and knowledge on how to make development co-operation more effective (for the full list and more detail, see Annex 4).

Post-Nairobi HLM, the GPEDC has started out supporting GPIs by serving as a knowledge hub and platform for sharing their results, while providing a space for mutual learning, increased cooperation, and effective upscaling of GPIs’ work. In 2015-2016, bi-annual updates on GPIs’ activities have been produced and options for further GPEDC support to GPIs proposed<sup>16</sup>. In 2018-2019, a GPI-specific newsletter - ‘GPI Buzz’ - was created and bi-monthly issues circulated. GPEDC JST made more efforts to source blogs from GPIs and created a GPI Google Group to encourage knowledge-sharing among GPIs themselves<sup>17,18</sup>.

In addition, periodically, events were organized for GPIs to exchange experiences such as Acceleration workshop for GPEDC GPIs, hosted by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) on 21-22 June 2016 - Barcelona, Spain and the Strengthening GPI Engagement Workshop, attended by 12 GPIs on 19-20 March 2018 in Bonn, Germany. The latter workshop also produced a proposal for strengthening GPI engagement which was presented to the SC at its 15th meeting (April 2018), albeit without a structured follow-up. Some of the GPIs continued their involvement e.g., some participated in Pilot Conclusion Workshop “Enhanced Effectiveness at Country Level: Pilot Conclusion” held on 9-10 May 2019 in Bonn Germany and some made substantive contributions to the development of the Global Compendium of Good Practices.

---

<sup>14</sup> These areas are: (1) Climate Finance; (2) Effective Institutions Platform; (3) Fragile States; (4) Managing diversity and reducing fragmentation; (5) Private sector; (6) Results and accountability; (7) South-South and triangular co-operation; (8) The Busan Action Plan for Statistics; (9) The Gender Initiative; (10) Transparency. Source: GPEDC. (2015b). *Synthesis Note on the Building Blocks and Voluntary Initiatives*. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Document-2-Synthesis-Note-on-the-Building-Blocks-and-Voluntary-Initiatives.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> These categories are: (1) Resource mobilisation; (2) Private sector, connected to BB on private sector; (3) Effectiveness and quality, connected to BBs on Transparency, Effective institutions, Managing diversity and reducing fragmentation, and Results and accountability; (4) South-South cooperation, connected to BB on South-South and Triangular co-operation; (5) Gender equality, connected to BB on Gender initiative; (6) Civil society, connected to BBs on Statistics, and Results and accountability; (7) Regional and country-led efforts on development, connected to BB on Fragile states; (8) Local, (9) Philanthropy, and (10) Climate finance, connected to BB on Climate finance. Source: *Mexico High Level Meeting Communiqué | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (2014). GPEDC. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/mexico-high-level-meeting-communication>

<sup>16</sup> *Update on Global Partnership Initiatives*. (2016). GPEDC. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Update-on-GPI-January-2016-REV2.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> UNDP. (2018). *Global Project for Managing Development Cooperation Effectively: 2018 Annual Status Report* <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-05/2018-ASR-final-report-final.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> UNDP. (2019). *Global Project for Managing Development Cooperation Effectively: Annual Status Report 2019* <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/km-gap/undp-gpn-development-effectiveness-2019-GLOBAL-PROJECT-ANNUAL-STATUS-REPORT.pdf>

### 3.3.3 Busan Global Partnership Forum and Korea GPEDC Learning and Accelerating Programme

In 2014, the Government of the Republic of Korea launched the Busan Global Partnership Forum to show its commitment to supporting the implementation of the Busan principles at the country level and sustaining the ambitions of the GPEDC. This forum brings together governments, bilateral and multilateral organisations, civil society and the private sector to assess the status of GPEDC implementation, address key challenges and exchange information regarding practical solutions. In 2014, the GPEDC Learning and Accelerating Programme (LAP) was created alongside the forum to meet countries' demand for training in selected areas related to GPEDC implementation. LAP provides a platform and venue to share experiences on their GPEDC implementation and engage in in-depth discussions on challenges and potentials solutions.

### 3.3.4 Work Programmes

After the Nairobi HLM (2016), GPEDC has introduced work programmes as foundational elements that reflect operating principles to guide and characterise GPEDC's way of working. The Work Programme 2017-2018 consisted of the following six strategic outputs worked out in corresponding activities;

1. Enhanced support to effective development cooperation at the country level.
2. Unlocking the potential of effectiveness and updating monitoring for 2030.
3. Sharing knowledge to scale up innovative development solutions.
4. Scaling up private sector engagement leveraged through development cooperation.
5. Learning from different modalities of development cooperation; and
6. Strengthening high-level political engagement, advocacy, public communication and strategic use of data and evidence.

Learning from the implementation of the GPEDC workplan 2017-2018, the GPEDC work programme 2020-2022 has delineated three strategic priorities and nine thematic Action Areas (AAs). Similar to GPs, the AAs are based on voluntary engagement, but contrary to the GPs, the AAs are integral parts of a coherent and comprehensive GPEDC planning framework.

The priorities and AAs of the GPEDC work programme 2020-2022 are as follows:

- I. Promoting development effectiveness to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
  - Action Area 1.1: Demonstrating the impact of effectiveness.
  - Action Area 1.2: Strengthening effective support to statistical capacity and data.
- II. Building better partnerships
  - Action Area 2.1: Private sector partnerships for sustainable development: Translating the Kampala Principles to action
  - Action Area 2.2: Triangular development co-operation for sustainable development
  - Action Area 2.3: Supporting country-led development effectiveness of South-South co-operation
  - Action Area 2.4: Civil society partnerships: enabling civil society participation and addressing shrinking civic space.
  - Action Area 2.5: Reinforcing foundations' engagement for co-designing and sharing solutions through new ways of working.

- Action Area 2.6: Strengthening development effectiveness at the subnational level to achieve the SDGs.
- Action Area 2.7: Effective multilateral support

### III. Leveraging monitoring for action

- Facilitating the use of monitoring results, including: (a) country-led "deep dives" to understand how monitoring results are informing policy and behavioural changes of partners and to understand the underlying causes of development effectiveness challenges and (b) stakeholder-driven dialogues and actions to identify and address key effectiveness bottlenecks.
- Reforming the monitoring exercise: what is measured (indicator framework) and how it is measured (the process of monitoring exercise).

The 2020-2022 work programme has four 'foundational elements' that guide and consolidate the work carried under the strategic priorities: (i) Country anchoring; (ii) Constituency engagement; (iii) Exchange of knowledge and learning; and (iv) Coherent advocacy and outreach.

## 3.4 Governance arrangements

As set out in the Nairobi outcome document and mandate, the governance arrangements comprise the Co-Chairs (CC), the Steering Committee (SC) and the Joint Support Team (JST).

### 3.4.1 Co-Chairs

There are four CCs who guide the work of the GPEDC. Three of them are appointed at Minister/Ambassador-level representing the three types of member countries (currently Bangladesh representing dual countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo representing recipient countries, and Switzerland representing provider countries). In addition, there is one non-executive co-chair (currently from the Reality of Aid Africa) representing the non-State constituencies of the GPEDC – a unique governance arrangements compared to other similar partnerships. The CCs are expected to ensure the momentum of the partnership, spearhead resource mobilisation, lead outreach efforts, represent the GPEDC in international fora, and apprise the SC of progress in implementation. CCs are also members of the Global Partnership Steering Committee, advocating on behalf of their constituencies.

The main functions of Co-Chairs are to<sup>19</sup>:

- ensure that momentum for implementing agreed effective development co-operation commitments is accelerated at the highest political levels among all stakeholder groups.
- spearhead resource mobilisation efforts to meet the financial and in-kind needs necessary for the full implementation of the programme of work of the Global Partnership.
- lead outreach to the full range of partners in development co-operation, including but not limited to, the business sector and emerging development partners.
- represent the Global Partnership in international fora related to development co-operation; and

---

<sup>19</sup> *Nairobi Outcome Document | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (2016, January). GPEDC. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/nairobi-outcome-document>

- e. apprise the Steering Committee on progress in implementing the costed and agreed programme of work in between official Steering Committee meetings, through biannual updates (between each Committee meeting).

### 3.4.2 Steering Committee

The SC meets twice per year on average and is the main decision-making body of the GPEDC, providing strategic leadership and coordination to ensure the successful implementation of its Work Programmes. In addition, the SC is expected to champion specific workstreams and serve as advocates/ambassadors of the partnership. Moreover, SC members are expected to consult and provide an inclusive representation of their respective constituencies.

Besides the CCs, the SC is comprised of seven representatives of partner countries/recipients of development co-operation one of which is a representative from the African Union, one of the g7+ group of FCAS, two from Africa, one from Latin America, one from Asia, and one from the Pacific; 2 representatives of dual-character countries; 3 representatives of DAC countries as so-called provider countries; and 1 representative each of the business sector, parliaments, civil society, multilateral development banks, UNDP/UNDG, OECD/DAC, Arab providers, trade unions, foundations, sub-national governments.

The core responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to<sup>20</sup>:

- a. provide executive guidance to the implementation and monitoring of a costed programme of work for the Global Partnership.
- b. champion/co-champion the specific work-streams in the programme of work of the Global Partnership and/or Global Partnership Initiatives to help deliver the programme of work.
- c. serve as advocates and ambassadors of the Global Partnership at national, regional and international levels to ensure that the priorities and key messages of the Global Partnership are promoted and reflected in relevant fora.
- d. increase focus on implementing development effectiveness commitments at the country level.
- e. consult with, and therefore provide inclusive and authoritative representation of, constituencies with a stake in the work of the Global Partnership; and
- f. f. undertaking other tasks as may arise from High-Level Meetings or as agreed at Steering Committee meetings.

### 3.4.3 Joint Support Team

The JST is hosted<sup>21</sup> by the OECD and UNDP and is meant to provide a strong support structure by undertaking the following responsibilities:

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> The Busan Partnership Document (the 4<sup>th</sup> HLF on Aid Effectiveness in Busan 2011) invited OECD and UNDP to support the effective functioning of the GPEDC, building on their respective mandates and areas of comparative advantage. The institutional set-up for the OECD/UNDP JST, endorsed in June 2012, builds on existing institutional structures of the two organisations. OECD's support as JST is provided by its Paris-based Development Co-operation Directorate and resourced through the OECD-DAC's Programme of Work and Budget. UNDP's support as JST is provided by a New-York based Team hosted by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support with Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy. The Project team and its support activities are financed through the third-party cost-sharing contributions from partners.

- a. develop, refine and implement the global methodology for monitoring the implementation of agreed commitments for endorsement by the Steering Committee.
- b. produce and disseminate relevant analytical work, including regular global reports based on monitoring of agreed commitments to inform political dialogue and facilitate knowledge sharing to make co-operation more effective at country level.
- c. carry out periodical 'horizon-scanning analyses of the evolving development co-operation context and the incentives for engagement by each Global Partnership stakeholder.
- d. provide demand-driven advisory support at the country level on the implementation of partnership and accountability frameworks in developing countries (contingent on adequate resourcing and prioritisation by the Steering Committee in the costed programme of work).
- e. organise ministerial-level and other meetings of the Global Partnership, and
- f. deliver Secretariat and Advisory Services to the Steering Committee and Co-Chairs.

# 4 Performance review

The performance review looks at three evaluation criteria: 1) the extent to which GPEDC is considered to remain **relevant**; 2) the **effectiveness and impact** of its activities; and 3) the **efficiency** of its activities.

## 4.1 Relevance

The **relevance** question addresses three aspects: the extent to which GPEDC is seen as relevant in a rapidly changing international context; if the vibrancy of commitment by the stakeholders has changed over time; and to what extent GPEDC has adapted to the changed circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

### To what extent has the GPEDC retained its relevance in light of important contextual changes?

As noted in chapter 3, the GPEDC aims to “*maximize the effectiveness of all forms of co-operation for development for the shared benefits of people, planet, prosperity and peace*”. **This is to be achieved by having the stakeholders engaged in development around the globe adhere to the four effective principles agreed at Busan (see Figure 2), as these are seen as critical enablers of the 2030 Agenda.**

**Coming out of the Busan High-Level Forum, the GPEDC was therefore established as *the* key multi-stakeholder** vehicle for driving development effectiveness by supporting a collaborative universe of those committed to these principles. Through the governing bodies and with support of the JST, it is providing an arena for sharing knowledge and experiences, supporting inclusive and deliberative in-country activities that provide insights and experience that furthers this agenda, and in particular guides and supports the country-level reporting on the application of these principles through the GPEDC-managed monitoring exercise.

In order to look at the Relevance of the GPEDC nearly ten years after it was established, one needs to look not only at the principles and their derived activities in terms of universalistic values, but also to understand their application in the current and likely or probable future contexts. There is a need to critically assess to what extent GPEDC both as a partnership but also its priority activities retain their intended relevance in the context of a rapidly changing world. This sub-section will therefore first look at some of the key changes that have been and are still taking place and are affecting the application of the effectiveness principles. It will then provide some findings on their application as documented in written materials but primarily through the eyes of key stakeholders, including academics who see the partnership and its activities more from the outside and in light of some of the competing agendas and concerns that development actors face.

### 4.1.1 From Paris to Busan

The Busan High-Level Meeting came about in part to look at the extent to which the Paris Agenda, with its monitoring and reporting system, had succeeded in addressing the aid effectiveness concerns raised by the lack of coherence and alignment of donor support around partner-country agendas. But it was also in response to the fact that overall financing for development was rapidly changing: more

and more countries were generating an increasing share of their national investment budgets through own revenues; new funding sources were growing in importance, such as China and various Arab funds; access to credit and concessional loans was becoming easier and cheaper; South-South cooperation was increasing in importance; private investments were growing with more guarantee schemes in place but also due to rapidly growing international markets providing incentives for accessing new sources of raw materials and processed products, and remittances from national diasporas were increasing in importance<sup>22</sup>. At the same time, the global community focused increasingly on climate change, international terrorism, global health and other trans-border issues, so donor attention was moving towards global issues rather than national development effectiveness. Partly in response to this shift in attention, an increasing share of donor resources was moving away from state-to-state agreements and towards an increase in the use of multilateral channels, whether UN agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs) like the regional development banks, or various multi-donor funding mechanisms like international trust funds<sup>23</sup>.

#### 4.1.2 From MDGs to SDGs and AAAA

At the time of the Busan HLM, work had begun on defining and subsequently agreeing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, with its 17 goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators – the 2030 Agenda<sup>24</sup>. The SDGs represent the international compact with respect to global development, and unlike the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs are relevant for all countries and thus contain mutual accountability not only as one of the key principles but as an organic part of what the SDGs in fact *are*.

Shortly before the SDGs were formally approved, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) was agreed to. This presents the emerging development financing possibilities, discussed above, providing an analytical frame to allow developing and transition economies map out and manage the various resource flows and build a sustainable financing model for their socio-economic development. Attention is given to domestic resource mobilisation as the key to achieving sustainable and locally owned development, acknowledging the decreasing role of grants aid to many countries<sup>25</sup>.

#### 4.1.3 Redefining the Universe of Effective Development

The rapidly changing development financing picture has generated a discussion regarding what it is GPEDC is to focus on regarding “development cooperation”. While the original concept was development cooperation *financing* which was understood to be the traditional grants aid that was the focus of the Paris Agenda, this share of total development financing is decreasing and of less relevance except for poor societies under stress. In line with the SDG and AAAA approach, GPEDC has

---

<sup>22</sup> A 2021 study published by the EC’s Joint Research Centre with ODI points out that diaspora remittances are greater than ODA or foreign direct investment. But in addition comes the more recent phenomenon of diaspora financing, where in a group of 300 such financing schemes, 44 were equity-based, 29 based on loans and 27 on bonds, with 99 based on knowledge transfer, and where infrastructure financing totals billions of dollars. See Gelb, S., Kalantaryan, S., McMahon, S. and Perez Fernandez, M., *Diaspora finance for development: from remittances to investment*, EUR 30742 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, ISBN 978-92-76-38762-6, doi:10.2760/034446, JRC125341. <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC125341>.

<sup>23</sup> The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the Global Alliance for Vaccinations and Immunization (GAVI) are multi-billion dollar funds, as are the larger country-focused funds like the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).

<sup>24</sup> THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development. (n.d.). UN SDGS. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>25</sup> Addis Ababa Action Agenda. (n.d.). SDG KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2051&menu=35>

moved its focus more towards a “whole of society” understanding. This, however, is more complicated. It entails that at the national level, relevant stakeholders are invited in, and their voices are heard in the discussion on the country’s path forwards. But it also implies that all resources available are to be considered. While the concept of “development cooperation” focuses on external financing, for some of the non-state actors, as stated in some of the interviews, it is not really possible to isolate the external from the internal resources for a given objective. The effectiveness analysis, from this perspective, needs to include the full resource picture in order to be meaningful and has become a source of debate in a number of countries.

On the other hand, the GPEDC’s inclusive approach of inviting a broad range of national stakeholder groups to address the application of the development effectiveness principles remains highly relevant: there is no organised alternative to how the GPEDC tries to foster broad-based participation and consensus-building on development cooperation on the ground<sup>26</sup>.

#### 4.1.4 “Global Light, Country Heavy” – but Voluntary

GPEDC has “global light, country heavy” as a guiding approach, which those spoken with agree is appropriate. While stakeholders, therefore, see the GPEDC *approach* and *objective* as relevant, the question is to what extent its performance has corresponded to these ambitions. A key issue for some stakeholders is therefore to what extent the ambition of country focus is happening. The answer to this depends to some extent on what is understood as “country heavy”.

Because GPEDC is a purely voluntary mechanism, results at national level depend on the extent to which stakeholders are willing to commit time and resources to local activities. This both requires an agreement among parties as to which activities are priority and GPEDC relevant, but also identifying financing for implementation.

#### 4.1.5 The Monitoring Reports

The core GPEDC *deliverable* so far has been the three Monitoring Reports produced in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The most visible *contributions* for GPEDC activities are the financing of the JST (see section 4.3 on Efficiency). Much of the JST work has been related to providing support and training to national actors to ensure that the monitoring exercise methodology is understood, data collection and validation are done properly, the national-level reporting is in line with standards and guidelines, with the JST then compiling the global report and contributing to the dissemination of its data and results. A key reason for these large investments in the reports is that they are not just the “flagship deliverables” of the GPEDC but their legitimacy and credibility is based on the actual partnerships that produced them – the process on the ground embodies the “whole of society” approach.

Furthermore, the ten indicators document the key dimensions of the four effectiveness principles and as such are the main instrument that allows all stakeholders to reflect on the status of development cooperation in the country, and in the case of multiple monitoring rounds, verify changes that may have taken place.

---

<sup>26</sup> There are a number of other accountability mechanisms in place, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, but these tend to be sector specific and focused on a more limited agenda.

The Steering Committee (SC) at its 20th meeting in December 2020 reaffirmed monitoring as a core function of the Partnership. At the same time, there was a recognised need to address shortcomings in the monitoring report and process. The indicator set is seen to reflect the more limited donor-partner relationship and does not capture more recent concerns regarding development cooperation. A proposal and roadmap to revise the indicator framework and monitoring process was approved with the Global Partnership Monitoring Reform process moving ahead in 2021<sup>27</sup>. This reform process must deal on the one hand with the need to simplify and streamline the monitoring exercise, to improve participation and communications around the results, and reduce the resource-burden of the exercise on the JST. Yet it should also address the concerns of a number of stakeholders that the monitoring captures the more recent aspects of development cooperation such as South-South cooperation and non-OECD financing; the more qualitative dimensions of development effectiveness; and the differences in country contexts which affect actual development cooperation on the ground. While the more comprehensive approach to the monitoring would contribute to the notion of “country heavy” understood as directed towards what is more relevant for the particular country, it requires additional resources. And this touches on the other aspect of “country heavy”: that for some GPEDC stakeholders, this implies that each country is to be more responsible for ensuring the required resources for implementing the GPEDC agenda. If GPEDC is of significant relevance to that country’s development, it is up to national authorities to allocate the required funding, either through own financing or from development partners. From this perspective, the degree of “country heaviness” thus should reflect the country-driven and voluntary nature assumed by the GPEDC rather than something that is to be funded from the global level of the partnership.

#### Textbox 2 Application of the Monitoring Reports

The Monitoring Reports are provided as stand-alone compiled reports summarising what has been reported from the countries. Country-specific summaries, presented in a standardised and visual manner, allows for easy access and possibilities to understand the individual country data, but the aggregate data are also used by other actors:

- The 2019 and 2021 Reports of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress both refer to the 2018 Monitoring Report data on the extent to which countries produce gender budgeting (SDG 5.c.1) and use national priorities for own programming (SDG 17.15.1) while a 2020 report uses the 2018 data to comment on the use of national systems<sup>28</sup>. Because the SG reports do not provide sources or references, however, the reader has no way of knowing that the source is GPEDC, so these reports do not provide any visibility to the GPEDC reporting.
- The three most recent Financing for Sustainable Development reports (2019, 2020, 2021) provide general references to the GPEDC reporting but more on the efforts and processes rather than the results.
- The OECD has used GPEDC data in seven of the nine most recent Peer Reviews of development cooperation, using GPEDC data to criticise poor partnership performance.
- When it comes to GPEDC countries, only partner countries seem to refer to GPEDC data in their Voluntary National Reviews. The 2020 report from Bangladesh, for example, notes a slight improvement by donors in the use of national planning tools while Samoa presents a more comprehensive overview of GPEDC monitoring results.

