

What is Joint Programming? A quick guide

What is Joint Programming?

- Joint Programming is the **joint planning of development cooperation¹ and external action²** by EU development/external action partners working in a partner country. Joint Programming is a voluntary, flexible and country-tailored process designed and driven by European partners at country level.
- **Non-EU development partners** who share the principles of Joint Programming are welcome to join the process when assessed as relevant by the EU and Member States representations and they are referred to as 'like-minded partners'.
- Joint Programming includes a joint analysis of the country situation followed by a joint response setting out how participating development partners will provide support and measure progress. The joint analysis and joint response are set out in a '**Joint Programming document**³'. **Joint results frameworks** are developed as part of the joint response to monitor the implementation of the Joint Programming process, to further inform dialogue with national stakeholders on the impact of our collective EU assistance and to enhance mutual accountability.
- A **Joint Programming Document should set out priorities** for support, indicate expected results and set out the indicative level of funding, broken down by priority. In principle, a Joint Programming document should respond to the partner country's national development plan⁴. It should also indicate division of labour between the Union, the Member States, other donors, and other non-Union donors across chosen priorities for support. It is key, while referring to the Union' part within a Joint Programming Document, to ensure that legal requirements set out in the respective regulations are respected. Joint Programming Documents tend to evolve to including common approaches and delivering joint messages on strategic and sensitive policy issues⁵.
- The timing/timeframe of the Joint Programming document is ideally **synchronised** to match the timing of the partner country's national planning cycle so that participating development partners are planning at the same time and for the same period as the government. This allows us collectively to be more responsive to national priorities and to tailor the Joint Programming document to the country context. Many Joint Programming Documents find a gradual and pragmatic approach to synchronisation allows the process to move forward in line with the country planning cycle.

¹ Bilateral government to government development cooperation if possible also regional and thematic funds.

² In "Chapter 1 - General provisions on the Union's external action" (§21.2) of the Lisbon Treaty, the Union's external action aims to (a) safeguard its values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity; (b) consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law; (c) preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris, including those relating to external borders; (d) foster the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty; (e) encourage the integration of all countries into the world economy, including through the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade; (f) help develop international measures to preserve and improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of global natural resources, in order to ensure sustainable development; (g) assist populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disasters; and (h) promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance.

³ See EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, 29 November – 1 December 2011) - Council Conclusions https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126060.pdf

⁴ In the context of the ENI, Joint Programming Documents are also guided by jointly agreed documents such as updated Association Agendas, Partnership Priorities and other equivalent documents (agreed by the Union, the Member States and the partner countries at the level of association/cooperation councils).

⁵ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/private-joint-programming/documents/analysis-heads-mission-reports-joint-programming-2016>

- The Joint Programming Document is developed at the **partner country level** by the Union (EU Delegation and other EU Institutions' field offices), the Member States (including their relevant development institutions) and other non-Union donors. The **EU Delegation usually plays a coordinating role** for the Joint Programming process. The Joint Programming Document is prepared in close cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders such as the government/national authorities, parliament, regional organisations, civil society and the private sector.
- Each participating partner in the Joint Programming process can decide to:

Either **replace its existing bilateral/regional programming documents** with the Joint Programming Document or **maintain these documents** to implement their contribution to the Joint Programming Document. In this case, the Joint Programming Document is approved by the participating partners, as a framework for their individual contributions.
- **Joint implementation** modalities often derive from a Joint Programming process (although not exclusively) as the best way to provide coherent, effective and coordinated support to specific sectors/priorities of the Joint Programming Document. Joint implementation can involve both financial and non-financial modalities.

Why is Joint Programming a good idea?

- **Joint Programming can make Europe happen on the ground**, translating shared European values and policies on issues such as fundamental rights and good governance into coherent, targeted action in partner countries.
- As participating partners plan together, there will be less aid fragmentation; individual partners can focus on the sectors where they can add the most value while ensuring that all priority needs are covered under the Joint Programming document. This **improves our alignment** with national development plan and reduces **gaps** and **overlaps** in our collective actions.
- There should be **less pressure** on each participating partner to tackle all of the sectors and issues in a given country that are in need of attention – they can now instead credibly demonstrate that they are part and parcel of a coherent Joint Programming Document which, through a division of labour, ensures that all relevant sectors and issues are being covered.
- Joint Programming may lower **transaction costs** for partner country governments/national authorities as they have only one country analysis/response strategy to manage for all participating partners. **Predictability** and **transparency** may also increase as EU partners plan together, setting out what overall objectives and sectors they are going to support with indicative financial envelopes in a single document.
- Planning together over the same time period can also help identify opportunities for **joint implementation** on the ground, with possible subsequent savings in terms of economies of scale and reduced overhead costs. We can deliver more **value for money** and increased impact as EU partners combine their resources.
- EU partners can show **greater coherence** vis-à-vis partner country governments/national authorities and other stakeholders, as they work together and speak with a common voice, backed by a single European strategy with a funding envelope.
- There should be more **visibility** for EU Partners as a whole in the partner country, with a single “European brand” outlined in the Joint Programming Document. Each participating partner can also expect visibility by being associated with the Joint Programming Document. In addition, each Partner will still have visibility under each action they are implementing/supporting.