

Framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration

1. Background

Background for the evaluation

Alongside its strong focus on monitoring, the Paris Declaration also highlights the importance of exploring to undertake an independent cross-country evaluation process. The Declaration states that the evaluation process should provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives and that it should be applied without imposing additional burdens on partners.

Further to the discussions at the third and fourth meetings of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet), consultations on how to deliver this work have been taken forward with the Joint Venture on Monitoring the Paris Declaration, the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) and with partner countries. At the eighth meeting of the WP-EFF (5-7 July 2006), the EvalNet presented options for the evaluation follow-up to the Paris Declaration and invited partner countries to join a task team to co-ordinate the independent evaluation process. WP-EFF members strongly supported the initiative highlighting that the proposed approach would strengthen harmonised approaches to evaluation and would prioritise country-led evaluations building on existing in-country processes. It was noted that donors would also need to volunteer for being evaluated. WP-EFF members agreed that the Evaluation Network should move forward with the joint evaluation process and with a view to preparing an initial report for the 2008 meeting of the High Level Forum on the Paris Declaration (HLF-3). They recommended to aim for a fairly light evaluation and to also look at longer-term issues beyond the HLF-3 in Ghana.

At the 2006 Regional Workshops on Aid Effectiveness in Africa and Asia and Latin America a wide range of partner countries reiterated their support for the proposed joint evaluation. It was stressed that the evaluation can add value to the implementation process e.g. by focussing on the more basic questions of what works and why as far as implementation of the Paris Declaration is concerned.

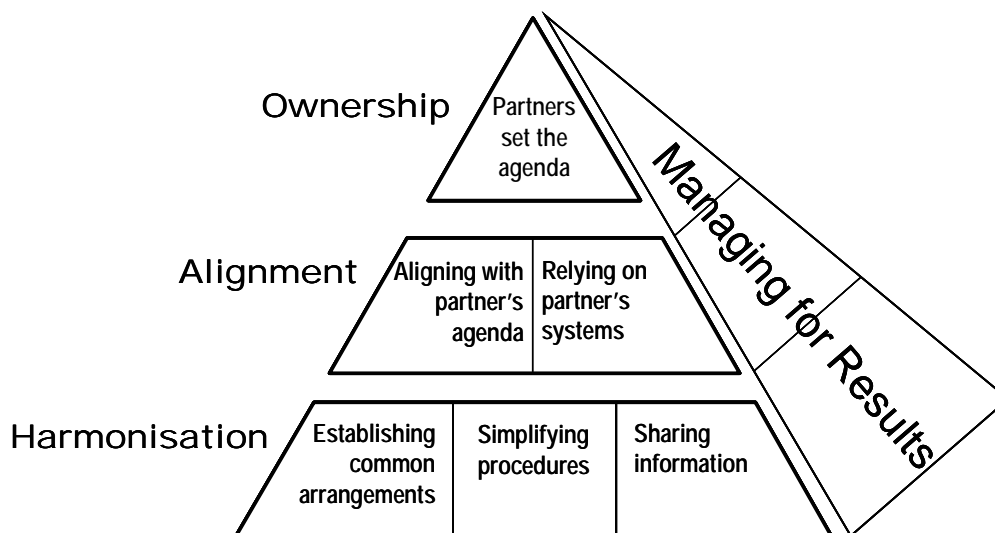
The Paris Declaration

The Paris Declaration poses an outstandingly important challenge both to the world of development cooperation in general and to the field of development evaluation in particular. Compared with previous joint statements on aid harmonisation and alignment, it provides a practical, action-oriented roadmap with specific targets to be met by 2010 and definite review points in the years between. The number of countries and international organisations participating in the High Level Forum (HLF) and putting their signature to the joint commitments contained in the Declaration was unprece-

mented, reflecting a progressive widening of the range of voices included in major meetings convened by the OECD DAC.

In various forms, the pyramid diagram reproduced as Figure 1 has been widely disseminated, providing a clear and accessible definition of the key terms country ownership, policy and systems alignment, and harmonisation, and the way these relate to each other and to the overarching theme of managing for development results.

Figure 1: The Paris Declaration concepts



Source: DAC (2004).

An important feature of the final Paris Declaration text is that it includes commitments not just on the established Harmonisation and Alignment agenda, but on five areas, including country ownership and results' management as well as mutual accountability.

