

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration

Donor Study

SPAIN

Executive Summary

The Spanish evaluation process has been particularly thorough in ensuring the methodological and temporal parameters, as well as the scope of the evaluation, that were established in its original design. In this respect, special attention has been paid to define the following: a) the time frame for evaluation (Master Plan II, 2005/2008, and the first two years of the Master Plan III, 2009/2012); b) the institutional range and c) the geographical scope, including the case studies of the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia and Extremadura, as well as Bolivia and Senegal, even though the bulk of the evaluation focused on governing and aid managing bodies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC) (e.g., the State Secretariat for International Cooperation (SECI), the Directorate-General for Planning and Evaluating Development Policies (DGPOLDE); and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development (AECID)).

Main findings and conclusions

The evaluation results highlight a series of key issues within the PD implementation process within Spanish Cooperation as a whole, but especially in the central system (SECI, DGPOLDE, AECID). According to the findings of the first phase of the PD evaluation, these results are related to the three conditions enabling its implementation: **commitment and leadership** with regards to the Paris Declaration, **capacity** to take action, and **incentives** for its implementation.

Commitment and leadership

The evaluation highlighted the following aspects with regards to the adaptation to and motivation for change, to the degree

of change and ownership at different levels of the system, and to how the changes are perceived. The evaluation highlights the following:

- The Spanish Cooperation's policies and strategic documents reflect, to a good extent, the effectiveness agenda, indicating the agenda's importance and assimilation with the Spanish Cooperation, particularly by the Central System (SECI, AECID, DGPOLDE).
- Sets of strategic and operational tools that allow for its application are being defined. Thus, the strategic planning exercises targeting the Spanish Cooperation system (Country Partnership Frameworks) and the operational planning exercises (in the AECID), as well as the Strategic Partnership Framework Agreements with Multilateral Organisations are processes which – should they be institutionalised – will be key elements for promoting the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.
- The decentralised cooperation is starting to identify how to transform the existence of multiple actors into an opportunity to foster aid efficiency at multiple levels by working from and with decentralised government bodies in partner countries. This is particularly true in the case of those Autonomous Communities with more experience in the field of development cooperation.
- Other relevant actors, such as non-governmental development organisations (NGDO), are making significant progress in articulating the Accra Agenda with their own

processes, identifying what and how they can improve aid effectiveness from their own sphere of action within the cooperation landscape.

- The evaluation also highlights the following issues:
 - The pace with which this group of measures is finally launched in order to put the principles of the Paris Declaration into operation, and the leadership to support and apply the processes through which these measures are developed, are neither sufficient nor consistent.
 - The current situation demands that a roadmap (which is not available at the moment) be defined. This roadmap should include realistic expectations, clear and comprehensive commitments to new processes, such as the Partnership Frameworks and Operational Programming, and to management tools, followed by demonstrated efforts to define and share this roadmap with the larger Spanish Cooperation community.
 - There are limited measures for monitoring and evaluating commitments and holding stakeholders accountable within the Spanish Cooperation system. This is linked to the need to develop an evaluation culture that allows for ad hoc decision-making.

Capacities

This evaluation focused primarily on the institutional capacities within the Spanish Cooperation, and particularly within the Central System (SECI, DGPOLDE, AECID), to meet commitments and provide effective leadership. The staff's knowledge and understanding of the PD, the degree of current adaptation of institutional capacities, and how the impact of changes is perceived at field office level were analysed. The evaluation highlights the following:

- The open and transparent strategic and operational planning processes are exposing deficiencies in institutional and individual capacities that require practical solutions. Attention should also be paid to securing adequate information systems, and training personnel to implement and assume responsibility for Management for Development Results practices. To achieve this, it is essential that senior management teams support these measures and that accountability measures are in place at all levels of the system.
- The analysis of good practices and processes that generate critical know-how needed to make the appropriate effectiveness changes has shown that the strategic and operational planning exercises (Operational Programming, Partnership Frameworks), as well as the creation of discussion and proposal groups on effectiveness within the Central System (Aid Effectiveness and Quality Work Group, Operational Programming Committee and Group) have been adapted effectively to this process. This reinforces the relevance of initiatives targeted at expanding the knowledge and understanding of the

elements of effectiveness, as well as the on-going nature of this process, based in practice and fortified by opportunities for feedback and follow-up.

