

A GUIDELINE ON THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

This Guideline has been developed to support Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in prioritising and managing their work and to strengthen their linkages to the Government-Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC). The Guideline is based on Section VI of the Review of TWGs and the GDCC that was carried out by the Government in the latter half of 2006.

TWGs are intended to serve primarily as coordinating and supporting bodies; they are not intended to substitute for or to duplicate the functions of ministries and agencies. TWGs are accountable to their host ministries and agencies, and the TWG Chair, as the Government's lead representative in a TWG, is therefore the sole decision-making authority in the TWG. As part of the mechanism to promote aid effectiveness and development partnership, TWGs also have reporting responsibility to the GDCC, in particular with respect to the Harmonisation, Alignment and Results (H-A-R) Action Plan and the Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs).

It is important to emphasise that this Guideline is not intended to be overly prescriptive. The list of tasks and organisational principles are not to be considered as mandatory and it will be necessary for each TWG to identify, prioritise and sequence its activities based on perceived need, available resources and existing capacity. Taking this observation into account, and making reference to the H-A-R Action Plan, TWG functions should be formulated in a Terms of Reference and an Action Plan that give due consideration to some or all of the following issues.

Composition of TWGs

TWG Chairs are responsible in the last instance for determining TWG membership but, in order to achieve purposeful and informed dialogue, it is necessary that TWGs consist of:

- (i) Well informed, technically or substantively competent, and adequately high level RGC representatives who are mandated to represent the views of their institution and who are able to provide required information and to facilitate follow-up action within their own institution.
- (ii) Development Partners should also be represented at an appropriate and competent level. Development Partners might agree and coordinate between themselves so that not every Development Partner supporting a sector needs to attend the TWG;
- (iii) The RGC-appointed Chair needs to be fully committed, with authority within the host ministry, and to be able to deal with matters arising on the spot as well as to guide discussions smoothly; in addition the Chair must be associated or familiar with some or all of the Development Partner assisted programmes in the sector;
- (iv) The Development Partner-chosen lead facilitator(s) must be at a senior level within their organisation, competent in the field and be willing to relate information to all other Development Partners. Development Partners should manage their own arrangements for nominating or replacing the lead facilitator but, in the interest of continuity, a lead facilitator is normally expected to support the TWG for at least two years;
- (v) Focal points for generic issues, including gender mainstreaming, in each ministry or agency;

- (vi) Technical Advisors working within the RGC structure (embedded TAs) should participate and contribute along with RGC representatives but should not function as Development Partner lead facilitator(s);
- (vii) Each TWG may invite NGOs and civil society representatives where they have a clear operational role and are providers of specific assistance and/or services related to the sector or where they make a specific contribution to the work of the TWG.

Size of TWGs

Too many members in a TWG is not conducive to meaningful dialogue. It is suggested that:

- (i) An optimum size to facilitate dialogue is be about 10 – 15 persons;
- (ii) Where it is necessary to have a larger number of members, it would be useful to constitute a "core group" of not more than 10-15 persons which could meet more regularly and report to the plenary; Development Partner facilitators in such core groups can keep other Development Partners informed of progress and developments;
- (iii) It would also be useful to constitute small "sub-groups" within any TWG to address more detailed issues (as is already being done in some TWGs), either on a time-bound or permanent basis.

Subjects or sectors to be covered

TWGs are mainly theme or sector based and related to NSDP priorities. Where cross-sectoral themes are to be addressed the composition of sub-group should be considered, including meetings among core members of relevant interconnected TWGs. GDCC also provides an opportunity to consider cross-sectoral linkages and challenges.

Criteria for formation of TWGs

The criteria for formation of TWGs could be established as follows:

- (i) TWGs should cover clearly identifiable sectors or themes, with sub-groups where necessary to deal with individual components;
- (ii) There must be clearly identifiable substantive targets that the TWG would help achieve through its own work;
- (iii) The subject or theme to be covered should not be too diffused, , making it difficult to assign clear responsibilities or to monitor progress across several RGC ministries or agencies;
- (iv) Where adequate coordination and RGC-Development Partner information sharing mechanisms already exist, there is no need to create parallel or additional mechanisms.

