

Executive summary

Reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires urgent action on effective partnerships, as called for in SDG 17. The ambition of the 2030 Agenda calls for a whole-of-society approach building on the collective actions of stakeholders to deliver sustainable solutions for people and the planet while leaving no one behind. The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation spurs action for more effective partnerships to deliver long-lasting development results. Established by the Busan Partnership agreement (2011), the Global Partnership advances the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors as reaffirmed at its 2nd High-Level Meeting in Nairobi (2016).

This report presents the findings of the 2018 Monitoring Round of the Global Partnership. It assesses how effectively governments have established a conducive environment to lead national development efforts, enabling the full participation of the whole of society; and how development partners deliver their support in a way that is focused on country-owned development priorities and that draws on existing country systems and capacities. The Global Partnership's biennial global monitoring exercise reports on progress through ten indicators that capture the essence of the four internationally agreed principles for effective development co-operation and capture the quality of partnering that takes place to deliver development results: country ownership; focus on results; inclusive partnerships; and transparency and mutual accountability. Data generated from Global Partnership monitoring, building on country-led data collection, also provide evidence for SDG follow-up and review (SDG Targets 17.15, 17.16 and 5c).

Partner country governments have made significant progress in strengthening national development planning. Since 2011, the proportion of partner countries with a high-quality national development strategy has almost doubled (from 36% to 64%). Partner countries, like their development partners, are also embedding the SDGs into their planning, signalling increasing use of the SDGs as a shared results framework. Still, to reap the full benefits of strengthened development planning, strategies must be better linked to implementation resources and matched with robust monitoring and evaluation.

Development partners' alignment to partner country priorities and country-owned results frameworks is declining. Alignment of project objectives to partner country priorities, as well as reliance on country-defined results, statistics and monitoring systems, has decreased for most development partners since 2016. While multilateral development banks have increased their reliance of country-owned results frameworks, the decline is most pronounced for bilateral development partners. Availability of government data is a shared bottleneck and signals the need for concerted efforts from both partner countries and development partners to use and strengthen national statistics and monitoring systems.

Forward visibility of development co-operation at country level is weakening. Partner countries report a decrease in the availability of forward expenditure and implementation plans from their development partners. This decline is mirrored in the fall of the share of development co-operation finance recorded on partner countries' budgets subject to parliamentary scrutiny. Together, this trend puts at risk the ability of partner countries to effectively plan and budget for their development efforts, and limits accountability over national development efforts through parliamentary oversight.

Strengthened public financial management (PFM) systems have not been matched with significantly increased use by development partners. The strongest gains in strengthening PFM systems relate to aspects of budget formulation, while continued effort is needed in the areas of auditing, procurement and to ensure PFM systems respond to gender equality goals. Globally, use of country PFM systems has increased slightly, primarily driven by a notable increase in the use of procurement systems. However, Global Partnership monitoring data show that the quality of PFM systems is not the determining factor for the extent of their use. Rather, the longer development partners engage in partner countries and the larger the share they channel to the public sector, the more they tend to use PFM systems.

More systematic and meaningful consultations with development actors are needed both by partner country governments and development partners. Partner country governments and, to a lesser extent, development partners consult a broad range of national stakeholders, such as civil society, the private sector, parliamentarians and subnational governments in the preparation of their country strategies and programmes, respectively. Results indicate that these engagement opportunities could be more regular, predictable and involve a more diverse set of actors.

The enabling environment for civil society organisations is deteriorating. Civil society organisations (CSOs) report a decline in the legal and regulatory frameworks that provide protection for CSOs as well as limited freedom of expression and inadequate protection from harassment when working with at-risk populations. Furthermore, CSOs do not consider development partners' funding mechanisms to be predictable, transparent or accessible to a diversity of CSOs and report that funding received is primarily driven by the providers' own interests and priorities. Concerted action by partner countries and development partners can support CSOs as equal partners in their own right, bringing knowledge on local development needs and priorities.

Improving the quality of public-private dialogue (PPD) in partner countries requires increased capacity, strengthened relevance and the inclusion of a wider range of private sector actors. Partner country governments and private stakeholders agree that mutual trust and willingness to engage in policy dialogue exist. However, all stakeholders report limited capacity to engage. Additionally, public and private stakeholders report diverging views on relevance and inclusiveness of PPD, weakening its quality. Despite challenges, results also show that when the foundations for high-quality dialogue are in place, PPD is geared towards results and leads to joint action.

There is mixed progress in making development co-operation more transparent. More development partners report to global information systems and standards to make information on development co-operation publicly available. Information provided by development partners is also more comprehensive; however, progress on timely and forward-looking information on development co-operation is uneven. In addition, nearly all partner countries have an information management system in place for development co-operation, and most (83%) development partners report to these systems. However, there is room for improvement regarding consistency and quality of reporting at country level.

In response to the evolving development landscape and the ambition of the 2030 Agenda, mutual accountability mechanisms are becoming more inclusive. Countries for which official development assistance remains important have quality mutual accountability mechanisms in place for development co-operation. Partner countries that are less dependent on development assistance are moving to other, more holistic accountability structures. Furthermore, an increasingly diverse set of development partners is engaged in mutual accountability mechanisms at country level. However, fewer partner countries are setting targets for effective development co-operation for these diverse partners.

Shifts in development co-operation structures at country level have implications for the Global Partnership monitoring process. These structural shifts have already impacted the way the 2018 Monitoring Round was undertaken at country level, meriting further attention from the Global Partnership community ahead of its next monitoring round. The Global Partnership will carry on adapting its monitoring to reflect the opportunities and challenges of the 2030 Agenda and ensure continued relevance and cutting-edge data in a changing world.

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