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2021-06/SCM21\\_session4\\_monitoring%20doc\\_countours\\_EN.pdf](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2021-06/SCM21_session4_monitoring%20doc_countours_EN.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> See [2021 Report of the Secretary General on SDG Progress](#), [2020 Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities \(QCPR\)](#), and [2019 Report of the Secretary General on SDG Progress](#).

The UN and OECD make some limited use of GPEDC reporting (e.g., in the UNSG QCPR report), such as in some of the Secretary-General's reports on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, no doubt due to the awareness of the data given that these two bodies host the JST. But even partner countries are sparing in their use of GPEDC data, selecting a few indicators but without much analysis or any attribution to GPEDC for any improvements noted.

A number of other GPEDC interventions were to further strengthen the “country heavy” approach, in particular, the GPIs and the AAs approved for the 2020-2022 programme period. These activities are discussed in section 4.2 below but reflect some of the challenges seen with the monitoring exercise. On the one hand, there is a central partnership for each GPI or AA that both shapes the content of the particular intervention, but also is expected to some extent to support and/or guide what the particular country does under that intervention. It is then up to the actors on the ground to implement the country-relevant activity, where commitment and resources are the responsibility of the local actors. In practice, this means that these GPI/ AA activities typically depend on a combination of committed individuals and dedicated funding mobilised for that particular activity. While this is in line with the voluntary principle of the GPEDC, it militates against the ability to ensure a more systematic “country heavy” footprint. Bringing in UNDP as a co-host for the JST was in part to take advantage of UNDP's global network of country offices which could provide support to country-based activities and thus could potentially address some of this short-coming, but due to UNDP's own limited funding, this support has focused on providing capacity building related to the monitoring exercises.

Regarding the centrality of the monitoring reports, a number of stakeholders pointed to two concerns. One is the periodicity and timeliness of the reports. With reports so far produced only in 2014, 2016 and 2018, the GPEDC report lacks continuity, predictability and the “freshness” of annual reports. The other question concerns the uniqueness of the indicators – the value-added that GPEDC provides compared with other available datasets. Concerning the latter, the GPEDC's *Quality of countries' public finance management (PFM) systems* is built on indicators from *Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)* reports<sup>29</sup>. While GPEDC generates an aggregate *change* indicator, which is useful, most observers of a country's PFM system will consult the more recent PEFA report because it is more comprehensive, with more rigorous ratings of the various dimensions of PFM systems. While GPEDC data are arguably better when looking at donor behaviour, many will consult the Center for Global Development (CGD) *Quality of ODA Index*<sup>30</sup> or the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) *Principled Aid Index*<sup>31</sup> because they cover more countries and appear more regularly<sup>32</sup>. In a crowded information field, PEFA, CGD and ODI provide annual, standardised information that is possible to compare over time and across space with consistent methodologies and data sources and well-known institutions behind them. GPEDC Monitoring Reports remain relatively anonymous.

The monitoring reform process thus faces a dilemma inherent to the GPEDC. While there are good arguments for widening the monitoring exercise by including more relevant aspects and deepening

---

<sup>29</sup> See *Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA)*. (n.d.). Homepage | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA). Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.pefa.org/>

<sup>30</sup> *QuODA*. (n.d.). Center For Global Development. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.cgdev.org/topics/quoda>

<sup>31</sup> See *Principled Aid Index 2020*. (n.d.). Odi.Org. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://odi.org/en/insights/multimedia/principled-aid-index-2020/>

<sup>32</sup> The CGD's *QuODA* applies GPEDC data in 4 of its 17 indicators, though usage is necessarily limited to those countries reporting, and for the time remains reliant on the 2018 data points.

insight by enriching the qualitative nature of some indicators, this runs up against the resource scarcity due to the voluntary nature of the partnership. Expanding the ambition will drive up time use, and financing costs may require more training and greater demands on the presentation in order to explain context dimensions and qualitative indicators. This might reduce the number of countries able to carry out the exercise. Recent “good practices” from other multi-stakeholder partnerships working on how to capture progress towards complex social changes reflect a trend towards simplification and utilisation-focus of measures (Textbox 3).

#### Textbox 3 Simplifying Indicator Systems

UNDESA and the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre in November 2020 presented a framework for analysing stakeholder engagement. This consists of only three dimensions, each with two indicators, and each indicator having four possible values, making the rating simple and transparent<sup>33</sup>. The time necessary to carry out the rating is minimised, the task requires little if any training, ratings across cases are simple to compare and progress over time in a given country can easily be tracked.

### In what way has the momentum (i.e., vibrancy in constituency engagement) of the GPEDC changed since its inception in 2012 and what explains these changes?

The process leading up to the 2011 Busan High-Level Meeting was driven by the political commitment to the Paris Agenda and the recognition that it needed to be updated in light of the changes to global development cooperation. A critical evaluation of donor performance as against the Paris Agenda underlined the need for continued scrutiny and accountability of traditional donors<sup>34</sup>, but there was also a need to take on board new actors and funding instruments. Various stakeholders, in particular the CSO community, had been involved in the planning and showed great commitment to the Busan proceedings, whereas the hoped-for involvement of the so-called BRICS countries (the large middle-income countries Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) did not happen.

In line with the decisions at Busan, GPEDC invited in a wider universe of stakeholders: the CSO community, organised labour, the business community and later on private foundations, as well as Parliaments and the lower levels of public administration. Having all stakeholders around the table, this “whole of society” approach was seen as critical for addressing the SDGs successfully. At the country level, some of the new donors such as Arab funds and China have become involved; actors engaged in South-South cooperation have joined in, and supplementary activities such as the Korea-funded *Busan Forum* and the related *Learning and Acceleration Programme* (LAP) have brought a new dynamic to some of the country processes.

#### 4.1.6 Rethinking Development Financing

The AAAA meant the attention of many governments shifted towards the new sources of financing and trying to address the challenges of managing inter-linkages between financing modalities, how to bring in the private sector etc. While in principle the effectiveness principles should look at the range

<sup>33</sup> *What is good practice*. (n.d.). UNDP. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www1.undp.org/content/oslo-governance-centre/en/home/library/what-is-good-practice.html>. While PEFA also has a four-value scale, it has deliberately used the letters “A” to “D” for the ratings while this UNDP framework uses the numerical values 0 – 3, which undoubtedly will lead to the methodologically highly inappropriate averaging and aggregating of numerical values.

<sup>34</sup> Wood, B., & E.T.A.L. (2011, May). *The Evaluation of the Paris Declaration: Final Report* (Phase 2). Danish Institute for International Studies. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/41136587.pdf>

of financing sources available, in practice this is quite demanding and the GPEDC indicators thus look at issues that are more relevant for grants aid than other funding modalities<sup>35</sup>.

#### 4.1.7 Rethinking Development Politics

In DAC countries, domestic politics focused on documenting results from development cooperation; increasing the importance of commercial links to developing countries through trade and investment; allocating an increasing share of resources to fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) both to address humanitarian disasters but also to stabilise and reduce the negative spill-over effects of instability to neighbouring countries. This led a number of DAC countries to channel more financing through the multilateral system and NGOs, lessening both their political exposure and administrative costs. The focus on EDC was reduced as the amounts disbursed through state-to-state agreements decreased<sup>36</sup>.

For partner countries, this meant DAC donors paid less attention to bilateral aid relations, reducing the accountability pressures that the Paris Agenda had provided. This accountability had been an important reason that some grants-aid recipients had committed to the Partnership. At the same time, the interest of national authorities to engage more directly with non-state actors varied. Ceding real political space to non-elected actors raised issues, such as who the various non-state stakeholders represented, what kind of mandate they had and hence on whose behalf they spoke.

These developments in DAC and partner countries meant the commitment at the *political* level has fallen though not necessarily disappeared. Engagement remained at technical-administrative levels in a number of countries, where support for active dialogue and joint actions has continued. This would not have taken place without political knowledge at the top, so there has been at least political acceptance if not active support for the GPEDC agenda.

For CSOs, labour unions, the private sector and later on foundations, the GPEDC legitimised their role in national policy discourse in a way that no other global process had. The CSO community is by far the largest and most diverse group. Finding common ground for engagement in the GPEDC is a challenge. Those CSOs interested are being served by the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) established to channel information down to the CSO community and on the other hand compile and transmit voices and concerns upwards to the GPEDC.

For the business community, involvement in the GPEDC was less of a felt need as private sector actors have always had channels to decision-makers for discussing framework conditions for private sector activities, investment climate, tax and concession policies, etc. The experiences with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) showed, however, that certain issues of concern to business benefit from a wider dialogue and participation by non-state actors. The Kampala Principles for private

---

<sup>35</sup> The AAAA encourages countries to put together Integrated National Financial Frameworks (INFFs) that capture this wide range of external resource flows while also including domestic resources, public and private. Establishing an INFF is a huge task, however, and maintaining such a database is daunting. The Rwanda Development Assistance Database is sometimes pointed to as a success story, but limits itself to official ODA yet is one of only a few such databases that seem to be regularly updated and accessible, reflecting the costs and challenges of engaging in such data-intensive tasks.

<sup>36</sup> While donors still are interested in development effectiveness, it tends to be manifested more with regards to aid dependent countries such as small island developing states (SIDS) and fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) but overall the attention is clearly much less than it was at the time of the Paris Declaration (2005).

sector engagement represent agreed guideposts for “good corporate citizenship”, providing incentives for the business community to engage with the GPEDC<sup>37</sup>.

For local authorities – urban councils, municipalities, provincial administrations – their role in public administration varies considerably across countries and hence their voice in national policy debates<sup>38</sup>. At the same time, what constitutes sub-national is very different in the kingdom of Eswatini with a national population of just over one million to the municipality of Shanghai, a modern city with over 25 million inhabitants. Along with the CSO community, this stakeholder group is, therefore, the most diverse in the GPEDC, reflecting a dilemma for the GPEDC: how can its general principles be made relevant to this range of public bodies with such divergent contexts, resources and responsibilities?

The Inter-Parliamentary Union faces a similar predicament: It is an arena and meeting place for those Parliaments/Parliamentarians that are interested, and several Parliaments have expressed an interest in ensuring that they are more fully engaged in such consultative processes. Overall, however, this is not a core task for the IPU and hence there are pressures to focus on what are considered higher priority concerns.

One finding from the perception study is that since the GPEDC does not address the core concerns of these constituencies directly (though it does get very close for certain partners, such as CSOs), the engagement is to a large extent driven by individuals committed to and concerned about the development effectiveness agenda – whether circumscribed to the *cooperation* part of it, or to the larger effectiveness issues involving how national resources are allocated and accounted for. Since the GPEDC is largely a consensus-based body without possibilities for sanctioning non-performance or behaviour not in line with the EDC principles, it has to show relevance at the level of more principled concerns and that the DC in fact does deliver better results for all. This is both a challenging task but also in a world of rapidly changing priorities, it has been difficult to maintain political interest in and support for EDC.

To revitalise the platform and protect it from this cycle, GPEDC has responded by establishing Action Areas (AAs), of which some set out to address constituency concerns and thus attempt to reverse a flagging interest. The performance of the AAs has to a considerable extent been driven by those committed to the AA agenda but has at the same time been constrained by the availability of external funding. More recently, the GPEDC has encouraged so-called Action Dialogues in a number of countries, in large part due to the exacerbation of socio-economic problems caused by the Covid-19

---

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted, however, that a key aspect of the Kampala principles is that the donor community essentially shows a willingness to finance risk mitigation for private investors. Under the fifth principle of Leave No One Behind, component 5.C states that there should be “proportionate” incentives for private sector to ensure that groups otherwise not served by the market, can be reached, while component 5.D notes that provisions should be made to mitigate and manage risks in general. See [www.effectivecooperation.org/content/kampala-principles-effective-private-sector-engagement-through-development-co-operation](http://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/kampala-principles-effective-private-sector-engagement-through-development-co-operation)

<sup>38</sup> Terms typically used to describe the relations between national and lower levels in the administrative hierarchy are *de-concentration*, where lower levels implement higher-level decisions and are accountable upwards for results and largely get resources necessary to implement these decisions, *decentralisation* where resources are provided for general objectives but where accountability is often to locally elected bodies or management; and *devolution* where local sources of revenue are the responsibility of the local authorities to mobilise and apply, with prioritisation and accountability generally at that level. The tighter the control from the top, presumably the greater the interest of lower-level authorities to become involved in processes such as the GPEDC since it provides access upwards in the system otherwise difficult to attain.

pandemic, and where the need for bringing all actors together to address these national crises can be of great help.

All constituencies face competing demands on limited time and finances. For the review participants, this poses a constant worry – assessing the alternative resource uses up against the GPEDC. For CSOs, for example, the latest annual report on the situation for the global CSO community as compiled by CIVICUS provides a list of the ten most pressing issues that CSOs worldwide are facing (see Textbox 4). Depending on how one understands the issues, half of them is *caused* by the state. Investing time and effort in collaborating with the actor that is providing the greatest threats to your own objectives becomes problematic.

#### Textbox 4 CIVICUS' The State of Civil Society

The 10<sup>th</sup> *The State of Civil Society* report<sup>39</sup> recently published by CIVICUS contains a summary of the trends and challenges that civil society has increasingly faced over the last ten years:

1. A sustained civic space crackdown
2. Politics in flux and democracy at risk
3. Ultra-capitalism's impact
4. Climate change recognised as a crisis
5. Challenging structural exclusion and vindicating differences
6. The rise of social media and the disinformation economy
7. Rogue states take their models global
8. Beleaguered multilateralism
9. The reality of conflict and militarisation
10. Newly mobilised people and new civil society forms.

### To what extent has the GPEDC adapted its work to the changed reality of the COVID-19 crisis and what can be learned from this in going forward?

The main adaptation to the circumstances caused by the pandemic has been that large parts of GPEDC interactions have become virtual, but work has not stopped up. Review participants note that the lack of face-to-face interaction means that the direct personal dimension is reduced, which is important for relatively “loose” constellations like the GPEDC. On the other hand, the personal links once created through formal meetings, GPIs and AAs appear quite robust, which speaks to the solidity of relations in the GPEDC. Some respondents pointed out that opportunities for more interactive sessions offered by online discussion could and should have been explored more.

At recent meetings, the Steering Committee discussed the challenges that the pandemic is causing, and not least of all the increased marginalisation of those already in difficult situations. This is seen as a vindication of the need to focus on the four principles of Development Effectiveness and the need to Leave No One Behind – that given the increasingly dire situation faced by poorer societies and the scarcity of resources available, greater attention must be given to how these limited resources are

<sup>39</sup> Civicus. (2021). *Civicus*. <https://civicus.org/state-of-civil-society-report-2021/>. It should be recognised that CIVICUS does not have any formal mandate to speak on behalf of the CSO community – the report is based on surveys and interviews. CIVICUS appears to provide voice more to the policy and advocacy segment of the CSO community and perhaps less to those engaged in service-delivery and local activities. Whether CPDE or CIVICUS better reflect CSO concerns is not the issue but rather that various bodies represent self-selected segments of this larger community and thus remain relevant only to the extent that they truly reflect concerns of their CSO constituencies.

allocated, and that this requires exactly the kinds of partnerships that GPEDC is fostering and supporting.

As noted above, GPEDC in 2021 is promoting Action Dialogues as a tool for accelerating the ability of national authorities to promote and mobilise national partnerships to more efficiently and effectively tackle the national crises. The GPEDC itself, given its limited financing and without an operational mandate to intervene, has limited scope for direct intervention but sees the Action Dialogues as a concrete tool for better resource application that can contribute to reducing and mitigating the pandemic's consequences.

#### 4.1.8 Conclusions Relevance

Concerning the extent to which GPEDC has retained its relevance given changes to the international context, the following are the conclusions:

- The principle of having an international forum and process where key constituencies are invited to participate is seen as highly valuable and unique. In a rapidly changing and increasingly contentious world, ensuring that such a consultative forum exists at a global level and is encouraged at country and to some extent regional levels is therefore *highly relevant*.
- What development effectiveness (DE) addresses is perceived differently by different constituencies. If it is only about development *cooperation*, this retains the attention on traditional donor-partner relations. The larger EDC issue is about *total* resource allocations since external resources are to *complement* and build on national efforts, not be stand-alone activities. This “whole of society” approach is increasingly the perspective of a number of constituencies, but which shifts the accountability towards national authorities. With the global trend of grants aid becoming less important for most partner countries, the wider understanding of what the development effectiveness principle should address may therefore weaken political interest and support by some partner governments.
- The *focus* of the partnership is hence perceived as somewhat less relevant by a number of constituency representatives, given the decreasing importance of grants aid, the increased focus on global concerns and risks, the emergence of new donors and financing sources and modalities, and increased attention to overall political accountability rather than development effectiveness issues.
- The pandemic may, however, modify this picture, as the need for optimising all available resources is clear to all, and having all available national capacities mobilised to address this overarching need makes the GPEDC approach *increasingly relevant*.
- While GPEDC aspires to be “global light, country heavy”, stakeholders experience the GPEDC as largely a global platform. The GPs and even more so the AAs were conceived to establish activities and produce results more useful at the country level, though with limited results till now<sup>40</sup>.

---

<sup>40</sup> A key issue for the GPEDC has been to strengthen “country heavy” implementation. This study has not included country cases that might have shed more light on this, but there are some obvious challenges. Since GPEDC is voluntary it is difficult to mobilise financial resources since there is not a legally identifiable body that is accountable for results or financial management. The GPEDC agenda is extremely wide and constantly up for debate, so priorities and action plans are

Concerning the relevance of the Monitoring Exercise and Report as a key deliverable of the GPEDC:

- The Monitoring Reports are seen to provide highly valid indicators, but reporting is irregular and to some extent overlaps with more visible, timely and regular indexes. While the greater granularity and validity is appreciated, it is unclear what the operational value of this is as there do not seem to be clearly documented attributable behavioural changes among GPEDC stakeholders – the hoped-for increased *accountability* is not documented despite increased *transparency* regarding development effectiveness performance<sup>41</sup>.
- The monitoring exercise has, however, shown itself to be valuable in countries where it is carried out since it not only provides information but has led to reforms of own programming and management tools, which is likely to improve donors’ willingness to increasingly apply the EDC principles for their possible grants aid to those countries<sup>42</sup>.
- The current monitoring reform process points towards additional and more complex indicators, differentiated by context, which is to provide greater relevance to the particular country context<sup>43</sup>. There remains, however, the potential risk of a trade-off here in terms of cost-effectiveness, timeliness, and ability to compare over time and across space, which may reduce the relevance of the global reporting. At the same time, SCM 19 asked for a more streamlined and simplified indicator system in order to address the above concerns, pointing to challenges in competing directions in terms of global versus country levels.

Concerning the momentum and constituency engagement of the GPEDC:

- Political engagement, which was strong leading up to the Busan conference and gained political support with the approval of the SDGs, has been declining since the 2016 Nairobi conference. This is in part because it is seen to generate limited benefits to country-level members of the constituencies; the EDC agenda is decreasing in importance compared to other political priorities; the constituency bodies are facing increasing pressures to move resources to arenas, processes and issues that better and more directly address own core objectives. Since GPEDC has to provide a broad approach in order to involve its diverse constituencies, it has yet to find how to address the dilemma of providing something to everybody with the risk of offering little of consequence to anybody.

Concerning adaptation of GPEDC work to the changed reality of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The Covid-19 pandemic has not had important operational consequences for GPEDC – it has continued to operate largely as before though more net-based. There is an apparent risk that the continued absence of face-to-face interactions and the more personal exchange and relation-

---

susceptible to sudden shifts. National authorities are necessarily the dominant actor and to some extent have to be willing to cede some of their executive or even legislative prerogatives to an unelected and largely unaccountable set of non-state actors that want a say in national policy and priority setting. In a world where the executive is becoming increasingly authoritarian and less tolerant of opposition and contrary views, there is little incentive for broad-based consultation on either side of the table. Without a clear mandate, “GPEDC on the ground” can easily end up without tangible results and thus not worth the time of non-state actors whose agenda might include reform of public sector action.

<sup>41</sup> The overall reporting notes that national planning and financial management instruments have improved yet funding partners’ use of them is falling while the Bangladesh VNR of 2020 points to an *increase* in the use of national systems. Neither of these differing results being in any way attributed to GPEDC or with any expectation that this reporting will have any real consequences.

<sup>42</sup> Comments received point to several Latin American countries improving these instruments in response to the poor ratings given to the use of their systems and instruments, meaning GPEDC may in fact be impacting partner countries more than development partners. See section 4.2.3 for more on this.

<sup>43</sup> Notes from the extensive consultations with stakeholder groups held during the first half of 2021.

building that comes with it, will reduce the perceived added value of engaging with the GPEDC, though so far this does not seem to be the case.

While GPEDC offers an inclusive global platform for debating development effectiveness, its relevance is challenged by its structural features: broad constituency membership with an equally broad agenda that does not address the core concerns of any of the partners and with one consequence being a shift in attention from political to more technical-administrative levels within the constituencies; limited country foundations in part due to non-overlapping interests of public versus non-state actors; the key deliverable, the GPEDC monitoring report, that faces challenges breaking through in an information-saturated world; and global trends where new funding patterns, levels, changing political priorities and risk concerns means development effectiveness has become a lower priority. While the Covid pandemic is shifting global attention back to efficient and effective use of limited resources, this is likely to be a time-limited phenomenon, meaning the structural features mentioned above will prevail, posing continued challenges to *GPEDC Relevance* and its constituents' engagement.