Roles and Functions of TWGs

TWG functions should be included in the Terms of Reference and Action Plan. They may include some or all of the following:

NSDP Linkages

- (i) Identify NSDP strategies, priorities and indicators that fall within the remit of the TWG (corresponding to Section Aa1 of the H-A-R Action Plan);
- (ii) Identify cross-cutting issues that the work of the TWG is expected to support, either through activities within the sector or through collaboration with other RGC Ministries or TWGs (C2b1);
- (iii) Identify relevant available data sources for NSDP monitoring and agree on any additional analytical work that the TWG might support to enhance NSDP reporting and monitoring;

- (iv) Based on an RGC appraisal of development assistance, promote alignment with national priorities and strategies (B1a1);
- (v) Where necessary, align planning cycles with those of the NSDP, PIP and the Budget process (B1a2).

Sector/Thematic Strategies

- (vi) Support the development of a sector strategy or programme that promotes the attainment of NSDP targets (including issues of a cross-cutting nature), supports routine work functions, and which addresses capacity development needs (Aa1, B3a1/2);
- (vii) Identify relevant support, and appropriate modalities, directed to the development, implementation, financing, monitoring and review of the sector strategy (B1a2);
- (viii) Establish and monitor JMIs that are linked to NSDP targets.

Financing

- (ix) Maintain a record, derived from the CRDB ODA Database, of all on-going Development Partner funded activities that are relevant to the TWG, whether implemented by RGC or otherwise (B1a2);
- (x) Identify pipeline projects – and potential Development Partner funding - that will address priority activities included in the sector plan or strategy (B1a2);
- (xi) To the extent that it is feasible, cost priority activities and identify funding sources and gaps, working with CRDB/CDC in its capacity as RGC aid coordination focal point;
- (xii) Support the preparation of the Public Investment Plan (PIP), including by ensuring that all projects are up-dated in the CRDB ODA Database (B1a2 and Article 14(5) of the Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management);
- (xiii) Discuss the sector Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as a basis for programming comprehensive RGC and Development Partner support (Aa1);
- (xiv) Ensure that activities related to the work and operations of the TWG, in particular the JMIs, are fully-funded (B1a2).

Capacity Development

- (xv) Capacity development activities should be located in the context of on-going public service reforms and should be guided by the H-A-R Action Plan, section B3a1/2:
 - a) Develop a coherent capacity development strategy, based on a needs assessment and functional review, that addresses capacity development at institutional, organisational and individual levels;
 - b) Identify and agree on a rational and RGC-led programme for providing technical assistance;
 - c) Establish and monitor indicators that will inform progress toward capacity development.

Aid Effectiveness

- (xvi) In the context of the H-A-R Action Plan, identify relevant activities that will promote aid effectiveness. This may include but need not be limited to:
 - a) Establishment of a programme-based approach to guide project development/programmatic support in the context of the sector strategy and to coordinate resource mobilisation efforts;
 - b) Lead a dialogue on aid modalities that are appropriate for the sector/thematic work supported by the TWG, identifying opportunities for

more efficient forms of channelling Development Partner assistance, including a 'donor division of labour'; delegated partnerships; basket funding etc (C1a2);

- c) Coordinated and rational use of technical cooperation (see capacity development above);
- d) Monitoring the use of PIUs, and in the context of broader capacity development work, agreeing a transition toward increased RGC management of ODA with regard to resource programming, implementation and reporting (B2d);
- e) Monitor funds committed, projected and actually disbursed so that implementation of sector activities can proceed smoothly (Da2);
- f) Monitor missions and analytical work, promoting joint approaches informed by the TWG Action Plan to the fullest extent possible (C1b1);
- g) Implementation of the National Operational Guidelines (for grants) and/or the Standard Operating Procedures (for loans) (Da2).

Reporting and Review

- (xvii) Consolidate and report to GDCC on JMIs; H-A-R Action Plan (see Annex One); TWG Action Plan activities; and any other issues necessary for GDCC discussion;
- (xviii) Identify and agree a modality for reviewing TWG and/or sector progress, ideally on a joint basis;
- (xix) Identify and agree a mechanism for providing inputs to the NSDP Annual Progress Report;
- (xx) Follow-up issues relevant to the TWG that are raised in either GDCC or CDCF, and identify those issues within the TWG that may need to be taken forward for dialogue at these higher-level fora.

