

Alignment

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures.

The commitments to alignment encompass the largest number of action areas in the Paris Declaration:

- Donors base their support on countries' strategies and expenditure plans.
- Donors use country systems for project implementation, financial management, procurement, environmental and social assessments, and results monitoring, and provide support to strengthen these systems.
- Partner countries strengthen their capacity to formulate, execute, and monitor policies and strategies, with coordinated support from donors.
- Donors untie aid, and particularly technical assistance.

Alignment contributes to better and more sustainable development outcomes by leveraging country ownership, reducing the transaction costs of aid delivery, and improving partner countries' capacity to design, implement, and account for their policies to their parliaments and citizens. Alignment is about trust and credibility; it seeks a common base of goals, values, and political commitment on which the aid partnership can be built.

Findings from the 2008 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey

The Survey reveals that despite clear commitments to alignment, implementation tends to be highly uneven. Donors have increasingly based their aid activities on partner countries' national development and sectoral strategies, and their medium-term budgetary frameworks. However, the different strategies in the country are not always clearly linked: for example, many sector strategies have no clear link with the national poverty reduction strategy. There has been less progress in strengthening and using country systems: while country systems for environmental assessment are increasingly used, the use of country procurement systems and of systems at the level of provincial and local governments has been less widespread. The Survey also reveals that there is no clear correlation between the strength of the country's public financial management system and its use by the donors. It is clear that many projects still rely on parallel implementation structures.

At the same time, aid has become more predictable, and since 2006 there has been considerable progress in untying aid.



Challenges

Both donors and partner countries need to work toward more effective strategies for growth and poverty reduction, and toward greater use of country systems for financial management, procurement, and project implementation, by making these systems credible and by building the necessary governing capacity. Developing statistical systems to facilitate results monitoring is important part. .

Getting aid integrated in the budget of the country, which permits oversight by parliaments, is another crucial challenge. Timely provision of information by the donors on planned commitments and disbursements is an important element in this.

Untying of aid, particularly technical assistance, is another challenge. Technical assistance needs to be demand-driven, selected in open and competitive processes, and based on the overall country strategy for capacity building.

Accra Agenda for Action

The AAA calls for partner countries and donors to continue working on strengthening country systems and increasing their use. Discussions at Accra on alignment will also revolve around conditionality frameworks, aid predictability, and capacity building.

