

DCF Survey Study 2020:

Toward effective development cooperation in the COVID-19 period



Development
Cooperation forum



United
Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



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Abbreviations

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CPDE	CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness
CRF	Country Results Framework
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum
DCIS	Development Cooperation Information System
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FSD	Financing for Sustainable Development
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
INFFs	Integrated National Financing Frameworks
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LRGs	Local and Regional Governments
MA	Mutual Accountability
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MICs	Middle-income countries
NDCF	National Development Cooperation Forum
NDCP	National Development Cooperation Policy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States

Glossary

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)	As a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to tackle 17 Sustainable Development Goals which, include ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, combating climate change, and achieving gender equality, as well as financing and other means of implementation. It was formally adopted in 2015.
Country Results Frameworks (CRFs)	CRFs are a tool used by countries to assess the contribution of international development cooperation to national sustainable development results. Countries can improve mutual accountability and transparency using CRFs. Results are typically defined through indicators, which are often, but not always, quantifiable and measurable and can include targets expected for the achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts over different intervals of time. Some countries may have CRFs incorporated within their National Development Cooperation Policy or similar strategy document.
Development cooperation	The Development Cooperation Forum has adopted a working definition of development cooperation as “...an activity that explicitly aims to support national or international development priorities, not mainly driven by profit, discriminates in favour of developing countries and is based on cooperative relationships that seek to enhance developing country ownership.” This includes financial transfers, capacity support, technology development and transfer, cooperative action to drive policy change at the national, regional and global levels, and multi-stakeholder partnerships. ⁱ
Development Cooperation Information Systems (DCIS)	DCIS are systems that can be used to track information related to international development cooperation (e.g. Development Assistance Databases, Aid Information Management Platforms or other mechanisms). Effective development cooperation is supported by information that is accurate, comprehensive and timely in reflecting disbursement, allocation, use and monitoring and evaluation of international development cooperation.
Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)	An INFF can be understood as a system of policies and institutional structures that can help governments to develop and deliver a strategic, holistic approach toward managing financing for nationally-owned sustainable development strategies. Such frameworks were called for in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. There are four main building blocks for the design and operationalisation of INFFs: i) assessment and diagnostics; ii) the financing strategy; iii) monitoring, review and accountability; and iv) governance and coordination. ⁱⁱ
International development cooperation partner	This term refers to all external/international development cooperation partners, both governmental and non-governmental, and may include OECD-DAC countries, Southern partners and other non-OECD-DAC countries, private sector organizations, foundations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, philanthropies, representatives of academia, research and policy think tanks.
Monitoring	Continuous examination of progress achieved during the implementation of an undertaking to track progress against targets and plans, and to take necessary decisions to improve performance. ⁱⁱⁱ

Mutual accountability (MA)	MA is defined as “...accountability between the providers and recipients of development cooperation, for the effectiveness of that cooperation in producing development results.” ^{iv} It addresses imbalances in the relationship between developing countries and international development cooperation partners and serves as a driver for mutual learning and knowledge sharing.
National Development Cooperation Forums (NDCFs)	NDCFs provide a platform for international development cooperation actors and domestic stakeholders to discuss issues, review progress and engage in mutual learning for improved mutual accountability, transparency and results.
National Development Cooperation Policies (NDCPs)	NDCPs define what effective development cooperation means in each country context, including in the area of mutual accountability and transparency, among all development cooperation actors. The NDCP articulates a country’s vision, priorities and activities related to international development cooperation as well as the division of labour among all relevant actors. An NDCP can either be a stand-alone document or part of a national action or sustainable development strategy / plan or an integrated national financing framework (INFF). When it is a separate document, it is typically called “aid policy”, “development assistance policy”, “partnership strategy”, or similar.
National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)	An NSDS, sometimes referred to as a national sustainable development plan, sets out the economic, social and environmental priorities of the country for the medium-to-long-term. It usually outlines the vision the country has set for itself, and the roles and responsibilities of the state and non-state actors in the implementation of the strategy. The national sustainable development strategy may also include the identification of resources and other means of implementation.
Private sector	The private sector refers to for-profit domestic and international organizations. This can include small, medium and large enterprises, business associations, chamber of commerce and multinational corporations.
Review	An assessment of performance or progress of a programme or institution. Reviews tend to focus on operational issues and can be ad hoc or regular (e.g. annual). Reviews can take the form of independent reviews or self-assessments. They can range from highly to loosely structured and typically do not apply the rigor of evaluations. ^v
Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)	VNRs are a national review process which aims to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development. These national reviews serve as a basis for the regular reviews by HLPF, meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC. Regular reviews by the HLPF are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and involve multiple stakeholders. ^{vi}

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Overview and key messages

Since 2008, the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) surveys have provided evidence on the state of play of the effectiveness of international development cooperation on the ground. This 2020 DCF study presents the findings of the sixth DCF survey conducted in 2019/2020. As in previous rounds, the survey was structured around five key enablers: national development cooperation policies, country results frameworks, development cooperation information systems and national development cooperation forums, with capacity support as cross-cutting.

The survey was launched in 2019 prior to the pandemic. In parallel to analysing data collected from 55 participating countries, interviews of ten countries in the Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America and Caribbean regions were conducted to deepen the analysis of

cooperation by charting the evolving design and use of the key enablers. The key enablers of effective development cooperation are not prescriptive and can be adapted according to diverse national contexts and shifting risks, opportunities and capacities relevant to the financing of national sustainable development priorities. By sharing their dynamic approaches, participating countries promote critical learning and behaviour change by their Governments and international development partners in pursuit of more effective development cooperation and progress toward the SDGs.

The unfolding COVID-19 crisis will impact on international development cooperation, with the potential to expand opportunities for more effective support to national sustainable development priorities and efforts to build back better. The 2020 DCF Survey

National development cooperation policy	Country results framework	Development cooperation information system	National development cooperation forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Priorities • Targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring targets • Long-term impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate, comprehensive, quality and timely data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-stakeholder dialogue • Review progress against targets
Capacity support			

the survey data. The interviews presented an opportunity to learn about the impact of COVID-19 on development cooperation in these countries. Facing the unimaginable human toll of the pandemic, developing countries now reckon with a dual challenge: address the new risks posed by Covid-19 and advance the fight against existing vulnerabilities exacerbated by the pandemic. The interviews shed important light on the role of the enablers of effective development cooperation both in the immediate response to and longer-term recovery from the pandemic.

This is the third survey since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development in 2015. In many ways, the survey reflects the evolution of development cooperation over the period. The survey results show progress in a number of areas and stagnation in others.

Successive DCF Surveys have helped to sharpen understanding and support effective development

provides timely analysis in this context, reflecting the latest assessment of the implementation and adaptation of key enablers in participating countries and generating insights on more effective development cooperation in the COVID-19 era

National development cooperation policies (NDCPs) are firmly in place as essential components of the international development cooperation ecosystem. Their contents increasingly reflect the diversity of development finance and other means of implementation required by the 2030 Agenda. The majority of countries surveyed have NDCPs, and most of these policies have been adopted or updated since 2016. Others have draft policies awaiting approval or intentions to develop their NDCPs. The survey results show an increasing percentage of countries with NDCPs covering a wide range of development cooperation going well beyond ODA, including domestic resource mobilization, private finance, and South-South and triangular cooperation.

Some aspects of NDCPs have progressed more slowly since the first DCF survey in 2009. Successive DCF surveys found that parliaments played little or no role in the oversight of development cooperation, and that they required capacity support to do so. NDCPs increasingly cover a diverse range of development actors, reflecting the multi-stakeholder partnerships required for achieving the SDGs. Yet, the policies still focus predominantly on the national government and international development cooperation partners, including multilateral organizations. The policies do not cover civil society organizations, philanthropic organizations and the private sector to the same extent.

The next generation of NDCPs needs to pay greater attention to the quality and impact of the policy. Evidence and lessons learned from implementation should inform new and updated NDCPs. Such evidence is best obtained through timely, robust evaluation. Evaluations in turn require reliable data. Survey participants recognized the importance of NDCPs and reviewing their contribution to effective development cooperation and results.