The Declaration goes well beyond agreement on definitions. It expresses a shared view on at least the basics of how some central institutional variables fit together, and why they are important. In this way, it draws together international thinking on some of the core topics of concern to both sides of the official international aid relationship.

The title of the Declaration conveys a simple but important message: aid will be more effective if the actions and behavioural changes listed as commitments under the five headings are undertaken, and less if they are not. Moreover, development results depend to a significant extent on the same variables.

Underneath the consensus on these central propositions, there exist important differences of interpretation and emphasis. This reflects several factors. First, there are some unexpressed but generally recognised disagreements about how the variables Ownership, Alignment, etc. relate to each other. There is not a single, universally accepted view on these matters. This especially, as some of the underlying assumptions

of the Paris Declaration are increasingly being questioned as the implementation process proceeds. Second, these views are, in the main, practical axioms that form part of the current world-view of particular agencies; they are based on experience, but not strongly rooted in a body of systematic evidence. Thirdly and most importantly, the “programme theory” or set of hypotheses that give the Declaration its logic has not been fully articulated.

It might be argued that these features of the Paris consensus make the commitments an unsuitable focus for evaluation. However – and on the contrary – it is quite normal at the beginning of an evaluation process that there is a degree of uncertainty or disagreement about details of how policy or programme objectives should be (or were intended to be) achieved. Greater clarity and possibly consensus about such matters is one of the outcomes expected from evaluation work. The challenge represented by evaluating the Paris commitments is in this respect quite typical.

Rationale for the Evaluation

The evaluation is designed to complement the monitoring of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, including the Medium Term Monitoring Plan, which has advanced through the Joint Venture on Monitoring, by deepening the understanding of the lessons emerging from the Paris Declaration surveys.¹ The surveys are rightly focused on whether partners are actually fulfilling their commitments measured across the 12 indicators and how the implementation is progressing – and only to a limited extent raise more fundamental questions related to why some of the changes are occurring, or why not. Also, the surveys are not designed with the attempt to measure whether the process actually leads to increased effectiveness and whether there are unintended effects of the processes of change set in motion.

The evaluation will therefore focus on causal effects which are not captured within the parameters of the Paris Declaration surveys with particular focus on envisaged outcomes and benefits of the aid effectiveness agenda. Also, the evaluation process makes it possible to raise more fundamental questions related to the theory of change that is implicit in the Paris Declaration and to give attention to unintended outcomes of the implementation process.

The value added of the evaluation can be summarised as follows:

- An evaluation can assess the inter-linkages between aid effectiveness and development results based on a long-term perspective.
- An evaluation can assess Paris Declaration implementation beyond progress towards the 12 targets. Further, while the surveys will identify *what* progress has happened, the evaluation can answer questions about *how* it happened and *why*, or *why not*.

¹ The first Survey Report summarizing the baseline results is scheduled for launch in March/April 2007.

- An evaluation can allow for an assessment of the Paris Declaration as a tool for aid effectiveness.
- An evaluation can provide an opportunity for in-depth analysis of both partner and donor behaviour and the inter-linkages between these.
- An evaluation can pursue selected themes for in-depth investigation.
- The evaluation is a tool for practical lesson learning.
- The evaluation can provide a cross-country/cross-donor perspective.

Constituencies for the evaluation

Since the findings of this evaluation will be of interest to multiple constituencies, its design and implementation must incorporate their needs and perhaps diverging concerns. At the first level, those constituencies include the signatories to the Paris Declaration: the governments of the partner countries and governing authorities and senior managements of development agencies. At the second level, those tasked with implementing the Paris Declaration: government, donor, civil society and private sector stakeholders in the partner countries as well as management and operational staff of donor/development agencies.

The results of the evaluation therefore need to be communicated in different ways to different constituencies. A dissemination strategy will be developed at the appropriate time.

Overall management of the evaluation

The overall strategic guidance for the evaluation will be provided by an international Reference Group with a broad membership and co-chaired by a partner and a donor country representative and will convene three or four times in the course of 2007 and 2008. The Reference Group will appoint a small Management Group tasked with day-to-day management of the evaluation. The Reference Group and Management Group will be supported by a small secretariat hosted and funded by Denmark (see Section 3 for details on the management structure).

2. Purpose and Scope

Purpose of the evaluation

The overall **purpose** of the evaluation is to provide information about the end impacts and effects of increased aid effectiveness.² However, in order to provide a proper basis for assessment it has been decided to carry out the evaluation in two phases:

² There is no agreed-to definition of aid effectiveness, but a widely held consensus about the different changes in behaviour and practice which are together taken to comprise effective aid.