## 4.2 Effectiveness and Impact

Effectiveness and Impact are addressed from the perspective of three issues: the extent to which intended results have been delivered; the relative progress towards GPEDC Outcomes; and the balance between global and country-level efforts and results.

**To what extent has the GPEDC effectively implemented and delivered results according to its work programmes at the global and country-level during the last two work cycles since Nairobi in 2016?**

### 4.2.1 The 2017-2019 Work Programme

The GPEDC's *Nairobi Outcome Document*<sup>44</sup> provides the general justification for GPEDC, the four effectiveness principles that guide its work, a discussion on the centrality of the monitoring exercise, and in Annex 3 lists 28 GPIs "that aim to advance specific commitments for effective development co-operation, as well as make progress in new and innovative areas of the Global Partnership". These were voluntary and led by different groups. Some GPIs had been established before the Nairobi Conference and were the main operational activities foreseen apart from the monitoring reporting. The intention was that the GPIs would generate lessons for the international community that on the one hand would demonstrate the value of the four principles, but also would provide the basis for experience exchanges and establishing "good practice" examples for others to study and, if appropriate, adapt and replicate.

A few GPIs, where the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is perhaps the best known, had already established themselves as stand-alone bodies that were able to mobilise financing and implement their own work plans. Most of the other GPIs had difficulties identifying financing and have largely had to close down, though a number achieved their objectives and therefore were either successfully closed down or updated their objectives.

---

<sup>44</sup> *Nairobi Outcome Document | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (2016, January). GPEDC. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/nairobi-outcome-document>

The 2017-2018 GPEDC work programme noted the need to generate momentum during the coming two-year period<sup>45</sup>. It defined six Strategic Outputs to be achieved that were later modified to five through the merging of two of them, ending up with the five results areas shown in Table 2. This two-year period was later extended by a year, so the results Table 2 covers the 2017-2019 period.

Table 2 Strategic Outputs and Results, GPEDC Work Programme 2017-2019

Strategic outputs	Reported achievements
<p><b>1 Enhanced support to effective development co-operation at country level</b></p>	<p><b>Generating and sharing knowledge to inform policy dialogue at country, regional and global levels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges in implementing EDC identified</li> <li>• Evidence-based knowledge on context-specific solutions to address these challenges sourced through the digital Call for Evidence (Sept-Oct 2018), complementary research and the implementation of the Development Finance Assessment (DFA)<sup>46</sup></li> <li>• New approaches to EDC piloted and tested supported by launching country-level implementation pilots (Feb 2018) and carrying out nine GPEDC country pilots in Bangladesh, Cambodia, El Salvador, Georgia, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Rwanda and Uganda.</li> </ul> <p><b>Compendium for advancing effectiveness principles at national level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compendium of Good Practices with experience-based learnings based on research in nine countries published<sup>47</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>2 Unlocking the potential of effectiveness and updating monitoring for 2030</b></p>	<p><b>Ensuring the GPEDC monitoring tool is fit for purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring framework updated based on lessons learned from previous monitoring rounds and refinements endorsed by SC</li> <li>• Tailored approach to monitoring EDC in fragile and conflict-affected situations prepared and endorsed at the 17th SC meeting in Kampala (March 2019)</li> <li>• Building on Mexico’s work, a pilot framework in developing an approach to monitoring the effectiveness of South-South Cooperation (SSC) delineated</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitoring Report on Effectiveness of Development Cooperation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful implementation of the country-led 2018 GPEDC monitoring round with the participation of 86 countries and territories</li> <li>• Monitoring data and evidence fed into SDG follow-up and review on country-level policy space and leadership (SDG 17.15), multi-stakeholder partnerships for development (SDG 17.16) and gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5c)</li> </ul>

<sup>45</sup> 2017-18 Global Partnership Work Programme | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/2017-18-global-partnership-work-programme>

<sup>46</sup> Development Finance Assessment Guidebook | UNDP in the Asia and the Pacific. (2019, March). UNDP. <https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/library/sustainable-development/development-finance-assessment-guidebook.html> While these exercises allowed UNDP to refine its DFA handbook, they also identified challenges and the considerable costs of carrying out DFAs. And DFAs are less complicated than the Integrated National Financial Frames (INFFs) foreseen in the AAAA. This is hence unfinished business, though hardly a GPEDC responsibility.

<sup>47</sup> A Global Compendium of Good Practices | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/global-compedium-good-practices>

<p><b>3 Sharing knowledge to scale up innovative development solutions and scaling up private sector engagement leveraged through development cooperation</b></p>	<p><b>Ensuring more inclusive engagement and strengthened visibility of the GPEDC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-profile side events, substantive inputs to the SC and CCs at various relevant international meetings and UN-led development processes organized such as a high-level side-event at the HLPF ‘Enhancing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development: Country-Level Frameworks for Resilient, Multi-stakeholder Partnerships ‘on 17 July 2018 in New York<sup>48</sup>.</li> <li>• GPEDC positioned as a network of partnerships working on EDC and capitalising on the complete store of knowledge available across constituencies through facilitation of online dialogues and regional exchanges</li> <li>• Representatives from GPIs, CCs and SC shaped the proposal for strengthening GPI engagement during workshop in Bonn, Germany (19-20 March 2018)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through country case studies and national workshops supported the elaboration of four country case studies in Bangladesh, Egypt, El Salvador and Uganda in 2018, with analysis of a total of 919 private sector engagement (PSE) projects</li> <li>• A paper collating emerging issue areas in PSE and the first draft of PSE principle and guidelines published, publicly consulted and further strengthened with strategic guidance from the Business Leaders Caucus (a senior-level advisory group that provides strategic advice and policy guidance)</li> <li>• Mutually agreed principles and guidelines for effective PSE leveraged through DC agreed on and published as <b>Kampala Principles</b><sup>49</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>4 Learning from different modalities of development cooperation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A virtual GPEDC knowledge-sharing platform for sharing lessons learned on implementing EDC principles and connecting policymakers and practitioners to evidence-based solutions built. The online platform is developed based on assessed needs of more than 250 responses from over 80 countries</li> <li>• The GPEDC monitoring Dashboard, an interactive data visualisation tool that enables easy access to data on monitoring the effectiveness of development cooperation launched at the GPEDC Side Event at the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data’s Data for Development Festival<sup>50</sup> (Bristol, United Kingdom, 22 March 2018)</li> </ul>
<p><b>5 Amplifying political momentum towards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepared and organised SLM<sup>51</sup> in New York on 13-14 July 2019 in advance of the Ministerial Segment of the 2019 UN High-Level Political</li> </ul>

<sup>48</sup> *Enhancing the global partnership for sustainable development: Country-level frameworks for resilient multi-stakeholder partnerships* | Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://sdgs.un.org/events/enhancing-global-partnership-sustainable-development-country-level-frameworks-resilient>

<sup>49</sup> *Kampala Principles on effective private sector engagement through development co-operation* | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/kampala-principles-effective-private-sector-engagement-through-development-co-operation>

<sup>50</sup> *Data for Development Festival*. (n.d.). Paris 21. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://paris21.org/news-center/events/data-development-festival>

<sup>51</sup> GPEDC. (2019a). *2019 Senior-Level Meeting (All Documents)* | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/event/2019-senior-level-meeting>

<b>the 2019 Senior-Level Meeting (SLM), including organisation of the first SLM</b>	Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The event convened stakeholders from (self-) registered list of 288 representatives of the UN Member States and 353 of non-executive stakeholders <sup>52</sup>
---	---

Table 2 highlights the number of activities that have been initiated under the GPEDC umbrella. What is less clear are the longer-term results emanating from them. While monitoring report data have been used in some UN Secretary-General and OECD reports, as noted in Textbox 2, they simply convey the data without further discussion on implications or any kinds of expected follow-on actions. While this is not the remit of such reports, the GPEDC itself does not have the mandate to follow up documented results, as noted earlier: while partner country PFM systems have improved, funding partners' use of these have fallen over time, for example. This phenomenon is not really addressed in terms of what might be consequences for GPEDC constituencies or any other body attempting to address what according to the GPEDC principles is an important anomaly.

Table 2, therefore, presents activities initiated and some Outputs delivered but no real Outcomes. A case in point is the Kampala principles for private sector engagement. While this evidently builds on a review of over 900 relevant cases in four countries<sup>53</sup>, it is not clear what the value-added is when comparing to other private sector initiatives. Four of the five principles are the standard GPEDC principles slightly modified while the last one, on Leave No One Behind, essentially provides various risk-alleviating approaches. While useful to the private sector, they are rather vague but also hardly innovative compared with a number of private sector guarantee schemes and policies, so the net value added to both development and the private sector remains to be seen.

Table 3 Key Findings of 2018 Monitoring Report

A key takeaway from the 2018 report is that while developing countries are strengthening their planning instruments and approaches, development partners are paying less attention to the principles of ownership, alignment and use of national instruments and processes, despite strengthening of local public finance management (PFM) systems and capacities. The predictability of external resources is also declining, which causes uncertainty for budgeting in those countries that count on external grants funding for national investments. The countries participating in the 2018 monitoring exercise include the majority of the FCAS and SIDS – that is, the countries that remain the most aid-dependent. For these countries these trends are worrisome, and where the Monitoring Report allows these countries to document these challenges to their development partners<sup>54</sup>.

These data have been used by the EU for an analysis of the extent to which the EU itself and its Member States (MS) are in fact adhering to the EDC principles. The report documents that while there is strong support for effectiveness principles at the policy level, actual performance as against the GPEDC indicators is declining. The report notes that a number of MS are unfamiliar with the GPEDC monitoring process and goes on to observe that performance reported is quite volatile across MS and over time.

<sup>52</sup> GPEDC. (2020a). *LIST OF REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS FOR THE SENIOR-LEVEL MEETING (as self registered)*. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Registered-Delegations-with-E-mails-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> Jack R. Taggart (2020) Global development governance in the 'interregnum', Review of International Political Economy, DOI: [10.1080/09692290.2020.1852948](https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1852948)

<sup>54</sup> *2018 Monitoring Results | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (n.d.-b). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/landing-page/2018-monitoring-results>

One question posed is therefore if this points to problems with the data and thus the underlying monitoring process itself, though this is not an issue raised by other actors.

While the GPEDC report thus is able to document the poor implementation of the effectiveness principles – a clear Output – the use of the data in reports like the EU report points to actual application – what can be considered an Intermediate Outcomes in a classic results framework. Whether this has led to any actual changes in behaviour on the side of the funding partners is not shown, but given the tone in the EU report, which reflects dissatisfaction with this state of affairs, it seems that this is doubtful. This is somewhat troubling as this may be challenging an important assumption in the implicit Theory of Change (section 3.2) that documentable evidence will promote improved behaviour. Since this may be a longer-term result, however, it may be too early and too scanty an evidence bases to draw any clear conclusions – this is presumably what AA 1.1 may help illuminate (see below)

The most visible deliverable has been the 2018 GPEDC monitoring report (the two previous ones, in 2014 and 2016, were pre-Nairobi). While 46 countries participated in the 2014 exercise, 81 countries were involved in 2016 and 86 countries in the 2018 round, so coverage/ participation has clearly increased. More importantly, each report mobilised a wide number of development partners and national actors in the process. For many national stakeholders, this was the first time they were engaged in such a joint national process. While there have been some changes in the countries participating – a total of 92 different countries have been involved in the three exercises – for the countries that have carried through this process twice or three times, there apparently has been a continuation in relations that is important, as the process is meant to engender a dialogue between the partners on the ground. This is to include an analysis of what the indicator values mean for their country, and thus to provide insight into which steps might be required to improve the development effectiveness of resources available<sup>55</sup>.

#### 4.2.2 The 2020-2022 Work Programme

The 2020-2022 work programme, *How We Partner Together for Sustainable Development*<sup>56</sup>, presents three strategic priorities: 1) Promoting development effectiveness to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, 2) building better partnerships, and 3) leveraging monitoring for action.

The two first priorities are operationalised in nine Action Areas (AA). The full set of AAs are presented in an Action Area Register that defines targets to be achieved by the Third High-Level Meeting (HLM3) for the Global Partnership, to take place in 2022. This register is updated on a regular basis, also presenting more short-term targets for the coming semester or next Steering Committee meeting (SCM), with the most recent update from 30 June 2021 for the 21<sup>st</sup> SCM early July 2021. This register furthermore identifies expected synergies *across* the various AAs as well as countries where pilots for the various AAs may be organised.

The third priority is to make the monitoring information more relevant and actionable, and, as part of this, the monitoring reform process. The focus is at the country level, to strengthen the basis for local

---

<sup>55</sup> As noted above, this review has unfortunately not been in a position to verify the actual dynamics and possible continuities on the ground. The in-country interviews have largely been with national focal points, whereas it would have been interesting to hear the experiences in particular from non-state stakeholders regarding in particular their views on the longer-term effects, so this remains to be explored.

<sup>56</sup> 2020- 2022 Global Partnership Work Programme | *Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/2020-2022-global-partnership-work-programme>

partnerships and joint action by generating evidence, knowledge and new solutions; facilitating the implementation of context-specific effectiveness solutions; and fostering partner country engagements and learning. In addition, there is an expectation that such modernised monitoring will identify what effectiveness may mean for different partners and cooperation modalities. This is hoped will help reinforce engagement and commitment from stakeholders, in line with the implicit Theory of Change outlined in section 3.2 that sees a link from a stronger evidentiary basis to improved effectiveness behaviour and subsequent performance.

This is essentially what is to be pursued AA 1.1, which is to explore and document the effectiveness to impact link, as this is an essential aspect of the effectiveness argument. One step being taken is to prepare country case studies at the sector level to trace through these steps in the results chains, with the intention of generating “good practice” examples to illuminate this link. This AA also organised a webinar mid-June with researchers from around the world who study the effects of development cooperation to discuss available evidence, but also to use the occasion to invite proposals to study this question and document what can be said<sup>57</sup>. But it means that the evidentiary basis for this tenet of the GPEDC is not yet conclusive.

### 4.2.3 Moving to “Country-Heavy” Results

While performance by development partner countries is found wanting in several areas (see Textbox 3), another question is the extent to which the partner countries themselves are learning and integrating effectiveness principles in their own systems and processes. Here the evidence is more positive as interviews revealed that countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, Peru, El Salvador, Mexico and Costa Rica apply effectiveness principles in their own planning processes and documents<sup>58</sup>. What this study has not been able to discern is what the countries see as the consequence of this. What can perhaps be said is that GPEDC provides what is sometimes referred to as “nudging” influence: while it is difficult to attribute specific consequences to one or a limited set of factors, the mere fact of being a constant supporter and “lighthouse” for these principles provides justification and support for adopting and applying them. In this way, GPEDC is exerting “soft power” influence, not least of all from the national monitoring reporting processes. But as with other “nudging” and “soft power” claims, the actual extent to which GPEDC can be seen as influencing and supporting change requires more careful study, and will also vary across countries and presumably over time<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> *Effectiveness to Impact: A Push for Global Collaboration among Researchers | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/globalcollaborationresearch>

<sup>58</sup> Bangladesh evidently also belongs to this group, which may be a reason donor country compliance with GPEDC principles by improving their planning, monitoring and reporting instruments.

<sup>59</sup> As with other “soft power” sources, it become difficult to identify the net value added in a world where there are a range of other bodies promoting various forms of tripartite public sector-private sector-civil society collaborations. In general, the reporting provided from the field to GPEDC at global level is very positive, pointing to acceptance of the approach and actors’ intentions to continue working towards the objectives. A problem is that the reporting is self-selected, where those with a positive message tend to report more than those who are dissatisfied with how matters are moving. When listening to non-state constituency representatives, the picture is nuanced. While they confirm their involvement and appreciate serious processes that include listening and working together towards agreements, there are also cases of frustrations, disappointments, situations of being marginalised, not listened to or included, the process excessively controlled by the public sector. From the persons spoken with, however, nobody is counselling withdrawal from or cancellation of the processes but rather wanting more support to make them more genuinely participatory when this is seen not to be the case today.

While “soft power” progress is overall being made, there is an unease regarding pace and lack of consistency across countries. It is partly in response to this that GPEDC established the *Action Dialogues*: the world is behind in its ambition of achieving the 2030 Agenda, this situation has worsened due to the pandemic, and therefore the application of the effectiveness principles needs to be accelerated. “*The Action Dialogues 2021 will draw upon the evidence, learnings and data from the monitoring of effective development co-operation (where available) and the four effectiveness principles. It will put country-level experience and partnerships at centre stage for shaping the ... national agenda on effective co-operation and partnerships*”<sup>60</sup>. So far almost 20 countries have signed up. The Action Dialogues are led by the national authorities who are to invite in all relevant national stakeholders and partners.

The difficult question, therefore, is what can be attributed to GPEDC, and which changes are caused by larger change processes. While stakeholders spoken to appreciate the GPEDC and its efforts, the monitoring report is picking up on results derived in part from SDGs activities, PFM reform processes, support for global public goods etc. Attribution is therefore to some extent subjective, dependent on which processes oneself is involved in. Speaking with stakeholders engaged in the GPEDC process will necessarily provide information on this process, unintentionally sifting out possible contributions from other sources. To the extent this is an important issue, a more rigorous assessment that can address self-selection biases may be required.

**To what extent has the GPEDC been successful in progressing towards its intended outcomes?**

There are two implicit results frameworks for the post-Nairobi period, covering the three-year periods 2017-2019 and 2020-2022. The term “Outcome” is not used, but the Strategic Outputs in the 2017-2019 work programme and the three Strategic Priorities in the 2020-2022 work programme are the closest to this level in the results hierarchy.

There is considerable consistency/overlap between these two sets of “Outcomes”, as shown in Table 4. While the fifth Strategic Output in the 2017-2019 programme does not have an obvious “counterpart” Outcome in the subsequent period, it is one of the four cross-cutting priorities of ‘enhancing and leveraging stakeholder-led political outreach and advocacy’.

The most comprehensive results reporting is from the first period, so this will form the basis for the assessment. The Action Area register referred to above provides an overview of what is to be delivered by the 22<sup>nd</sup> SCM in November 2021 in addition to the HLM3 targets and can therefore point to the direction that the GPEDC is moving during this period.

Table 4 Implicit Outcomes, GPEDC programme periods 2017-2019 and 2020-2022

2017-2019 Strategic Outputs	2020-2022 Strategic Priorities
1 Enhanced support to effective development co-operation at country level	1 Promoting development effectiveness to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 agenda

<sup>60</sup> *Action Dialogues 2021 | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/action-dialogues-2021-effective-development-co-operation-briefs>

2 Unlocking the potential of effectiveness and updating monitoring for 2030	3 Leveraging monitoring for action
3 Sharing knowledge to scale up innovative development solutions and scaling up private sector engagement leveraged through development cooperation 4 Learning from different modalities of development cooperation	2 Building better partnerships
5 Amplifying political momentum towards the 2019 Senior-Level Meeting (SLM), including organisation of the first SLM	Cross-cutting across all three SOs: Knowledge sharing

Using the three priorities for the 2020-2022 period as the relevant Outcome statements, the first one concerns the promotion of the principles to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 agenda. As noted in Table 2, a number of activities were carried out during the 2017-2019 period with some Outputs delivered, including the compendium of “good practices”. But the only actual Outcome is the stated application of the principles in several of the participating countries noted in the section above. While the application of effectiveness principles in own systems and instruments is very positive, more careful scrutiny is required to understand the extent to which the various country decisions have led to a broad-based and institutionalised application that can be characterised as an “Outcome”<sup>61</sup>.

During the current programme period, the steps taken in the previous programme period are being carried forward through the work done on documenting the Effectiveness to Impact consequences (AA 1.1) while AA 1.2 is to support work on identifying how to improve data and statistical work to underpin capacity development in this field. Early work on AA 1.1 has been on developing the design for case studies to document the Effectiveness to Impact link but without carrying out any case studies so far. Under 1.2, several methodology workshops have been held, partnerships with in particular statistical knowledge networks have been established, with a first advisory paper to be ready by yearend, both workstreams thus still in preparatory mode.

The second Outcome objective is the building of better partnerships. During the first period, this was a two-part objective, the first one largely being the positioning of the GPEDC as the umbrella body for country-level partnerships – being recognised at the global level as the key interlocutor for these kinds of partnerships. The second dimension was the support to private sector engagement, where the Kampala Principles were launched before the second work programme began. While there are no studies that can document significant application of the principles or that they provide superior results, this study was not able to look into this, so possible results are not known. Another Output was the putting into place of a knowledge platform for the sharing of experiences, though without known application or any medium-term results that can be considered an Outcome. During the current period, the nine AAs are moving ahead at a somewhat uneven pace, in part as a function of available funding for actual activities. Each AA has its own work plan that typically includes the development of guidance materials and toolkits based on practical experience on the ground. These are to be made publicly available among other things on the GPEDC knowledge platform.

<sup>61</sup> One challenge in reaching conclusions is that the strategic outputs/priorities are not stated as Outcomes, but largely formulated in process terms – “promoting”, “leveraging”, “building” – making it difficult to discern what would constitute satisfactory Outcome achievements.

The third strategic priority is successful country-level action based on empirical evidence. This largely concerns the development of the Monitoring Reports and the support to stakeholders to conduct the monitoring exercise, to better capture EDC concerns and performance, and make this available in a form that can inform understanding and choices on the ground. This continuous reform process has during the current period led to the “transition period” for reflection and adjustment of the monitoring framework and process, to ensure that it addresses stakeholder concerns and country-level EDC-relevant decisions, as well as continues to remain relevant as a tool for global and country-level accountability and commitments. The recently initiated Action Dialogues are seen in part to also contribute to this work.

