

Technical Seminar on Joint Programming – Summary and Conclusions

DEVCO/EEAS/NEAR/EU Member States - 19 February 2016

Executive Summary

There is currently a good momentum for Joint Programming. MS confirmed their support and engagement. Council Conclusions are planned for May 2016 FAC/DEV and will provide additional impetus.

Progress was made on the issue of "replacement" of bilateral programming document with a Joint Programming Document (JPD) which was at the core of the agenda. The proposal of "core elements" for JPD – based on MS replies to a light survey – was well received. MS will communicate any additional element considered relevant. On this basis, light guidance will be developed to facilitate the drafting of JPDs "apt" to replace bilateral documents. The new generation of JPDs can be shaped in a way to cover most of the EU MS required content.

A number of MS confirmed their agreement in principle to use JPDs as their bilateral planning document (France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden pending political decision and Austria in specific cases). Others are fully supportive of a reinforced JP, but not yet in a position to fully replace.

A preliminary list of countries for possible "replacement" was discussed. The case of Laos was presented where a JPD is already in the pipeline to serve as the EU bilateral document.

Participants agreed to consider triggering JP in countries beyond the current list of 55 countries, when and where conditions are ripe and upon request from field. In the Central African Republic, JP has great potential given the recent elections, enormous reconstruction needs, and synergies with the Bêkou Trust Fund.

Member States welcomed the willingness to build synergies between JP and the Comprehensive Approach. The two exercises include a Joint Analysis. Some MS mentioned their own efforts to develop "whole-of-government strategies", corresponding to the Comprehensive Approach attempt to set-up a more encompassing and coherent vision of EU's relations with a particular partner country or region. Follow-up will be given in the framework of the upcoming Report on the Action Plan 2015 on the Comprehensive Approach and in the discussions on the country cases to be established for the 2016/2017 Action Plan.

The proposed **way forward** was positively received:

- Consolidating JP process, including through "replacement", wherever possible, notably in countries with a "window of opportunities" (new planning cycle beginning in 2016/2017);
- Expanding JP in new countries: on demand and as circumstances require;
- Elevating JP: better drawing on the political potential of JP by linking it to other processes, the Comprehensive Approach
- Communicating more on JP: EU Delegations and EU MS to renew efforts including with partner governments and other donors to raise awareness of value added.

Opening Session

- The Seminar was attended by 21 Member States (see participants list in attachment) and the EIB.
- It was opened by Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, Head of Division at EEAS Global 5 (Development Cooperation Coordination); Chantal Marijnissen, Acting Head of Unit of DEVCO A2 (Aid Effectiveness and Financing for Development) and Sergio Piccolo of DG NEAR B1 Middle East (and formerly EU Head of Cooperation Palestine).
- Collective efforts are needed to build on the current JP momentum, notably in the run-up to the **Council Conclusions** planned for May 2016 FAC/DEV. The Council Conclusions should take stock of the progress to date, including the latest developments in fragile contexts, and set-out the prospects for JP in the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Agenda.
- **"Replacement"** of bilateral programming documents is a way to strengthen JP by avoiding duplication. To do so, we have to make sure EU services and MS core requirements for Programming documents are covered and that appropriate guidance is provided to Delegations and Embassies.
- However progress on JP should be supported in **all countries, where conditions are ripe**, even if there are no immediate prospects for replacement. Special attention should be given to countries which have a new planning cycle in 2016/2017.
- In the neighbourhood, the **ENP review and the new programming cycle** starting in 2016/2017 provide further opportunities to engage in JP. For EU services it is considered as the "default" model to adopt.

Session 1 - "Replacement": EU and MS basic requirements

- 17 MS answered the survey on programming processes, internal procedures and core elements of bilateral documents. The replies are presented in the excel sheet in annex and summarised in the attached presentation. The presentation went through main features of MS country programming documents, duration of the programming period, the co-signature of the document, consultative process, programming guidelines/instructions and flexibility towards synchronisation.
- Based on the results of the survey, a **set of "core elements" for a JPD to replace EU + MS bilateral programming documents** was presented and well received (see below).

