



Conclusions from the Core Group Meeting Held in Brussels on 27 April 2010

Participants

AECID : Manuel Gonzalez Garagorri
CzDA : Michal Prochazka
KfW : Bruno Schoen
EuropeAid : Alex Gerbrandij, Nicolas Leroy
AFD : Jean-Marc Bellot
KfW Brussels office : Helmut von Glasenapp, Amelie d'Suza
Secretariat : Benoît Mauduit

And :

DFID : Simon Williams (by Telephone conference in the afternoon)
Katia Legien-Schifferer, probable future coordinator (in the afternoon)
Doerte Bosse (EuropeAid), for the preparation of the EDD

1. Setting up of the coordination office

H. von Glasenapp provided a table of MoUs and contributions received (attached).

- MoU with CzDA is still to be discussed internally, although funds have already been transferred. Question is if CzDA contribution could be considered as financing the costs of the office for 2010 and 2011 (which would be more in line with the actual destination of funds)
- DFID has signed and payment will be made in the coming days
- AECID has now signed the MoU and M. Gonzalez brought the originals with him. Payment can occur within 2 weeks of receiving the copies signed by KfW.
- Actually pending are the agreements with EuropeAid and with GTZ. H. von Glasenapp calls for quick solution, as KfW would not like to take the risk of employing Mrs Legien-Schifferer without the funds. There is also a matter of principle vis-à-vis the members who have paid early.

Both EuropeAid and GTZ need to sign grant contracts with KfW in addition to the MoU. The terms of those grant contracts have to be harmonised and reporting requirements have to be kept as close as possible to what has been agreed in the MoU.

- B. Mauduit and KfW Brussels office have to review the exact terms of the template grant contracts with EuropeAid and with the GTZ
- Other members should be informed about possible additional requirement that would have to be charged upon the coordinator

Core group members have seen the office which is reserved for the coordinator. Furniture is already in place and a computer (laptop with docking station) will be purchased as soon as the standard of the suitable keyboard will be known (presumably German).

Concerning the recruitment:

- following the decision of Ms Polsterer to take up a short term contract in priority, all members have agreed to the proposal to go for the 2nd best candidate, Mrs Legien-Schifferer
- Mrs Legien-Schifferer could take up her new position as soon as 18 May and would participate to the annual meeting.
- Mrs Legien-Schifferer met the core group members in the afternoon and confirmed her interest.

2. Feed-back from the thematic groups

Feed-back from the activities of the thematic groups during the past months was considered in the perspective of needs for space and follow-up during the annual meeting.

It was reminded that the initial working groups were re-named thematic groups because experience showed that the themes were broad and could lead to the creation of working groups or workshops dedicated to more focussed issues within a given thematic. Therefore, while organising thematic workshops during the annual meeting we should keep in mind that (i) generalists will be present and not experts and (ii) the aim of the workshops will rather be to inform participants about activities carried out so far and to outline what specific issues within the given thematic should be worked on in the coming year.

Quality Management (lead : EuropeAid / Nicolas Leroy)

Initiatives by EuropeAid have so far concerned joint monitoring / joint evaluation. Proposals made by EuropeAid at the last workshop (15/04/2010) were :

- Each institution should nominate one focal point for cooperation on monitoring
- Open a database to share reports and jointly analyse the reports for a given project
- Identify projects (less complex than programs) where involved donors could carry out joint monitoring missions
- Use the existing Capacity4Dev format in a first phase, before joining a more structured initiative (IATI or TR-Aid)

Feed-back from the core group :

- Need to identify the added value of this initiative in the context of existing agreements in basket funds and sector support and other similar initiatives (World Bank, IATI, TR-Aid, Aid Data...)
- Be clear about the objective : priority is to coordinate European donors, but EuropeAid cannot ignore multilateral donors such as World Bank, UNDP or FAO due to the very high number of already existing joint projects.

Initiatives launched by other members can be considered also part of the overall "quality management" thematic, notably "accountability of development agencies" (AFD, November 2009) and "MDG reporting and other development impact measurement tools" (KfW, December 2009)

=> Need to offer a broader overview of the "Quality Management" thematic.