One possible Outcome from this might have been institutionalised monitoring that feeds into national decision-making processes in the fields covered by the monitoring exercises. The monitoring review process is still underway and looking at improving the monitoring instrument itself – the indicators’ coverage, reliability, validity – but also at the process including how to engage the stakeholders. It will not be possible with the time remaining in this work programme period for a new monitoring exercise to produce final results that can lead to these kinds of organisational/systemic changes, though this is also not envisaged till a future period.

#### 4.2.4 Looking Ahead

The GPEDC is clearly moving in the direction it has intended and has been reasonably consistent and coherent in these efforts. Progress is uneven, as is to be expected given the decentralised and voluntary nature of the GPEDC, where country-level activities are defined and prioritised by the stakeholders on the ground – with governments clearly in the driver’s seat and thus largely determining pace, scope and direction.

There is, therefore, more consistency regarding the activities and objectives regarding the global level: the Co-chairs and Steering Committee have a firm eye on the HLM3 as a key event to reconfirm the GPEDC’s role and status in the development world, and as the lead actor on defending and developing the EDC principles as key to successful SDG implementation. A number of activities are therefore being timed to provide inputs to these discussions.

Yet the documenting of results beyond the direct Outputs remains relatively poor. A key reason is that much of GPEDC results and claims are “soft” improvements – capacities, processes, levels of engagement, the spread of knowledge, degree of societal awareness. These are difficult to document in terms of changes and improvements and even more challenging, as noted above, to document attributable cause. Yet subjectively experienced feelings of empowerment through successful participation in a monitoring process, for example, can be valuable to individuals and organisations involved. But it is at a more *societal* level that such quasi-outcomes are intended to be produced and recorded. Tracking this, however, can be costly and problematic: the starting point/baseline situation is generally poorly mapped and recorded so changes are challenging to document; disparity of country situations makes cross-country comparisons hard; how to interpret improvements in the given country context is challenging; how to weight the various factors and processes, and how much importance to accord to the experiences of different actors can easily be accused of selective bias and subjectivity; how one disentangles the influence of GPEDC from that of other actors and processes is virtually impossible when trying to analyse relative contributions to the change identified. To the extent it is important to document such transformations, the contracting of a research body for tracing the *Effectiveness to Impact* results chain foreseen under AA 1.1 may provide an empirical base in

setting a new standard for how more rigorous verification can be done. This, however, is resource-demanding and cannot be expected to be replicated across the GPEDC universe of activities, but points to a useful “testing” of GPEDC assumptions while perhaps providing greater legitimacy to claims through clear reliability and validity of data and methodology. A possible complementary step is to produce a more rigorous results framework for the GPEDC as a body, not necessarily with a fully-fledged Theory of Change, but at least a verifiable intervention logic for key programme areas, with some agreed-upon overarching Outcome and perhaps even Impact statements<sup>62</sup>.

There are also perhaps some exaggerated expectations regarding what GPEDC can contribute to. Some FCAS stakeholders would like to see more attention paid to factors contributing to peace and stability since these are necessary pre-conditions for societal actors coming together and agreeing on joint actions. This may be putting too much hope on general dialogue and partnership approaches for successfully addressing fundamental conflict issues, thus saddling GPEDC with objectives it cannot really satisfy. There therefore also needs to be some caution regarding what GPEDC should be held accountable for since unrealistic or unfounded expectations has the potential for setting GPEDC up for a situation of perceived failure. This latter issue needs to be taken into account when trying to assess GPEDC’s degree of success. The discussion surrounding the reform of the monitoring exercise points to a dispersion in concerns and expectations that GPEDC cannot hope to meet. As noted in the Relevance section, trying to be everything to everybody threatens the ability of GPEDC to focus on those aspects of EDC over which it can provide influence and for which it can reasonably be held accountable. The danger of a broad consensus mechanism is that it reaches an agreement by including all concerns.

GPEDC on the one hand faces the reality that the effectiveness principles are in general quite well known and thus not something that the GPEDC can claim “ownership” to – it is a steward of the standard but not a body that most actors discussing effectiveness would realise plays any particular role in its maintenance and application. Another dimension is that the effectiveness *indicators*, which the GPEDC can claim much stronger ownership to and to which its name is more clearly linked through the monitoring reports, are meant as a metric to trace actor performance. This is typically used by “rights holders” to hold “duty-bearers” accountable – in fact is meant to. And while in a truly inclusive and participatory national GPEDC group there are several dyads of rights holders and duty bearers, there are obviously some that are more important than others. The GPEDC indicator universe is therefore likely to produce “facts/sources of contention”, something that may constitute a disincentive for some actors to engage.

Another issue that has been raised in interviews is that the GPEDC indicators focus on effectiveness *principles* whereas funding partners, in particular, are under pressure to document *results*. Unless and until GPEDC is able to document that the principles in fact produce better results, the political interest by funding partners to engage in the GPEDC process may be affected. At the same time, several noted that there is interest in a more equitable North-South dialogue since the global nature of problems like Covid-19 and climate change require this.

---

<sup>62</sup> As with a Theory of Change, some caution should be exercised when it comes to how far out a results chain it is logical to expect traceable consequences of GPEDC interventions. As a voluntary body, its actual voice and weight when it comes to development decisions will remain limited, and at Outcome and certainly at Impact levels there will be other processes and actors of much greater importance, swamping whatever GPEDC influence might have.

The more recent dimensions of South-South and triangular cooperation are also receiving more interest by a number of the stakeholders, and the current GPEDC universe does not highlight these to the extent some would like. GPEDC is thus again faced with the dilemma of whether to enlarge the agenda in order to accommodate new concerns or focus on delivering consistent and quality information on a core set of issues.

The ability to document higher-level results and thus the relevance of GPEDC clearly depends on having an agenda to which the GPEDC can legitimately claim to be making attributable contributions. This is easier to achieve with a focused and fairly stable set of objectives that can be tracked over time. Yet by staying with a relatively static agenda the GPEDC risks irrelevance as new issues come to the fore. One of the dilemmas that the monitoring reform process will presumably have to look at is how to accommodate the decisions that have defined the EDC universe with at the same time recognizing the arguments that exist to include newer dimensions that some stakeholders see as important for understanding the world of development effectiveness today.

One indirect indicator of the overall relevance of the GPEDC is reflected in what appears to be a limited reach of GPEDC reporting when compared to the use and referencing of alternative sources of information and analysis. The perception even among GPEDC stakeholders that the GPEDC depends on a limited number of committed individuals is a further indication that the GPEDC, despite important documented achievements, merits some self-reflection concerning its role and net value-added in a large and crowded development universe.

**To what extent are the GPEDC's roles at the global level (standard setting, knowledge sharing, monitoring and policy advocacy) and at the country level (enable better steering of diverse development cooperation efforts to deliver on national development targets) balanced and complementary?**

GPEDC as a body or GPEDC data is referenced in various high-level documents as referenced in Textbox 2. especially in the UN system, where its role in supporting and promoting EDC is recognised and formally appreciated. Since the GPEDC JST is housed in and institutionally supported by the UNDP and OECD, the administrative branches of GPEDC have direct access to these key international actors and platforms and are politically and technically supported by these two bodies. But the GPEDC, as a proponent of EDC that is seen by many in a fairly limited technical sense – “provide more data, align with partner priorities, use country systems” – is easily seen as a minor actor that is dealing with an issue that is no longer at the top of the political agenda for most international actors. While it is accepted as a standard-setter in this field, it plays this role in what many perceive to be a declining area of interest at the global level.

GPEDC houses a knowledge-sharing platform that is easily accessible and simple to navigate. Judging from the number of actors involved in the various working groups and the number of times documents are recorded as being downloaded, however, there appears to be limited engagement and use of this resource so far.

The monitoring reports are recognised as providing valid and detailed data, as noted previously, but with limited impact as far as other global reporting is concerned (see Textbox 2). While some national VNRs refer to own monitoring data, especially regarding the degree to which development partners

provide complete and timely data, use national systems etc., the operational consequences in terms of behavioural change and follow-up are unclear. There *are* some development partners that take these issues seriously, especially at a policy level, but as noted by the EU report, this does not necessarily translate into changed performance on the ground, where a host of other considerations come into play, and EDC concerns appear to get pushed down the priority list.

At the country level, the role of GPEDC may be perceived quite differently. In countries where GPEDC activities such as monitoring exercises, stakeholder consultations based on EDC principles, support to piloting of new ways of carrying out activities more in line with EDC “lessons learned” mean GPEDC is appreciated in a very different way. Since national processes are defined and led by national authorities, it is of course up to them to decide which aspects of the GPEDC approach they apply to which country-processes.

The capacity building provided in connection with the monitoring exercises is important and allows for the consistent application of index value calculations, for example. The extent to which different non-state stakeholders are involved is a function both of what the government wants and what the non-state actors are able or willing to offer and contribute. Here practices vary a lot by country, and hence not something over which GPEDC has much say except by providing the guidelines and setting standards. The JST quality assures and standardizes the reports coming from the field and in this way provides feed-back and ensures consistency of the reporting and ensures that the final product answers to GPEDC standards.

For other forms of support to the field, much less is documented in terms of what GPEDC advises and countries in fact do. The Action Dialogues may turn out to become different as this is a specific form of intervention where GPEDC at the global level may push for experience exchanges through early identification of “good practices” and pro-active dissemination of these due to the urgency and importance of these dialogues. The Kampala Principles constitute another example of where general principles are promulgated but actual implementation has to conform to the particular case and the conditions under which the individual case unfolds. The Kampala Principles case studies provided on the GPEDC website address different sectors across a range of countries, but since there are key principles behind the actions there are commonalities across the cases that allow for some comparisons and drawing of lessons.

The Republic of Korea is actively supporting the accumulation of GPEDC relevant knowledge. After hosting the Busan High-Level Forum in 2011, in 2014 the Busan Forum series was launched including the previously mentioned Learning and Accelerating Programme (LAP). The fourth and most recent forum in 2018 included 25 countries from around the globe. The final report documents a number of “lessons learned” cases, speaking to a range of issues on the GPEDC agenda, reflecting the diversity of situations being faced by countries trying to implement the EDC principles<sup>63</sup>. At the same time, in a recent paper prepared by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the concluding recommendations remain very general and do not speak to the above concerns regarding a need for more operational and timebound results, where the GPEDC is instead encouraged to “*raising*

---

<sup>63</sup> Program Strategy and Policy Planning Department Korea International Cooperation Agency Republic of Korea & Ministry of Foreign Affairs UNDP Seoul Policy Center (USPC). (2018, November). *Outcome Report: 2018 GPEDC Learning and Accelerating Programme*. [https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Outcome-report\\_2018-GPEDC-Learning-and-Accelerating-Programme.pdf](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Outcome-report_2018-GPEDC-Learning-and-Accelerating-Programme.pdf)

*international awareness on development effectiveness by creating a multi-layered supporting system ... strengthening linkages to SDGs, capacity building of developing countries ....*<sup>64</sup>.

---

<sup>64</sup> Busan Global Partnership Forum (2019, December). *Outcome Report: Revitalizing the Global Partnership for the attainment of the SDGs*. GPEDC. [https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2021-02/2019%20Busan%20Global%20Partnership%20Forum%20outcome%20report\\_0.pdf](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2021-02/2019%20Busan%20Global%20Partnership%20Forum%20outcome%20report_0.pdf)

## 4.2.5 Conclusions Effectiveness and Impact

### To what extent has the GPEDC delivered expected results?

- During the programme period 2017-2019, the GPEDC delivered a number of Outputs in line with those programmed. For the current period, Output delivery has been slow in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic but the progress in various AAs has also depended to a large extent on the lead partner.
- The key deliverable has been the 2018 Monitoring Report, with an increasing number of countries reporting, and where the high participation by vulnerable and poorer states (FCAS and SIDS) reflects their concern with EDC. The report documents improvements in partner country systems while development partners pay less attention to key EDC principles of ownership, alignment and use of national instruments.
- Much of what GPEDC points to as consequences of its work at the country level are “soft power” results that are difficult to measure and report and also attribute to a single source like GPEDC. The newly launched Action Dialogues may provide more easily traceable results, and while country-specific in their consequences may nonetheless provide an opportunity to document an implicit GPEDC value chain on the ground.
- Since GPEDC is fundamentally a voluntary body, what is *expected* is largely confined to the global level where direct funding is provided and hence accountability can be expected. Here results are largely in line with what was programmed particularly in the first period. At the country level, it is participation in the 2018 monitoring exercise that stands out – other results are scattered and vary with only a few countries documenting activities unevenly over time. Results at the global level are thus *satisfactory/good* while results at the country level are highly variable and as a collective largely *disappointing*.

### What has been the relative progress towards Outcome?

- Strategic objectives have remained relatively stable across the two work programme periods. Using the three strategic priorities for the last period as proxies for Outcomes, there is a fairly consistent and coherent move in the direction of these overarching objectives over these two periods.
- Since the GPEDC has not produced a formal results framework or intervention logic, no *monitorable* Outcomes have been defined and hence results reporting is against the more process-formulated Strategic Priorities. Results reporting from the field is affected by a self-selection bias compounded by the challenge that much of this is “soft power” achievements.
- Documentable achievements beyond Outputs are limited. Even Monitoring Report data are referenced sparingly. The progress towards Outcome level results, therefore, appears *poor*.

### How is the balance between global and country level efforts and results?

- GPEDC is recognised as the anchor for EDC concerns at the global level, but the issue itself is of decreasing interest to a range of actors.
- In countries where GPEDC-supported activities are taking place, its reputation appears more positive but overall, the GPEDC is perceived as largely a global-level body with limited ability to generate activities at the country level.

## 4.3 Efficiency

**How is the cost-benefit ratio of GPEDC membership being perceived, and to what extent and how can this be improved at both the global, regional and national level?**

The total funding seen as necessary to finance the JST over the current three-year period amounts to a little over €8.6 million<sup>65</sup>. The JST is lauded by all spoken with as being efficient and dedicated, providing support and guidance to the various constituencies and country-teams as requested. Its main activities are to service the Co-chairs, the Steering Committee and their related activities and meetings as well as certain global services such as their website and knowledge platform<sup>66</sup>. While it is not possible to provide any meaningful input/output ratio, the general consensus that the JST is doing a lot with limited funds means that the view is that the cost-benefit ratio as far as JST funding is concerned is *good*.

When it comes to costs and benefits as seen by national-level stakeholders, nothing is really known. The main activity has historically been the national monitoring exercise, for which some external funding was provided for things like capacity development, but where the last such exercise was in 2018. The team is not aware of local budgets and assessments of time use by the various partners in the process and the extent to which external financing was made available, but when considering time use costs most resources were clearly national. Other activities such as integrating effectiveness principles into own planning processes and instruments are locally financed. Specific interventions such as the studies leading up to the adoption of the Kampala principles or improving an aid database (Rwanda) have often received donor financing, and some more continuous support has also been available in some countries, such as from UNDP/UNRCO. To what extent local business, CSOs, unions etc pay their own way or are dependent on funding from other partners is not known, and undoubtedly varies from one country to another. The fact that the monitoring exercises have expanded in terms of a number of partner countries and involvement of local stakeholders indicates that these exercises are seen as worthwhile – though some countries that participated in the 2014 and 2016 exercises clearly did not also participate in 2018. Whether this was due to funding constraints or due to other factors is not known. It is also not known if other processes have been limited or cut due to lack of financing or seen as not being cost-effective.

Table 5 Resource Requirements for JST Core Functional Support, 2020-2022

Areas of Institutional Support	OECD (EUR)			UNDP (USD)		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Monitoring	1,079,000	1,094,633	1,099,803	333,125	376,500	376,500
Country anchoring and implementation	220,000	146,390	149,257	223,100	325,000	370,500
Communication, KS, Learning	110,000	73,155	74,628	268,000	323,480	314,980

<sup>65</sup> This is based on the data provided to SCM 21 in July 2021, using the approximate exchange rate end of July 2021 since the OECD part of the JST is paid in Euro while the UNDP part is paid in USD.

<sup>66</sup> It should be noted that the JST has been a highly pro-active and constructive body during this review, identifying relevant stakeholders for the team, setting up a number of meetings, providing documentation, etc. This also reflects, however, the vulnerability of the GPEDC: In most reviews/evaluations, the team itself would do this work by selecting across a known universe of potential informants. The fact that the GPEDC universe is so dispersed and difficult to identify is one issue. The more troubling is that the team of course has no way of understanding or correcting for any (unintended) biases in the informant and document universe provided.

SC and governance	220,000	146,390	149,257	368,750	405,500	405,500
Modernised DAC Narrative (applicable only to OECD)		200,137	205,702	n/a	n/a	n/a
GMS (applicable only to UNDP)	n/a	n/a	n/a	68,798	89,438	90,759
Annual Total Cost	1,629,000	1,660,705	1,678,647	1,261,773	1,519,918	1,558,239
Total period cost		<b>4,968,352</b>			<b>4,339,930</b>	

The real issue concerns the constituencies at the global level. Development partners are able to rely on the DAC for many of their contributions, and for those committed to EDC the issue is not so much budget constraints but rather time availability constraints. For many partner countries, and in particular the poorer ones, the lack of a quasi-secretariat like the OECD means that the relative costs are greater, and many of these countries face both budget and time constraints<sup>67</sup>. Political commitment, as noted previously, has declined, and with that presumably the willingness to shoulder the budget implications of GPEDC engagement when it comes to global level activities. There may therefore be a bifurcation between how partner countries view costs of GPEDC engagement on the ground versus at the global level, but nothing is really known about this.

For the non-state stakeholders, the cost-benefit issue is one of increasing concern. The issue, as noted previously, is that members want to see clearer results from the use of organisation resources – staff time and money – when each of these constituencies face a host of divergent concerns and thus need to choose carefully how to allocate scarce resources. The CPDE for the CSO community, while receiving donor funding for activities, still need to justify why focus should be on the GPEDC and its activities and not more on specific issues, whether thematic – such as the list of 10 concerns identified in the CIVICUS report – or geographic by focusing on the conflict-affected or climate affected issues. For other non-state actors, the question is even more stark, as there are direct trade-offs between continuing to pay attention to GPEDC or moving onto other urgent priorities. One former SC member noted that he had to read 200 pages of documentation before one SCM, forcing him to either pay serious attention and then put other urgent tasks aside, or come into the SCM not as prepared as he wanted to. While those involved in the GPEDC are generally very appreciative of the body and the activities, they also sense an increasing unease in their own organisations where there is a demand for better-documented benefits as justification for continued participation. One challenge is weighing the costs of the global engagement to the benefits of results on the ground, where a question is whether good results in a few countries justifies continued engagement at global level, or if a more decentralised approach would be better – but then losing out on the ability to help country-level members with the insights gained from the participation at the global level. One actor said that organisation’s board is going to make a decision towards the end of the current work period to decide whether it wants to continue being engaged at the global level or not.

For partner countries, the issues are the same, and in some ways perhaps starker. National governments in the poorer countries face severe staffing and financial constraints yet are the actors who are likely to invest the most in the monitoring exercise because the issue of effectiveness of external financing is a real issue. Getting a stronger national steer on these resource streams can be quite important so the necessary resources need to be mobilised.

<sup>67</sup> Prior to the Busan conference, an informal partner-country caucus was organized by a co-chair representing partner countries and other colleagues, partially and temporarily filling this gap.

What is also clear, however, is that the participants in the GPEDC processes recognise the benefits and uniqueness of what the GPEDC has to offer. For non-state actors, in particular, there is no real alternative forum where such principled and important global issues can be debated and where they are largely treated as equals. The GPEDC provides a unique ability to be heard on issues that are truly of importance – though the actual consequences of these very interesting discussions are difficult to quantify.

For a number of those spoken with, the issue is how to weigh the options: if not GPEDC, then what – and if there is no real alternative, is the loss of GPEDC of such great consequence that it is worth maintaining, given the costs?

### 4.3.1 Conclusions Efficiency

- The Joint Support Team is seen overall as *Efficient* and relatively ‘light’ when compared to other global partnership, while the budget allocated to it is considered appropriate by stakeholders.
- For development partners, the question is more time availability than budget constraints, as the GPEDC is a fairly marginal cost compared to their total costs of international engagements.
- For partner countries, political engagement has been under pressure with time and budget resources at risk of being directed to own country-level activities rather than global participation. This trade-off is more complex for poorer countries where external financing remains important and GPEDC remains an important arena for arguing their case.
- For non-state actors, constituents are questioning the use of resources at global level against often limited benefits at country level. The concern of decreasing engagement is felt at global level while country-level activities may continue or increase as actors see purpose in this. Decision-making bodies of non-state actors appear increasingly under pressure to decide if or with what level of engagement they will continue working at global level.
- The overall challenge is that value-for-money needs to be documented for continued commitment, especially at global level, in light of the many other pressing issues that all these stakeholders are also engaged in.

# 5 Governance review

## 5.1 Strategy and plans

To what extent are GPEDC's ambitions clear, shared and translated into realistic strategies and plans?

In answering this question, we first describe GPEDC's evolving ambitions as reflected in documented strategies and plans. Subsequently, we revisit these desk-study results, in the perspective of the perception of interviewees and survey respondents concerning the evolution of GPEDC's strategies and plans.

