**Country Joint Programming Factsheet**

***Regional workshop on Joint Programming for Asia***

1. Country: **Cambodia**
2. General expectations for workshop:
* To share our experience and celebrate our achievements with our colleagues from Asia and the HQ.
* To get ideas and advice about the practical implementation of the joint strategy, its links to strategic policy dialogue and application of high-level results indicators.
1. Status of Joint Programming in your country:
* Joint European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2018 launched in November 2014. It represents 10 European partners – CZ, EU, FI, FR, DE, IE, IT, SE, UK and Switzerland (hence European rather than EU).
* The strategy includes a joint results framework. Preparations are currently under way for the first annual monitoring of the implementation which will take place in October-November 2015.
1. Key steps ahead *(to be taken into account for workshop session on 'Identification of operational challenges’)*:
* Ensuring that monitoring of the strategy: a) builds on the existing national monitoring and coordination processes as well as on the individual European partners programme/project monitoring arrangements; and b) includes all the mandatory procedures and information necessary for the report to be sufficient for all partners’ procedural requirements.
* Political context continues to be a challenge with increased influence of China. It is therefore necessary to present a ‘one Europe’ face to Cambodian Government in order to ensure sufficient visibility and continued relevance of the European values in Cambodian development context.
* It is of critical importance to go beyond a ‘paper exercise’ and demonstrate tangible results of having a joint strategy to give further impetus for the process. Having joint consultation with the Government, civil society and the private sector to discuss the results, achievements and future direction will be one way to do this.
* Timely update of the strategy, as needed, to address the gaps and reflect evolving aid context e.g. post-2015 agenda or Cambodia’s pending graduation to the middle-income status expected in 2016.
1. Key aspects of the process:
* Process is as useful as the product – Going through the joint programming process helped to shape the joint aspects of the European programmes and create a joint vision for the partners.
* Be clear about the process at the outset – Discussing the purpose of the joint programming and clarifying the expectations of the process helped to shape the direction of the European programmes in concrete terms, and to clarify the value added. Organising a retreat early on in the process was a practical way to start thinking about what joint programming meant to us. Having an external facilitator was useful in shaping the diverse ideas into a coherent roadmap.
* Be clear about the terminology – “Division of labour” or “financial allocation for the period of the strategy” does not mean the same thing to all European partners. It is important to clarify as much of the terminology as possible at the outset, to ensure that misunderstandings do not appear later in the process.
* Be clear about the context – Doing a joint context analysis in a politically fragile environment and creating a common understanding of the backdrop for the joint programming e.g. key role of governance reforms, which in turn help the European partners align behind the key European values and principles.
* Get an external facilitator - Joint programming is a time-consuming exercise and capacity constraints can significantly slow down the process, regardless of the participants’ commitments. The EU Delegation’s provision of an external consultant whom all parties trusted helped to facilitate the process and keep driving it forward without putting undue pressure on individual European Heads of Cooperation.
* Use smaller working groups – Setting up small working groups (1-2 Partners) to brainstorm and come up with the ideas on specific issues can help to ease the burden while moving the process forward.
* Be flexible and context-specific - Joint programming is not an exact science, hence there can be no definite guidelines for the process. European partners were prepared to improvise in the process and to jointly find the solutions that worked: a) for the EU and non-EU partners and their diverse operational requirements, b) for the specific context and at the specific point in time. The former is necessary if the process is to be inclusive. The latter is especially important in politically-sensitive contexts as was the case in post 2013-elections in Cambodia.
* Be ambitious with humility - This was a learning process for the European partners as there were no definite examples of joint strategies available previously. Whilst the European partners were ambitious they also understood that rigidity or complexity on behalf of any of the partners may prevent the group from achieving a comprehensive joint strategy. It was therefore important to allow every partner to move at their own speed, if needed, and to take time for the learning and communication, before proceeding with the next stage of strategy formulation.
* Communication, communication, communication! – Between European partners (resident and non-resident alike). Between Heads of Cooperation and Heads of Mission. Between European partners and Cambodian government, donors, civil society, private sector. Between European country offices and HQ. This is important not only for maintaining the smooth process, but also for ensuring a partner country’s buy-in. There is a perceived general uneasiness among Cambodian government related to joint actions by DPs (including joint programming) which can be interpreted as ‘ganging up’ of the DPs against the Government and providing more opportunities for criticising the Government e.g. for the governance and human rights situation in the country. This was offset by the European partners communicating clearly the intentions of the process and its advantages for both the European partners and for the Government.
1. Key achievements:
* Team spirit- Team of people that are willing and able goes a long way towards making things happen. Having a critical mass of dedicated European partners helped to give momentum to the process.
* Value added – Joint programming process lead to an improved and better focused policy dialogue between the government and the European partners which responds to the shared priorities set in the joint strategy, instead of having a myriad of bilateral dialogues.
* Good enough DoL – European partners’ programmes do not exist in a silo. If governance reforms, which are key European priority in Cambodia, are to succeed they have to be linked and so do our programmes that support them. Hence division of labour will never be perfect and ‘clean’. It was important therefore to be realistic and pragmatic. The European partners already have a well established DoL in terms of policy dialogue with the Government and clearly identified technical competencies in ‘their’ sectors. The joint strategy was therefore used as an umbrella to bring together all the activities of the European partners, to consider the direction and coherence of the joint programme in relation to the stated European priorities, to improve harmonisation of modalities and to fine-tune the DoL, providing a guide for future positioning. However, in order to support governance reforms effectively, European partners may consider re-engaging in new sectors in the future.
* Increased efficiency – European partners collectively plan for and discuss the results of all important analytical work. However, in the interest of efficiency, they rely on existing processes and analytical work conducted by individual European (or other) donors with the best technical/sector expertise. The upcoming joint strategy reporting will likewise inform individual partners’ monitoring, enabling them to demonstrate their contribution to all issues covered by the joint effort.
* Increasing our leverage – Preparation of the strategy and related consultation with the Government, civil society and the private sector increased the European leverage in Cambodia, particularly vis-à-vis the increasing importance of the emerging donors and the changing aid landscape.
* Speaking with one voice – Throughout the joint programming process, the European Heads of Cooperation regularly communicated with the HoMs to ensure that there was always a single coherent message communicated with the Government on all key policy and strategic issues.
* Joint results framework – Development of a joint results framework with strategic indicators to monitor policy dialogue is perceived as a significant success by the European partners, as it will enable to assess the joint European contribution towards the overall strategic objectives in Cambodia.
1. Element for next steps *(as starting point for workshop 'Joint Programming individual country sessions'):*
* Developing monitoring plan for 2015 to help practically demonstrate results. The plan should include mapping the key national monitoring processes and all mandatory development partner processes, bringing it together and drawing conclusions relevant for the joint European strategy results framework.
* Developing mid-term evaluation for 2016 which will serve to assess the impact of the joint strategy and to inform any necessary adjustments to the strategy document