Roadmap to Joint Programming in Armenia

**1. Background**

As announced to the EU HoMs by the EU Delegation (EUD) regarding the prospects for joint programming on October 7 2013, the EUD organised a first meeting with Heads of Cooperation of the Member States present in the Republic of Armenia (RA) on January 29 2014. During the meeting it was agreed to prepare this roadmap in order to prepare for joint programming at the next EU programming cycle (2018-2020).

In parallel, the RA has finalised a new development strategy, Armenian Development Strategy (ADS), which should guide the priority activities of the relevant donors in the country. Whereas there is not yet a government-led coordination of donor activities, there is a donor coordination initiative launched by the United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator since spring 2013. The EU participates as the co-chair of the economic development sub-group together with the World Bank.

**2. Results to be achieved for the implementation of Joint Programming (JP).**

There are a number of cornerstones to be reached to put in practice JP. The most relevant ones are reflected here and constitute the main elements of this Roadmap:

* Preparation of a donor mapping;
* Agreement of a common analysis and vision of the Armenian development context;
* Division of labor;
* Synchronisation to the extent possible of European donors’ policy and strategy regarding programming cycles and implementation plans as of 2018 with indicative financial allocations;
* Agreement on the content that will be included in the joint programming document;
* Agreement on the approval procedures that each donor will apply to the joint document.

European donors will continue to cooperate closely during the 2014-17 period through regular meetings of the EU Development Counsellors and the larger donor coordination group promoted by the UN.

**3. Participants**

The EU Delegation is seeking all the EU countries to agree to JP in particular for all the EUMS with permanent representation in the RA. The countries with relevant bilateral cooperation which have agreed to work closely together to implement JP at the January 29 2014 meeting were:

* Czech Republic
* France (AFD)
* Germany (Embassy, GIZ and KfW)
* Greece
* Poland
* Lithuania (did not join the meeting but expressed the desire to join the initiative)
* United Kingdom (also did not join the meeting and have no bilateral assistance at present)

**4. Short-term Actions**

The following actions are intended to be taken in 2014 - 2015:

* Finalisation of the donor mapping document
* Draft Roadmap for Joint Programming in RA completed
* Positive response letter from GoA on joint programming including the intention to actively coordinate donor activities should have been received
* HoMs letter to be sent to GoA enclosing the Roadmap and requesting written GoA endorsement for moving to full European joint programming from 2018
* Joint Communication to be sent by HoMs to European capitals, briefing on the process, attaching this Roadmap and the GoA endorsement letter and highlighting the specific actions that need to be taken by capitals as well as the steps and reform agenda agreed upon with the GoA

**5. Subsequent Steps**

The subsequent steps to be taken are grouped below by issue, with the exact timing to be decided by EU Development Counsellors in Yerevan based on the progress made on implementing the above steps and on the basis of specific instructions coming from their capitals.

5.1 Common analysis

A common analysis and vision for European cooperation support has to be envisaged based on the Armenian Development Strategy. The analysis will have to take into account the existing political commitments and the relevant EU-Armenia agreements in force or under negotiation.

5.2 Division of labor

Most EU Member States have few development related activities. In particular, Germany, mainly implementing through GIZ and KfW, is the most active Member State in Armenia,and pursues its cooperation to a large extent on a regional basis (Caucasus Intitiative). As such, a reasonably good coordination amongst donors exists today but no actual division of labour. Also thanks to the number of sector specific donor coordination working groups, a general vision of the activities implemented by other donors is shared by the donor community. What is missing at the moment is the government leading the division of labour or following a certain developmental strategy.

Division of labour needs to also consider division of tools, as the instruments available to the various donors are different, and could be used in a complementary manner in order to advance results in the specific sector under the given European lead donor.