Climate and energy (lead : KfW / Otmar Werner represented by Bruno Schoen)

- The last workshop (30 March) was about integrating clean development mechanisms into project financing. There were very lively discussions but finally few time for conclusions, except that all agreed to continue the exchange over a follow-up workshop in May or June.
- The thematic workshop during the annual meeting will be rather of an informative nature (as climate specialists are not expected to be present) and could also aim at identifying further issues to be developed or launched in the coming months.

Division of Labour (lead : AFD represented by Jean-Marc Bellot)

- Workshops have so far concentrated on delegated cooperation (DC). Another workshop is foreseen in June, not to deal only with DC but also with other issues such as the implementation of the Code of Conduct, mutual recognition and division of labour at country level. One idea is to invite representatives of country offices (eg. Mali, Mozambique).
- Another initiative under this thematic is the joint contribution to the public consultation on the revision of the Commission's financial regulation. This should now be followed-up within the Member States between the "practitioners" and the ministries (need to raise the attention of ministries of finance with the support of MFAs). => Issue should also be explained during the annual meeting

Human resources and institutional development (lead : CzDA / Michal Prochazka)

- no meeting of the thematic group as such since September 2007. However CzDA is about to organise joint learning events at Czech embassies for other Eastern European donors.

- however out of the workshop organised in March by InWent and AFD/CEFEB came the proposal to set up joint European training initiatives, due to be presented during the annual meeting.

3. Preparation of the annual meeting

Agenda and invitation

The first draft agenda created some confusion, some ministries already thinking that the general directors for development were invited. Manuel Gonzalez confirmed that the meeting was for managing directors of the Practitioner's Network only and that AECID only (and not the Ministry of foreign affairs and cooperation) was inviting. The format of the agenda will be adjusted accordingly.

AECID has prepared a notice with practical information about transportation to La Granja and accommodation. It will be re-sent by AECID after a few adjustments concerning busses.

Themes for discussion

Themes need to be precise and to be focussed on issues that are relevant for practitioners. The first meeting would be an occasion to discuss about the consequences for practitioners of the new setup of the Commission (following the creation of the EAS) and about the future European aid architecture. The meeting should be taken as an occasion to associate donors and providers of technical assistance to the already opened debate about a European "platform", which at present implicates the financial institutions (AFD, KfW, EIB and others) and EuropeAid.

The second discussion theme is regarded as more focussed on internal challenges for our agencies linked to the implementation of the European effectiveness agenda and to the future collaboration processes among European development actors.

- B. Mauduit will draft short concept papers for the two sessions which will first be circulated within the core group and will have to be validated by AECID management (M. Gonzalez is in charge), before the core group further elaborates along the agreed lines.

Transfer of the Presidency

This will happen at the end of the second session on the 27th. It won't be a formal event but can be the occasion for DFID to present their priorities and what they would like to develop with the Network in the year to come.

Thematic break-out groups

Two sessions are foreseen on the 28th for break-out groups. We could have up to 3 groups at a time, i.e. 6 thematic workshops altogether. 4 workshops would be for the established thematic groups. 2 other slots are available for new themes or more focussed issues. S. Williams indicated that DFID might want to propose a workshop on private sector involvement.

NB A question was whether AFD would like to propose a follow-up of last year workshop about collaboration with the civil society. In the meantime, AFD indicated that they would not have the capacities to propose such a workshop.

Last session

The last foreseen session is about organisational aspects of the Network. It should integrate the conclusions from the managing directors' meetings and from the break-out groups of the same day.

- S. Williams prepares guidelines for this session.

4. Preparation of the European Development Days

The core group validated the principle of applying for a slot (out of 8) in the official programme of the EDD and to prepare a joint event together with the European financial institutions in charge of private sector support (EDFI). The event would illustrate the complementarity of donor/agency interventions and EDFI direct support to private enterprises and contribute to reaching the MDGs. The panel could be composed of one representative of the practitioners, one of the EDFIs, one of a private foundation and one of a private company from the South.

- B. Mauduit is to organise a telephone conference with DEG and Proparco, who have indicated their interest in this project. DFID, EuropeAid and CzDA will confirm their intention to participate to the teleconference.
- In case the event proposal would not be accepted by DG Dev, H. von Glasenapp and J.M. Bellot look for an alternative location for the event, outside but within walking distance from the conference centre.