



Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation

Conclusions from the Enlarged Core Group Meeting Held in Brussels on 8 March 2011

Participants

AFD:	Herbert Voigt
DFID:	Simon Williams
KfW:	Amelie D'Souza, Benoît Mauduit
Lux Development:	Alice Risch
AECID:	Carlos Lucini

Coordination Office: Katja Legien

The main topics of this core group meeting were a) the Network Annual Meeting in May and b) an update on the past and planned activities of the Network.

Before starting to discuss the different topics, Simon Williams announced that by 1st April he will take over a new post becoming the DFID no 2 in the Southern Sudan Office in Juba. The Network congratulates Simon, regrets his early leave of the Core Group and wishes him all the best for this challenging new task!

A new DFID contact point will be nominated in the course of March.

1. Annual Meeting 19/20 May in London

Simon Williams explained the proposed course and focus of the Annual Meeting. The format will be like in Madrid in 2010, i.e. open also for non-Network members and associated organizations. The first day will be the Directors' Meeting, and the second day is devoted to Network business (including formal transfer of the Presidency to Luxembourg). The core group (including the views of Paul Engel/ECDPM who will be facilitating and who shared his ideas via phone) discussed the different aspects to consider. The proposed outcome (subject to final decision by DFID) is as follows:

Preliminary Agenda of first day, 19 May, Directors' Meeting:

- 1) The impact of post-Lisbon Treaty EU Institutional developments for practitioners (to be framed around a high level presentation from the Commission - possibly DG Fotiadis)
- 2) EU -12 transition experience and application to other countries in transition like now in Northern Africa (with speakers from Hungary and/or Poland MFAs, and possibly AECID and AFD who expressed their interest in this session).
- 3) Towards a post MDGs world - the changing shape of ODA Part 1 (panel presentation led by DFID)
- 4) Towards a post MDGs world - the changing shape of ODA Part 2 (panel discussion with representation from EIB, KfW, AfD, DFID and a representative of the EDFIs)

covering Blending Mechanisms, Innovative Finance, Definition of ODA, and engagement of the Private Sector and EDFIs; followed by Q & A from the floor)

Alternatively Session 3 could be abandoned or shortened in order to provide more time for the last session, which would then be interrupted by a coffee break between panel discussion and exchange with the other directors.

It was also discussed whether there could be time for a meeting of Directors where they discuss strategic issues of the Network on the basis of past year's Network logical framework.

The preliminary agenda of the second day, 20 May, devoted to Network issues is as follows:

- 1) Presentations of the thematic groups Division of Labour and Climate Change to the plenary (2x 45 min)
- 2) DFID-led session on civil society: the focus has not been fixed yet. One idea is that this could focus on civil society's role as a monitor of direct budget support.
- 3) Traditional stock take of Network progress (strategic issues, thematic groups' activities, budget, etc.) and hand over to Luxembourg as the next Presidency

The Core Group agreed that, from now on, costs of Network Annual Meetings of up to 3,000 € should be met by the Network budget (which has several thousands of € surplus), and not fully by the hosting Presidency. The Network will consequently pay for the evening reception costs and also Paul Engel's travel costs to London (he is not charging a facilitation fee).

It was decided that the Coordinator will send a "Save-the-date" message to all Network contact points with the draft final agenda in order to increase chances of availability of the agency Directors.

30 rooms are reserved in the Thistle Hotel for Annual Meeting guests. The coordinator should be able to assess demand following the reactions to the "Save-the-date" mail.

Together with the invitation letter of DFID, a logical framework summary of the Network will be sent, and equally the question which agency would like to take over from AECID the core group membership (and Presidency in 2012/2013) will be raised. In parallel, the Coordinator will approach directly BTC and DEVCO to enquire their availability.

Paul Engel was contacted via phone call and agreed to moderate whatever meeting we would like him to (at least the 2nd and the last sessions of the 1st day).

2. Update on the Thematic Groups

The group on Climate Change will have a workshop on Clean Development Mechanisms in March 23rd in Paris. Another one is planned for June in Brussels on climate/energy financing options and initiatives in the European context.

Regarding the group on Division of Labour, there was some further exchange per e-mail on the financial regulations and a reminder was sent to all, short before the articles most relevant to indirect management were discussed by the Budget Committee. The

reference paper “Summary of propositions of changes to the financial regulation of the European Commission” can be read on the website (see under <http://www.dev-practitioners.eu/co-financing.html>). The discussion involved a lot of different agencies and was appreciated by the Commission.

