



Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation

Conclusions from the Enlarged Core Group Meeting Held in Brussels on 7 December 2010

Participants

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The main topics of this short core group meeting, held on the occasion of the EDD and with all members available and present at the EDD were a) Impressions of Network performance at the European Development Days, b) Update on the activities of the thematic groups and c) Plans for remainder of the DFID Presidency period.

1. Quick Impressions of Network Performance at EDD

Overall, it was unanimously agreed amongst core group participants that the panel on SME – Motor of Development organised by the Network and the EDFI was a success:

The choice of the topic (private sector), panellists and the moderator was good, the sequence of the speakers' initial presentations (first the private sector representatives from the South, then the donor organisations), the discussion itself being interesting and relevant, the sufficient time for the many questions from the audience and answers from the panellists, etc. Also the number of participants (estimated 300) was very satisfying.

Ideas for a next time were:

- have less donors and instead more people from the South like e.g. a developing country Minister of Economics on the panel;
- change the general EDD mode of panel discussion (speakers sitting statically on the podium and presenting one after the other) to make it more lively;
- include a video or other input in-between to make the discussion more "colourful"

Although the costs and efforts for such an EDD participation with a panel are considerable (around 5000 € from the Network side plus the working time/salary of the coordinator), it was agreed that this is a good investment for increased visibility of the network and its activities. Also this kind of event exactly promotes the dialogue at

Practitioners' level that the Network is designed to facilitate. It is very positive if this event has helped to develop further synergies between donors and development finance institutions. It was also good that the event identified and highlighted particular challenges for the 'missing middle' of SMEs in partner countries.

The Network will think about what other international events like the EDD could be suited and interesting for the Network to be more involved.

The EDD stand of the Network was also considered as very good with all the different members' and Network material displayed. However, the development village was in general less frequented than in other previous years. People enquiring at the practitioners' stand were e.g. interested in general information about the network and its activities, funding opportunities, and the difference from EUNIDA. We do need to look at how we can make our 'message' a bit simpler for enquirers to understand, and how we can ensure that enquirers are aware that we cannot offer funding on behalf of the Network for particular projects or programmes.

It was agreed that there will be an open (email-)exchange amongst practitioners about the EDD on lessons learnt. The Network Coordinator will follow-up on this.

2. New Members

SlovakAid joined the Network. The signature of both parties was done and celebrated at the SlovakAid stand with representatives of the Network presidency DFID, AFD, ADA, and certainly KfW as contract party in the EDD development village on Tuesday 7th December. SlovakAid expressed its specific interest in topics like how to define and implement joint projects.

EIB after the Workshop on Financial Regulations on December 16th strongly expressed its wish to join formally the Network. The Network agreed to further encourage them in this idea and to prepare the necessary steps (Network Coordinator and KfW to follow-up). General information on the Network and the MoU has been sent already to EIB.

Hungary and Poland are the next countries having the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (with Poland also organising the next EDD in December 2011 in Warsaw). We should work to make them potential candidates for Network membership.

3. Update on the Thematic Groups

Since the annual meeting only the thematic group on Division of Labour was indeed active with two well-attended workshops on Aid Effectiveness and the Commission's Financial Regulations in June and November 2010.

The group on climate change will soon initiate two workshops: one Workshop on CDM in January, 2011 in Paris, and another one planned for March in Frankfurt on climate financing options and initiatives in the European context. The thematic group leader will get in touch with Network members on this soon.

The thematic group on Quality Management will develop an activity on Joint Monitoring in May 2011. The other group on Human Resources also expressed its interest in developing an activity in 2011.

If a thematic group is not sustained by activities like workshops or similar events for a long time due to a lack of interest in the topic, it could be dissolved easily. The experience shows that it needs the initiative of individual persons within the agencies to keep the groups going.

It is not necessary to form a whole new thematic group to initiate a workshop on a topic with potential interest, a singular event is also highly welcome. GTZ is e.g. thinking about organising a (series of) workshop(s) on "New Partnership in Development" concentrating on output-based approaches/cash on delivery. Martina Kampmann and Jörg Freiberg together with the Coordinator will follow-up on this and check the interest of the Network and associated agencies.

The review of EU Financial Instruments could also still be a topic for further Network discussion.

4. Plans for Reminder of DFID Presidency

There will be an event in the first quarter of 2011 in Brussels organized by DFID with a focus around implementation on the ground of the European Commission's Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

The aim of the workshop is to exchange views and good practice between practitioners (including the Commission) on how to successfully implement their commitments to the four year EU GEAP for Development. The exact timing of the workshop will be contingent on the date of the next EU Member States consultation on GEAP progress to ensure that some member states gender experts will be in Brussels when the workshop is held.

DFID is keen that the workshop is open to all EU Member States, and will be inviting one representative from each member state (either a gender expert or a policy/programme officer with a particular interest in the subject).

The preparations for the Network's annual meeting in May 2011 will start early next year within DFID. The form of the annual meeting will be like the one in Madrid in 2010, i.e. open also for non-Network members and associated organizations for the first day, and the second day for Network business (including formal transfer of the Presidency to Luxembourg).

Topics dealt with will include private sector development as a follow up on the EDD panel, and civil society provided the members' interest. The logical framework will also be used as a basis to review the achievements and activities implemented.

The next meeting of the Core Group (not in expanded format) will probably be in February in Brussels (date to be confirmed).