5.3 Synchronization of European donors’ programming cycles and implementation plans

From a preliminary discussion, it appears that the programming activities will need to be carefully pursued, considering that the various cycles may not be able to be synchronised. For example whereas the EU Delegation pursues 3 or 4 year cycles (the current financial perspectives include two cycles, 2014-2017, and 2018-2020), Member States may follow as short as one-year cycles. As such, and as is the case in other countries, European donors are not likely, at the moment, to be able to synchronise their financing cycles with the joint programming cycle. Having said that, they will be able to program their policy and strategy within the jointly agreed EU cycle under Joint Programming.

5.4 Other content

It may be advisable that EU donors establish joint positions on a number of issues, stemming from a belief that articulating such positions backed by a joint European strategy and financial support will considerably increase the political influence behind it. The formulation of joint positions could come out of the joint analysis that it is proposed to take place in 2015 or 2016. These could include the following:

* Donor coordination from the side of the GoA;
* Safeguarding human rights, with an emphasis on the rights of children, women and minorities;
* Gender issues;
* Promoting decentralisation;
* Rule of law, access to justice, transitional justice;
* Environmental protection and climate change.

Other content for the joint programming document would include:

* Agreement on a results framework for the joint programming document with a limited number of indicators to track whether the joint strategy is achieving its stated objectives and also looking at European donors’ overall development effectiveness performance;
* Agreement on a number of communication products that will be taken forward to raise the European profile in the RA, for example a joint website showcasing results, a brochure giving an overview of cooperation, annual reports on achievements, and press releases on joint EU positions and demarches to GoA.

5.5 Approach to stakeholders

The GoA, other development partners, civil society and the private sector need to be kept informed of the joint programming process, sensitized to its implications and invited to provide input and opinion at certain points, as appropriate, in particular:

* The GoA should be regularly updated on the joint programming process. It should be asked not only to comment but even to propose a division of labour. It should also be reminded that the existence of a National Development Strategy and key sector strategies that adhere to the national budgeting cycle are key for European joint programming to go ahead in practice;
* Other development partners: the larger donor coordination group should be kept updated on progress and invited to provide input and comment on specific content of the joint programming document as this is being developed, and they would be most welcome.
* Civil society: should be asked for input on the overall analysis of the country and where the European support should best focus. This has already taken place for the design of the future assistance of the EU and should be kept as a key element of the joint programming process;
* Private sector: views should be sought on relevant issues, such as the implications of the Eurasian Customs Union on EU aspirations, access to finance, labour market, etc.

**6. Links to HQs**

Joint programming in the RA will be impossible without specific support from EU capitals. Whereas, EU Ministers have already endorsed the general concepts of synchronizing planning cycles, agreeing on a joint strategy paper, and establishing a division of labour and indicative financial allocations, turning these intentions into practice will require specific direct commitment and support from the EU capitals.

Therefore, as mentioned above, the HoMs in Yerevan will send a joint note to Brussels detailing what will be expected from each of them to make joint programming a reality in the RA from 2018 on. This communication should be the outcome of agreement on a Joint Programming Roadmap with the endorsement of the Government of Armenia.

Key areas of the note would be:

* Confirmation of local willingness to take forward joint programming in the RA, from the represented Member States, the GoA, civil society and, if possible, other donors that could find this initiative interesting enough for their future support in the country;
* Confirmation of start date and duration of the initial joint programming document. Request to the capitals to adhere to this timetable for the programming of their support to the RA;
* Understanding that financing commitments may take place on a different timetable, meaning that allocations made for the programming period will be indicative only;
* Request for agreement that each country’s bilateral implementation plan will restrict itself to the implementation details of their respective agreed contribution to the joint programming document, i.e. setting out the projects and programmes to be undertaken. Thus, content such as country analysis, overall priorities, aid effectiveness commitments etc. should be transferred to the joint programming document;
* Request for a commitment that support to the RA and to the agreed sectors will be maintained for the duration of the joint programming document. This is essential to ensure predictability and continuity and to maintain the coherence of the joint programming document.

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