

**Session 3 – Working Group 4
What comes after the Aid Policy: Joint Assistance Strategy?**

ISSUES PAPER

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Brief Background:

In the draft Aid Policy Document, the GoR in para 2.2 recalls that “The (Paris) Declaration binds both the Government and its development partners to implement policies and strategies that will increase the effectiveness of the assistance received by Rwanda”. In paras 3.49. and 3.50.the GoR stresses that it “ (...) will seek to work with its partners to ‘provide clear views on donors’ comparative advantage and how to achieve donor complementarity’ at country and sector levels, as mandated in the Paris Declaration”, and affirms that it “ (...) favours further development of the ‘lead donor’ concept in clusters”.

In order to promote a harmonised approach to supporting the EDPRS and the implementation of the APD, the development of a Joint Assistance Strategy would move current work to a higher level. It would combine many of the common features of individual country assistance strategies/programmes but, by going beyond a ‘lowest common denominator’ approach to country programming and focusing on key EDPRS outputs, DPs could collectively review ‘division of labour’ issues and identify a consolidated resource envelope. This would serve the key objective, which is to promote national ownership and increased ‘aid effectiveness’ as well as efficiency.

The JAS could therefore be referred to as a Business Plan, based on the EDPRS and agreed between DPs and the Government. It would detail how external resources, both technical and financial, can augment domestic funds and collectively support the EDPRS. It could also set out modalities for providing development assistance, together with agreed expectations regarding performance and accountability, in line with the provision set by the APD.

Discussion Points:

What should be the main initial priorities?

Although prepared consultatively, the Aid Policy is a unilateral initiative ‘owned’ by GoR. What needs does it leave unmet and what should be the priorities in addressing them?

- Is the main need now simply to implement it?
- Or does it need enriching, on the basis of GoR-DP dialogue, to take forward the many aspects of aid relations that cannot be handled unilaterally?
- Is there a need for some collective donor statement, e.g. responding to the Aid Policy and/or to how the Paris Declaration should be implemented in Rwanda?

- Do adequate institutions/processes exist, or would be created by the Aid Policy, for taking forward the dialogue, reducing reliance on conditionality, promoting Paris and mutual accountability?
- How should the issues of limited capacity – both on the part of the development partners and on the government side be tackled ?

How should a JAS be understood?

Alternative models:

1. As taking the Aid Policy to the next level?
2. As a donor-oriented instrument for deepening dialogue, alignment to local priorities/processes, responding to Paris and the Aid Policy?
3. As a jointly-negotiated strategy around which all future aid should be coordinated (in which case, how should it relate to Vision 2020 and the EDPRS)?
4. As a model that makes technical propositions that is separated from political considerations?

Strategic questions of timing and sequencing

1. Do the preconditions exist to progress to the full model (#3) in Rwanda? Is there enough mutual trust, willingness to be open, to exchange information? Even if so, are there sufficient capabilities on either the GoR or DP sides?
2. Would it be a better sequencing to spend 2-3 years implementing the Aid Policy before moving to one of the JAS models? Or would moving to a JAS be integral to implementing the Aid Policy?
3. Or is there a better next move, not mentioned above?
4. And, how are any political differences to be reconciled?

Anticipated Output:

Shared understanding among GoR and DPs on donors' response to the APD and next steps.