



Technical Seminar on Joint Programming - Minutes

DEVCO/ NEAR/EEAS/EU Member States - 14 November 2016

The aim of this seminar was twofold: to discuss conclusions and recommendations of the Joint Programming Evaluation as well as to take stock of progress since the May 2016 Council Conclusions on Stepping-up Joint Programming, based on feedback by Heads of Mission.

Participants were given the possibility to send comments on the Joint Programming evaluation by 22 November and on the analysis of Heads of Mission reports by the 30 November.

1. Key messages

- **Shared positive assessment:** JP is considered a valid instrument to promoting overall relationship with partner countries, bolstered by greater visibility, leverage and influence. It is seen as progressing well and considered as a mid/long-term endeavour; a new way of working which naturally requires time; and a way to work on long-term challenges (i.e. SDGs, migration, etc.). The "voluntary à la carte" requirement set out by the Council Conclusions on Stepping up Joint Programming seems to have strengthened a good dynamic, rather than slowing down the process.

Key trends:

- **Political leverage and policy dialogue** can increase through better engagement of the EU community and the partner country. "EU Partnership" has created more trust and knowledge sharing; need to step up the use of EU MS' specific contextual knowledge and entry points to the partner country. Involvement of HoMs in definition of what to expect from JP in-country – from the start. EU Delegation to play a key role in steering JP.
- Build further on what works (aid predictability, trust, etc.) and **open up** JP to new types of funds beyond country programmable aid (regional and thematic funds) in line with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The increased use of **results frameworks** in JP documents improves Joint Programming role (being alive, giving more centrality to aid predictability, mutual accountability and transparency).

Old and new challenges:

- Better **country ownership** is crucial: involving partner governments from the start and communicating the benefits Joint Programming has to offer them is key.
- Increasing **bilateral interests** which are linked to aid (such as migration, security, trade, role of the private sector,...) and which sometimes conflict with alignment and predictability, are of increasing concern to field colleagues, and can make JP more difficult.

Prospects:

- Enhance the policy/political leverage role of JP while continue working on less prominent traditional aid effectiveness dimensions (such as aid fragmentation).
- Make JP "**more strategic**" but without jeopardising substance while making it "lighter" in terms of human resources and transaction costs (seeking better workload sharing in the process).
- Increase **decentralisation of decision-making** in JP to better realise its potential



- **Further strategize existing and new "Joint Actions" under a JP umbrella** (not only implementation, but approaches, analysis, sharing workload).

2. Sessions 1 & 2 – Joint Programming independent Evaluation Report

Presentation of findings and recommendations by ADE evaluation team, followed by an open discussion on the 9 recommendations. Final report to be disseminated January 2017.

Recommendation 1 – Sharpen the theory of change

The proposal to revisit the theory of change of JP towards a better contribution to development and to increase the EU and MS leverage was well received. The evaluation pointed out mixed results on some aid effectiveness expected results (notably aid fragmentation) at this stage, therefore suggesting refocusing on strategic potential. Participants broadly supported the recommendations, but recalled that JP should build on what works, adding value to what is better done by other mechanisms, and that the principle of ownership should remain central in the revised theory of change.

R2 – Think process more than products

Generally, the participants agreed on this recommendation, highlighting that the process of JP has a lot of value, enhancing trust and better coordination. However, the process of JP should remain result-oriented and lead to some flexible and adapted product.

R3 – Keep it strategic

There was agreement on the recommendation on the efficiency of the process: to lower pressure on human resources, avoid duplication with wider coordination and keep it focused on what EU and MS do best/is most needed/is not well covered by others. JP as an EU donor coordination mechanism can increase EU leverage to deliver on strategic objectives linked notably to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

R4 – Take a champion approach

While the coordination role of EU Delegations is rooted in the Lisbon treaty, the evaluation highlights the positive effects of MS championing certain sectors. Local circumstances should dictate the approach and the division of tasks, but EU delegations were seen and asked by most participants to be the necessary driving force of the process. Ensure Heads of Delegations and HQ levels are supportive. It was also recalled that the ambition and expected benefits of each JP exercise are to be defined at country level.