Improvements show in the content of country results frameworks (CRFs) and their application in monitoring development cooperation. Countries require capacity support to operationalize and strengthen their results frameworks. More than half of the respondent countries have CRFs in place. CRFs increasingly reflect targets for local and regional governments compared to previous years, as well as targets for individual development cooperation partners. Most countries report that the monitoring of targets in their CRFs contributed to improved alignment between the activities of external partners and national priorities.

While over half of respondent countries have CRFs in place, there remains a sizeable percentage that do not have CRFs (or equivalent). There are countries that do not see the need for a specific country results framework for development cooperation and prefer to rely on results frameworks and indicators in their national sustainable development plans or strategies. There are structural barriers, such as the division of labour between ministries in some countries that make it difficult to have a single results framework for development cooperation. In other instances, countries cite the need for capacity support to develop their CRFs. The risk of not having a robust CRF is that it may lead to use by external partners of their own parallel frameworks, which can undermine country priorities as set out in the NDCPs. The 2019/2020 DCF survey found signs of backsliding towards the use of parallel frameworks.

Development cooperation information systems (DCIS) are in place in most countries and are assisting them in improving the transparency and management

of development cooperation. Quality of data remains a challenge for a number of countries. There is room for broadening the scope of the DCIS, its uses and accessibility. DCIS currently track the 'basics' of development cooperation, namely, current and projected disbursements; progress on projects/ programmes, on-budget flows; and progress against government and partner targets. Few countries participating in the DCF survey have DCIS that track progress on untying development cooperation; use of development cooperation to combat inequalities; and gender-disaggregated expenditures and results.

Data quality constrains the functioning of the DCIS and its practical value: nearly half of the surveyed countries report that data from international development cooperation partners were not complete. This limits the reliability of the DCIS for budgeting and planning future activities, with implications also for its contribution to integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs). Interviews of countries revealed actions underway to enhance DCIS. For example, linking the DCIS to the budgeting and procurement system; redesigning the DCIS to enable linking of projects to the SDGs and the NSDS; and upgrading the DCIS to track COVID-19 financial flows. Initiatives to improve data quality include better quality control at point of data entry, training providers of data, and enhancing the capability of the DCIS to extract data generated routinely by public administration systems.

The percentage of countries reporting parliaments as regular users of the DCIS and making the DCIS fully accessible to parliaments has improved. Notable improvements also show in accessibility of the DCIS to persons with disabilities, independent monitoring groups and policy think-tanks, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and the general public. Yet, giving full access does not always translate to regular use of the DCIS by these stakeholders, in particular, the private sector and philanthropic organizations.

National development cooperation forums (NDCFs) are gradually assuming a multi-stakeholder character. More needs to be done to make these forums more inclusive of non-state actors and leverage their comparative strengths. NDCFs typically involve national ministries and international development cooperation partners, in particular OECD-DAC partners, multilateral organizations and multilateral development banks. The 2019/2020 results show improvement in engaging local and regional governments in NDCFs. This is a positive development in view of the crucial role local and regional governments play in the 2030 Agenda, including the contribution they potentially make to Voluntary National Reviews.

NDCFs are still not fully engaging non-state actors, for various reasons. In some cases, the enabling environment is not conducive to civil society or private sector participation. In others, governments do not have clarity on what they expect from non-state actors and how to incentivize their participation in NDCFs. The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the necessity for multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborative approaches to addressing new and emerging development challenges. Looking ahead, national governments will need to improve the quality of consultation with non-state actors and foster an environment more conducive to their participation in NDCFs and related development cooperation processes.

While capacity support is strengthening the key enablers of effective development cooperation, demand for capacity support will likely increase in the coming year with the challenges of the COVID-19 response and recovery. Capacity support to strengthen the key enablers went most frequently to enhancement of the DCIS and to development coordination units. Local and regional governments and parliaments tended to receive minimal or no capacity support. Looking ahead, survey participants prioritised the need for capacity support to

strengthen both DCIS and their monitoring and evaluation capacities.

Countries are using development cooperation in their national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Development cooperation partners are redirecting resources from new or existing projects/programmes to priority areas identified by governments. Interviewed countries expressed uncertainty as to whether bilateral international development cooperation partners, with their own economies under severe strain, would be able to meet their development cooperation commitments in the coming years.

Moving forward with the pandemic response and recovery, developing countries will need strengthened capacities for mobilizing, managing and tracking financial and non-financial resources. They will need reliable DCIS to make difficult choices among competing priorities on where resources should be channelled. They will need strengthened capacities for partnership and collaboration with a diverse range of national stakeholders and beneficiaries and international development cooperation partners.



1. Introduction



1.1 Background and context

This study on the sixth Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) survey comes at a time when the world faces the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The emerging picture of the pandemic as it unfolded since December 2019 is the catastrophic impact on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people and on countries' economies, with global growth declining sharply. The pandemic has laid bare the structural inequalities between developed and developing countries, and the deep systemic inequalities that exist within many countries. The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to reverse the progress made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in least developed countries and other countries in special situations.

The *Financing for Sustainable Development Report* (FSDR) of the Inter-agency Task Force of Financing for Development assesses progress against all action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The 2020 FSDR highlighted that the already challenging global economic environment characterized by low growth rates would be exacerbated by economic and financial shocks associated with COVID-19. The 2020 FSDR finds that the international economic and financial systems are failing to deliver on the SDGs and that notable backsliding has occurred in key action areas. In the case of international development cooperation, an update to the FSDR following the release of 2019 ODA data showed that ODA to developing countries increased by 1.4 per cent in 2019 in real terms over the comparable period in 2018, while falling slightly as a share of donor country gross national income (GNI), from 0.31 to 0.30 per cent on average.¹ Net ODA to LDCs and Africa increased by 2.6 per cent and 1.3 per cent during this period, respectively.² The increase in 2019 is welcome and continued commitments will need to be sustained in light of the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An effective response and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will require developing countries to mobilize financial and non-financial resources domestically and internationally, and deploy these resources in a highly targeted manner. Global

and national responses to the pandemic have also demonstrated the importance of global cooperation and multi-stakeholder collaboration in responding to COVID-19. The impacts of COVID-19 on societies, economies and ecosystems will remain for many years. Amidst these unprecedented challenges, there is an opportunity for development cooperation to support countries in their immediate response to COVID-19 and simultaneously build resilience and preparedness for future anticipated and unanticipated risks to the well-being of their populations. Development cooperation that is both risk-informed and climate-smart will be vital to building back better.³

The **Development Cooperation Forum**⁴ (DCF) reviews trends, progress and emerging issues in international development cooperation, facilitating coordination of diverse actors and activities. Its analytical work and deliberations generate practical recommendations for policy makers and practitioners, to support implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The DCF is one of the key mechanisms at global level for follow-up and review of the means of implementation under the 2030 Agenda. The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum, by their mandates, take the work of the DCF into account.

The biennial DCF surveys have been conducted since 2009 and focus on the quality and impact of development cooperation by focusing on five key enablers: i) national development cooperation policies (NDCPs); ii) country-driven results frameworks (CRFs); iii) development cooperation information systems (DCIS); iv) national development cooperation forums (NDCF); and v) capacity support. The DCF survey provides developing countries with the space to reflect with their partners and stakeholders on the state of each of these enablers at the national level and to follow-up with practical actions to enhance the effectiveness of development cooperation.

The DCF surveys have evolved since the first survey in 2009, reflecting the changes in the development cooperation landscape and national priorities. Box 1 shows the key thematic issues raised in previous survey results.

Several countries participating in the DCF surveys also participate in the biennial global monitoring of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) that monitors 10 indicators of development effectiveness of the 2011 Busan Partnership Agreement.

DCF survey participants have underscored the practical value of the survey exercise. These include:

- i. Promoting frank dialogue on development cooperation;
- ii. Improving coordination within government and with development cooperation partners;
- iii. Clarifying monitoring, review and accountability of development cooperation;
- iv. Facilitating mutual learning among stakeholders;
- v. Enhancing transparency of development cooperation information; and
- vi. Identifying capacity building needs.

Countries participating in the DCF survey are able to use their inputs to facilitate their preparation and follow-up of the Voluntary National Reviews of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Enablers of effective development cooperation addressed in the survey can serve as building blocks in the design and use of integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs) to mobilize and manage resources to achieve national sustainable development strategies, as called for in paragraph 9 of the Addis Agenda.