### 5.1.1 Ambitions described in strategies and plans

The GPEDC was established as part of the Busan Partnership agreement in 2011, with the aim *to create an inclusive and representative global partnership to support and ensure accountability for the implementation of commitments at the political level towards earlier agreed development effectiveness principles*<sup>68</sup>. Already at this stage, the mandate of the GPEDC had been broadened from effective aid to effective DC, under the assumption that practising the EDC principles leads to increased DE. In addition, it was assumed that this requires the involvement of non-state actors, including already engaged civil society representatives and the private sector<sup>69</sup>. The main calls for action at that time concerned the development of an agreed set of indicators and targets to monitoring progress in the implementation of commitments, and the actual establishment of the GPEDC, hosted by the OECD and the UNDP.

During the first High-Level Meeting (HLM) of the GPEDC in Mexico (April 2014) a communiqué was issued, reconfirming the ambition to build an inclusive post-2015 Development Agenda that would respect the EDC principles. In this communiqué, the special role and need of middle-income countries as being both providers and recipients, requiring differentiated strategies for effective DC, was acknowledged. The main actions through which these ambitions were announced to be operationalized included 1) convening HLMs every two years, 2) Korea hosting an annual learning and acceleration workshop, and 3) reviewing global arrangements for M&E in light of the post-2015 agenda being developed. In addition, an overview of 39 ongoing global voluntary initiatives has been presented, each in its own way aiming to contribute to effective DC. These initiatives have not been formally connected to the GPEDC, and in some cases, they only reflect the commitments of particular countries or actors and not the GPEDC as a whole.

---

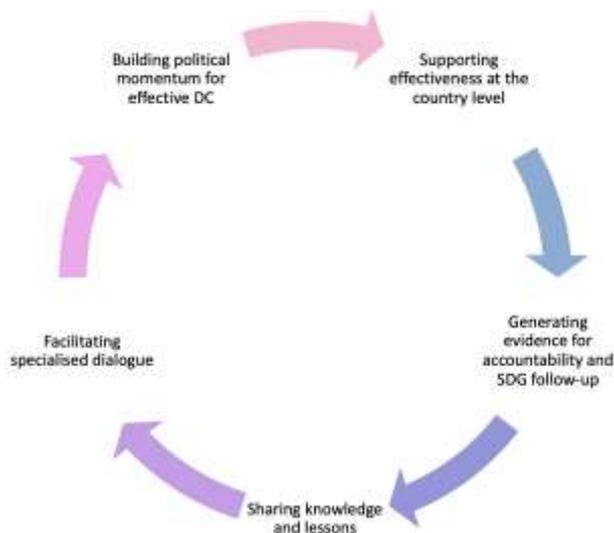
<sup>68</sup> *Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action - OECD*. (n.d.). OECD. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>

<sup>69</sup> In fact, the GPEDC has been declared, at this time, as the most inclusive development cooperation accord ever reached with regards to the diversity of stakeholders and its broader agenda (Abdel-Malek, T. (2015). The global partnership for effective development cooperation: origins, actions and future prospects. *German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut Für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)*, 88. [https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/Studies\\_88.pdf](https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/Studies_88.pdf).

The Mexico communiqué, in line with the Busan agreement, highlights the importance of the GPEDC as the main vehicle through which more effective DC is being pursued, without much formalisation in terms of structure, operational planning or resourcing of action.

It is in the second HLM in Nairobi, during which the GPEDC's mandate is revisited and expanded upon within the context of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, that this mandate is worked out in more operational detail. The document clarifies expected contributions (commitments) for most constituencies, whilst acknowledging the special position of middle-income countries. The Nairobi outcome document<sup>70</sup> furthermore specifies a renewed vision and mandate and breaks this down into five core functions (figure 4) that all are expected to contribute to GPEDC's mandate with an increasing emphasis on progress at the country level.

Figure 4 Five core functions of GPEDC



In addition, the Nairobi outcome document presents governance and working arrangements for implementing those core functions, with a description of the roles and responsibilities of the CCs, the SC, and the JST. Furthermore, a biennial Programme of Work covering 2017 and 2018 is announced that gets endorsed by the SC in April 2017. As the Mexico communiqué, the Nairobi outcome document also contains a reference to global initiatives and lists 28 GPIs, that remain voluntary, led by different groups of GPEDC stakeholders, and still loosely connected to the GPEDC without clear responsibilities for GPEDC governing bodies.

The 2017-2018 Work Programme translates the GPEDC's five core functions into six strategic outputs with activity plans, including task distribution and schedule. Tasks are, however, only assigned to the CCs, SC, and the JST, while the formulation of results and activities illustrate the need for cooperation of other GPEDC stakeholders (e.g., 1.1 Country-led (inclusive) dialogues for advancing effectiveness principles). Further, an indicative budgetary framework was worked out, which covers JST institutional support and some of GPEDC's core activities (e.g., country pilots, support to the monitoring exercise). However, this budget did not match the full ambition of the work programme, nor did it fully get funded, creating challenges for the JST to provide the planned support and for members to finance

<sup>70</sup> Nairobi Outcome Document | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (2016, January). GPEDC. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/nairobi-outcome-document>

their expected contributions. In February 2018, nine-country pilots were launched under Strategic Output 1 of the 2017-2018 Work Programme<sup>71</sup>. Reportedly these were one of the most useful country-level supports provided.

In subsequent SC meetings, the progress of the 2017 – 2018 Programme of Work<sup>72</sup> is discussed, although without having a formal and functional monitoring system in place that ensures regular and comparable reporting on progress. The programme of work is extended to also cover 2019, during which a Senior Level Meeting (SLM) in New York is organized, which attracted over 700 senior-level people and consisted of a range of technical, mostly member-led, sessions to exchange experiences and share lessons on specific EDC-related topics, including EDC in Fragile Contexts, Effect Triangular Co-operation, and Effective Partnerships. Following the SLM, and learning from experiences with the 2017-2018 WP, the CCs create a new programming framework, stressing the need for collective and cooperative action as the basis for the 2020-2022 Work Programme.

Consequently, the 2020 - 2022 Work Programme is formulated (within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic) and distinguishes three strategic priorities to be pursued through 10 AAs with global and country-level outputs specified for each area. The Work Programme is furthermore guided by four foundational elements that reflect learnings from the past (i.e., activities to be more anchored at country level, stronger constituency engagement, enabling an exchange of knowledge, and coherent advocacy and outreach). Action areas are member-led. This means that they have a clear lead-agency<sup>73</sup>, who in partnership with up to 20 voluntary members, is expected to take care of the planning, resourcing and implementation of activities under their respective AA with the JST in a supporting role to 1) facilitate systematic country-outreach and engagement and 2) enhance synergies across AAs. In practice, this resulted in work plans being elaborated, resourced and implemented to a varying extent, largely in line with the global outputs as presented in the overall Work Programme.

The above illustrates a clear evolution of strategic and operational planning frameworks, starting from strategic political commitments that are not yet (Busan) or loosely (Mexico) operationalised (Busan and Mexico). From Nairobi onwards, planning frameworks become more technical and operational with an unequivocal attempt to improve member engagement and an increasing emphasis at the country level. Despite this progress, GPEDC's funding efforts still only concentrate on covering JST institutional support costs and the delivery of selected global results (i.e., costs for monitoring reviews and HLMs/SLMs)<sup>74</sup>. Systematic resource mobilisation and clear arrangements to enable implementation of action at the country level are still lacking, resulting in continued dependence on

---

<sup>71</sup> GPEDC. (2018). *Enhanced Effectiveness at Country Level: Summary of Pilot Focus Areas*.

[https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-05/GPEDC-Country-Level-Implementation-Pilot-Summary\\_final.pdf](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-05/GPEDC-Country-Level-Implementation-Pilot-Summary_final.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> 2017-18 Global Partnership Work Programme | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (n.d.).

GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/2017-18-global-partnership-work-programme>

<sup>73</sup> Except AA 2.7 on effective multilateral support

<sup>74</sup> The JST funding note specifies areas of institutional support including: 1) substantive support to the monitoring reform, 2) support to structured country anchoring and light coordination for 'whole of GPEDC' Work Programme implementation, 3) facilitation support for communication, knowledge sharing and learning, and 4) support to Steering Committee decision-making and governance.

voluntary and unpredictable contributions of a shrinking number of member countries. The recently established Financing Committee might prove to be a step forward in this regard.

All GPEDC's key outcome and work programme documents are all accessible through the GPEDC website and are regularly promoted and discussed during GPEDC events. In addition, the GPEDC website provides user-friendly information through infographics<sup>75</sup>, blogs, videos and podcasts and about the essence of its work, but these communications are primarily downloaded by people based in provider countries.

### 5.1.2 Ambitions perceived by the respondents

Looking at how interviewees and survey respondents perceive the evolution of GPEDC's strategy in terms of clarity and implementability, a somewhat more critical picture emerges.

First, the vast majority of interviewees confirm the continued validity and clarity of GPEDC's overall vision - *maximise the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development for the shared benefit of people, planet, prosperity and peace* – as well as the four EDC principles through which this vision should become reality. Less agreement is expressed about what these principles mean in practice and how progress towards this vision should be manifested and captured. *Examples of contesting views given include national ownership being the same or different from government ownership, alignment being measured by funding volume and modality, which would not be in line with political realities or characteristics of South-South cooperation, transparency going at the expense of the safety of non-state constituencies, and so on.* In addition, interview respondents report different views about how EDC should be defined and delineated and how this evolves over time, despite attempts by the DAC to develop a new and more broadly accepted narrative about the use of the EDC principle in a changing operating environment. These differing views are also illustrated and acknowledged by the priority being given to the ongoing reform of GPEDC's monitoring exercise.

Some interviewees argue that this absence of a clear and common understanding of EDC and its underlying principles is one of the main reasons why GPEDC struggles in keeping the so-called dual countries engaged, as they feel the history, nature and context of their EDC efforts is different, hence the application of the EDC principles would need to be adapted to reflect this reality.

Other critical remarks related to the operationalisation of GPEDC's mandate include:

- GPEDC is trying to do too many things for a plethora of stakeholders at both the global and the country level, especially in light of its limited resource base.
- GPEDC is pursuing effectiveness of all forms of co-operation for development on paper, but in practice still (perceived as) being dominated by the aid-effectiveness debate between traditional donors and recipients at the global level. Despite the existence of deliberate communications to explain this difference, among others as part of the communication strategy in the run-up to the SLM, the shift from AE to DE is not (yet) firmly established in the public image of the GPEDC.
- GPEDC lacks clear implementing arrangements, in particular at the country level, where it is assumed that GPEDC activities can be embedded in existing coordination mechanisms or

---

<sup>75</sup> GPEDC At A Glance | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/gpedc-glance-0>

dialogue platforms while having to rely on a support system with limited and unpredictable resources.

### 5.1.3 Conclusions Strategies and Plans

In conclusion, we see that GPEDC's strategic ambitions are articulated and get regularly updated as well as adapted to the context. The essence, the GPEDC goal (improving the effectiveness of all forms of DC) remains relevant, as are the four EDC principles. However, the operationalisation of this ambition and the four principles remains difficult. More specifically, complex questions like (i) how this ambition translates into logical, more immediate and feasible results, (ii) how are the principles to be translated in practice and what are the inherent challenges in that, and (iii) how does this differ among recipient and dual countries, understandably keep coming up. Also, a gap remains between what GPEDC says it does, and what respondents perceive (i.e., broadening from AE to DE versus still focused on AE), despite extensive and deliberate efforts to communicate and discuss the broadening of GPEDC's mandate, since its inception in 2011. GPEDC's continued hesitation to develop and communicate an agreed explicit conceptual framework is illustrative of the absence of a clear and common understanding of the essence of GPEDC's work. Without such an agreed framework, the assumed interrelations among the principles and pathways of change towards GPEDC's ambitions, and the expected role of GPEDC's main constituencies in this, remain undefined and therefore difficult to communicate and open for multiple interpretations.

Nevertheless, clear progress is being made from 'limited operationalisation' (before 2016) to SC/CC/JST-centred operationalisation (Work Programme 2017 – 2018), to member-centred operationalisation (2020 – 2022). Still, the current work programme largely concentrates on the global level results and allows a great deal of freedom to members in terms of engagement and commitments, without specifying clear expectations nor having adequate and predictable funding for implementation and support. Not surprisingly, this complicates the demonstration of meaningful progress and tangible results.

## 5.2 Cooperation and Engagement

To what extent are the expectations from different members/constituencies clear, and are they effectively stimulated to engage and contribute, making optimal use of their respective capacities and complementarities?

In responding to this question, we distinguish findings related to member-engagement at the global and the country level, with special attention for engagement in the ongoing AAs. Besides, we will address the engagement of CCs and the host organisations.

### 5.2.1 Member engagement at the global level

GPEDC brings together 161 countries and 56 organisations aiming to agree on more concerted efforts in improving the effectiveness of all forms of DC. Successfully engaging such a diverse 'membership' with varying interests and capacities is not an easy feat and, not surprisingly, proves to be a challenge. In interview and survey responses related to **global engagement**, we observe a widespread concern about a limited, changing and uneven engagement among and within the various constituencies. Respondents explain these concerns by referring to an apparent reduction in political interest, the

practical absence of “*emerging donors*”, key players in the present international development scene like China, India and Brazil, the continued difficulties of securing adequate financing from a shrinking number of *financial* contributors. In line with this, various respondents characterise the GPEDC as “champion-driven”, meaning that the partnership’s performance depends on the active efforts of a small minority of its members.

At the same time, other respondents counter these concerns, indicating that – firstly – a varied engagement is inherent to the voluntary nature and diversity of constituents of the partnership. The second line of arguments is that this dynamic could also be a logical move from political to technical engagement, given that attention has shifted from the political commitment - manifested in the establishment of the partnership - to a more technical one needed for implementation. In light of this, they refer to the strong engagement of over 600 representatives in the SLM taking place over a weekend, and to the ongoing involvement in AAs. A third explanatory factor relates to the mainstreaming of the EDC principles in sector-specific policies and partnerships, making time investments in a separate partnership advocating these principles less relevant.

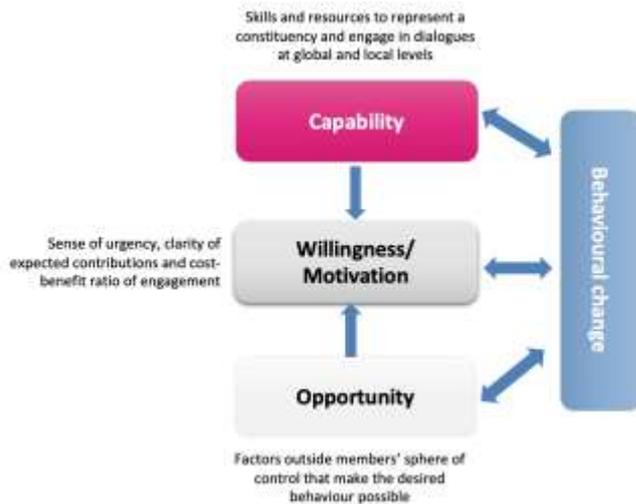
Another often expressed but also disputed, explanation lies in the emergence of the 2030 Agenda a few years after the GPEDC establishment. Some respondents claim that development partners focus on this agenda, which is built on the same principles that GPEDC is advocating for, which makes the GPEDC less relevant to engage with. Others argue that GPEDC is primarily concerned with “how” the 2030 agenda can best be implemented, complementing sector-specific efforts by linking and contributing to SDG 17. Again others, praise the GPEDC for being a unique and inclusive partnership of multiple state and non-state actors that is less politicized than the more formally established UN institutions that coordinate and monitor the implementation of the 2030 agenda. They see the GPEDC as an important platform with the potential of making a broad and inclusive voice heard to support more effective cooperation in the pursuit of the SDGs.

From the above, it becomes clear that member cooperation and engagement is influenced by a multitude of factors, whereby only part of those factors are within the realm of influence the GPEDC leadership and its members. We related these factors to the extent to which members have the capacity, willingness and opportunity<sup>76</sup> to actively cooperate and engage (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Drivers of desired behavioural change: Capacity, Motivation and Opportunity

---

<sup>76</sup> Mayne, J. (2015). Useful Theory of Change Models. Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 30(2), 119–142. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjpe.230>



Looking at how the GPEDC ‘manages’ these three factors, we observe the following:

In terms of **capacity to engage**, in particular, significant differences *between* constituencies are reported. Key factors in this are 1) the extent to which a constituency can rely on existing coordination and consultation mechanisms, 2) the variety of views and interests within each constituency, and 3) the skills and resources available to represent a constituency. For instance, provider countries can rely on a well-resourced and experienced OECD/DAC mechanism for coordinating and representing their views within the partnership, while many foundations rely on WINGS as a functional network of philanthropic organisations to coordinate and represent their views. Recipient and dual countries are much more heterogeneous, coming from different regions and finding themselves facing highly diverse development contexts and needs. Some - in particular respondents from regional organisations – say that various global and regional platforms and coordination mechanisms exist (e.g., G77, AUDA-NEPAD, ASEAN) that could be used more and better. However, also then it will remain a major challenge to reach a common position on key EDC issues. CPDE, representing the CSO constituency as a platform that unites many CSOs from around the world on EDC, the IPU as representative of parliamentarians, and the UCLG representing sub-national governments face the challenge of having to reconcile views from a large number of diverse constituencies within a limited period that do not have the same tested consultation mechanisms in place. At the same time, there are substantial differences in staff capacity and expertise available for meaningful engagement. E.g., provider countries may have several dedicated DE experts supporting their SC representatives in making sense out of the many documents to be processed, while this is less or not at all the case for other SC members. As a result, they constantly have to balance between what is needed to be a credible and valuable representative and what is possible given available time and resources.

**Considerable willingness (motivation) to engage** is reported both within and between constituents. Key determining factors for such willingness include 1) a sense of urgency to engage, 2) clarity and complementarity of expected contributions, and 3) a perceived "cost-benefit" ratio of engagement.

In terms of sense of urgency, the engagement of member countries highly depends on international and national politics and the importance of effective DC in the national development agenda. Increasing nationalistic political tendencies in many countries in the past years have reduced the sense of urgency to be (seen as) active part of a global partnership like the GPEDC. At the same time, DC,

especially when still primarily perceived in terms of aid, is of marginal political significance in middle-income countries. Instead, the South-South co-operation (SSC) modality is more relevant to them, but despite SSC being the focus of an action area, this modality is still experienced as having (too) little prominence within GPEDC to trigger stronger engagement from the dual countries. Moreover, country representatives do not experience clear consequences related to their active involvement (or lack thereof), which obviously does not help in sustaining a strong sense of urgency to engage. The drive to engage among non-state constituents is less strongly affected by national politics. Instead, they see the GPEDC as one of the very few accessible platforms through which they can directly influence the global debate on effective DC.

In terms of clarity and complementary contributions, the Nairobi outcome document (2016) is the first time in which commitments per constituency are made explicit. These commitments are diverse and many (e.g., over 25 commitments for the recipient and provider countries without distinguishing dual countries, 13 for civil society partners, 12 for the business sector, and so on) and they do not talk about all stakeholders. Therefore, some - in particular regional organisations - observe that more clarity about what is expected from them would facilitate making meaningful contributions. Meanwhile, the special position of Middle Income / Dual countries is acknowledged but not (yet) translated in tailored and agreed expectations, keeping them cautious to contribute. Moreover, commitments remain abstract. This is understandable given the strategic nature of the document, but it does limit the motivational power of these commitments. Further still, these commitments per constituency have not been operationalized in the 2017-2018 work programme, which only refers to the role of the CCs, the SC, and the JST. Finally, the set-up of the 2020 -2022 work programme with AAs per constituency is an unequivocal step forward in clarifying the need for member engagement. Still, the specific expectations of the many members that have volunteered to contribute to particular AAs remain largely unclear, which does not stimulate the willingness to engage.

The perceived cost-benefit ratio of engagement differs in particular between government and non-state actors. Most of the respondents still support the vision of the GPEDC, and in principle are willing to invest their time (i.e., the main cost of engagement). However, in particular, government representatives comment on the absence of a clear return on this time investment in terms of benefits for their country (no specific results) or the partnership as a whole (global progress remains limited). This makes it difficult to continue justifying engagement and spending time of high-level representatives and even more so of political leaders. Non-state actors also face difficulties in justifying continued time investments in the absence of clear and tangible benefits, but this is partly compensated by the benefit of having access to and connect with policymakers that they would not have without the GPEDC.

Finally, in terms of **opportunities to cooperate and engage**, the GPEDC is still perceived as a unique inclusive platform to engage in a global debate on EDC. According to some respondents, the value of the GPEDC in this respect has been reduced with the emergence of the 2030 agenda and associated mechanisms and fora that manage and monitor its implementation. However, the GPEDC is still described as a relatively free and open space for debate, being less political than platforms that are part of the formal UN system. Another positive development in this respect is the AAs under the 2020-2022 work programme, offering members opportunities to engage in addressing more specific topics.

At the same time, it is observed that these opportunities are not equally nor sufficiently worked out so that engagement can move beyond consultation into action.

Also, in terms of **financial engagement**, the GPEDC is characterised by volunteerism with no clear financial requirements from members to cover support and implementation costs. The funding note of July 2018 shows that cash and in-kind contributions have been made by 19 countries, including Bangladesh, Mexico and the Slovak Republic, during the 2013 – 2018 period, while the latest funding update (July 2021) reflects a funding gap of Euro 1.65 million for OEDC and US\$ 1.25 million for UNDP. I.e., 30% of the total budget for the JST core institutional support remains to be secured halfway through the 2020-2022 programming period. The same update indicates that contributions of only seven or eight donors<sup>77</sup> are expected for this period.