- Within the organisational restructuring process, mainly at the central system level, there is a clear and visible improvement. These improvements are mainly the result of creating specific planning and quality units (UPC), Programme Assistance units, while also creating new cross-sectional work groups within the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development (AECID), as well as formalising existing ones.
- Decentralisation is a key issue for the implementation of the PD, and one that has not yet been fully tackled. The new tools (Partnership Frameworks and Operational Programming) contribute to the redefinition and appropriate distribution of roles and responsibilities between headquarters and the field (and internally), as well as the improving relationships and coordination between organisations and units.
- The evaluation exposes existing limitations to identifying the results and indicators that are expected from each person and team in relation with the implementation of the PD (for example, AECID Management Contract), and from tools for monitoring (processes and results) and further evaluations (key for decision-making).
- Despite efforts made to increase coverage and to regularise human resources, especially in AECID Technical Cooperation Offices, there are still a number of key issues that must be addressed: a) team stability and consistency in Spanish Cooperation, and, therefore, improving knowledge management and creating an efficient distribution of roles and responsibilities required by an effectiveness agenda; b) the possibility to develop a professional career within the sector, including mobility between headquarters and field offices, and among organisations (both at international level and between public and private entities); and c) defining and ensuring coherent roles and profiles for various positions.
- The current capacity of the system to generate and manage meaningful feedback is not sufficient to effectively reflect the progress and limitations in the implementation of the PD, nor to share and socialise experiences in an efficient manner.

Incentives

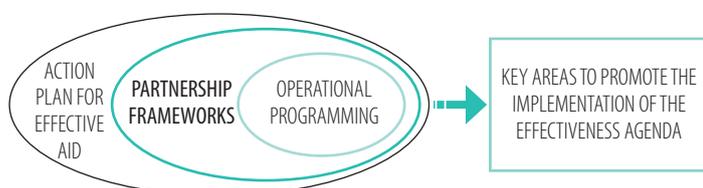
Lastly, the evaluation focuses on the specific incentives offered to staff in order for them to fulfil the objectives of the effectiveness agenda, and on the perception of potentially discouraging factors. In this section, the study also addresses the practical application of the Management for Development Results approach. The evaluation points out at least three issues:

- Regardless of the possibility to develop an incentive system, the fact that processes are not institutionalised or completed and lack continuity is one of the major disincentives for staff.
- Currently, staff performance in achieving the aid effectiveness objectives are not linked to greater possibilities of professional development and promotion.
- The limited progress in effectively implementing a Managing for Development Results (MfDR) System, which should have been implemented in 2010, negatively impacts the Spanish Cooperation system because the latter moves forward without having objective qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure the Official Development Assistance results. Spain's 2009 International Cooperation Action Plan (PACI) committed to establishing an MfDR System by the end of 2010, in response to the III Master Plan.

Main recommendations

The recommendations have been drawn up on the premise that the ongoing strategic planning processes at their different political, institutional, and operational levels, can be the key areas for improvement in order to successfully implement the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

Figure 1. Planning process: policy, institutional, strategic and operational levels



Recommendations focused on the central system (SECI, DGPOLDE, AECID)

Commitment and leadership

- Reposition the AECID Management Contract (MC) as a strategic reference that establishes a clear approach to aid effectiveness. Increase its utility by organizing the specific actions within the MC into a logical sequence (road map) with adequate specificity and definition to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.
- Institutionalize the management process of the Partnership Frameworks within the cooperation system and the AECID Operational Program. Ensure a sustained commitment from senior management.
- Develop an integrated information system that contributes to the implementation of strategic processes (in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation stages).

