



Second DCF SURVEY on Mutual Accountability and Aid Transparency at the Country Level

BACKGROUND

Accountable and transparent delivery of aid is critical to improve the effectiveness of aid in achieving better development results and progress towards the MDGs. A range of mechanisms exist at national level to ensure accountability on aid commitments. National mutual accountability mechanisms are those in which programme countries hold providers accountable for their aid, and are themselves held accountable for development results and aid management. **The ultimate goal of stronger national mechanisms is to instil trust among development cooperation actors.** For example, they should result in promoting aid predictability, increased budget support and better use of country systems, while supporting progress towards aid effectiveness and transparent use of aid monies on the ground. One good example of such a mechanism is a Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) which contains targets for both governments and individual providers, and which serves as a basis for joint review processes.

United Nations Member States at the MDGs Summit held in September 2010 recognized that **“the commitments made by developed and developing countries in relation to the Millennium Development Goals require mutual accountability”**. They called for “adequate and predictable financial resources as well as their improved quality and targeting” for greater transparency and accountability in both donor and developing countries.

In 2002, the UN Monterrey Consensus emphasized the need for **more effective development partnerships** among donors and recipients, while maximizing the poverty reduction impact of ODA. In 2005, the Paris Declaration called on providers and recipients of aid to jointly assess **mutual progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness** and, in 2008, the Accra Agenda for Action set the goal to have **mutual assessment reviews in place in all signatory countries by 2010**.

The UN Development Cooperation Forum is the focal point within the United Nations system, to carry

out a holistic consideration of issues related to international development cooperation, with participation of all relevant stakeholders. It represents an important platform to discuss issues of aid quantity, quality and effectiveness in a frank and inclusive manner. **The forum was encouraged on several occasions to regularly assess progress on mutual accountability and aid transparency.** Its outcome in this regard will constitute **a strong UN input into the 4th High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness** in Busan, Republic of Korea in November 2011.

The first DCF Survey on mutual accountability in spring 2010 has shown that **progress towards establishing national mutual assessment reviews was limited**. It also provided the basis for an analytical report which outlines a number of **concrete steps to enhance mutual accountability**.¹ Such steps include, for example, a national aid policy with specific performance targets for individual providers; a monitoring process at highest political level with strong recipient government leadership; the inclusion of parliaments and civil society and the provision of independent analytical inputs; comprehensive databases which cover aid quality issues; and peer pressure among providers.

THE SURVEY

1) The purpose: Why monitor mutual accountability twice?

The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness agreed that the body of work undertaken by UNDESA in the context of the DCF Survey is important. It considered that this work reflects the latest thinking on appropriate approaches to monitor mutual accountability and that the 2011 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey must draw on this. The first survey delivered an in-depth and multi-stakeholder assessment of mutual accountability. The DCF Secretariat in UNDESA and the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness agreed that the **2011 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey will integrate three key DCF Survey questions in its questionnaire**.²

Together with UNDP/UNDG, both organizations will closely collaborate to ensure that the findings of both surveys support comprehensive analysis and discussions around mutual accountability.

The results of the next DCF survey **will support a comprehensive country-level analysis of mutual accountability progress to be presented at UN DCF processes.** The outcome will also be reflected in **the narrative on mutual accountability in the 2011 Monitoring Report.** Providing detailed responses to the DCF survey will be crucial to distil explanatory factors and building blocks of mutual accountability successes and failures. It is of the essence to provide as much information on mutual accountability as possible, both to avoid mutual accountability fatigue among high performer countries as well as to trigger a quantum leap in medium/low performer countries.

This 2011 DCF survey will also be particularly important to draw lessons for any monitoring on mutual accountability that may emerge post-HLF4.

2) The content: What will the questions be about?

The **objectives** of the survey are (i) to review progress made in your country in implementing national mutual accountability mechanisms; (ii) to gather the views of key national stakeholders on this progress; and (iii) to better understand the nature of behavioural change of all development actors through lessons learned (“explanatory factors”) and good practices (“building blocks”).

To allow comparability, the questionnaire is very similar to the one for the first survey. It covers a number of questions on (i) the national aid policy in the recipient country; (ii) the mutual accountability coordination forums; (iii) quality/transparency of information on aid and aid effectiveness; (iv) support for capacity development; and (v) overall evaluation of progress. An additional question (question 5) will be introduced to cover the impact of mutual accountability on behavioural change and development results.

3) The process: Who is supposed to do what?

Senior government representatives responsible for aid management are urged to **bring together the views of key stakeholders** (including other government actors, bi- and multilateral donor agencies, non-traditional providers, parliaments and civil society groups, including development NGOs, media and academia) **by organizing a multi-stakeholder consultative meeting with facilitation by UNDP country teams.**

The meeting format may vary, but should include a short introduction to the questionnaire, which should be circulated prior to the meeting. Consultations should be led by the government, interactive and open. The objective is **to reach agreement among stakeholders on the ratings for the various questions.** Where this is not possible, the recipient government’s view should be used to answer the questions and comments should indicate which stakeholders disagree and why. There should only be one response per country.

The **survey thus also aims to act as a catalyst to develop more inclusive national dialogue** and accelerate future progress.

In order to assess the degree of stakeholder participation, and where necessary gather further responses, the contact details (Name, Organization, Email) of the participants in your consultations should be provided. These will be treated as strictly confidential.

The survey should take place in parallel to the Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey. **Final responses are expected by 28 February 2011 the latest** and should be sent to Thomas Boehler at UN DESA (boehler@un.org, +1 917 367 9452) and Ms. Radka Konderlova at the Global Aid Effectiveness Cluster of UNDP/CDG (Radka.Konderlova@undp.org, +1 212 906 5581). Please do not hesitate to contact them, if you have any questions regarding the survey.

¹ See: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf/ma_study-status_and_progress.pdf

² Responses to these questions can be provided in the questionnaires of both surveys.