In general, the subsequent funding notes from October 2018 onwards illustrate that the financial contributions remain unpredictable and dependent on a shrinking number of, mostly traditional, donors. This does not only affect the ability of the JST to really concentrate on its support work but also reinforces the image of the GPEDC still being a conventional ODA-driven mechanism.

### 5.2.2 Member-engagement at country level

**Mechanisms for engagement at the country level** are not prescribed but are assumed to be embedded in existing (mostly government-led) coordination mechanisms and dialogue platforms. Besides, there are national coordinators nominated, who, relying on their own position and capacity, are expected to ensure follow up on global agreements related to the monitoring exercise. Moreover, the UN Resident Coordinator system and the UNDP as a host agency network of the country office, are present in most countries and in theory can support and facilitate country-level GPEDC processes, upon demand and when resourced to do so. In practice, there are reportedly strong variations in engagement at the country level, with GPEDC related efforts having to compete and/or coordinate with many other existing sector-specific coordination mechanisms that aim for more tangible and therefore compelling results. Besides, there are no financial provisions nor clear and agreed implementation arrangements for GPEDC activities at the country level. This makes that country-level engagement largely relies on the intrinsic motivation of local GPEDC stakeholders, which often will not be enough to make things move. A good example of this is the reaction of an interview respondent representing a recipient country, who expressed willingness to follow-up on the invitation to organize an inclusive action dialogue but having no idea how to go about this and who would fund this.

### 5.2.3 Engagement of co-chairs and the host organisations

Concerning the **engagement of the Co-Chairs**, it is clear that given their central role the active engagement of the CCs is crucial for the performance of the partnership. The CCs are widely appreciated for their efforts in taking up that (time-consuming) responsibility, but interview respondents also note significant differences in the level of engagement among the CCs. These differences are partly attributed to capacity issues with the CCs representing provider countries having more extensive support systems in place than their colleagues representing dual and recipient countries. Another complicating factor is that the CCs represent the political leadership in their respective countries, which results in staff changes that may disrupt the consistency in leadership.

---

<sup>77</sup> Switzerland, Canada, EU and Germany, Ireland, Korea, Japan, and possibly Sweden.

Finally, concerns are expressed regarding the representativeness of the CCs and the degree to which they are able to consult across their various constituencies. This concern is partly explained by the apparent difficulty of finding a timely replacement of the CC representing the dual countries, while the CC of recipient countries has the near-impossible task of being seen and accepted as effective and legitimate guardian of the many and varied interests of its constituents.

Finally, concerning the **engagement of the host organisations (OECD and UNDP)**. The role distribution between the JST team at UNDP and OECD is relatively clear, and the JST is largely appreciated for its support work without anybody questioning its willingness or ability to cooperate. Questions are however raised about the (expected) contribution of these host organisations to the leadership and decision-making of the GPEDC. At present, both the OECD and the UNDP are seen to concentrate their engagement in the strategic leadership of the GPEDC through their seats in the SC. In addition, the JST at the OECD and the UNDP each have team leaders, who play an important leadership role vis-à-vis their respective teams and a supporting role towards the CCs, who are responsible for the operational (day-to-day) leadership of the GPEDC. Some interview respondents consider this a lost opportunity, as they feel that both host organisations have the (potential) capacity to contribute more in providing thought and practical leadership to the operations of the GPEDC. At the same, the host organisations express reluctance to do so to avoid undermining the sense of ownership among a broader set of stakeholders.

A related question concerns the extent to which the capacity of in particular the UNDP and its network of county offices is sufficiently sourced and used to further the performance of the GPEDC at the country level. The Nairobi outcome document includes the expectation that the host organisation would draw on their respective structures, but also that this is contingent upon the resources made available for this. Resource mobilisation for the GPEDC till now have concentrated however on covering JST expenses at the OECD and UNDP Headquarters, which already proves to be a challenge, while no funding is mobilised and earmarked to enable UNDP to support the work of the GPEDC at the country level.

#### 5.2.4 Conclusions Cooperation and Engagement

In conclusion, member cooperation and engagement differ between and within constituencies and has been changing over time, both for the right and the wrong reasons. This is partly caused by contextual factors outside the sphere of influence of the GPEDC and partly - by the capacity, willingness and opportunities to engage. The capacity to engage differs significantly between constituencies, but current arrangements for coordination, consultation and engagement do not take these differences into account. The willingness to engage is largely determined by the clarity and complementarity of expected contributions, which has gotten more attention and improved over time, but expectations still remain too abstract, varied and voluntary to have much motivational power. In terms of providing opportunities to engage, the GPEDC is positively appraised for being unique in offering an open and safe space to debate global EDC concerns. At a more operational level, the nine AAs offer increasing opportunities for members to engage in debate on more specific topics they feel they can contribute to, whereas space for more active contributions is still needed.

Financial engagement depends on volunteerism, which leads to unpredictable contributions, mostly from a shrinking number of traditional donors. This affects the work of the JST and confirms the image

of the GPEDC primarily remaining a conventional Official development assistance (ODA)-mechanism. The engagement of CCs is varied, due to differences in capacity and support systems that till now could not be resolved. Finally, the contribution of the host organisations in providing thought and practical leadership to GPEDC's operation, in particular at the country level, remains more limited than it could and needs to be, partially in an attempt to avoid the GPEDC becoming secretariat- rather than member-driven.

## 5.3 Steering structure and processes

To what extent are roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms among the entities that make up the GPEDC (SC, Co-chairs, members, and JST) clear, logical and functional?

To what extent are adequate (communication) processes/models in place for planning, implementation and accountability of action at the global- and country levels?

In this sub-chapter, we review steering structure and processes in combination, as these elements are close and naturally linked. In answering questions related to the adequacy of steering structure and processes, we first look at descriptions in GPEDC's key documents and then present respondents' views about the clarity, logic and functionality of these structures and processes.

### 5.3.1 Structure and processes described in GPEDC documents

The Nairobi outcome document reflects the GPEDC's steering structure by specifying the roles, responsibilities of the CCs, the SC, and the JST. In addition, the document prescribes composition, terms and nomination procedures for the CCs and SC. Member consultation is described as one of the SC's responsibilities, but no particular processes are prescribed for this. Besides, SC meetings are announced to take place twice a year on average, while coordination/ dialogue mechanisms at the country level are to be promoted but not specifically proposed. The work of the GPEDC is to be guided by biennial costed work programmes to be approved by the SC. Monitoring and implementation arrangements related to these work programmes are announced as well.

In practice, we see most of these arrangements taking place, although timely replacement of CCs and SC members poses a challenge for some constituencies. Implementation arrangements have been worked out in two subsequent Work Programmes (2017-2018 extended to 2019 to cover the SLM, and 2020 – 2022). The 2017-2018 Work Programme introduces work plans in pursuit of six strategic outputs under the combined responsibility of the CCs, SC, and JST. Building on the experiences of this first work programme, the 2020-2022 Work Programme is developed, reducing strategic priorities to three: 1. Promoting EDC to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 agenda; 2. Building better partnerships; and 3. Leveraging monitoring for action. This work programme introduces nine member-led AAs with specific outputs at the global and the country level. Each AA has been elaborated in a results framework/work plan outlining results, activities, resource requirements, indicators and time-schedule in varying levels of detail. These work plans focus however primarily on the global level results announced in the overall work programme. Most of the work plans specify a group of 10 to 20 members, who under the leadership of a voluntary 'lead member' take responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of action but without a clear task distribution.

Furthermore, monitoring arrangements to capture and demonstrate progress and achievements are not prescribed nor described in detail, but at the end of 2020, an Action Area Register has been set up, which summarizes expected results and synergies across AAs. Lead members are expected to provide updates on progress in this register, but this is not (yet) systematically taking place. Instead, four so-called AA coordination calls have taken place to discuss progress, updates and synergies, but the results of these calls have not found their way into the AA register yet. Besides, developments within particular AAs may find their way into related SC discussions. The SC agenda however does not

allow much space for this, and recent SC discussions around progress are largely limited to the Monitoring Reform and Action Dialogues (strategic priority 3).

A questionnaire among AA leads followed by a group interview revealed that the implementation of most of the AA plans are behind schedule, as retaining the principle of inclusiveness takes time and is valued above the pace of implementation. In most AAs a similar implementation model is being used, with activities carried out by consultants funded by the AA lead agency, while implementation results are overseen and discussed by the broader group of AA members. In addition, a number of common challenges were identified. This includes the difficulty of getting partner countries actively involved<sup>78</sup> to connect more strongly to country level results, while the ‘promise’ of such results is key for member engagement. Moreover, the absence of a joint funding approach was felt to affect the predictability of funding and with that the pace of implementation

### 5.3.2 GPEDC’s communication processes and practices.

Given its aspiration of being an inclusive and member-driven partnership, the review has looked in further detail at GPEDC’s existing communication process and practices. In this, the GPEDC website ([www.effectivecooperation.org](http://www.effectivecooperation.org)) plays a central role. The website is accessible to everybody with an internet connection and provides a wealth of information about the GPEDC including details about its purpose and principles, governance arrangements, activities and results. The website includes an elaborate dashboard to navigate through the three rounds of monitoring data offering transparency on all data collected and a user-friendly way to review and analyse this data. The website furthermore provides access to a variety of publications, including infographics, blogs, podcasts, videos and reports, related to EDC. Finally, the website hosts a knowledge-sharing platform reflecting groups, events and offering space for virtual discussion.

In addition to the website, the GPEDC sends out newsletters to around 7000 addresses, communicates through Twitter, and is present on Facebook and Linked-In, which illustrate GPEDC’s diverse efforts to be visible to its constituencies and the public at large. Communications are increasingly taking place in English, French and Spanish to overcome language barriers, but analytics show that the reach of these communications is strongest in provider countries, where the use of these communication modalities is most common. Extending this reach through cooperation with Government Focal Points and UNDP CO communication officers may be possible and are considered but are beyond the capacity of the one dedicated communication officer in the JST.

JST develops specific communication strategies and plans to promote upcoming SLM and HLMs. Such plans cover an extensive period prior to the event (seven months in the case of the 2019 SLM, while mid-2021 work on the communication plan for the 3<sup>rd</sup> HLM at the end of 2022 has already started). These plans incorporate a range of communication activities and modalities, whereby the strategy for the 2019 SLM also reflected a clear intention to put the so-called ‘marketing funnel’ from creating awareness to interest and engagement’ in practice. The 2019 SLM communication strategy pays explicit attention to GPEDC’s progression from the Aid Effectiveness (AE) agenda, whilst paying attention to the specific interests of the diverse constituencies, and in that sense ticks all the right boxes. Moreover, special 1-pagers are being published to inform the participants of important key

---

<sup>78</sup> With the exception of the AAs on Triangular and South-South cooperation.

events (e.g., HLPF, UNDCF, etc.) about the importance of EDC and the essence of GPEDC’s work, while so-called ‘advocacy notes’ have been developed with the help of relevant SC members to explain the role of particular constituencies vis-à-vis EDC.

All these communication efforts take place in the absence of a comprehensive conceptual framework that defines GPEDC’s key concepts and assumptions and specifies the roles of GPEDC’s constituencies and are not part of an overall communication strategy or systematic perception analysis. Instead, they are developed and rolled out in response to communication needs that are picked up by the JST and CCs in their interactions with the broader constituencies.

Despite all these communication efforts, the interviews reflect a varied understanding of the essence of GPEDC’s work. Quite a number of interviewees still describe GPEDC as being largely preoccupied with improving donor-recipient cooperation and AE in practice, which would explain the challenge of attracting interest from emerging donors and middle-income countries.

### 5.3.3 Perceptions concerning adequacy of steering structure and processes

Most interviewees and survey respondents are on the same page, in general expressing high satisfaction with the clarity, logic and functioning of GPEDC's governing bodies, while the adequacy of planning, implementation and monitoring processes gets a more varied response. In addition, more specific observations related to the GPEDC's steering structure and processes emerge, which are categorized and summarized in Table 6:

Table 6 Overview of observations from interviewees about the GPEDC’s structure and processes

Topic	Details
Concerning positioning of the GPEDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differing views about the need for more institutional linkages with the UN-led 2030 agenda</li> <li>• The informal status of GPEDC serves the purpose of providing an inclusive and less politicized space for debate.</li> <li>• Questions about the appropriateness of current hosting arrangements (UNDP/OECD versus UNSDG/DCO).</li> <li>• GPEDC being connected through Ministries that are responsible for coordinating external aid (rather than ministries of foreign affairs), offers the potential to influence country-level processes, but compartmentalisation at the country level is problematic.</li> </ul>
Concerning governing structure, representation and distribution of roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense efforts of the CCs are visible and appreciated.</li> <li>• Rotation of CCs at the same time affects continuity.</li> <li>• The nomination process of CCs and SC members is insufficiently clear and smooth, causing empty seats, delayed replacements and questions about representativeness.</li> <li>• Limited clarity in distribution of responsibility among CCs, SC and JST to ascertain progress in work programme implementation. More specifically, what are the specific results that each entity can be held accountable for, and what is the exact chain of command among them?</li> <li>• Insufficient clarity and agreement on the roles and responsibilities of dual/middle-income countries.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex, time-consuming yet justified structural arrangements in light of GPEDC's inclusiveness principle.</li> <li>• Finance committee not formalised, hence without clear expectations and designation process.</li> <li>• Multiple constituency nature of the GPEDC not reflected in staff composition of the JST.</li> </ul>
Concerning internal coordination and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for a more effective consultation mechanism among partner countries to strengthen their voice and ensure CC and SC seats are timely filled and replace.</li> <li>• Absence of clear and systematic communication channels between SC and AAs, and between SC members and their constituents (dependence on the JST).</li> <li>• Little information flows from global to country and back.</li> <li>• SC meetings are document-heavy (despite recent improvements/reductions) and characterised by having rather broad conceptual discussions with limited focus and little connection to ongoing or planned activities.</li> <li>• Comprehensive and user-friendly accessibility of information about the results of the various rounds of Monitoring Reform.</li> <li>• Little (insufficient) communication of results and contributions to progress that the GPEDC can take credit for.</li> </ul>
Concerning management arrangements of the Work Programme and AAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC endorsement of Work Programmes only halfway through the first year of implementation.</li> <li>• Management attention focused on a limited part of the Work Programme (i.e., global 'flagship' processes like the Monitoring reform, HLM/SLMs).</li> <li>• The evolution from GPs to Work Programme 1 and 2 demonstrates learning and growth in terms of coherence and member-leadership and engagement.</li> <li>• Many AAs spread the GPEDC (too) thin, with uneven expectations/demands of support services JST.</li> <li>• Implementation arrangements of the AAs insufficiently specific on expected contributions and distribution of work.</li> <li>• The absence of an implementation budget for all AAs leads to financial dependence on the lead agency, which in turn leads to an imbalance in lead agencies.</li> <li>• Voluntary nature leaves some of the AAs without clear lead (e.g., 2.4) or budget.</li> <li>• No transparent reporting on the progress Work programme and AAs, hence limited clarity on progress, actual deliverables and synergy between AAs. <i>Apparent limited awareness of existence and content AA registers.</i></li> </ul>
Concerning management arrangements at the country level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity in existence, status and capacity of national coordinators, who would have to ensure in-country follow-up on GPEDC plans.</li> <li>• Country-level results are pursued without a clear in-country implementation plan or arrangements.</li> <li>• Insufficient clarity on the support national coordinators can expect to receive from the SC and the JST.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficiently clear where GPEDC is positioned at the country level and what can be expected from UNDP to support country-level processes.</li> </ul>
Concerning financial arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPEDC budgets are limited to JST support.</li> <li>• Voluntary financial contributions result in limited, ad-hoc and unpredictable funding.</li> <li>• JST budget is 'area of support' based, and not activity- or output-based, which complicates accountability.</li> </ul>

In reviewing GPEDC's steering structure and processes, we acknowledge the ongoing monitoring reform that aims to improve the periodic monitoring exercise and review of progress towards the EDC principles, as one of the GPEDC core processes. Therefore, data collection under the GPEDC review has not paid separate or deliberate attention to the perceived quality of this process. Nevertheless, interview participants did share some critical observations related to the current monitoring framework, which reconfirm the importance of the monitoring reform.

### 5.3.4 Conclusions Steering structure and processes

The overall GPEDC governing structure and arrangements are relatively clear, inclusive and sufficiently flexible to make the partnership easily accessible to (new) members. The governing bodies provide adequate and widely supported clarity about GPEDC's strategic ambitions, but without setting clear priorities in light of its limited sphere of influence and resources. This lack of 'strategic choices' is partly explained by the complexity of the SC and CCs having to reconcile widely varying interests, whilst the representativeness of non-State SC members continues to be questioned by some recipient / dual countries.

Over time, GPEDC has been increasingly pressured to practise its own principle of results-orientation. This has led to work programmes that are more coherent and member-driven but lack specificity in terms of expected (financial and technical) contributions from, and work distribution among, individual members. The work programmes focus primarily on global level results through nine Action Areas, which in turn are assumed to support progress at the country level. This assumption, however, has not yet been demonstrated, as most AAs struggle in engaging partner countries and linking their efforts to clear country-level outputs. This can be explained by the absence of clear implementation arrangements at the country level but stands in the way of GPEDC's resolution of being "global light, and country heavy".

If we consider the steering structure, whilst regarding GPEDC as a cooperation system to deliver meaningful results at the global and country-level, we see it as a strategic apex (SC and CC) that is administratively and technically supported by the JST. The translation of the strategic priorities into operational plans is undertaken by lead-members in charge of AAs, but this happens without a clearly defined and resourced 'operating core' that is responsible for the delivery of action, in particular at the country level. This makes the feasibility and realisation of GPEDC's intended results uncertain and unpredictable.

The GPEDC has institutionalised an impressive monitoring system to track progress towards EDC at the country level, with easily accessible and comprehensive results. Given their nature, these results may be somewhat controversial and cannot be attributed to the GPEDC but serve the purpose of informing and inspiring the global debate about EDC, and confirm the relevance of the GPEDC. Its

relatively informal and voluntary nature makes GPEDC a unique and safe platform that is conducive for the quality and inclusiveness of such a debate.

Existing monitoring and reporting systems are however less convincing in capturing and communicating results that are closer to GPEDC's sphere of influence, making that the effectiveness and added value of the GPEDC continues to be questioned. Moreover, the GPEDC is making extensive and well-designed efforts to communicate the essence of its work, but these communication efforts get decided and shaped in a rather organic manner without an overall communication strategy nor benefitting from an overarching and agreed conceptual framework. Communications efforts use a range of, mostly web-based, modalities and channels, but reaching a relevant audience, in particular outside the provider countries remains a challenge. Furthermore, we see that 10 years after the establishment of the GPEDC a gap remains between what GPEDC sets out to do on paper and what it is perceived to do in practice, which has not been solved by GPEDC's communication efforts (yet).

## 5.4 Learning Capacity

What is the demonstrated learning capacity (ability to make new choices and adopt new practices based on new insights) of the GPEDC?

Reaching GPEDC's vision - *maximise the effectiveness of all forms of co-operation for development for the shared benefit of people, planet, prosperity and peace* – implies that key actors' behavioural change if not paradigm shift is needed, which will not happen without learning. Meaning, GPEDC's capacity to learn and facilitate learning processes among its members is *sine qua none* of its mandate. In this chapter, we, therefore, distinguish findings that demonstrate GPEDC's capacity to facilitate the learning of its members/constituencies from findings that demonstrate GPEDC's own internal learning processes.

### 5.4.1 Facilitation of learning of the GPEDC members

Facilitation of learning processes among constituencies is more or less explicitly part of all of GPEDC's five core functions as presented in the Nairobi outcome document (Figure 5). GPEDC's learning ambitions are most explicit in *sharing knowledge and lessons*, but obviously part of the other core functions as well. E.g., *effectiveness at the country level* is supported by sharing learnings and monitoring data, *generating and analysing evidence* about progress on effectiveness principles is a pre-condition for experience-based learning, whilst *facilitating specialised dialogue* is expected to be informed by learnings from evidence. However, also before 2016, learning facilitation already featured in GPEDC's activities, in particular through the Busan Partnership Forum (Textbox 6) and Korea's Learning and Acceleration Programme (Textbox 7) that has organised annual learning and reflection events since 2014.

#### Textbox 5 Description of Busan Global Partnership Forum

##### **BUSAN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM**

As a voluntary contribution to facilitate discussions among various stakeholders for the implementation of the GPEDC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea has been hosting an annual Busan Global Partnership Forum since 2014 (which has been held biennially since 2017). The Busan Forum has emerged as a venue that brings together policymakers and practitioners from all over the world to share experiences and to learn from each other and renew their sense of commitment to the Busan Principles for Effective DC.

The Forum usually takes place in 2-day sessions and has been convened five times, with the latest one taking place on 4-5 December 2019, which particularly focused on the linkage of effective cooperation to the 2030 agenda with the participation of approximately 100 experts from GPEDC's diverse constituencies. The Forum typically combines a range of plenary and break-out sessions with active contributions from the GPEDC's CCs and SC members. In those sessions, the latest insights and experiences related to specific EDC topics are presented and discussed by panellists. In this latest Forum, also a deliberate attempt was made to draw the interest of emerging donors that have proven difficult to get actively engaged in the GPEDC, by inviting scholars from China, India and Brazil.