- Phase one will be conducted with the purpose of strengthening the aid effectiveness by assessing what constitutes better practices for partner and donor behaviour in regard to implementation of the Paris Declaration
- Phase two will be conducted with the purpose of assessing the linkages between aid effectiveness and development results.

Scope and Focus³

In terms of scope the evaluation will seek to address all levels outlined in the indicative framework for evaluating the Paris Declaration presented in Figure 2⁴:

- The necessary *inputs* are identified, using the language of the Paris Declaration, as “political support, peer pressure and coordinated action”. It is assumed that this is a summary phrase that indicates the importance of a range of types of necessary input, on both the donor side and on the side of partner countries.
- The *outputs* are the actions and changes in behaviour to which the Declaration commits the signatories.
- With regard to *outcomes* two different levels are identified. Outcomes 1 which express how realisation of the Paris commitments is expected to make aid more effective. And outcomes 2 which express how this results in greater development effectiveness.
- *Impacts* are defined in the conventional way and refer to the final level of development results.

The **scope of evaluation phase one** will be on input and (to the extent possible) output levels. That is, this phase will begin by establishing, with the help of the monitoring survey, how far political support, peer pressure and coordinated action (from partners and donors as appropriate) are working to get the behaviour changes to which signatories have committed. “How, why and why not” questions at these levels would then be addressed. Further, the nature of the interactions between the behavioural changes specified in the Paris Declaration under the headings of Ownership, Harmonisation and Alignment, Results Management and Mutual Accountability will also be investigated in the evaluation.

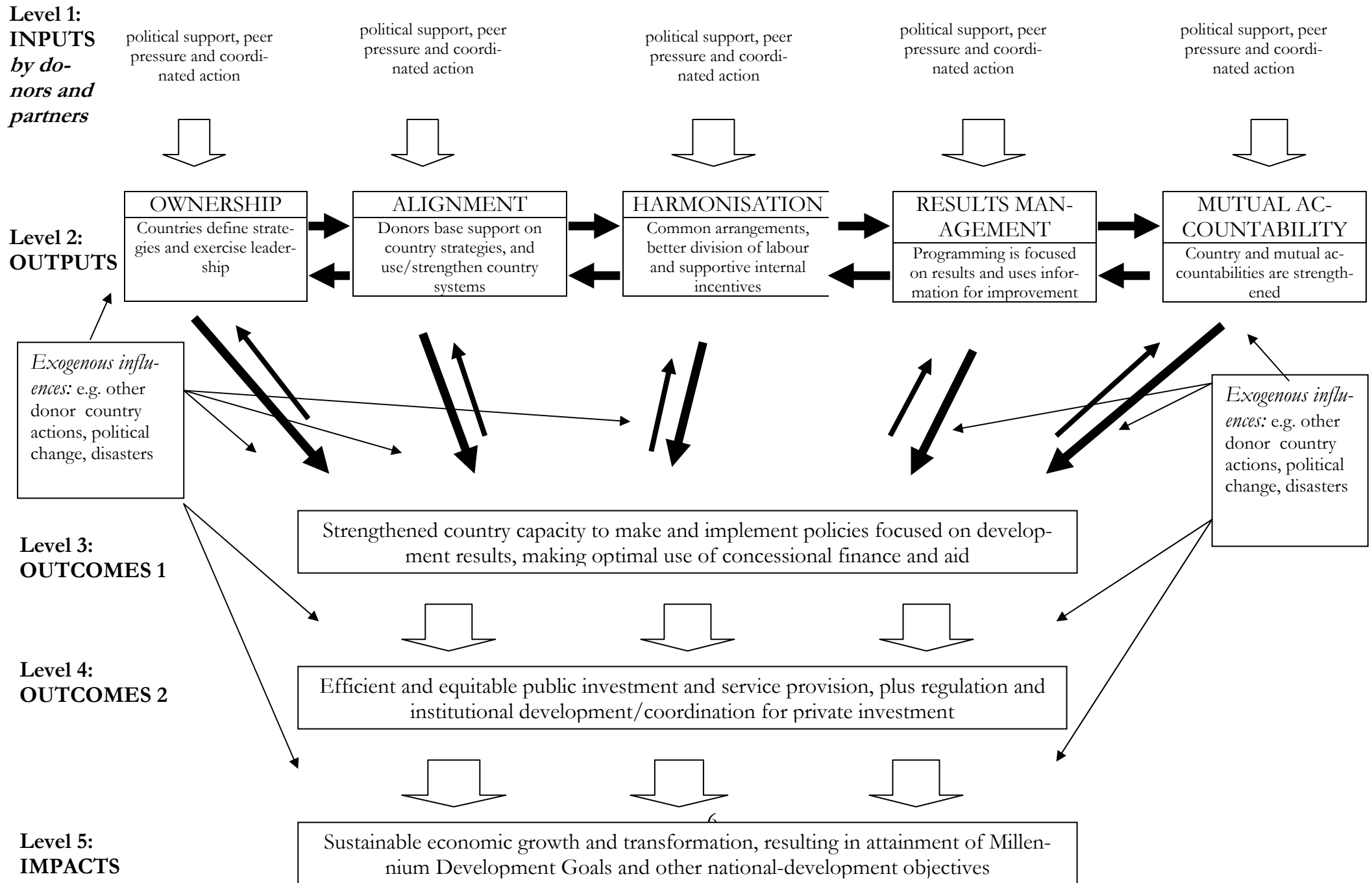
The **scope of phase two of the evaluation** will be on outcome and impact levels assessing the underlying theory articulated by the model:

- That country ownership and the other outputs promised by the Paris Declaration would, if implemented together, strengthen country capacity to make and implement policies focused on development results and make good use of aid;
- That country capacity enhanced in this way would raise the quality of public investment and service provision, including regulation and institutional development for private investment; and
- That this would lead to better development results, such as growth and transformation, and the realisation of the MDGs.

³ This section is a summary adaptation of a comprehensive discussion contained in the Options Paper prepared in 2006 for the OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation and may be downloaded from www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

⁴ The figure is taken from the “Options Paper”

Figure 2: An indicative outline for a possible evaluation framework for the Paris commitments



In terms of **focus**, phase one will focus on the practical lessons learned on implementation and contribute to ongoing aid effectiveness policy debates and to the HLF 3 on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana in 2008. The focus of phase two will be on a more *summative* investigation of which the results will be presented during the HLF 4 in 2010.

Main Evaluation Questions

Overall the evaluation will assess the relevance and effectiveness⁵ of the Paris Declaration and its contribution to aid effectiveness. There is no agreed-to definition of aid effectiveness, but a widely held consensus about the different changes in behaviour and practice which are together taken to comprise effective aid. The first phase of the evaluation will seek to assess whether these changes are taking place while the second phase will seek to assess whether, if such changes has indeed taken place, this has led to improved development effectiveness.

Evaluation questions (phase one of the evaluation) can and should be specified according to the different levels of the indicative outline of the evaluation framework presented above.

The first level of the figure relates to *inputs* provided by donors and partners. Evaluation questions at this level would focus largely on what is happening or not happening and how/why.

The second level of the figure relates to the expected *outputs* (i.e. ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results management and mutual accountability). Evaluation questions at this level would focus on the relationship between the “what/how/why” issues.

The third level relates to *outcomes* and evaluation questions would be looking to ask whether things are changing in directions consistent with the programme logic and the degree to which that logic is complementary or conflicting over time (because of differences of interpretation, inherent inconsistency or exogenous influences).

Further, the evaluation questions need to focus on particular observed trends or events related to the implementation of the Paris Declaration. This may relate to a particular survey finding or report on one or more of the 12 indicators of the initial monitoring. Evaluation questions may also, however, focus on an observed level of the change specified by one of the 56 Paris Declaration commitments not covered by the 12 monitoring indicators (e.g. “Strengthen as appropriate the parliamentary role in national development strategies and/or budgets”, PD Para. 48).

More specific evaluation questions are specified in the generic ToR for country and donor level evaluations annexed to this document.

Limitations of the evaluation

It may be also argued that the Paris Declaration is too recent to be evaluated. However, the five areas harmonisation alignment, ownership, mutual accountability and results’ management are not new, and previous studies and evaluations (e.g. of the Comprehensive Development Framework⁶) may provide partial baselines.