The sixth DCF survey forms part of the substantive preparation for the 2021 Development Cooperation Forum⁵ and seeks to contribute to action-oriented global policy dialogue on development cooperation issues. The findings of the survey will also inform policy dialogue at the High-level Political Forum and ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Sustainable Development Follow-up.

1.2 The survey methodology

The methodology of the DCF study has been strengthened with each successive round. The 2020 DCF study improved the robustness of its methodology by drawing on and integrating multiple sources of data, namely, a streamlined 2019/2020 DCF survey, semi-structured interviews with more respondent countries, and data from a larger number of national development cooperation policies than in previous studies.

A total of 122 developing countries were invited to complete the 2019/2020 DCF survey online between November 2019 and February 2020. The survey was available in English, French and Spanish, and respondent countries are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Countries were encouraged to consult domestic actors and beneficiaries as well as international development cooperation partners when completing the survey.

The data from the survey were complemented by semi-structured interviews with 10 countries from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The sample was drawn from those countries that had consented in the survey to be contacted for interviews. The sample included four countries designated as INFF pilot or “pioneer” countries. In addition to exploring aspects of the enablers of effective development cooperation, the interviews engaged participants on the early impact of COVID-19 on development cooperation and the actions their countries were taking or intended taking to ensure that development cooperation is sustained, reinforced and effective in the COVID-19 period.

The study analysed the national development cooperation policies or equivalent documents of 28 countries that consented to sharing these documents. This served

Box 1: Key themes of DCF surveys 2009 to 2018

2009	2011	2013/2014	2015/2016	2017/2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined mutual accountability & transparency • Few countries with MA mechanisms in place • Lack of aid policies, data on progress, and transparency in sharing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in small number of countries • Need to engage parliaments, local government, and non-DAC donors. • Need for gender-sensitive policies and targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest progress with aid policies, aid information systems, setting targets for partners. • Local government, parliaments and gender need attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repositioning for 2030 Agenda • Crystallized thinking on key enablers: NDCPs, CRFs, NDCFs, DCIS and Capacity support • Highlighted role of subnational governments and citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More diverse range of development cooperation reflected in NDCPs • Better engaging with range of development partners • More CRFs, fewer parallel frameworks • High demand for capacity support in M&E

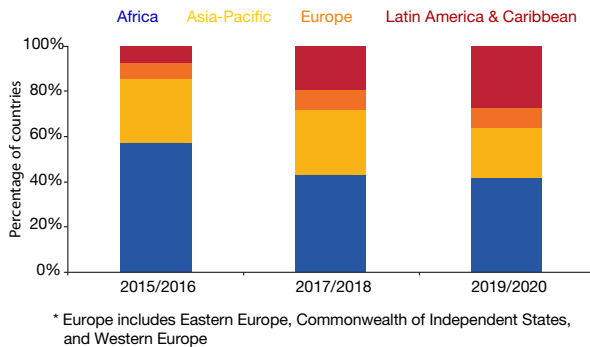
to substantiate the survey responses, and also provide practical examples of how countries are applying the key enablers of effective development cooperation.

For the broad set of survey respondents, the DCF survey study categorizes countries using the income classification terminology of the World Bank. For those countries that are part of country groups in special situations, as defined by the United Nations, those designations are prioritized over others. Countries in special situations typically refers to the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS categories. The survey study also adds Africa as a special geographic group, understanding that there is overlap with some of the aforementioned categories.

A total of 55 countries participated in the 2019/2020 DCF survey, representing 45 per cent of the countries invited to participate. Twenty-one countries (38 per cent) were classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), while 12 countries were classified as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Twenty-one countries (38 per cent) were lower middle-income countries, 16 countries (29 per cent) were upper middle-income countries, 12 countries (22 per cent) were low-income countries, and six countries (11 per cent) were high-income countries.

African countries continue to form the largest proportion of countries that participate in the DCF Surveys. Participation from the Latin America & Caribbean countries increased from 9 per cent in 2015/2016 to 27 per cent in 2019/2020. (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Participation of countries by region



A note on interpreting the survey results

The DCF survey represents a snapshot of the state of key enablers of effective development cooperation in respondent countries at the time of the survey. Circumstances change in countries between surveys, and different countries have participated in the surveys over the ten-year period. The study bears these two factors in mind in interpreting the changes observed between surveys and it is recommended that readers do too.

The DCF survey questions have been revised over time and direct comparison of results from previous surveys is not appropriate for all survey questions. The 2020 DCF study makes comparisons with previous DCF survey results to the extent that it is feasible and meaningful to do so.

Less than a quarter of survey participants (13 countries) organized discussions with stakeholders in preparation of their responses, so the views reflected in this 2020 DCF study are predominantly those of government officials completing the survey. Those governments who did consult others tended to consult international development cooperation partners, multilateral organizations and development finance institutions. The survey responses seldom draw directly on the perspectives of other stakeholders, for example, parliaments and civil society organizations.

2. Key enablers of effective development cooperation



2.1 Key enablers

The DCF survey and analysis are structured around five key enablers of effective development cooperation:⁶

- i. National Development Cooperation Policies (NDCPs)
- ii. Country Results Frameworks (CRFs)
- iii. Development Cooperation Information Systems (DCIS)
- iv. National Development Cooperation Forums (NDCF); and
- v. capacity support.

These five key enablers evolved from DCF deliberations as far back as 2009, on national mechanisms for strengthening mutual accountability and transparency in development cooperation. Successive DCF surveys have helped to sharpen understanding of these enablers and how they contribute to effective development cooperation more broadly. The key enablers are not prescriptive about the details of form and content. They are conducive to a dynamic perspective from country level on the wider ecosystem of financing of national sustainable development priorities and the follow-up and review of progress toward the SDGs. As such, these five key enablers distinctive to the DCF survey give developing countries the space to determine what is best suited to their country context.

The enablers are a toolbox of policies, structures, systems and processes that facilitate mutually reinforcing changes in behaviour of governments of developing countries and their international development cooperation partners as well as other actors, including domestic stakeholders and beneficiaries. These behaviour changes contribute to better quality and use of development cooperation, and this in turn contributes to the achievement of sustainable development outcomes and building the resilience of developing countries. (Figure 2)

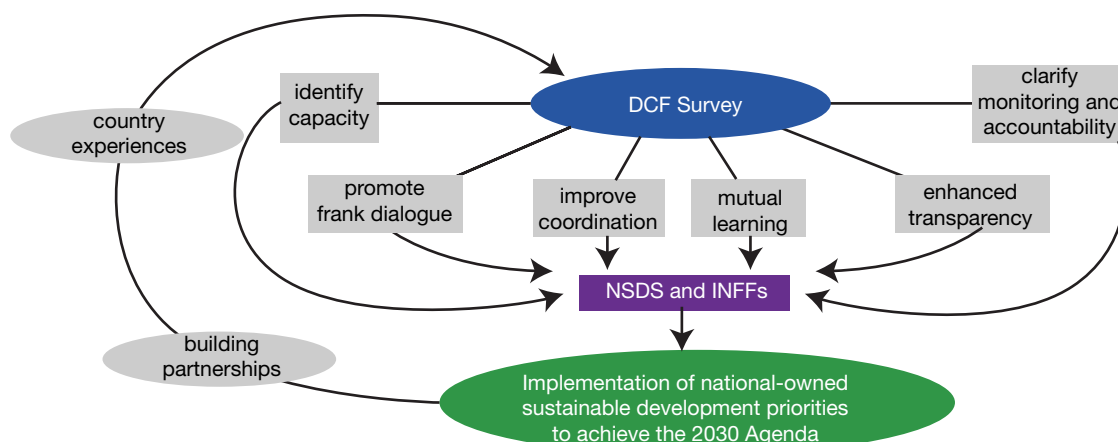
Behaviour changes on the part of international development cooperation partners include:

- Better alignment of development cooperation with national priorities;
- Increased confidence and use of national frameworks and systems;
- Commitment to development cooperation targets;
- Predictability of development cooperation; and
- Investment in strengthening national capacities.