The proceedings of the forum are published in an outcome document that is available through the GPEDC website. In addition, references to the various Busan Forums can be found on all kinds of websites of (media) organizations that are more or less closely associated with the GPEDC, ranging from OECD and UNDP to IISD, Donor Tracker, the Broker, and so on.

One interviewee who took part in several Forums describes the events as well-organized and good opportunities to exchange and maintain contacts, but somewhat repetitive in dynamics and suggesting that the hosting of Forum could be rotated. At the same time, no specific references to particular learnings or follow up action triggered by the Forum were given in the interviews.

#### Textbox 6 Description of Learning Acceleration Programme

##### **KOICA LEARNING AND ACCELERATION PROGRAMME (LAP)**

In support of the practical implementation of GPEDC Principles, KOICA launched the Learning and Accelerating Programme (LAP) in 2014. The Programme is held biannually at the KOICA headquarters in Seongnam City and co-hosted by the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre. The LAP focuses on peer-to-peer learning among government officials to foster a community of practice (CoP) with the purpose of improving insights in monitoring and the implementation of the GPEDC principles.

Till now, the programme consists of a series of 2-3-day events that took place in 2014<sup>79</sup>, 2016<sup>80</sup> and 2018<sup>81</sup>. The events are attended by around 25 participants from around the world, including participants from fragile and LDC contexts. LAP offers a series of interactive learning workshops and provided a 'safe space' for working-level participants to discuss EDC priorities and challenges, share ideas and solutions, and build relationships, with plenty of time for peer learning and discussion.

The 2016 LAP consisted of four modules focusing on:

- Exploring and understanding GPEDC 2nd Round Monitoring outcomes (led by the JST)
- Improving the quality of public financial management systems (The Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI)).
- Engaging the private sector to achieve sustainable development (The Partnering Initiative)
- Increasing usage of country-owned results frameworks by providers of development co-operation (GPI for Results and Mutual Accountability)

The results of 2016 are summarized in an outcome document with explicit key takeaways formulated by the participants, including the notion that even though country context matters, some common priorities emerged, like political leadership and the use of country systems.

The 2018 LAP consisted of five modules:

1. Monitoring Framework
2. Strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development
3. Development financing
4. South-South (and Triangular) Cooperation
5. Effective development cooperation in fragile states.

The 2018 outcome document not only summarizes what was learned but also indicate that action plans for follow-up related to all four principles were developed. The evaluation of the event shows that 86% of the participants rated the programme as satisfactory and 82% felt that the programme had achieved its objectives, with 87% stating that the programme had changed their mindset in a positive direction.

The LAP sessions provided an opportunity to explore more insightful ways to showcase and discuss participant's country- and region-specific models, solutions and challenges and to facilitate and cultivate exchanges for collaborations and transferrable ideas and solutions between countries.

After the Nairobi HLM (2016), GPEDC has been promoting learning and exchange. E.g., the Asia-Pacific Regional Knowledge Exchange in October 2017 in Manila, the African Effective Development Co-operation Community of Practice Meeting in November 2017 in Addis Ababa, but the most visible

---

<sup>79</sup> Korea's GPEDC Learning and Accelerating Program Learning & Accelerating Program 3–5 November 2014. (2020, June 18). Vdocuments.Mx. <https://vdocuments.mx/koreaas-gpedc-learning-and-accelerating-program-learning-accelerating-program.html>

<sup>80</sup> KOICA Learning and Acceleration Programme provides peer learning opportunity for developing countries | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. (2016). GPEDC. <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/koica-learning-and-acceleration-programme-provides-peer-learning-opportunity-developing>

<sup>81</sup> Program Strategy and Policy Planning Department, Korea International Cooperation Agency, Republic of Korea. (2018). *Outcome report: 2018 GPEDC Learning and Accelerating Programme* (Seongnam, Republic of Korea, November 2018). GPEDC. [https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Outcome-report\\_2018-GPEDC-Learning-and-Accelerating-Programme.pdf](https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Outcome-report_2018-GPEDC-Learning-and-Accelerating-Programme.pdf)

successful efforts of facilitating learning comes from GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (founded in Nairobi, in 2016). A frequently referenced achievement of this GPI is the co-production of “Triangular Cooperation in the Era of the 2030 Agenda –Sharing Evidence and Stories from the Field” – a collection of case stories, operational tools, experiences and lessons learned from 45 contributors (among them 24 countries across four continents, nine international and regional organizations, and eleven representatives from civil society, private sector, philanthropy, research institutions, and sub-national actors) and around 100 cases highlighting how strong partnerships are built by engaging in trilateral activities. Both the GPEDC and a GPI are mentioned in an official UN document – Outcome Document of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA +40) held in March 2019 in Buenos Aires.

This attention for learning also comes back in GPEDC’s subsequent work programmes and AAs and is a regular item for discussion in SC meetings as well<sup>82</sup>, whilst being at the core for shaping the SLM agenda in 2019. The introduction of the whole-of-society approach in the WP 2020-2022 is a good example of learning that aims to further efforts towards more effective DC. In addition, the GPEDC published a compendium of good practices<sup>83</sup> that offers experience-based learnings based on research in nine countries. Apart from commissioning learning-oriented research, the GPEDC hosts eight knowledge-sharing groups with 12 to 26 active members, organises and refers to knowledge-sharing events, and offers the possibility of online discussions.

Another example of GPEDC’s learning facilitation efforts is the launching Global Partnership’s Knowledge Sharing Platform<sup>84</sup> in July 2019 to promote vibrant and dynamic knowledge-sharing on best practices for increasing the effectiveness of DC. The Platform is meant to provide a space for practitioners, networks, working groups and initiatives to collaborate on issues related to effective DC, with 260 knowledge resources available across constituencies and institutions. Although this is appreciated by the members, many indicate that in an increasingly digital world with more interactive tools coming to aid (global) discussion on distance, having topical interactions and guides to needs-based resources takes priority over having access to a vast amount of resources.

Overall, we observe the GPEDC making many deliberate efforts to facilitate knowledge exchange with varying results in reach and active participation. At the same time, some respondents describe GPEDC’s learning events as being relatively bureaucratic and formal, creating a sub-optimal learning environment, citing recent online events of IATI and IDB’s exchange group as more positive examples. Moreover, the GPEDC seems less equipped to capture the effect of its many knowledge-sharing efforts on the behaviour and practices of its constituencies, which would demonstrate the real learning from those efforts.

In addition, the biennial monitoring rounds to track country-level progress on effectiveness commitments have the potential of serving a learning process. Having said that, this requires completing the learning loop by following up on reported monitoring results with analysis, decision-

---

<sup>82</sup> Among others in meeting SCM 19 and 20

<sup>83</sup> *A Global Compendium of Good Practices | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/global-compendium-good-practices>

<sup>84</sup> *The Global Partnership | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/>

making and action, before the next monitoring round takes place. The recent introduction of country-level action dialogue (#actiondialogue21) to which 17 countries have now committed themselves<sup>85</sup> demonstrates a somewhat delayed but much-needed attempt to complete this learning loop.

In light of GPEDC's strong learning ambitions, we see the absence of a clear and agreed ToC as a missed opportunity to stimulate and structure the learning of the partnership. A sound ToC (or several ToCs for different country contexts) would articulate the hypotheses underlying GPEDC's efforts to advocate the EDC principles as interrelated means to increase DE with the ultimate aim to accelerate progress in the implementation of the 2030 agenda. Testing these hypotheses would then become the core of a natural learning agenda for the GPEDC. At the same time, we note that under Action Area 1.1 a deliberate effort is made to demonstrate the impact of the EDC principles. The work plan for this AA announces three case studies (initiatives) and new research and outreach that *must demonstrate both the practical implementation of the effectiveness principles and accelerated SDG impact– and the causal connection between them*. The work plan furthermore explains the causal pathways to be examined in these initiatives and research efforts, which in essence is quite similar to using a ToC as a learning tool.

#### 5.4.2 GPEDC's own internal learning processes

When looking at GPEDC's internal learning processes to reflect and improve on the performance of the partnership itself, we see numerous examples of changing practices based on new and progressing insights. These include, among others:

- Introduction of work programmes to operationalise GPEDC's ambitions.
- The evolution from relying on loosely connected GPIs to a coherent framework of member-led AAs.
- The efforts to connect and integrate results of the monitoring review in the SDG progress reports, even though some argue that this needs further attention.
- The adaptation of the EDC principles into the Kampala principles to ensure partnerships at country level with the private sector yield maximum results, in particular for those furthest behind.
- Adaptation of working practices to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Introduction of action dialogues to complete the learning loop of the monitoring system.
- Seeking connection with other sectors/themes like climate change.

In addition, we see the ongoing monitoring reform as well as this GPEDC review process as demonstrations of GPEDC's learning orientation, even though the actual learnings/adaptations from these processes are not yet there.

#### 5.4.3 Conclusions Learning capacity

GPEDC demonstrates a variety of deliberate knowledge-sharing efforts to facilitate EDC related learning among its constituencies. The reach of these efforts varies, and in the absence of targets or benchmarks, it is difficult to objectively assess the success of these efforts in terms of reach and quality. Measuring the effect of these knowledge-sharing efforts on the behaviour of GPEDC

---

<sup>85</sup> *The Global Partnership | Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*. (n.d.). GPEDC. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/>

stakeholders is even more difficult, but would be even more valuable in judging GPEDC's performance as a learning-oriented partnership.

Among the many events, in particular, the **Busan Forum Global Partnership Forum and the KOICA Learning and Acceleration Programme** are important and generally well-received initiatives with the deliberate aim to facilitate regular exchange and learning towards EDC, each having its own target group and learning dynamics. In particular, the LAP has a deliberate learning purpose and effective approach to equip government officials with improved skills and a more positive mindset towards the EDC principles, but the scale of this programme remains (too) modest to be of noticeable impact.

In addition, we see the GPEDC becoming increasingly serious about the importance of learning for fulfilling its mandate at the global and the country level. The introduction of the action dialogues is a clear step forward in completing the learning loop of the monitoring system, while under Action Area 1.1 some of the key causal connections that form the essence of the GPEDC's work will be examined.

In terms of internal learning capacity, we see clear examples of adaptations to context, and changing practices in the planning and management of GPEDC's operations. These changes illustrate the occurrence of regular and organic reflection processes that for instance take place during SC or CC meetings, but also include more fundamental reflection processes that are deliberately decided upon and demonstrate the GPEDC's learning orientation.

# 6 Overall conclusions

From the combined findings of the performance and governance review, we have formulated the following overall conclusions in response to the various review criteria of relevance, effectiveness, progress towards outcomes, cost-benefits, and governance.

## 6.1 Relevance

**GPEDC's mandate** to maximise the effectiveness of all forms of cooperation for development remains relevant. In a world dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, with increasingly scarce resources, a declining share of ODA in financing for development, and progress towards the SDGs getting further behind schedule, the GPEDC's expanded promotion of the Paris principles (2005) from aid effectiveness to maximising *all forms of development cooperation effectiveness* helps to ensure its continued relevance. However, this expansion has not been fully internalised by the GPEDC's constituencies, as many perceive the GPEDC as still being primarily focused on improving the effectiveness of grant aid in a conventional North-South cooperation system, despite the GPEDC's deliberate efforts to address other cooperation modalities like effective private sector engagement, South-South and triangular cooperation as well as enabling conditions for a whole-of-society engagement in development cooperation. The perceived narrow focus on aid effectiveness clearly affects the reputation of the GPEDC in middle-income countries for whom grant aid is of marginal significance.

Besides, the validity and relevance of the **four development cooperation principles** remain undisputed. However, over time the practical meaning of principles like 'country ownership' and 'inclusiveness' have become issues for debate, questioning the centrality of government in development cooperation and proposing to broaden the term ownership more in line with the whole-of-society approach. By the same token, 'transparency and mutual accountability' remain complex principles, especially in situations of tension and a lack of trust among different constituencies. This obviously complicates the operationalisation of such principles in clear and agreed action plans. In view of these tensions and challenges, the DAC has launched an exercise to modernise its own narrative on effectiveness.

Despite the difficulties in operationalising the four principles of EDC, since Nairobi (2016) the GPEDC has initiated efforts to become more results-oriented and translate its mandate into more operational priorities and plans. In its recent 2020-2022 Work Programme, the GPEDC has created an operating framework focusing on three priorities: 1) promoting development effectiveness to accelerate the 2030 agenda, 2) building better partnerships, and 3) leveraging monitoring for action. The review's reflection on the relevance of the first priority – **the GPEDC promoting development effectiveness in the 2030 agenda** - lies in the fact that the GPEDC provides a unique, inclusive open space to debate the effectiveness of DC efforts in the pursuit of the SDGs. Despite being co-hosted by the OECD and UNDP, the GPEDC is not an institutionalised part of the UN architecture for implementing the 2030 agenda. This 'informality' helps in keeping the GPEDC accessible and relatively free from becoming politicised, but at the same time it leads to questions about the 'status' of the GPEDC and the extent to which constituents are bound by its resolutions.

The relevance of **building better partnerships** as the GPEDC's second priority most strongly lies in the fact that this priority demonstrates the GPEDC's resolve to maximise *all forms of development cooperation*, rather than limiting itself to traditional aid effectiveness. This priority area is also relevant in terms of offering a more obvious and coherent space – through seven AAs – to the diversity of its constituencies to contribute to the GPEDC's mandate. At the same time, these seven AAs on top of the GPEDC's other priorities are perceived as spreading the limited GPEDC resources too thin, raising (unrealistic) expectations about the results of the partnership and demands on the JST for support.

The third priority relates to the GPEDC's **periodic monitoring exercise and the ongoing monitoring reform**. The reform effort is relevant given the earlier-mentioned contention about how the four principles of EDC are to be practised and measured. Despite some varying views about their methodological soundness, the monitoring reports have the potential to be a relevant tool for accountability for, and learning from progress towards the implementation of the development principles at the country level. In particular, the inclusiveness of the process means that the monitoring exercise provides unique insights into achievements and challenges towards improved development effectiveness. These insights in themselves can serve an accountability purpose and trigger a political debate about the importance of effectiveness in the global development agenda. However, we observe a limited and changing willingness – in particular among middle-income countries – to take part in such an accountability-driven debate. These same insights can also be relevant for learning, if being fed into an open and more technical debate, as was done during the SLM in 2019 and the series of Busan Forums. Nevertheless, the insights gained from the monitoring are only valuable for making progress at the country level when followed up by a successful 'action dialogue' process, which is a process that was only initiated in 2021 and still has to prove itself.

## 6.2 Effectiveness at the global level

In terms of **effectiveness at the global level**, we see new evidence and knowledge being produced (subsequent monitoring reports, a compendium of best practices, etc.), a growing community with agreed principles for private sector engagement, and various global events and outreach efforts dedicated to (specific aspects of) development effectiveness, including the GPEDC's contribution to the monitoring of SDGs 17.15, 17.16 and 5c, and the development of a virtual knowledge-sharing platform.

At the same time, we see limited participation and engagement of middle-income countries and little evidence of global-level results successfully feeding into change processes at the country level (with the current action dialogues still having to demonstrate their effect). This demonstrates that the GPEDC has been reasonably effective in delivering EDC-related evidence and knowledge at the global level. At the same time, the GPEDC faces challenges in connecting global processes with country-specific action, as well as realising its ambition of creating a global community dedicated to furthering the Paris principles as set out in the Busan Partnership agreement of 2011.

## 6.3 Effectiveness and impact at the country level

At the country level, we see the GPEDC having difficulty in *demonstrating* clear and attributable results. There are **apparent output achievements**, including an increasing number of in-country dialogues in the context of the monitoring exercise (86 countries in 2018), and eighteen countries

confirmed leading action dialogues in 2021. Besides, various pilots and country case studies have been conducted to document lessons about effective development cooperation across the work programme's AAs.

In terms of **progress towards outcomes (behavioural change)**, the subsequent monitoring reports provide a unique insight into *progress towards the practising of the EDC principles in an increasing number of countries*. Highlights from these reports illustrate progress in putting national development strategies in place, declining alignment and predictability of support by development partners, while consultation with non-state actors is stagnating in a deteriorating space for civil society. Unfortunately, there is no attribution of these results to the GPEDC, and hence no linkage to performance and governance of the GPEDC, which makes it difficult for the review to base its assessment of progress on results documented in the monitoring report.

However, from the interviews, the review has found clear but inherently anecdotal **signs of progress in partner countries**. Particular examples include a range of partner countries reporting the development of national strategies or guidelines for development cooperation, and the DAC using the critical findings on alignment to reinvigorate discussions with its members about aid effectiveness. Nevertheless, evidence of attributable progress towards the desired behavioural change of the GPEDC's constituencies is limited and sketchy. This means that the causal connection between the operationalisation of EDC principles and effective development cooperation remains to be proven. This is recognised by the GPEDC as it has become the focus of one of the AAs. Meanwhile, until more rigorous proof is produced, the real added value of the GPEDC for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 agenda continues to be questioned.

## 6.4 Cost-benefit ratio and efficiency

When reviewing the **cost-benefit ratio and efficiency of the GPEDC**, we observe that the various constituencies perceive the cost-benefit ratio of their engagement differently. Partner and dual countries appear largely satisfied, as their costs for participation are limited to voluntary time investments, while they consider it important to be connected and benefit from the global debate and exchanges related to effective development cooperation. Various non-state constituencies (CSOs, trade unions, foundations) also largely perceive the cost-benefit ratio of their participation as positive as the GPEDC offers a relatively unique space to access and influence policy-makers, but only insofar that there are reasonable prospects of contributing to meaningful results that justify time investments. The diverse private sector is overall less convinced, as it has other channels to influence decision-makers and the benefits of being part of the GPEDC are less direct or clear at this stage. Moreover, with certain exceptions the global debate holds less importance to business than its practical implications in the marketplace. Finally, provider countries are the most critical constituency in terms of assessing the cost-benefits of their participation in the GPEDC, as many of them feel that they invest both considerable time and funding without having a clear insight into the returns of these investments. Nonetheless, they value the multi-stakeholder nature of the GPEDC and opportunity to discuss EDC issues with different constituencies.

Concerning the **financial efficiency** of the JST institutional support services to which the GPEDC budget is dedicated, we see a relatively small secretariat providing a range of support services at a cost of

around US\$ 3 million per year. This budget is meant to cover various areas of institutional support, with key deliverables and results being most clearly defined in the funding note of November 2020. However, in the absence of a clear overview of actual JST deliverables and results, it is difficult to make a comparative (planned versus actual) input-output assessment. Nevertheless, given that the majority of interviewees are positive about the quality of JST support, we assess the cost-efficiency of the JST as adequate, even though its time-efficiency is challenged at times by the part-time availability of the co-chairs, who are better positioned to provide political leadership than day-to-day operational management.

## 6.5 Governance

### 6.5.1 Strategy and plans

In terms of governance arrangements, we see that the **GPEDC's strategic ambitions** are articulated and regularly updated and adapted to important changes in context. This important political agreement exist, albeit without an agreed and comprehensive conceptual framework that explains the goal and underlying principles of effective development cooperation. Until now, the GPEDC stakeholders have been hesitant in elaborating such a framework, as its inclusive and multi-stakeholder composition may turn such efforts into complex conceptual discussions without many practical conclusions. However, the absence of an agreed and explicit conceptual framework makes it more challenging to clearly communicate the GPEDC's assumed pathways of change at the global and country level, linked to the contribution of each of the GPEDC's constituencies.

In turn, this complicates the **operationalisation of the GPEDC's ambitions** and the four EDC principles into clear results-oriented work plans. Despite these challenges, since Nairobi (2016) GPEDC stakeholders have initiated efforts to become more results-oriented and translate its mandate into more operational priorities and plans. This means that progress has been made from 'limited operationalisation' (before 2016), to JST-centred operationalisation (2017 – 2018 work programme), to an increasingly coherent and member-centred operationalisation (2020 – 2022).

### 6.5.2 Structure and operating model

The overall **GPEDC governing structure and arrangements** are relatively clear and sufficiently flexible to make the partnership easily accessible to (new) members. The governing bodies provide adequate and widely-supported clarity about the GPEDC's strategic ambitions, albeit without clearly considering priorities in light of its limited sphere of influence and resources.

In its current 2020-2022 work programme, the GPEDC has created an operating framework focusing on three priorities with nine AAs that demonstrate the GPEDC's resolve to maximise *all forms of development cooperation*, not limiting itself to traditional aid effectiveness. These priorities and AAs offer space to the diversity of GPEDC constituencies to contribute to pursuing results at both the global and country level and reflect the inclusiveness of the partnership. However, with new issues demanding attention (e.g. leaving no-one behind, climate change) and knowing its limited resource base, the GPEDC spreads itself (too) thin, raising (unrealistic) expectations about the results of the partnership and demands on the JST for support. This partly explains current AAs that rely on voluntary engagement and commitments without clear task divisions and implementation budgets, choosing to

concentrate on the delivery of global level results while struggling to connect and deliver specific results at the country level.

If we regard the **GPEDC as a cooperation system to deliver meaningful results** at both the global and country level, we can discern a strategic apex (SC and CC) that is administratively and technically supported by the JST. However, the operationalisation of the strategic priorities at the country level relies on voluntary structures and an assumed integration of efforts in existing country coordination mechanisms. This means that the realisation of country-level results is pursued without a clearly defined and resourced 'operating core'<sup>86</sup> that is responsible for the implementation and delivery of results at the country level. This makes the realisation and demonstration of the GPEDC's results uncertain and unpredictable, leaving the real added value of the GPEDC for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 agenda at the country level vulnerable to criticism.