⁵ See DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, OECD/DAC, 2002

⁶ Toward Country Led Development, The World Bank, 2003

Self-selected country and donor headquarters case studies have been adopted as an approach to permit detailed analysis of concrete experiences. There is, and can be, no claim that the self-selected countries and donor organisations are formally representative. Accordingly, while it will seek to develop understandings, insights, and conclusions relevant to many different countries, agencies and settings, this evaluation must not be regarded as an all encompassing, worldwide study. It is believed that, with careful attention to the context and limitations of the findings, what is learned from studying those countries can be adapted to inform similar efforts elsewhere.

3. Structure/Architecture of the Evaluation

The structure or architecture of the evaluation owes a lot to the Options Paper prepared in 2006 to review the feasibility of taking forward an evaluation process on the implementation of the Paris Declaration and summarized in DCD/DAC/EFF(2006)13.

The meetings of the Network on Development Evaluation in March and November 2006 and the WP-EFF meeting in July and October 2006 supported the proposed overall approach which suggests that the evaluation should be conducted as a) a series of country level evaluations designed within a common evaluation framework to ensure comparability of findings across countries while allowing flexibility for country specific interests and b) a number of donor evaluations (carried out primarily as desk work supplemented with interviews) that would look at how the Paris Declaration is finding expression in the policies and guidelines of a sample of donor organizations.

These two strands of evaluations should be complemented by short-term (2007-2008) and medium-term (2008-2010) programmes of analytical work which will draw together and analyse findings from the individual evaluation studies as well as other relevant studies. It is stressed that to the extent possible, the evaluations should build on and complement the joint monitoring exercise.

The architecture of the second phase of the evaluation (2008-2010) will be based on the findings of the synthesis report of the first phase of the evaluation. The actual design of the second phase will take place early 2008 and an outline presented to the HLF together with the results of the first phase.

Management Structure

In order to give strategic guidance to the evaluation an international Reference Group has been established comprising members of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, representatives from partner countries, principally the members of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, and representatives for civil society. The Reference Group will be co-chaired by a partner and a donor country representative (Vietnam and Denmark) and will convene three or four times in the course of 2007 and 2008.

The Reference Group has appointed a small Management Group comprising Denmark, Netherlands, South Africa, Vietnam and UNDP⁷ tasked with day-to-day management of the evaluation. This task involves developing the current draft Evaluation Framework ToR, coordinating and managing the joint evaluation process, guiding the component studies, developing the programme of analytical work and guiding the work of the team involved in the synthesis of the findings and recommendations. The Management Group will be chaired by one of the co-chairs of the Reference Group. The Reference Group and Management Group will be supported by a small secretariat hosted and funded by Denmark.

The roles and responsibilities of the Reference and Management Groups are detailed in Annex 1.

Conduct of the evaluation

As mentioned above, the architecture of the first phase of the evaluation (2007-2008) will comprise: country level evaluations; donor headquarter evaluations; thematic studies; and a synthesis of the three. In addition, a second phase aiming at assessing outcomes (aid and development effectiveness) will be designed and prepared.

Country level evaluations

The sampling frame for the country level evaluations will be a self-selection of partner countries willing to conduct such studies. However, the same purpose, focus, objectives and dimensions of the evaluation are to be covered in all country cases in line with the generic terms of reference for the country level evaluations Annex 2. Nonetheless, contextualisation is allowed in regard to the depth required of the various dimensions to be investigated in the respective countries.

Each evaluation should be managed in-country, led by a National Evaluation Coordinator appointed by the government and supported by an *advisory group* including relevant national stakeholders, including civil society, and development partners. Ideally, the advisory group should provide some standing capacity to follow up on evaluation issues in the future.

Key principles of independence and objectivity⁸ need to be applied and will have to be assured locally. The respective governments and donors using either local funding mechanisms or donors' central evaluation funds should finance the evaluations. Each partner country should team up with a few donors to secure funding and technical support.

Evaluation findings would need to be discussed at country level between the respective countries and their development partners before being communicated to the Synthesis Team through the Evaluation Management Group.

The role and responsibilities of the National Evaluation Coordinators are detailed in Annex 2A.

⁷ One partner country representative preferably from Latin America still needs to be identified

⁸ E.g. as specified in the OECD/DAC good practices for evaluations of development cooperation.

Development Partner HQ level evaluations

Similarly to the sampling of country cases, there will be a self-selection process of donors willing to undertake a donor headquarter level evaluation. However, in this case contextualisation of the elements of the ToR is not deemed appropriate. Nevertheless, issues and points for attention may be added to the generic terms of reference (see Annex 3).