Behaviour changes on the part of developing country governments include:

- A results-focused approach to development cooperation;

Figure 2: Participating countries' use of DCF survey for learning and policy change



- Building multi-stakeholder partnerships;
- Inclusion of a diversity of actors in development cooperation structures and processes;
- Better coordination of development cooperation across ministries and local and regional authorities;
- Improved monitoring and reporting on development cooperation; and
- Investment in strengthening national capacities.



National Development Cooperation Policies (NDCPs) are the policy frameworks governing international development cooperation. An NDCP provides the country government's vision and priorities for development cooperation, the role and responsibilities of development cooperation partners and other stakeholders, and the development cooperation-related targets to be achieved. NDCPs should ideally be informed by national development priorities and aligned with national sustainable development plans or strategies and the SDGs. The NDCP is a foundational key enabler on which the other key enablers are often built.

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Country Results Frameworks (CRFs) establish how countries will monitor and assess progress made against the targets set out in the NDCP (or a similar document) and are used to evaluate the long-term impacts of development cooperation. They support developing countries in following a results-based approach to development cooperation by defining the intended results or outcomes to be achieved. Ideally, CRFs should be aligned to national development strategies, reflecting the SDGs, and linked to national budgets. Like NDCPs, CRFs are ideally developed in consultation with multiple stakeholders, including local governments and the most vulnerable groups in society.

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Development Cooperation Information Systems (DCIS) are systems that track information related to international development cooperation (e.g. Development Assistance Databases, Aid Information Management Platforms or other mechanisms). They enable effective development cooperation by providing country governments and other actors data and information that is accurate,

comprehensive and timely on issues relating to disbursement, allocation, use and monitoring and evaluation of international development cooperation

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National Development Cooperation Forums (NDCF) enable dialogue between governments and international development cooperation actors, as well as domestic actors and beneficiaries. With the increased emphasis on multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships, NDCF provide an important platform for development actors to review progress and engage in mutual learning and enhance the effectiveness of development cooperation.



Context-specific capacity support is needed to assist developing countries in forming institutional capacities required for operationalizing the key enablers and leading effective monitoring, review and accountability for international development cooperation.

The key enablers of effective development cooperation are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. A well-designed NDCP with clear, measurable targets for international development cooperation serves as a foundation for CRFs. CRFs require timely, reliable and accurate information, and here development cooperation information systems play a key role in the collection and analysis of data on development cooperation. The results measured in CRFs should be made transparent and importantly, they should serve as the basis for dialogue among governments, international development cooperation partners and other stakeholders in NDCF.

The key enablers form part of the larger ecosystem of financing of national sustainable development priorities and the follow-up and review of progress. They serve as building blocks in designing and implementing INFFs and optimal mobilization and management of financial and non-financial resources to achieve national sustainable development strategies.



2.2 Emerging perspectives on COVID-19 implications for development cooperation

The 2019/2020 DCF survey was rolled out in an already challenging global environment before the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. To further contextualize the findings and inform the analysis, the 2020 DCF study followed up with a sample of 10 countries to hear how the pandemic was affecting development cooperation in their respective countries and what measures they were pursuing to manage the immediate impacts of the pandemic toward building longer term resilience.

The impact

All countries interviewed were under ‘lockdown’ and stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted their economies negatively. Countries identified sectors of their economies most impacted by the pandemic, which included unemployment, exports and tourism. They also highlighted the impact on the ‘informal’ economy, which provided livelihoods to millions of people, many of whom had been living under challenging conditions prior to the pandemic. Countries pointed to pre-existing weak health systems and concerns about the capacity of the health sector to respond effectively to the pandemic. All countries interviewed reported low rates of infection at the time, and some expressed concern that infection rates would rise as citizens working abroad or in neighbouring countries returned home. They stressed the difficulty of

determining the full impact of the pandemic, citing the lack of predictability of both the virus and its economic impacts. They also expressed concern about the impact on existing development projects that were halted temporarily as a result of the ‘lockdown’.

Several countries commented on how the COVID-19 pandemic is focusing their attention on the importance of disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction. One of these countries is considering giving greater prominence to disaster risk reduction as it embarks on revising its NDCP.

“Budgets and plans have been completely thrown out by COVID-19. The pandemic has shown gaps in government information about who is vulnerable and where vulnerable people live.”

– Survey interviewee

Role of development cooperation in national responses

The interviewed countries underscored the need for international development cooperation partners to meet their commitments, as developing countries will need to mobilize a large volume of development finance to respond to the immediate impacts of the pandemic and for a sustainable recovery.

The interviewed countries are acutely aware, however, that the economies of bilateral international development cooperation partners have been impacted severely by the pandemic, potentially jeopardizing current and future levels of support.

The following are insights on how interviewed countries are using development cooperation and its enablers in the COVID-19 response:

i. Redirecting existing finance

Countries and international development cooperation partners are redirecting finances to areas where there is a high demand for financial support. Much of the resources are being redirected to the health sector, where there is a great need for testing, personal protection equipment, ventilators and other medical equipment. Some countries have clear, mutually agreed criteria for re-directing resources. Others have more rudimentary criteria, such as whether or not a project has started. According to those interviewed, international development cooperation partners are, for the most part, redirecting existing finance rather than providing new finance for the pandemic response and recovery.

While countries understood the necessity to redirect finances, they noted that it would still be necessary to find the needed resources for new and existing projects that had been paused due to a focus on recovery efforts. Those projects address the persistent development challenges which would underpin recovery efforts.

ii. Engaging development finance institutions

All countries interviewed have been engaging with multilateral development banks for technical support and for concessional loans. In some instances, there

are negotiations on the suspension or deferment of loan repayments. One country stated its intention to explore more diverse and innovative approaches to financing development in the COVID-19 period.

iii. Leveraging partnerships with the private sector

Countries are exploring partnerships with the private sector in the response and recovery from COVID-19. Discussions are at an early stage, but the countries believe that there is a strong interest from the private sector to partner with government.

iv. Tracking COVID-19 expenditures through the DCIS

One country has upgraded its DCIS to include a COVID-19 portal. All financial flows from development cooperation partners are captured in the system, allowing the government to have a consolidated view of COVID-19-related flows.

Against this background of the unfolding COVID-19 response and recovery, an opportunity has emerged for developing countries, international development cooperation partners and other development actors to use development cooperation more effectively in support of national sustainable development priorities and sustainable recovery from the disaster – building back better. The 2020 DCF study looks toward this increased effectiveness of international development cooperation, starting with an assessment of the extent to which the key enablers are in place in the participating countries.

2.3 Extent to which enablers are in place

Figure 3 illustrates the extent to which countries that participated in the DCF surveys 2019/2020 have the enablers in place. Thirty-six countries in the latest survey have NDCPs, and 29 countries have CRFs. Forty countries have DCIS, and 37 countries have NDCFs in place. As illustrated in Figure 4, the percentage of countries reporting that they had NDCPs in place was similar between the 2017/2018 and 2019/2020 surveys. However, there were differences in respect of the other three enablers.⁷ In 2017/2018, the percentage of countries that reported having DCIS and NDCFs in place was as high as 90 per cent (52 out of 55 countries). There is a notably lower number and percentage of countries reporting that CRFs were in place in 2020 compared to the previous survey. Section 4.2 discusses possible reasons for this.