Proposed elements	Core element	Optional
Executive Summary	X	
Joint Analysis	X	
Joint Response : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU shared vision • Objectives • Priority sectors: related objectives and expected results by sector • Indicative financial sector allocations • Division of Labour (lead donor by sector) • Risk assessment 	X	
Overall indicative multi-annual financial planning	X	
Indications on intervention modalities and programme management		X
Monitoring and results framework	X	
Cross cutting issues (gender, climate change, etc...)	X	
Communication Strategy		X
Sector fiches in annex		X

- These "core requirements" are in line with the 2015 JP Guidance Pack on Joint Programming, which remain a valid basis to build on.
- Monitoring Results Framework/indicators as well as communication were highlighted by MS as key elements to ensure that JP documents are visible and effectively used after these are produced.
- Some MS drew attention on the importance of risk assessment/mitigation, on "value for money", and on including a long term perspective and vision.
- EU MS committed to communicate shortly after the seminar any **additional element**. On this basis, guidance on core requirements will be developed to facilitate the drafting of a JPD apt to replace bilateral strategies of the EU and the Member States.
- The concept of "**replacement**" raised some questions, notably because programming documents have a very different nature and status (from purely policy documents to more operational ones) throughout EU MS. It was however agreed that JP Strategies should be shaped in a way to minimize the work that each MS has inevitably to do "on top of" this document. It was also agreed that a sound and "as concise as possible" **joint analysis** should be part of it.
- The overall objective remains valid: to avoid duplication of work and agreeing on a common strategic umbrella. It was reiterated that **EU and MS will keep their bilateral relations, dialogue and implementation plans**, i.e. programme/projects documents. Some commented that in any case **visibility of individual MS should be ensured**. Specific aspects of bilateral cooperation which cannot be included in the JPD (i.e. research, private sector, trade etc.) can always be dealt with in a complementary way, to comply with individual MS procedures.
- Some **MS indicated that they are, in principle, ready to replace** (France, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden pending political decision and Austria in specific cases) and encouraged the EU services to make "replacement" a reality. **Other MS expressed their support for it while pointing out that their internal systems do not**

(yet) allow them to replace (reasons include strong and established bilateral dialogue mechanisms, ongoing reviews of development cooperation, whole-of-government approach, specific quality requirements, monitoring etc.).

- In line with the Joint Programming principles, in a given country "replacement" may only be possible for some of the EU MS participating in the process.

Session 2 – "Replacement": countries with potential for 2016 – 2017

Based on replies of MS to the survey, a preliminary list of countries considered to have some potential for replacement was presented:

EU (5 countries tbc)	Laos, Senegal, Mali, Palestine & Ethiopia (tbc)	Laos well advanced
Germany (7 countries)	Laos, Palestinian Territories, Ethiopia, Benin, Cambodia, Kenya & Mali	In principle possible in all 50 "focal countries" for German cooperation
Sweden (4 countries)	Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Afghanistan	Pending political decision
Spain (1 country)	Bolivia fulfils ES expectations	But substitution of bilateral programme not considered yet
France	all JP countries	Unless justifying circumstances
Austria	Palestine	Under consideration

- Capitals are invited to support **efforts in the field to reach this goal**. However, the final decision will depend on progress. **This list is therefore dynamic and only indicative.**
- Some MS indicated that more countries could be added to this preliminary list, and agreed to provide indications on any additional countries.
- "Replacement" should be the rule rather than the exception, especially when programming reviews take place. However, as far as the EU is concerned, the replacement will depend on the quality of the final documents.
- The cases of Laos, Palestine and Senegal were presented in greater detail. EU services are hoping to replace MIP/SSF/NIP in these countries:
 - **The Laos** is the first and most advanced case for this year, as the new JPD has already been sent by HoMs to capitals for approval. The aim is to sign this jointly with the Laos government by mid-2016. JP has already allowed strategic dialogue with the Laos government.
 - **Palestine** should follow by the end of 2016. Work is ongoing in this direction, building on the progress made in recent years (16 sector fiches, transition strategy...). The aim is to keep the JPD as simple as possible.

- The **Senegal** EU Delegation presented state of play via videolink. A review of the ongoing strategy is planned and will lead to the drafting of a new JPD, which could hopefully replace bilateral programmes, in 2018 (synchronising with the country cycle).
- The role of **other donors, as well as that of banks** was also discussed. The processes should be as inclusive as possible, especially with like-minded partners such as Switzerland and Norway. The EIB confirmed its interest in joining in, to reinforce the EU support package that JP provides to partner countries. In the East, other donors are interested (Turkey, USAID...), notably in the Joint Analysis.