R5 – Build on bilateral relationships to speak and deliver as a group

No additional comments. The point is about setting clear ambitions for EU and MS in country, setting what and who the EU as a group wants to influence and clarify entry points for policy and political dialogue.

R6 – Consolidate JP supporting services

Coordinated guidance from HQ could be based on increased coordination at capital level so as to create more MS-ownership of the process, e.g. through joined EU and MS consultancy missions and/or regional seminars.

R7 – Deepen the dialogue with national stakeholders



Creative ways have to be found to clearly communicate to national stakeholders what they have to gain from JP, e.g. on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ownership needs incentives.

R8 – Involve EEAS HQ and Ambassadors from the start

No additional comments. The recommendation is about early involvement of Heads of Missions and HQ (*all HQs in our interpretation*) in the definition of the perimeter of JP and how this translate into its guidance (inclusions of aid programmed globally and regionally, blending operations, humanitarian aid; focus on joined-up analysis and some common positions or also on deeper division of labour, etc.).

R9 – Think incentives

General agreement on the need to increase incentives, be it at institutional or personnel level. Some participants felt that replacement of bilateral programming documents with a Joint Strategy could create such incentives, both for MS (avoiding duplication of work) and for partner government ownership (making Joint Strategies the key reference).

Sessions 3 - The Spanish Model of Development Cooperation

The Spanish MFA presented their bilateral programming methodology ("Marcos de Asociación País" – MAP – Country partnership framework) and use of Common Development Results framework aligned with the National Development Plan. Three distinct features of the model: 1) shared partnership strategy, 2) continuity (even when government changes), reinforcing inclusivity and coordination among the different actors of the Spanish Cooperation and 3) field-driven and capital coordination for championing vision and coherence. OECD DAC peer review of Spain was positive: *CPFs include a four-year indicative budget which, together with flexibility in budgeting and programming in countries and in headquarters, helps Spain to be more predictable and responsive to the needs of its partners.* In Bolivia the process is run together with JP. It was suggested to share Spain's work on the results framework for the benefit of all EU partners.

Sessions 4 – Key Findings from the HoMs Reports

DEVCO A2/EEAS Global 5 Joint Programming team presented key findings from an initial analysis of 40 2016 HoMs reports including progress made, challenges, prospects and the way forward. The May Council Conclusions but also the July Global Strategy and the Consensus on Development created a greater momentum for and awareness of JP, which is broadening in coverage. The HoMs reports showed several positive effects of JP, the most important one being the increased EU-MS cooperation, including beyond development cooperation, resulting in increased political leverage and the issuing of joint messages to the partner government.

Participants generally agreed with these findings, notably on building on the political potential of JP, incl. addressing other challenges ahead beyond development (e.g. fragility in the Sahel).

Specific issues discussed included:

- Aid effectiveness dimensions raised more positively in the HoMs reports than the evaluation suggests, which has to be taken into account when changing the JP narrative.
- Growing interest from HoMs on the JP potential to make the relationship with the partner government more strategic.



- Linking JP to the implementation of SDGs is seen as an effective way to increase partner government ownership.
- Support for regional seminars, with adequate format to ensure exchange of experience between participants.
- Further promoting the inclusion of results frameworks in the JP document to facilitate monitoring and implementation.
- Draw lessons from Trust Funds, in terms of EU and MS cooperation. Discuss how "migration compacts" and investment facilities fit with JP.
- Explore and encourage more flexible forms of JP in fragile contexts, as the volatile context make predictability difficult and require constant adaptations.
- Use the MTR of the EDF and DCI multi-annual programmes and the second phase of multi-annual programming in ENI as an opportunity to foster JP, also building links with the Partnership Frameworks (on migration).
- Further operationalising Joint Action/Joint Implementation needed.