Figure 3: Key enablers in place 2020

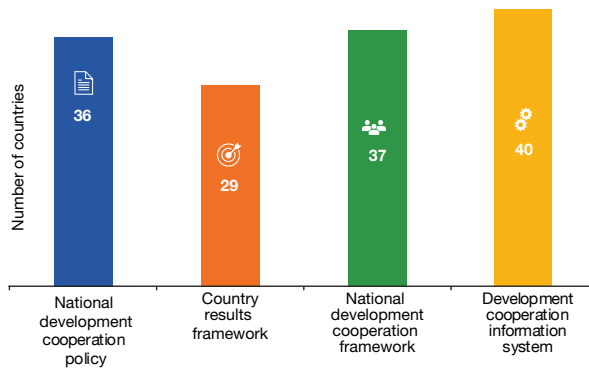


Figure 4: Enablers in place 2016-2020

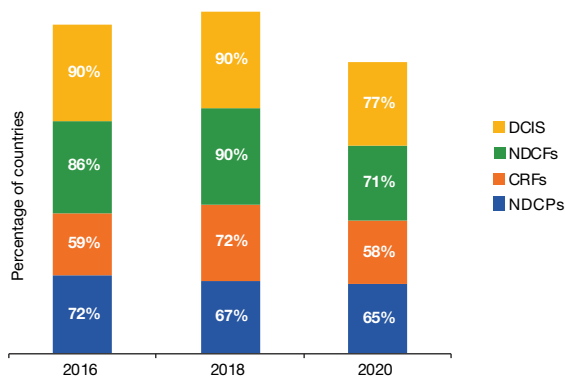
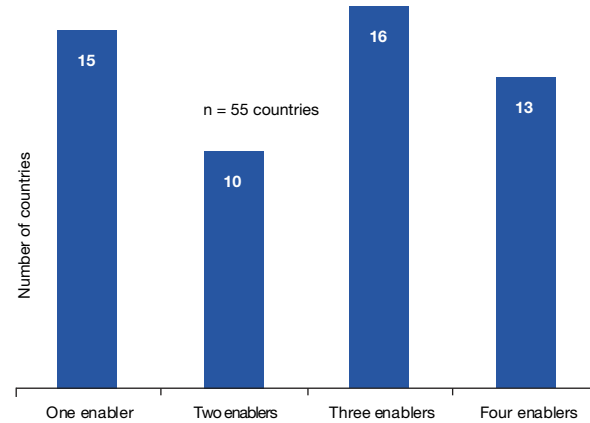


Figure 5: Number of enablers in place in countries

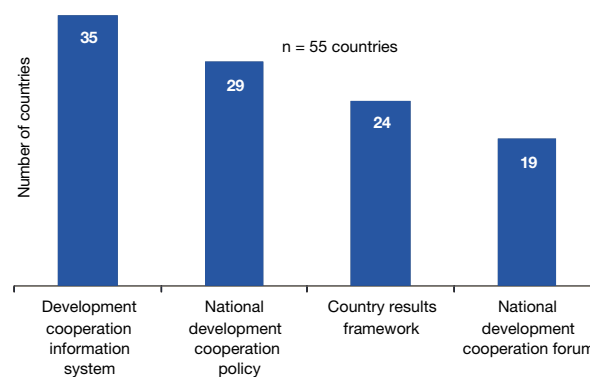


As the key enablers are mutually reinforcing, ideally countries should have all four enablers in place, with capacity support as a fifth, cross-cutting enabler. It is encouraging that 29 countries (53 per cent) had at least three key enablers in place, and 13 countries (24 per cent) had all four enablers in place. (Figure 5)

Capacity support

Capacity support is a cross-cutting enabler that strengthens countries' efforts to develop and operationalize the other four key enablers. Figure 6 shows the number of countries that received capacity support to develop or upgrade their enablers. Countries most frequently received support to develop or upgrade their development cooperation information systems. This is a positive development, in line with the proposal in the 2017/2018 DCF survey to prioritize capacity support to countries to strengthen their DCIS.

Figure 6: Countries receiving capacity support to develop or upgrade their enablers



“Building capacity sustainably in our regions is challenging because of high staff turnover and constrained budgets.”

– African country

Ministries responsible for international development cooperation management and coordination were more likely to receive major capacity support than other development cooperation actors. This is not surprising given the central role they play in development coop-

eration. (Figure 7) A review of the NDCPs submitted with the survey found that NDCPs tended not to make explicit reference to capacity building for implementing the NDCP; when they did, capacity support was directed towards the coordinating ministries and national line ministries. Local and regional governments tend to receive minimal support. This is worrisome given the critical role that local governments play in the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Parliaments perform an important oversight function and previous DCF surveys highlighted the need to strengthen their capacities. The 2019/2020 DCF survey found that the situation remained unchanged – parliamentarians tend to receive minimal or no capacity support. Responsibility for their capacity strengthening ultimately rests with parliaments. The Inter-Parliamentary Union recently issued its ‘Guide to the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments’ to assist parliaments in putting parliamentary self-development into practice. The guide encourages parliaments to self-development that builds resilience, drawing on existing internal capacities that enables them to use external support more effectively.⁸

Countries were asked to identify two areas most in need of capacity support. The 98 responses (Figure 8) indicate a strong demand for capacity support for developing or improving the DCIS and data analysis, followed by capacity building for monitoring & evaluation of development cooperation. Countries also identified the need for capacity strengthening of units responsible for coordination of development cooperation, to carry out functions such as convening dialogue platforms and engagement with the private sector. The “other” category included a diverse range of areas, for example, financing frameworks and innovative approaches to finance, practical application of blended finance, and project design. Only 3 per cent of responses identified the need for support to review or develop NDCPs; this accords with the data on 20 of 28 NDCPs reviewed in the DCF study which were adopted relatively recently, between 2016 and 2019. One response also identified the need to strengthen oversight capacities of parliament and the Auditor-General.

Figure 8: Areas most in need of capacity support

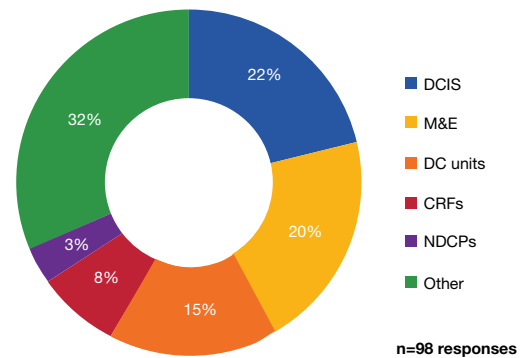
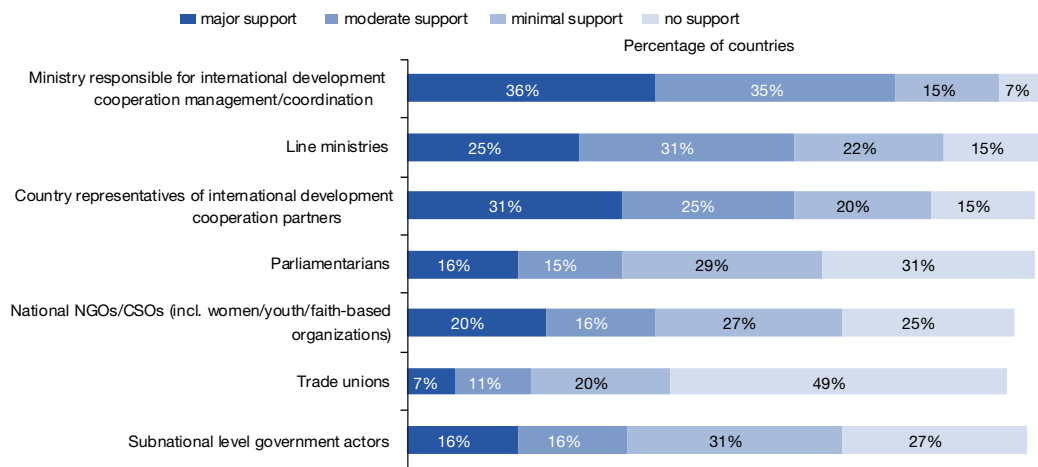


Figure 7: Extent of capacity support received



Note: Totals are less than 100% as some countries did not complete the question

3. National Development Cooperation Policies (NDCPs)



3.1 NDCPs as the foundation for effective development cooperation

NDCPs define what effective development cooperation means in each country context, including in the area of mutual accountability and transparency among all development cooperation actors. A sound NDCP links development cooperation to national sustainable development priorities so that development cooperation expenditure is directed towards national priorities and contributes to development results. NDCPs also set the frameworks that guide the partnerships between governments and development cooperation partners and actors.

As public policy documents, NDCPs can promote greater transparency about the volumes, sources and types of international development cooperation, and how development cooperation is managed and utilized. Without this policy framework clarifying the 'rules' for international development cooperation, country governments run the risk of fragmentation and ineffective use of development cooperation. The absence of a policy framework could also make it harder for countries to mobilize resources. As NDCPs are the foundational enabler, their centrality to effective international development cooperation cannot be over-emphasized.

