

**JOINT PROGRAMMING SEMINAR MYANMAR 28-29 APRIL 2015**

**Brief wrap-up by Veronica White, Consultant**

The Joint Programming regional workshop for Asia took place in Yangon, Myanmar from 28-29 April 2015 included and was **co-hosted by the European Union (DEVCO/EEAS) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development***.*

The Asia Joint Programming workshop’s primary **objective** was to increase the knowledge about Joint Programming based on **practical experience in the region**, through a process of peer learning, with a focus on implementation at the country level. More than **50 participants from the region attended** the 2 days’ workshop. Colleagues from Nepal could not participate due to the devastating earthquake.

The agenda included a **mix of technical information sessions and break-out sessions**. The technical sessions focused on sharing information on the concept, state of play. The break-out sessions focused on sharing lessons learned, identifying operation challenges and presenting country cases. Participants reflected on how the JP instrument can be used to achieve more meaningful results.

**Participants’ expectations** of the workshop included the showcasing of **best practices and lessons learned from other countries** (e.g. common challenges, synchronization, added-value for EU MS, fragility context); a **better understanding of the benefits of joint programming** and on the process to achieve the best results; the showcasing of **concrete examples on how to move the process further**, beyond the strategy document; ideas/experiences on **how to enhance coordination at the sector level** and joint sector policy dialogue (e.g., improving coherence in MIC context); what the **institutional and individual incentives** are for JP; a better understanding of **how to use the JP process to enhance policy dialogue** and joint advocacy.

A number of **key messages** came out of the workshop including the following:

* Interest and commitment among participants to move forward with JP in Asia;
* JP involves changing mindsets, it is a **change process which comes with temporary investments costs** and **results in improved efficiency** **and impact** in the delivery of EU development cooperation in the long-run. In general, the ‘transaction cost’ aspect should rather be seen in the “better value for money” perspective, as a mere focus on transaction costs would not take sufficient account of the necessary investment in any structural change process;
* **Commitments emerge** from the EU Treaty (Article 208 §1), the post-Busan Global Partnership agenda as well as the ‘public’ responsibility of ensuring quality delivery of EU cooperation which exceeds 50% of global ODA worldwide;
* JP requires a **pragmatic,** **flexible, country-specific country approach** aiming for the delivery of concrete and measurable results;
* JP strategy documents are in some countries (Mali) already being **used instead of bilateral programming documents**. Substitution is a clear example of where transaction costs are reduced as only one programming document needs to be developed and the work-load for doing so is shared. It also helps to make the process and adoption procedures more efficient;
* The political dimension of the JP Process is essential to keep the momentum going. **“Speaking with one voice” is an important driver for EU MS and the EU alike**. Substitution and the political dimension are 2 key incentives to ensure continued interest on the ground;
* **Alignment/synchronization** was a technical obstacle in some countries, but **has been overcome** in most countries now. Furthermore, **non-EU donors are key players** in some countries which we cannot do without, specifically at sector level. In some cases, we will therefore need to be diplomatic on how we engage the process.

The workshop included break-out sessions where groups focused on:

1. Operational challenges
2. Country cases.

The results of the breakout sessions are detailed in Annexes I & II.