Conduct of Meetings

The following points may guide the work of TWGs:

- (i) Meetings should have a clear agenda with documentation shared in advance to the fullest extent possible;
- (ii) All participants should be provided with an opportunity to inform the TWG of important developments;
- (iii) TWGs should meet as often as is deemed appropriate, but at a minimum should meet to agree the report to be submitted to the GDCC;
- (iv) Preparatory meetings between the Chair and the lead facilitators – as well as between Development Partners – may ensure a more focused and productive TWG dialogue;
- (v) The Chair, or his/her nominated representative, and the lead facilitators should maintain regular contact between meetings to ensure timely follow-up to agreed actions;
- (vi) A Secretariat should be appointed and facilitated. Their role will include keeping records of each meeting, document sharing and serving as the aid coordination focal point, as provided for in Article 35(ii) of the Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management;
- (vii) GDCC may be employed for dialogue where the TWG feels that it is otherwise unable to make progress or that there is an issue that merits further cross-sectoral discussion.

Support Structures

Internal and external support mechanisms are required:

- *Internally*, a well-organised and properly led unit within the lead ministry or agency should organise meetings, keep records or minutes of meetings of TWGs and sub-groups, and conduct follow-up with line ministries and agencies responsible for carrying out agreed upon actions. The unit will also produce GDCC progress reports for dissemination, communicate issues to be resolved by GDCC and serve as the aid coordination focal point as provided for in the Strategic Framework (see the previous section). To avoid adding new layers to the existing structure, this secretariat should be an integral part of the host ministry or agency, such as the planning department. The unit should also be the designated contact point for the lead facilitator or other TWG members on behalf of the Chair.
- *Externally*, some TWGs may need the continued support of CRDB/CDC in its role as the RGC focal point on aid coordination and GDCC secretariat. This is consistent with the H-A-R Action Plan (Ac1), which states that "CRDB/CDC provides technical support to sector ministries and agencies on aid coordination and aid management issues based on needs identified and support requested by the Chairs of the TWGs".

Linkages

Members representing RGC ministries or agencies in any TWG should bring information and knowledge from their offices and communicate information, required actions and decisions back to their ministry or agency. Similarly, Development Partners need to bring all information about ongoing and proposed programmes that they support; they should also disseminate deliberations and decisions of the TWG to other members of the Development Partner community.

TWG REPORTING ON RGC HARMONISATION, ALIGNMENT AND RESULTS ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The H-A-R Action Plan identifies the following activities that are within the remit of the TWGs. These activities are identified in the main text and are associated with points in the first section that might be included in a TWG Terms of Reference or Action Plan. Item (xvii) under 'Reporting and Review' makes particular reference to TWG reporting on H-A-R implementation.

H-A-R Activities for TWG Reporting

A.a.1. Within the framework of NSDP, sector ministries and agencies develop sector plans and prioritized results-based programs, and a sector MTEF.

B.1.a.1. Development partners review their country assistance strategies and policies to align their assistance with NSDP priorities and sector development plans.

B.1.a.2. Development partners align their development programs and projects to finance and implement agreed sector plans and prioritized sector programs included in the three year rolling PIP.

B.2.d.2. Implement the agreed PIU rationalisation strategy.

B.3.a.1. All sector plans and development programs/projects include an assessment of the existing capacity gaps and a capacity development plan to fill the gaps to achieve targeted development results.

B.3.a.2. Each sector TWG prepares and implements a capacity development program for their sector ministry/agency to fill identified capacity gaps.

B.3.a.3. Development partners provide financial support for the application of MBPI/PMG schemes as an element of the capacity development strategy

C.1.a.2. Each TWG prepares a plan to increase delegated cooperation within their sector/thematic area.

C.1.b.1. Each TWG prepares a calendar of field missions, diagnostic reviews and studies planned by donors participating in the sector/thematic area of the TWG.

C.2.b.1. Concerned ministries and donors develop common guidelines to tackle cross-cutting issues e.g. gender, HIV/AIDS.

D.a.2. Development partners ensure that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for loan assistance and National Operational Guidelines (NOG) for grant assistance are followed in monitoring and reporting on their programs/projects to reduce burden on RGC implementing institutions.