The existence of an NDCP by itself is insufficient for effective development cooperation. The quality of NDCPs, how they are implemented and how they are monitored are critical for effective development cooperation. The DCF surveys therefore assess not only the existence of NDCPs but also their scope, quality, implementation and monitoring. In addition to the survey responses, the study reviewed a sample of NDCPs that countries submitted and also drew on the in-depth interviews with a sample of countries.

3.2 Prevalence and scope of NDCPs

Thirty-six of the 55 countries (65 per cent) that participated in the 2019/2020 DCF survey reported that they had a national development cooperation policy or an equivalent in place. Eight additional countries reported

that the NDCP was in the process of being finalized or awaiting approval.

Countries report various reasons for operating without an NDCP. Four countries reported that they lacked the capacity to develop the policy. One country reported that the NDCP could not be adopted because of jurisdictional problems within the government, and another country indicated that it had been prevented by war from developing its NDCP. One country put forward the use of separate frameworks with each development partner as a reason for not having an NDCP, while another country indicated that development cooperation was covered in its long-term and medium-term development framework and strategy. Two countries reported a lack of demand for an NDCP but did not indicate reasons for that. One of these is a high-income country and development cooperation probably forms only a small portion of public resources for development.

The study reviewed the NDCPs and equivalent documents of 28 countries that had made these available for the DCF study. Of these, 19 policies were adopted between 2016 and 2019. The oldest policy dates back to 2006. The documents submitted as equivalent to NDCPs were national development plans or strategies. While these make reference to international development cooperation as financial and technical capacity sources for implementing the national plan or strategy, the level of detail appears insufficient to guide the management and coordination of international development cooperation.

Financial and non-financial instruments

The DCF surveys 2009 to 2014 covered a narrower range of development cooperation instruments rooted in the paradigm of aid and national aid policies. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda signalled a shift to national development cooperation policies that reflected the diversification of the development cooperation landscape. The DCF surveys since 2015/2016 have covered a wider range of financial and non-financial development cooperation instruments, contributing to the broadening scope of the global policy dialogue on international development cooperation, its quality, impact and effectiveness.

NDCPs in the 2019/2020 DCF survey continue to cover a broad range of financial and non-financial means of implementation, following the trend since 2015/16. As many as 92 per cent of countries with NDCPs reported that their NDCPs covered technical cooperation and other capacity building, and this was somewhat higher than the 78 per cent of NDCPs covering ODA (grants and concessional loans). There are changes in the scope of NDCPs in the 2019/2020 DCF survey compared to two preceding surveys. (Figure 9)

- i. The percentage of NDCPs covering grants and concessional loans (ODA) decreased from 90 per cent in 2016 to 78 per cent in 2020. This is perhaps a reflection of the larger number of high-income and high middle-income countries with little or no ODA, participating in the 2019/2020 survey. The larger number of middle-income countries may also explain the sizeable increase in the percentage of NDCPs that cover domestic resource mobilization from 56 per cent in 2016 to 78 per cent in 2020.
- ii. A larger percentage of NDCPs in 2020 cover ODA as a catalyst for other types of funding compared to previous surveys. The percentage of NDCPs covering private finance has also increased, perhaps reflecting increased interest in the use of blended finance. Again, the larger number of high-income and high middle-income countries participating in the survey may also explain the changes.
- iii. A larger percentage of countries reported NDCPs covering South-South and/triangular cooperation: 86 per cent in 2020 compared to 64 per cent in 2018. This may be a reflection of the larger number of middle-income countries that prioritise South-South and Triangular cooperation. The sample of NDCPs of countries from the Latin America and Caribbean

region covered South-South and Triangular Cooperation in detail.

- iv. Nearly all NDCPs cover technical cooperation and other capacity building.

Accountability frameworks

Most countries reported that their NDCPs included accountability frameworks: As many as 89 per cent of countries reported that their NDCPs included a framework for monitoring the implementation of their policies, 81 per cent covered the use of country results frameworks, and the same percentage of countries reported that their NDCPs covered the use of country systems for procurement and public financial management systems. Seventy-five per cent of countries' NDCPs contained provisions for reporting on the annual budget approved by the legislature. (Box 2)

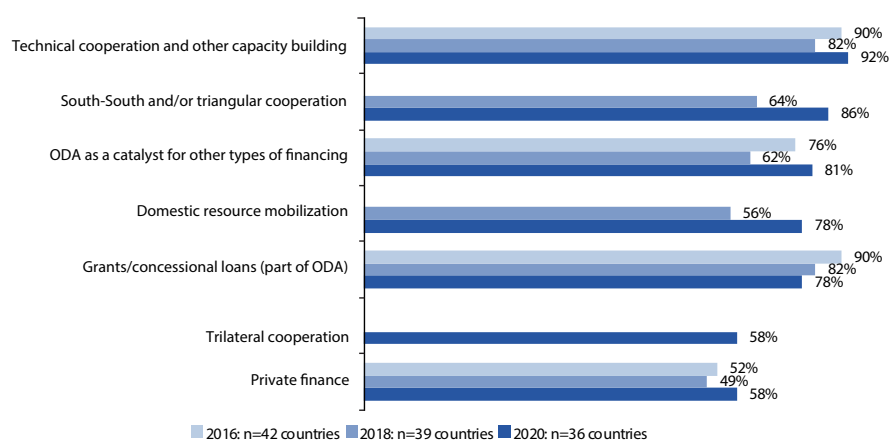
Role/inclusion of stakeholders

NDCPs are inclusive of a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors, different levels of government, and diverse international development cooperation partners. Most countries' NDCPs covered the inclusion and role of national government actors and international development cooperation partners in general, 94 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively. There is good coverage of local and regional governments, national NGOs, the private sector, multilateral organizations and multilateral development banks. (Figure 10)

Coverage of global and regional commitments

Achievement of the 2030 Agenda places significant demands on public budgets and capacities of developing and developed countries. The Addis Agenda affirms the centrality of domestic public policies and the mobilization and effective use of all sources of finance: public, private, domestic and international for the achievement of the

Figure 9: Coverage of development cooperation instruments in NDCPs



2030 Agenda. Other important areas covered in the Addis Agenda are science, technology, innovation and capacity building; and debt and debt sustainability.⁹ NDCPs developed in the post-2015 period can be expected to reflect these two global agendas, as well as major related agreements adopted in 2015, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Box 3). Relevant regional commitments may also be reflected.

The majority of countries with NDCPs (83 per cent) reported that country efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda were incorporated in their NDCPs. It is also encouraging that 64 per cent of countries with NDCPs reported that their policies mostly or entirely incor-

porated the country's efforts to implement the Addis Agenda. (Figure 11)

Of the sample of NDCPs reviewed, the policies adopted in 2016 did not make explicit reference to the 2030 Agenda. This may be because the policies adopted in 2016 were initiated prior to the agenda's adoption. Policies from 2017 onwards mention the 2030 Agenda, but in most instances the policies did not expand beyond that. There were three NDCPs that provided good examples of reflecting the 2030 Agenda. The NDCP of one LDC identified the achievement of the SDGs through effective use of among other things, international development cooperation, as its overarching goal. The NDCP of an upper middle-income country referenced the 2030 Agenda and

