



**Development Partners Coordination
Group (DPCG)**

**Development Partners Missions Guideline
July 2011**

Background

In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Development Partners in Rwanda in response to Rwanda's Aid Policy committed to strive to use joint missions and coordinated analytical work. This commitment is reaffirmed through the Government of Rwanda and its Development Partners agreement to assess the proportion of missions undertaken by two or more donors jointly or by one donor on behalf of another. The Donor Performance Assessment Framework (DPAF) as well as the global rounds of the Paris Declaration Survey continues to assess the progress on joint missions. While some progresses have been observed through these assessments, it has also noted to be useful to clarify a procedure in which missions are requested and recorded so that missions are scheduled with sufficient consideration to Rwanda's agenda.

Purpose of the Guideline

This guideline aims to clarify a procedure, in which how mission requests are communicated and approved along with the definitions of missions. It builds on the mission policy articulated in the Aid Policy Manual of Procedure. This guideline will be applicable for all Development Partners related missions, including missions undertaken by an initiative funded by Development Partners.

Definitions of Missions

Donor missions to the field are defined as missions that meet all the following criteria:

- The mission is undertaken by, or on behalf of, a donor, including programme developers, appraisers and evaluators, sector assessment teams commissioned by a donor.
- The mission involved international travel typically, but not exclusively, from donor headquarters.
- The mission made a request to meet with government officials including local government.
- Disaster assessment teams.

Recognising that with increased delegation of authority to donor local representatives, meetings concerning development cooperation framework, project/programme development, appraisal, evaluation as well as sector assessment are increasingly undertaken by in-country donor representatives without missions from donor headquarters. To this end, in-country meetings concerning the above are also considered as missions in this guideline.

The following missions are considered excluded from the definition of missions applicable in this mission guideline:

- Missions undertaken by DPs to attend events (workshop, conferences, etc.) that do not involve request to meet with GoR officials;
- Undertaken by parliamentary or other political delegations
- Special event missions undertaken as part of a defined programme, e.g. electoral observers;
- External consultants that are executing work as part of scheduled programme implementation plans.

As for the in-country meeting, the following types of meetings are excluded from the definitions of missions in this guideline:

- Technical meeting with sector Ministries as part of scheduled programme/project implementation plans;
- Meetings concerning monitoring of programme/project implementation (including discussions on annual workplans) are to be done through Steering Committee meetings as defined in project/programme agreement,

- Follow-up meetings concerning request for project/programme management and administration, such as disbursements, financial reporting, audit, etc.

With the Sector-Wide Approaches/Programme-Based Approaches and increased use of basket funds, meetings concerning programme/project implementation and management are to be undertaken through sector-level agreed harmonisation forum, such as Sector-Working Groups and/or Basket Fund management groups, etc.

Mission Policy

Rwanda's Aid Policy Manual of Procedure defines the below principles for managing missions.

- Donors' missions should be planned to coincide with the meeting of the respective Sector Working Group wherever possible. This will allow the mission to report on its work and to interact with Government and donors without imposing undue transaction costs upon them.
- Donors will be required to request missions from a single centralised point in Government. Requests will be made using an online calendar which will only allow proposed dates that are at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Government will assess the suitability of the proposed timing in light of planned SWGs meetings and other relevant planned missions and may suggest alternative dates accordingly.
- While donors will be free to propose the Government officials with whom their missions would like to meet, it will be at the Government's discretion to approve this, to substitute higher or lower level officials as appropriate to the nature of the mission, or to advise that the proposed officials can only be met if the mission is re-scheduled to a certain date (e.g. to coincide with another donor mission).
- The mission calendar will be used to provide a historical record of missions in order to provide data for the DPAF.
- Sharing of a signed mission's Aid Memoire is mandatory. EFU is to receive copies of all signed missions' Aid Memoire from relevant sector Ministries.

Silent Period: The period of March and April is a silent period. During this period, the Government requests donors not to schedule any donor missions. This aims to reduce transaction costs for the Government, thus providing ample time for budget preparation and consultation. However, if missions are invited by the Government for specific purposes and/or pre-agreed regular missions (i.e. IMF Mission, Missions related to Joint Budget Support Review), such missions would be granted as exceptional cases.

Mission Request Procedures

1. A mission calendar will be created in the website for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (www.minecofin.gov.rw), which will keep track of mission requests and approved missions. DPs will submit their mission requests through the mission calendar, indicating a proposed date, nature of requested meetings, proposed level of meetings, project ID for existing projects/programmes support, if joint missions/meetings the names of other donors the missions are undertaken with or on behalf.
2. External Finance Unit (EFU) of the MINECOFIN plays a guardian role of the mission requests, reviewing and processing mission requests in coordination with Minister and PS/ST office as well as relevant sectors, particularly SWGs chairs.
3. The PS/ST provides the approval on the missions, which will be forwarded to relevant officers and Ministries through the EFU. The EFU will notify the approval of mission requests to relevant DPs through the mission calendar. An automatic reply will be generated from the mission calendar on the status of approval.
4. Mission requests will be processed within 7 days.

Criteria/conditions for possible rejection of mission requests

- Inappropriate timing of proposed missions, including silent period and availability of GoR proposed officials for the missions;
- Missions that were not requested at least 2 weeks before the proposed mission dates, unless the objectives of the missions are considered critical and priority for Government.
- Duplication of content and objectives of proposed missions.