Each evaluation should be led by the development partner (preferably its independent evaluation department) or by another independent body and be supported by an *advisory group*, which should preferably include representatives of interested partner countries.

The role and responsibilities of the Evaluation Coordinators are detailed in Annex 3A.

Thematic studies

The Reference and Management Groups may initiate special thematic studies to supplement the country level and donor evaluations. Thematic studies should primarily be based on existing documentation (evaluations, research reports and other types of studies) and could focus on topics such as:

Links between aid effectiveness and development effectiveness: Development effectiveness does not only depend on aid effectiveness – and improved aid effectiveness may not even be the most important factor in ensuring development effectiveness. A thematic study should therefore be launched to look into the possible links between the two and possibly also into other factors determining development effectiveness. This study should be coordinated with the planned Joint Evaluation of Total ODA.

Technical Cooperation: How are the PD principles for co-ordinated technical cooperation contributing to the development of more effective institutions? This study should build on previous studies and be coordinated with the proposed JICA/DfID study on “Effective TC for Capacity Development.

Untying of aid: The PD commits donors to continue to make progress on untying aid. To what extent has development partners actually untied their assistance and what are the key promoting or impeding factors for making progress on fully untying development assistance? The study should identify examples of benefits of fully untied aid.

Fragile states: What are the specific requirements and challenges related to the implementation of the Paris Declaration in fragile states?

Civil society: To what extent is the Paris Declaration relevant and applicable for development cooperation organised through NGOs/civil society? To what extent have and should civil society agents be involved in the implementation of the Paris Declaration? This study should only be undertaken if it is deemed necessary to supplement the work initiated by the WP-EFF in cooperation with the CSO Advisory Group.

Cross-cutting issues: Separate studies could be commissioned on the specific requirements and challenges relating to human rights, gender, the environment and HIV/AIDS. What impact has the implementation of the Paris Declaration had on these issues?

Some thematic studies will be commissioned and managed by the Evaluation Management Group while others will be undertaken by interested members (donors and/or partner countries) of the Reference Group coordinated and supported by the Management Group.

Synthesis

The purpose of the first phase evaluation is to assess effectiveness of aid by assessing what constitutes better practices for partner and donors. The Syntheses report be based on findings from the (i) country level evaluations; (ii) donor headquarter level evaluations, (iii) other completed and ongoing donor/joint evaluations that focus on aspects of the Paris Declaration agenda (e.g. ownership, partnership, general budget support, sector evaluations, etc.) and IMG-type reports⁹; and (iv) thematic studies. The use of multiple sources would to a large extent facilitate generalising the results from the country case study findings and the donor level evaluations.

The ToR for the synthesis work will be elaborated in May 2007.

The thematic studies and the drafting of the Synthesis Report will be contracted to independent evaluation teams/groups.

The Evaluation Management Group will manage the work on the synthesis report. Steps would need to be taken to ensure that the evaluation work-plan is integrated with the Joint Venture's Monitoring Medium Term Monitoring Plan (content of this Plan is still to be decided).

Specific Products of the evaluation

The specific products from the evaluation are the following:

- Country level evaluation reports
- Donor headquarter evaluation reports
- Thematic studies
- Synthesis report 2008
- Summary reports, Briefs etc.

The evaluation process should be seen as a continuing activity, with results appearing at different points in time before and after 2008. However, a key point in the time-line is the end of 2007, when substantive findings of the first phase of the evaluation would be needed to feed into the 2008 HLF. It is envisaged that a workshop will be held late 2007 to discuss preliminary findings from the country and donor level evaluations and thematic studies.

⁹ The Independent Monitoring Group in Tanzania, see: <http://www.tzdp.org.tz/index.php?id=20>

This would be feasible within the suggested approach, with the synthesis work feeding on a number of country level and donor level evaluations as well as a variety of other sources and studies.

Timetable for the evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration

2007		2008	
Jan – Mar	Agree Evaluation Framework	Jan – Apr	Synthesis of component evaluations (and other material)
Mar – Apr	Develop specific ToR for country level and donor evaluations.	April	Reference Group meeting/ workshop on synthesis report
Mar – May	Develop programme of thematic studies and analytical work	September	3 rd High Level Forum
May – Oct	Country and donor lesson learning evaluations; thematic studies	Aug – Sep	Develop follow up study programme 2008 – 2010
Nov	International Workshop on emerging findings	Nov – 2010	Follow-up <i>summative</i> studies – to be decided