- Articulate and integrate the different strategic planning and operational processes, maintaining the momentum of the planning phase during the monitoring and evaluation phases. Follow through on institutional processes and capitalize experiences.
- Develop the Action Plan for Aid Effectiveness as a road-map for Spanish Cooperation, ensuring widespread participation and ownership from throughout the system.

Capacities

- Adapt and improve the consistency between job descriptions and responsibilities, and create strategies that encourage mobility between headquarters and the field.
- Link changes in functions at headquarters and the field to the overall decentralization process. Develop manuals defining specific roles and responsibilities as a way to overcome deficiencies in the staffing and operational structure.
- Integrate training and capacity building into operational processes. Educational initiatives are most effective when they are based in direct practice, with emphasis on support and feedback.
- Encourage spaces and channels of communication and coordination among the institutions that form the central system for Spanish Cooperation (SECI, DGPOLDE, AECI), between departments, between headquarters and field, and among field offices.
- With leadership from senior management, ensure the stability of, strengthen, and support operational units, work groups and teams committed to implementing the aid effectiveness agenda.

Incentives

- Develop and execute a career development plan and a system of incentives that reflect PD principles (AECID Management Contract).
- Assume the decision and task of integrating aid effectiveness indicators throughout the system so that they no longer are only associated with budget management.

Recommendations related to the central system's external context

Commitment

- Recognize and value the initiatives being spearheaded by the decentralized cooperation actors to identify specific opportunities and PD-related development priorities that reflect their particular perspectives and realities.
- Develop a strategy to disseminate information about, and increase understanding of, aid effectiveness at all

levels of Spanish cooperation. Convey the relevance of the Partnership Frameworks and how each actor relates to them.

- Clarify the involvement of different Spanish actors, including Ministries and other units outside the Central Government, in ongoing processes in Spain and abroad, with a special emphasis on the Partnership Frameworks.
- Promote the development of an integrated information system with other actors within Spanish Cooperation that will improve multilateral cooperation operations, with a special focus on enabling timely decisions and fomenting complementarity between bilateral partners.
- Promote coordination at multiple levels and between Ministries based on operational agendas.
- Promote active and sustained participation of the governing, advisory and coordinating bodies in tracking and monitoring progress toward Spain's aid effectiveness goals.
- Maintain an active and influential presence at the international level. Continue and further support for Triangular and South-South cooperation.

Summary of main lessons learned

Finally, the evaluation highlights important lessons learned from the Spanish Cooperation's experience in implementing the aid effectiveness agenda.

- The evaluation indicates how important the **system's capacities** to implement and consolidate relevant processes are in determining the impact of the aid effectiveness agenda. It highlights the importance of the system's ability to adapt its structure, organization, and human resources to new standards and procedures, and that these adaptive measures are realistic and properly sequenced given existing internal capacities.
- The analysis reflects the importance of bridging the gap between discourse and **practical implementation** in terms of the aid effectiveness agenda. This process has to do with creating intentional training initiatives, taking advantage of existing spaces and/or exercises for strategic and operational planning, and creating opportunities for exchanging experiences and practices (not just information) at all system levels.
- **The system's capacity to generate meaningful and useful feedback** (and, by extension, learning and incorporating new elements for more effective aid) is one of the most critical areas for improvement.
- In practice, **internal and external instruments to monitor PD implementation and progress** are not being converted into meaningful feedback for the Spanish Cooperation system. This should reinforce the need for internal and comprehensive information and monitoring systems that support the effective incorporation of PD principles and guidelines into operational work streams and inform and facilitate relevant decision making processes.
- Finally, the evaluation exposed a number of promising examples of how incorporating **high quality systems** into some of the Spanish organisations and structures can contribute to a more effective and efficient management of aid. It is critical that these examples serve as models and are adapted to the specific context and characteristics of the development cooperation sector.