There will be a workshop “Regards Croisés on Aid Effectiveness” organised by the DoL group on 7th April in Brussels.

There were no activities of the two groups Institutional Development/HR and Quality Management.

The coordinator will ask all thematic group leaders soon to briefly out-line their plans and vision for their group for 2011/2012. If the group leader feels that there is no point in continuing a group, the core group will suggest its dissolving at the annual meeting.

Dr. Freiberg from GIZ drafted an outline for a potential new working group on “Experiences in Result-based Funding, Programming and Monitoring“. The core group welcomes the initiative. The coordinator will send the proposal to all contact points so that the Network Members can check before the Annual Meeting about their agencies’ interest and resources available to join the group. Dr. Freiberg will be invited to present and discuss his proposal with the practitioners at the Annual Meeting so that it could start end of May provided that at least three Network members will join (which seems quite realistic).

3. The Network – Strategic Issues

European Parliament

The Coordinator told the Core Group about her activities to establish contact with the European Parliament with the objective to increase visibility of the Network. So far there has been one meeting with a Development Committee DEVE Secretariat member who was interested about knowing the network and its activities.

There have also been in the past some occasions where development agencies were invited to present themselves/specific topics to the DEVE Committee. It is desirable to facilitate the renewal of similar meetings. The idea is to get the opportunity to provide some technical inputs (e.g. presentations or other forms of information) on current issues of the DEVE. The coordinator will send a list of current issues to the Network contact points and ask for potential inputs from members to offer to the respective Parliamentarian.

The coordinator will continue to deepen contact with the EP/DEVE members.

Network Members

During the past 12 months there were few changes of membership: In December 2010 the network welcomed Slovak Aid as a new member with a little ceremony during the EDD.

On the other hand, InWent as such could not be a member any longer since it is part of GIZ - the former GTZ: GIZ was officially formed on 1 January 2011 and brings together the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) (German Technical Cooperation), InWent (Capacity Building International) and the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED) (German Development Service).

Apart from GIZ also our member EuropeAid changed name and organisational structure with the formation of the new Directorate General DEVCO.

Overall, the network comprises at present 11 members. Contacts with other prospect members (DANIDA, SIDA, MINBUZA etc.) are maintained. Only those agencies that contribute financially are listed on the website as members and receive mails with general information through the Network.

Network Survey

The coordinator drafted an interview guideline with questions concerning the Network as such, the thematic groups, the annual meeting, EDD participation, the Coordination Office and the website. It was agreed not to send the questionnaire in written. Rather, the Coordinator will interview the contact points of the Network via phone during the next weeks. The feedback should help the Network to get some inputs on strategic direction for the next months 2011/2012, and on how to better focus its services to the members. The main results will also feed into the discussion on the Network during the Annual Meeting.

Logframe

The logframe for the DFID Presidency 2010/2011 was considered useful reflecting the Network's main objectives and activities. A one page written summary of it will be sent together with the invitation to the Directors for the Annual Meeting and should facilitate the participation of the Directors to the discussion on the next presidency's focus.

Annual report

The coordinator will finish the annual report by end of March so that it can be sent together with the Annual Meeting invitations mid-April.

Budget

By January 2011, all members had paid their annual membership fee 2010/2011, two members already for 2 years. The overall amount of the budget 2011/2012 will stay the same as before (108,000 €), as the overall number of paying members did not change¹.

The expenses were more or less like projected except for communication costs for which considerably less was spent. On the other hand, the participation in the EDD with a high level panel entailed some expenses not accounted for in the initial calculation. Overall, around 25,000 € will be the surplus. It was agreed to shift this surplus to the next budget period (April 2011 – April 2012).

Like mentioned above, it was agreed to contribute from 2011 onwards up to 3,000 € on the Annual Meeting to support the hosting organisation.

The Network budget needs to be audited by two Network members not directly involved in the financial decisions/transactions. AECID (Carlos Lucini) volunteered to check the accounts. As for the second member the Coordinator will ask BTC (taking advantage of their Brussels presence thus avoiding extra travel costs) whether they can do the audit as well.

EDD

It was agreed that the Network will again participate in the next EDD in Warsaw to increase visibility with a stand and an event, but not to spend again that much money on advertisement of the side event. The focus of the event will be discussed in due course.

¹ The incoming Slovak Aid and the outgoing InWent both paid the same amount of 3,000 €/budget period.