### 6.5.3 Cooperation and engagement

The review observes a widespread concern about limited, changing and uneven **cooperation and engagement between and within constituencies**, for both the right and wrong reasons. The observed differences in engagement – which relate to the SC, CC and AAs – are partly caused by contextual factors outside the sphere of influence of the GPEDC, and partly by the capacity, willingness and opportunities to engage.

The *capacity to engage* significantly differs between constituencies. Key factors in this are 1) the extent to which a constituency can rely on existing coordination and consultation mechanisms, 2) the variety of views and interests within each constituency, and 3) the legitimacy, skills and resources available to represent a constituency. Despite these known differences, the current governance arrangements for coordination and constituency consultation do not take these differences into account, but nonetheless expect more or less equal engagement. The *willingness to engage* is largely determined by the clarity and complementarity of expected contributions, which has gained increasing attention and improved over time, but expectations remain too abstract, varied and voluntary to have much motivational power. In terms of providing *opportunities to engage*, the GPEDC is positively appraised for being unique in offering an open and safe space to debate global development effectiveness concerns. At a more operational level, the nine AAs offer increasing opportunities for members to engage on more specific topics that are close to their interest and capacity, but also here engagement remains voluntary without clear expectations or incentives for active involvement in implementation.

**Financial engagement** is also voluntary, which keeps the threshold for membership low but leads to unpredictable contributions from a shrinking number of traditional donors. This affects the work of the JST and confirms the image of the GPEDC primarily remaining a conventional ODA mechanism. The engagement of co-chairs is varied, due to differences in capacity and support systems that till now could not be resolved. Finally, the contribution of the host organisations in providing thought and practical leadership to GPEDC's operation, in particular at the country level, remains more limited than

---

<sup>86</sup> 'Operating core' refers to the entities responsible for the actual implementation of the GPEDC's core activities and delivery of outputs as presented in its subsequent work programmes, whereby the JST plays primarily a support role, except for the work related to the monitoring exercise in which the JST is the main implementing entity.

it could and needs to be, partially in an attempt to avoid the GPEDC becoming secretariat- rather than member-driven.

#### 6.5.4 Monitoring, communication and learning processes.

The GPEDC has institutionalised an impressive **monitoring system** to track progress towards EDC at the country level, with easily accessible and comprehensive results. However, these results are beyond the sphere of control of the GPEDC, while there is no documented attribution of these results to the GPEDC. As such, these results may serve the purpose of informing and inspiring a global debate about EDC but are too removed from the GPEDC's operations to be of use for management steering. At the same time, there is no systematic monitoring and reporting system that convincingly and comprehensively captures and communicates results that are closer to the GPEDC's sphere of influence, leaving the GPEDC vulnerable to criticism about its effectiveness and added value.

Outside the monitoring exercise, **communications efforts** use a range of – mostly web-based – modalities and channels to create awareness, share experiences and inform readers about upcoming and past GPEDC activities. However, reaching a relevant audience at scale – in particular outside the provider countries – remains a challenge. Furthermore, ten years after the establishment of the GPEDC, we observe that a gap remains between what the GPEDC sets out to do on paper and what it is perceived to do in practice, which has not (yet) been solved by the GPEDC's communication efforts.

The GPEDC demonstrates a variety of deliberate **knowledge-sharing efforts to facilitate EDC-related learning** among its constituencies. The reach of these efforts varies, and in the absence of targets or benchmarks it is difficult to objectively assess the success of these efforts. However, more important is the effect of these knowledge-sharing efforts on the behaviour of the GPEDC's constituency, although this is not systematically monitored and reported upon. Nevertheless, we see the GPEDC becoming increasingly serious about the importance of learning in executing its mandate at the global and country level. The introduction of the action dialogues is a clear step forward in completing the learning loop of the global monitoring exercise, while some of the key causal connections that form the essence of the GPEDC's work will be examined under AA 1.1.

Among the many learning-oriented events, the **Busan Forum Global Partnership Forum and the KOICA Learning and Acceleration Programme** have been important and generally well-received initiatives since 2014. They deliberately aim to facilitate regular exchange and learning towards EDC, with each having their own target group and learning dynamics. In particular, the LAP has a deliberate learning purpose and effective approach to equip government officials with improved skills and a more positive mindset towards the EDC principles, although the scale of this programme remains too modest to be of noticeable impact.

In terms of **internal learning capacity**, we see clear examples of adaptations to context, and changing practices in the planning and management of the GPEDC's operations. These changes illustrate the results of regular and organic reflection processes that – for instance – take place during SC or CC meetings, but also follow from more fundamental reflection processes that are deliberately decided upon (e.g., monitoring reform) and demonstrate the GPEDC's learning orientation.

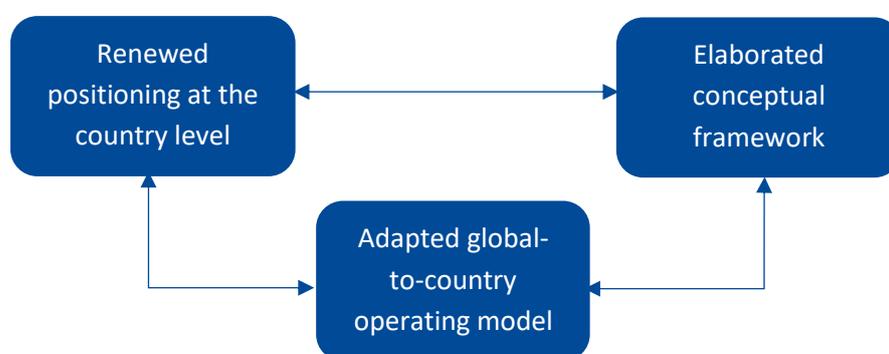
# 7 Recommendations

The overall conclusion of the GPEDC review is that the **GPEDC needs to improve its achievements at the country level.**<sup>87</sup> In light of this, we recommend that the GPEDC reinforces its ambition of being ‘global light, country heavy’ and pursues the delivery and demonstration of meaningful contributions to EDC at the country level with renewed vigour. To achieve this, we present a set of seven recommendations. The first three are more strategic and foundational, while the subsequent four are more operational, calling for improvements under the ongoing 2020-2022 work programme.

## Strategic recommendations

The three strategic recommendations are connected and relate to the positioning, conceptual framework, and the operating model of the GPEDC.

Figure 6: interrelated areas of strategic recommendations.



### 1. Reposition and equip the GPEDC to promote and support EDC in specific development areas prioritised by countries.

EDC at the country level is best pursued in combination with, and in support of other existing in-country multi-stakeholder partnerships dedicated to the implementation of the 2030 agenda (e.g., related to nutrition, health, education, etc). Many of these thematic or sector-specific partnerships pursue EDC as an essential part of their ambitions but often struggle with the implementation of the EDC principles. The GPEDC can demonstrate stronger added value to those partnerships by offering credible and practical advice on how to put the EDC principles into practice. This includes offering guidance and tools on how to (1) define, stimulate, and maintain country ownership, (2) pursue results-oriented policy cycle management,<sup>88</sup> (3) define and practice inclusive policy development and implementation process, and (4) operationalise transparent and mutually accountable development cooperation.

To develop this credible and practical advice, the GPEDC can assign EDC principles to dedicated working groups that – with the support of the JST – identify relevant state-of-the-art applied research

<sup>87</sup>An alternative would be to accept the GPEDC’s limitations of not having the resources nor a dedicated implementation mechanism at the country level, and therefore – instead of pursuing country level efforts –focus its mandate on offering an open and inclusive space for dialogue and learning about EDC at the global or regional level. However, all constituency groups agree that EDC has to happen at the country level to be of value in accelerating progress towards the SDGs. Global efforts are seen as a means towards an end, and hence their interest in, and contributions to a global or regional platform without the clear ambition and associated efforts to influence country-level processes will be short-lived.

<sup>88</sup> E.g., by using insights from recent research related to the success factors behind complex change processes and theory of change practices like the COM-B model ([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314086441\\_The\\_COM-B\\_Theory\\_of\\_Change\\_Model\\_V3](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314086441_The_COM-B_Theory_of_Change_Model_V3)).

and translate this into practical tools and guidelines. Consequently, these tools and guidance are promoted and made available through in-country members of the GPEDC (i.e., national coordinators, UNDP country offices, bilateral donors, etc.). In-country members of the GPEDC could also make a deliberate effort to identify and connect with existing development partnerships at the country level.

*Besides repositioning the GPEDC as an advisor to support EDC at the country level, we encourage the partnership to continue advocating for EDC and its agreed principles at the global level, to ensure that EDC remains recognised as a key issue for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 agenda. This advocacy effort is strengthened by the evidence on which it is based, and hence the continued monitoring of EDC progress in line with the results of the ongoing monitoring reform process will remain valuable.*

## **2. Develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for improved planning and communication.**

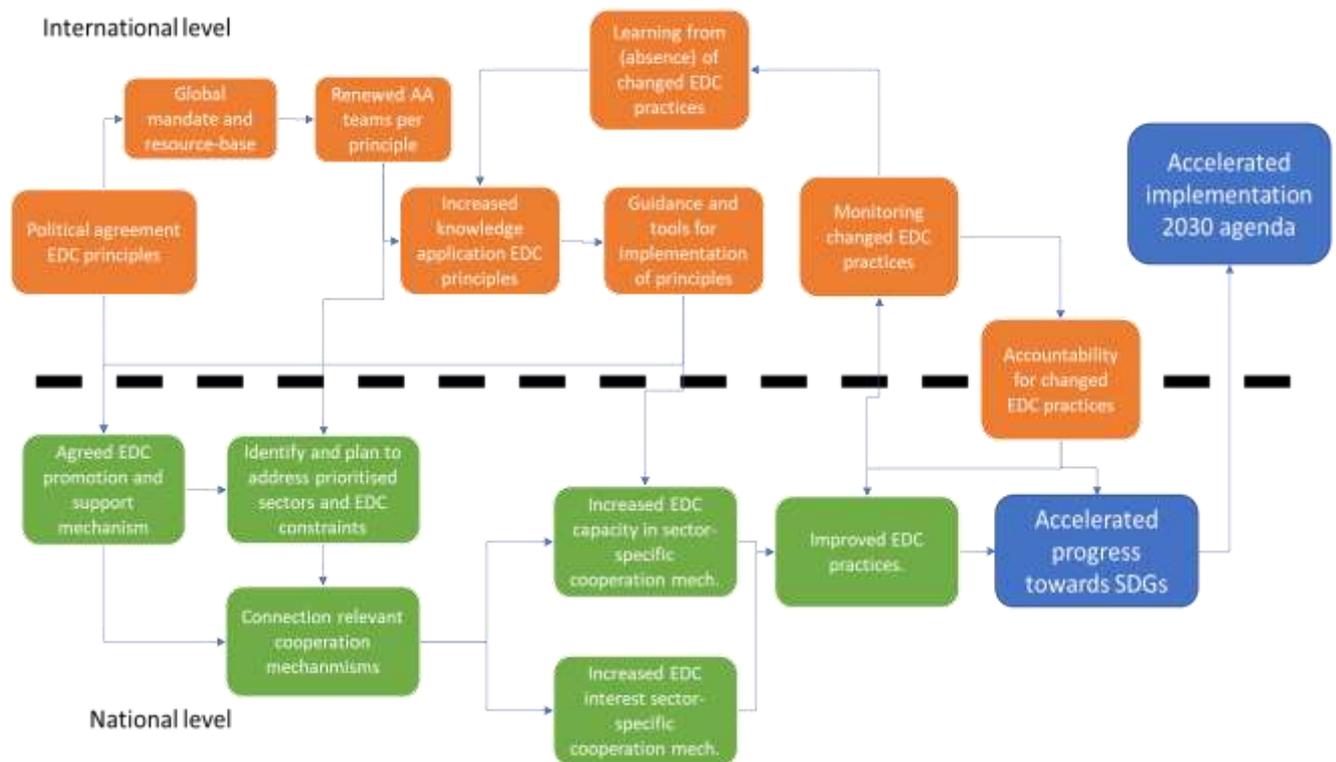
The GPEDC's vision to maximise all forms of development cooperation through the four EDC principles is clear on paper, but insufficiently worked out and internalised to hold practical and convincing use in communicating and planning its operations. Following the earlier recommendation to reposition the GPEDC to support EDC in specific development areas in countries, this gives us grounds to recommend a further elaboration of the GPEDC's conceptual framework so that it:

- **communicates** the importance and **continued relevance of the GPEDC** by clearly defining its vision of EDC, its underlying principles and objectives, and articulating its contribution to the successful implementation of the 2030 agenda;
- **clarifies how** the GPEDC intends to complement and **connect to other key actors/cooperation mechanisms at the country level** in furthering the successful implementation of the 2030 agenda; and
- offers an overall framework that **guides the planning and monitoring of progress** towards intermediate and ultimate results at the country level, clearly linking the GPEDC's international knowledge-building efforts to national development cooperation processes.

This recommendation requires describing (and preferably visualising) how a global political agreement on EDC principles is translated into key interventions at the global level and linked to changes at the country level, contributing to more effective development cooperation practices and ultimately to accelerated implementation of the 2030 agenda. This conceptual framework needs to leave the necessary space for elaborating country-specific pathways of change, but as a minimum would include 1) the causal relations from key interventions at the global level to (behavioural) changes at the country level, 2) key intermediate milestones that explain the journey from EDC principles to practices and assumptions on which GPEDC relies to make this journey, and 3) a global actor map that illustrates the positioning of the GPEDC vis-à-vis other key international entities that make up the global architecture for the implementation of the 2030 agenda.

Although elaborating on an agreed comprehensive conceptual framework that clearly presents the GPEDC's objectives and positions it is not a quick and easy process, the review sees this worthwhile and feasible to ensure an improved understanding of and support for continued attention to EDC. The visualisation below may serve as a starting point for this process.

Figure 7: initial conceptual framework of the GPEDC at the global and country level.



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

This recommendation requires the adaptation of the GPEDC’s working arrangements at both the global and country levels.

**At the global level,** this means retaining the AA working group structure as an inclusive member-driven implementation model, but organising them around the four EDC principles with the mandate to 1) develop and share knowledge about the operationalisation of the principles, and 2) assist in-country teams in the design and planning of interventions to improve the implementation of the EDC principles.

**At the country level,** this means continuing recent practices to stimulate action dialogues in countries by encouraging the explicit nomination of an (existing) in-country multi-stakeholder development partnership/coordination mechanism, as a critical success factor for leading the pursuit of EDC at the country level. Where possible, this could be the cooperation mechanism created for the action dialogues, while in other countries another SDG-related task force/partnership, possibly with the government in a leading and the UN system in a convening role. This nominated entity is expected to identify country-specific EDC priorities and design costed interventions to address these, supported by the relevant AA working group, ideally following up on earlier AAs. Subsequently, they can use these plans to mobilise the necessary financial and in-kind contributions from GPEDC members in the country. This nominated entity could also hold instrumental use for the implementation of future monitoring rounds.

In doing so, the national coordinator or another delegated member should be tasked with and equipped to monitor and report on progress in capacity, motivation and practices towards EDC of

targeted development partnerships at the country level to ascertain the results-based steering of these interventions. The JST would collect and consolidate these reports to create a global overview/evidence base of the GPEDC's country-level results.

These first three recommendations (1) reposition and equip the GPEDC to promote and support EDC in specific development areas prioritised by countries, (2) develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that clearly presents the GPEDC's objectives and positioning, and (3) adapt the GPEDC's operating model and funding structure to provide a clearer connection between the global- and country-level operationalisation of the GPEDC's mandate. When combined, we believe these three recommendations help to reinvigorate the GPEDC's country focus, which is expected to stimulate interest and engagement among the GPEDC's constituencies.

### **Operational recommendations**

The review team would furthermore recommend the following.

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

The review was presented with anecdotal yet meaningful examples of changed practices at the country level that were triggered or inspired by the GPEDC. We gathered that besides the compendium of good practices, not many of these signs of progress are captured, documented, or reflected upon. This is a missed opportunity in demonstrating and learning from meaningful GPEDC results. It is therefore recommended that the co-chairs initiate a systematic mapping of changed EDC practices with an outcome harvesting<sup>89</sup> exercise, including more rigorous analysis of the GPEDC's contribution to results achieved in a selected number of representative cases. Such an exercise can lead to new insights about the factors that help or hinder achieving desired changes at the country level and provide the next HLM with valuable evidence-based insights into the GPEDC's added value at the country level. *This exercise should include the findings from AA 1.1, demonstrating the impact of effectiveness.*

#### **5. Improve engagement by stimulating the vibrancy of the AA working groups.**

The AA working group structure should be retained as it supports progress towards a more inclusive and coherent implementation model.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, there is scope for improvement in the engagement and performance of the AA working groups. This requires 1) an improved perception of the cost-benefit ratio of engagement among AA members, 2) a stronger recognition and use of the complementary contributions in line with the diversity of AA members, and 3) a better balance between freedom/voluntarism and structured/formalised operations.

In practice, this would mean the following:

- a) The perceived cost-benefit ratio of engagement in AA working groups is strongly influenced by members having the feeling that their efforts constitute a meaningful contribution to change at the country level (sense of usefulness) and that progress is made in that direction (i.e. sense of

---

<sup>89</sup> <https://outcomeharvesting.net/the-essence/>

<sup>90</sup>We recognise that the by referring to the AAs, we do not cover all operational activities of the GPEDC as they do not include the monitoring exercise and reform (priority 3 of the 2020-2022 work programme). However, to avoid duplication of the ongoing monitoring reform, we refrain from making recommendations concerning the monitoring exercise, which we assume will continue in line with the outcomes of the reform process.

accomplishment). The AA teams should therefore revisit their work plans and monitoring practices and renew their ambitions in terms of the country-specific change that they aim to support/trigger and monitor/record.

- b) Member engagement is furthermore stimulated by clarity about **what** is expected from them, and by these expectations being in line with what they are able to contribute. AA working groups should hence revise their work plans to include specific task distributions of participating members, refining distinct expectations in line with the particular qualities that members have to offer.
- c) Engagement can also be easier if it is clearer when and **how** members are expected to make and be accountable for their contributions. This requires the JST ensuring that the necessary tools and templates for planning, budgeting, and monitoring are available and understood as useful and user-friendly, while the AA lead agencies demonstrate and insist on a more uniform and stringent use of the available planning, budgeting, and monitoring formats and systems.

This means that the GPEDC demonstrates a stronger application of the EDC principles to its own work programme implementation. With the help of the JST as and if needed, the AA lead agencies should ensure that AA work plans are broadly supported by the working group members and thus planned and implemented in an inclusive, results-oriented and accountable manner, as well as being aligned to contribute to specific results at the country level.

#### **6. 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.**

The review considers the current number and composition of co-chairs and steering committee members as numerous and complex but understandable and adequate in reflecting the inclusive character of the GPEDC. The recommendation therefore focuses on measures that would facilitate a strong and more equal engagement of the co-chairs and SC members, recognising and addressing the different challenges that affect their engagement.

Concerning the four co-chairs, this means providing more clarity about the expected (time) demands of being a co-chair along with the minimal support requirements that are necessary for effective and equal engagement. Ideally, co-chairs would mobilise their own support, but – as needed – they should be able to call on additional support from other co-chairs and/or the JST. This was considered earlier, although procedures rather than funding seem to have been the main bottleneck.

Co-chairs and SC members engage on behalf of their constituencies and can only do so if they can rely on a functional and efficient coordination mechanism. The variety in size, diversity and resources between constituencies creates different coordination challenges for each representative, whereby in particular the coordination among dual and recipient countries warrants attention. It is therefore recommended that the co-chairs and SC members representing these constituencies undertake a self-assessment to determine priority needs for improved coordination.<sup>91</sup> In doing so, they could build on the experiences of the working groups for South-South and triangular cooperation that demonstrate relatively high levels of engagement from the recipient and dual countries.

At the same time, the JST could collect and share best practices from other global partnerships that face similar constituency coordination challenges (examples include dedicated partnership facilitators (GPE), country support teams (SUN Movement), or the use of regional caucuses). These examples

---

<sup>91</sup> While inviting other constituency representatives to consider a similar exercise.

illustrate strengthened support structures that come at a cost, which has to be assessed against the benefit of improved engagement, although it should be borne in mind that improved constituency coordination mechanisms can facilitate exchange and learning processes within constituencies.

**7. Strengthen the management support function of the JST by providing a stronger mandate in stimulating and supporting uniform and user-friendly processes for planning, monitoring, and reporting of results achieved under the umbrella of the GPEDC.**

The JST operates under the executive leadership of four part-time co-chairs, which signifies that the GPEDC is member-driven but also makes steering and oversight complex and time-consuming and may affect the responsiveness of the JST. It is important that the GPEDC is member-driven but the JST can become more efficient and effective with a stronger mandate to take charge of the design and functioning of management support processes. This requires making a clear distinction between *content* leadership that should stay with the co-chairs, and *administrative* leadership<sup>92</sup> to be delegated to JST leaders. This would help to ensure the availability and stimulation of more uniform use of user-friendly planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting systems, and facilitate more results-oriented management of the GPEDC's work programme implementation.

---

<sup>92</sup> Administrative leadership refers to steering and oversight to optimise all processes that support the implementation of the GPEDC's core activities, particularly related to operational planning, monitoring, and reporting processes (including the provision of tools and templates).