Figure 10: Stakeholders covered in NDCPs

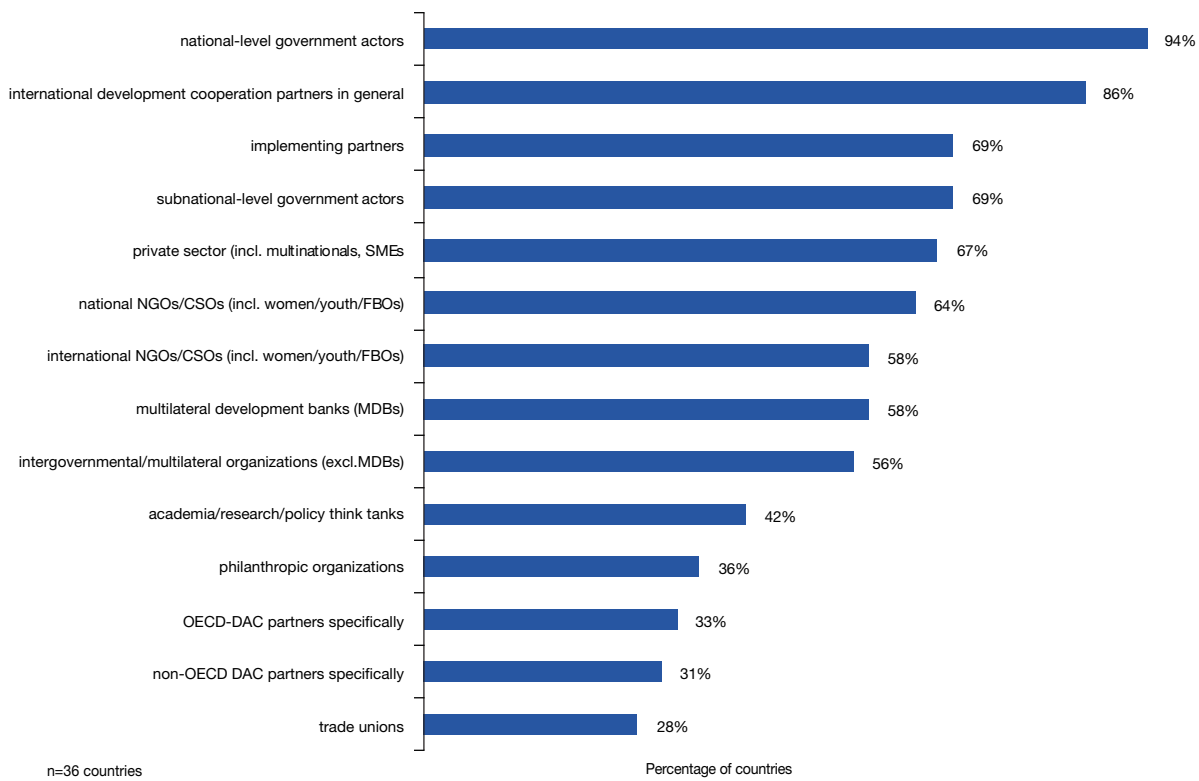
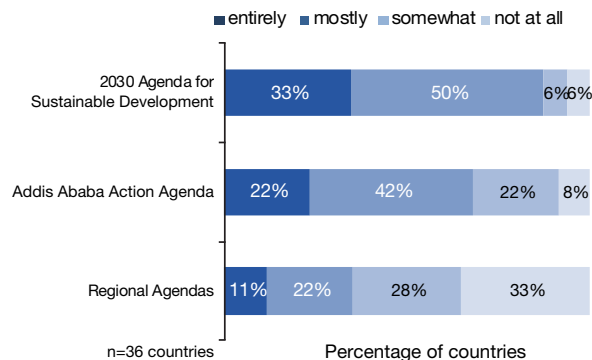


Figure 11: Extent to which NDCPs cover global and regional agendas*



Note: Percentages in this figure may not total 100 owing to non-response by one or more respondent, or due to rounding.

Box 2: Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for implementing NDCP

This land-locked developing country adopted its first Aid Coordination Policy in 2009. The development of a new NDCP was motivated by a new political dispensation focused on becoming a high middle-income country. The new NDCP was also necessary for identifying national priorities for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The NDCP 2019 sets out a multi-level framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the policy. The framework is structured around and informed by the country's development cooperation architecture articulated in the policy document.

At the apex are **Joint Government-Partner Annual Reviews** that serve to inform the policy dialogue between the Government and partners in key development sectors, and to agree on targets for the subsequent year. The policy proposes the establishment of a **Development Cooperation Performance Assessment Framework** that will serve as the basis of the Joint Annual Reviews aimed at strengthening mutual accountability. The accountability framework is expected to cover commitments of the Government and development partners, and include indicators drawn from international and national agreements on the quality and volume of development cooperation committed to the country. The performance assessment framework will also include national development indicators drawn from the national sustainable development agenda, in order to establish the effectiveness of development cooperation.

The NDCP includes **Quarterly Project Reviews conducted** by the Ministry of Finance with the relevant multilateral development agencies, implementing agencies and development partners. These quarterly reviews are intended to inform discussions of project steering committees and technical working groups.

The NDCP proposes **Annual Sector Reviews** of all projects and programmes within the various sectors. These are intended as joint reviews conducted by Technical Working Groups or by the Ministry of Finance if technical working groups are not functional. The Annual Sector Reviews inform the annual discussions at the NDCF and are required to review the effectiveness of development cooperation as well as the development outcomes for that particular sector.

The NDCP requires the Ministry of Finance to compile an **annual portfolio review** of each bilateral and multilateral development agency for discussion with these agencies.

The NDCP makes provision for regular joint **monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of projects** funded by development partners. The policy encourages development partners to utilise national consultants to conduct evaluations so that national evaluation capacities are strengthened.

was the only one of those shared by survey respondents that explicitly mentioned the Addis Agenda. It sets out the link between the National Development Plan, the 2030 Agenda and the role of international development cooperation in complementing national efforts to achieve national goals. The third NDCP (of an LDC) has as its overarching objective of the NDCP as "Provide leadership in governance, strategic and operational management of aid to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals".

NDCPs tend to have less coverage of regional agendas. Thirty-three per cent of countries indicated that their NDCPs covered regional agendas entirely or mostly, and 28 per cent responded that their NDCPs covered regional agendas 'somewhat'. The sample of 28 NDCPs reviewed found that six made explicit reference to regional agendas. (Figure 11)

3.3 Consultation in design of NDCP

Most countries (94 per cent) consulted national-level development actors in the design of NDCPs, and this

is consistent with the results of previous surveys. There appear to be changes in the extent to which other stakeholders were consulted in the design of NDCPs. The most notable change is in the consultation of international development cooperation partners. In the 2018 DCF study, 87 per cent of countries reported consulting international development cooperation partners. In 2020, however, only 67 per cent of countries reported consulting OECD-DAC partners, and 56 per cent reported consulting non-OECD-DAC partners. (Figure 12)

The role of parliaments in development cooperation varies from country to country.¹⁰ In some countries, parliaments are consulted in the design phase of NDCPs, while this is not required in other countries. In the 2017/2018 DCF survey, 61 per cent of countries reported that they had consulted their respective parliaments in the design of the NDCP. In a follow-up with countries in the 2019/2020 DCF survey, 18 out of 27 countries indicated that they consulted their legislatures in the design of NDCPs and eight indicated that this was not the case.

3.4 Targets in NDCPs

The monitoring and review of development cooperation should preferably be done against a set of targets for government and development cooperation actors. These targets may be reflected in the NDCP and/or in a separate CRF. They also provide an indication of the type of information needed for the development cooperation information system and serve as the basis for discussions of progress at national development cooperation forums.

Previous DCF surveys found that NDCPs contained targets predominantly for government and its ministries, followed by targets for international development cooperation partners collectively. The results of the 2019/2020 DCF survey show a similar result – 86 per cent of countries' NDCPs have targets for national governments and ministries. Although 72 per cent of countries responded that their NDCPs contained targets for international development cooperation partners collectively, a lower percentage of countries had targets for specific categories of international development cooperation partners. These results are consistent with the results of previous surveys.

Figure 13 illustrates that there is a sizeable disparity between the percentage of international development cooperation partners consulted and the inclusion of

targets for these partners in NDCPs. For example, 67 per cent of countries reported consulting OECD-DAC partners but only 31 per cent of NDCPs contain targets for this group. There is also a sizeable disparity for non-OECD-DAC partners, international NGOs and international multilateral organizations (excluding multilateral development banks). It is worth noting that disparities for multilateral development banks and the private sector were not as large as those for other international partners.

By contrast, when national actors were consulted in the design of NDCPs, they were likely to have targets in the NDCPs. For example, 67 per cent of countries reported that they had consulted local and regional authorities in the design of NDCPs and 61 per cent of countries reported that their NDCPs contained targets for these actors. The gap between consultation and targets was also small in the case of national NGOs.