Session 3 - Expansion and consolidation

1. Expansion, i.e. kick-starting JP in new countries beyond the 55 initial ones:

- The current list of 55 JP countries is based on a consultative process and HoMs assessment launched in 2011. It was generally felt that circumstances may have changed and opportunities for JP may have opened up in other countries. The risk of diluting efforts across many countries was also underlined. **It was agreed to remain flexible and open to support new JP process where conditions are deemed right in the field.** The political momentum of the new Council Conclusions will provide ground both for expansion and consolidation of JP.
- The case of **CAR** was presented, as a series of elements offer a significant window of opportunity for JP to be initiated and its potential to be unleashed. The recent elections, which will hopefully bring more stability to this fragile context; the enormous reconstruction needs of an aid orphan country; and the coordination already set-up in the framework of the Bêkou fund are positive features which can be built on. However, there is need to move quickly as the country requires urgent support to stabilise. Ways and means to engage MS not present in the country will be considered, possibly through the TF (which already include DE, IT, NL and CH for example).
- In the preparation of the seminar, MS proposed the following countries: **Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, Peru, Ecuador, Cuba and Colombia – see annex.** It was also suggested that the following be examined: **Central Asia, some accession countries (Albania) and Ukraine** where there are many donors and multiple coordination issues. For the latter, the possibility has already been raised in a Ukraine Coordination Meeting that took place on 17th February.

2. Consolidation of ongoing JP

- On top of discussions on replacement, it was reminded that progress could be made in **all countries with new planning cycle beginning in 2016/2017:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Malawi, Mauritania, Moldova, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Philippines, Tanzania, Vietnam, Tunisia, Zambia. Ethiopia was also mentioned as intense preparation continues for a new and ambitious JPD requiring active MS support in the coming months.
- **Collective effort is required from the EU & MS capitals** to reach out to their delegations/embassies/field offices and ensure JP possibilities are fully considered and roadmaps are drafted or updated for as many countries as possible.

- Regional seminars encourage peer-learning, ownership and help reduce the perception of JP as being an exclusively "HQ process".

Session 4 - Joint Programming and Comprehensive Approach

- The May 2014 Council Conclusions on the Comprehensive Approach state that "the European Union and its Member States can bring to the international stage the unique ability to combine, in a coherent and consistent manner, policies and tools ranging from diplomacy, security and defence to finance, trade, development and human rights, as well as justice and migration".
- Its implementation is progressing and **has close links with JP**, notably in terms of **analysis. JP can be a springboard and/or a deliverable** of the Comprehensive Approach. Country cases and themes of focus are being defined for the 2016/2017 Action Plan – to be discussed with MS on 18th March.
- There was **consensus on the need to reinforce the synergies** to cross-fertilise JP with other processes going in the direction of the Comprehensive Approach. Challenges such as migration and security are all interlinked with development cooperation, so it would be welcomed if JP could contribute towards their integration in joined-up strategies of engagement with partner countries.

AOB – Communication and support

- Responding to a request made in the previous seminar, the idea of establishing a JP newsletter was presented and well-received. Live inputs from MS field offices and EU Delegations is crucial to make it a knowledge-sharing tool. The primary audience would be MS and EU partners. The format envisaged is an informal electronic newsletter of 2-3 pages, circulated quarterly.
- Regarding the mode of delivery/content/quality control of the newsletter, it was believed a small editorial team would be most effective. Beyond the newsletter, regular web updates and a large web presence would be needed.
- Keeping colleagues in the field updated to foster progress was also considered crucial.
- DEVCO will continue to give in-country support with a team of four senior experts. Based on demand from the field, the team will provide analytical support such as in mapping, country analysis; facilitating workshops and consultations; and support drafting documents (i.e. joint analysis, joint strategies, etc.).
- Other forms of support were suggested to come also from EU MS, to increase the ownership in the process; including through mobilisation of local expertise

Annexes

- Participants list
- Agenda
- Presentations
- Synthesis note on replies of MS to the survey
- Excel sheet compiling MS and EU replies