

## Harmonization

*Donors' actions are more harmonized, transparent and collectively effective.*

Harmonizing the delivery of aid can increase aid effectiveness and reduce the administrative burden on recipient countries. In the Paris Declaration, donors committed to implement common arrangements and simplify procedures. Partner countries and donors committed to work together to strengthen complementarities and bring about a more effective division of labor; reform procedures and strengthen incentives to promote harmonisation, alignment, and managing for results; adapt the principles of effective aid to situations of fragility and conflict; and promote a harmonized approach to environmental assessments and to cross-cutting issues such as gender equality.

The Paris Declaration treats harmonization as closely related to ownership and alignment, partly because the simplest approach to common arrangements is to adopt those established within the country.

### Evaluation of the Paris Declaration

The evaluation finds that donors continue to have a high level of commitment in principle to harmonization. At the same time, there is a very mixed picture of practical commitment and follow-through in relation to different types of harmonization measures among different groups of donors. Budget support, sectorwide approaches, and other arrangements meeting the criteria of joint planning and harmonization of procedures are growing and spreading slowly. In a number of countries there has been an increase in harmonized basket funds for support to civil society, usually with indigenous management and governance structures drawn from the sector itself.

However, changing delivery aid systems requires time, resources, willingness to compromise, and strong political will. It also requires donors to overcome deep-seated issues of incentives that do not favor harmonized approaches. There are also concerns that harmonized approaches could undermine national ownership, and that harmonization requires budget support to the exclusion of other modalities and tools for providing aid.

### Progress and Challenges in Harmonization:

While the responsibility for harmonization falls primarily on donors, leadership, initiative, and support from partner countries are indispensable factors of progress. Investing in developing capacity in these areas contributes to strengthening the base for further harmonization at the country level.



Publicizing the benefits of harmonization and the efficiency and effectiveness of pooled efforts could engage wider public and political understanding and support for implementation of the Declaration.

Further progress on harmonization will require resources, willingness to compromise, mutual trust between development partners, and strong political will. Care must be taken to ensure that harmonization efforts do not limit the diversity and levels of aid available to partner countries.

### **Accra Agenda for Action**

The Accra Agenda for Action calls for continuing efforts at harmonization in the areas of building more effective and inclusive partnerships and reducing the fragmentation of aid, enhancing complementarity and division of labor, and delivering and accounting for development results.