The interviews sought to elucidate the reasons for relatively low percentage of NDCPs with targets for international development cooperation partners but did not find anything conclusive. One interviewee stated that it was difficult to set targets for international development cooperation partners in the NDCP as their priorities differed. They were therefore simply requested to align their

Figure 12: Actors consulted in design of NDCPs

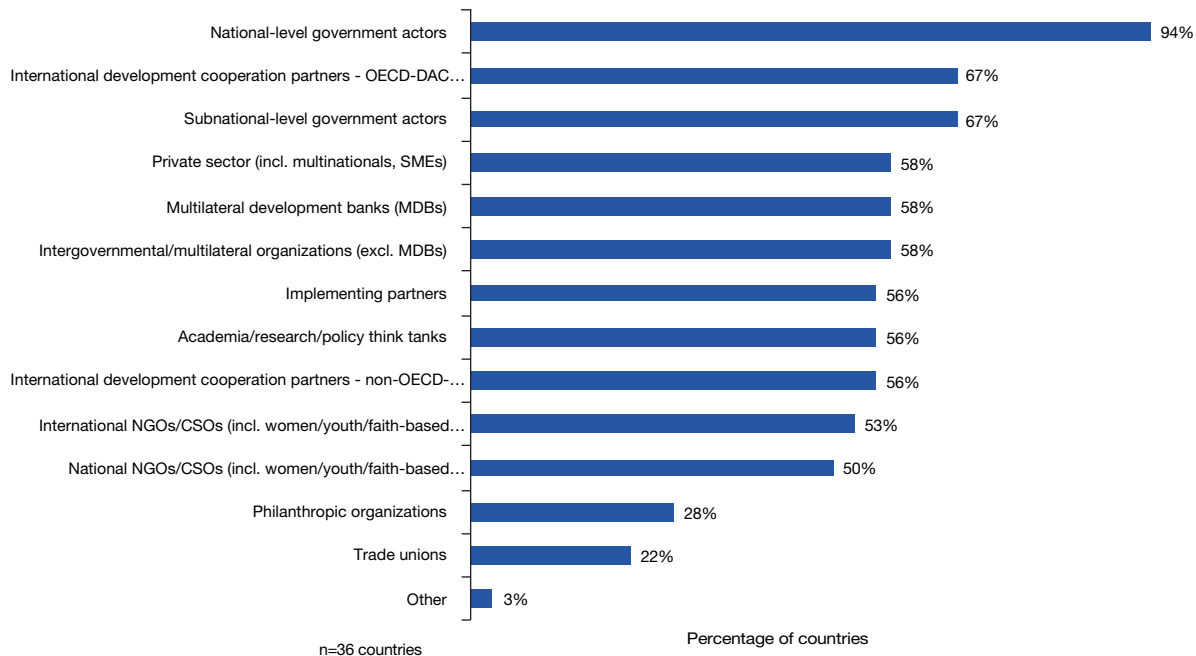
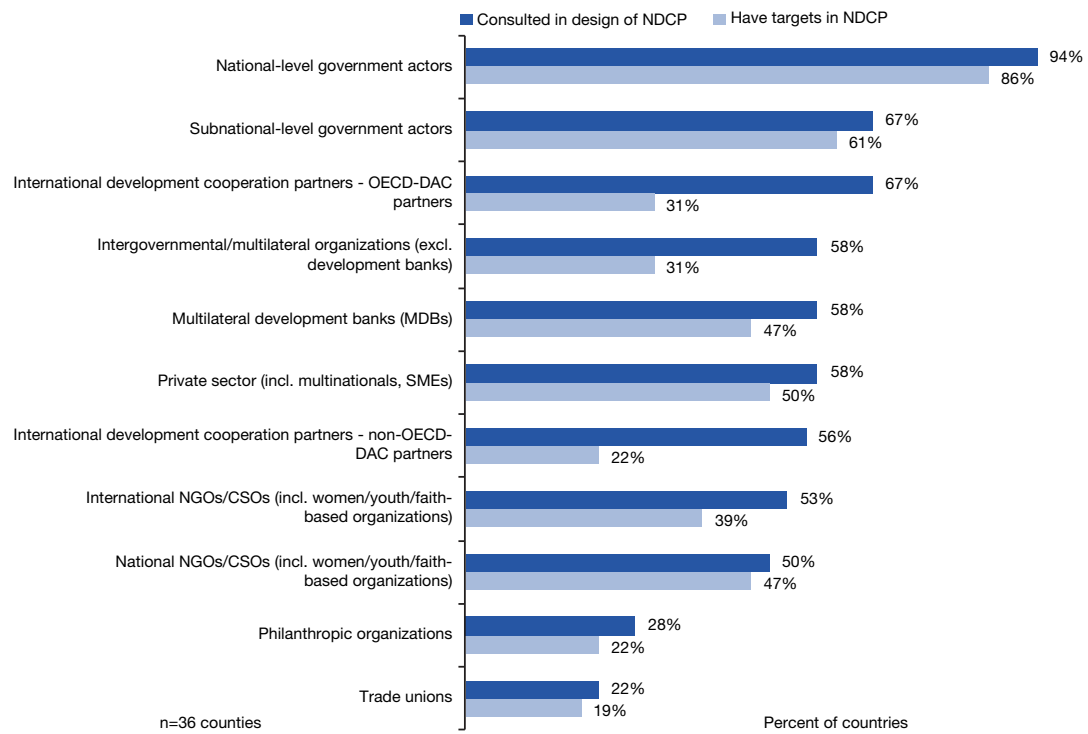


Figure 13: Consultation in NDCP design vs. targets in NDCP

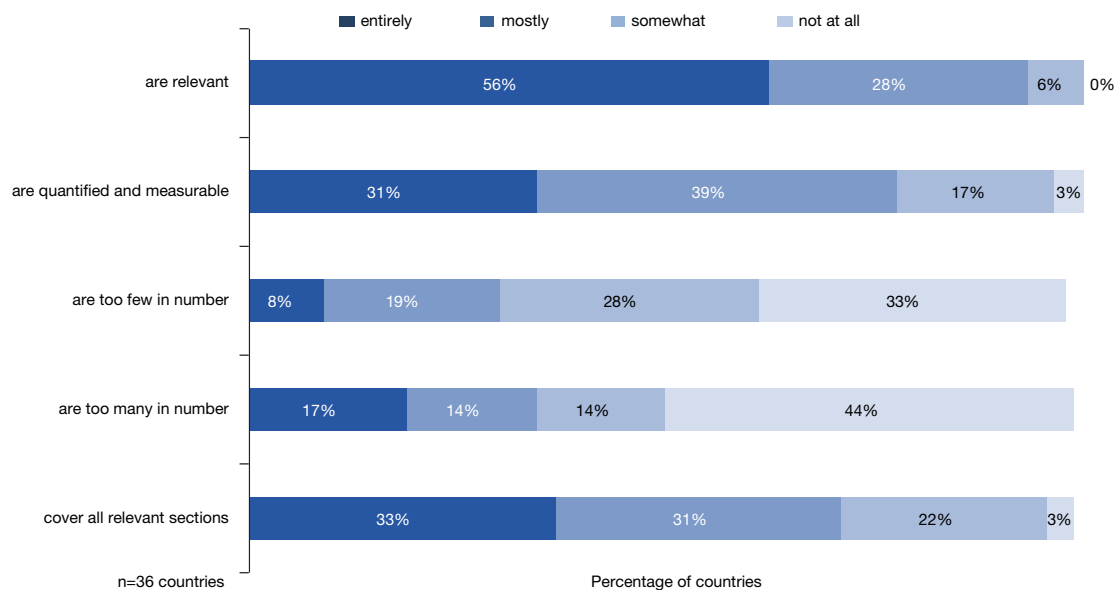


support to national priorities, but no targets were set. The issue of target setting should be investigated in greater detail in the next DCF survey. (Box 4)

Countries reported positively on the quality of targets in their NDCPs. Eighty-per cent of countries believe that their NDCP targets are entirely or mostly relevant, and 70

per cent believe that the targets are quantifiable and measurable. Few countries felt that the targets in their NDCPs were too few or too many, while 64 per cent of countries reported that their NDCP targets covered all relevant sectors. (Figure 14)

Figure 14: Quality of targets in NDCPs*



Note: Percentages in this figure may not total 100 owing to non-response by one or more respondent, or due to rounding.

Box 3: Coverage of disaster risk reduction and climate finance in NDCPs

The DCF study reviewed the 28 NDCPs to assess the coverage given to disaster risk reduction and management and found that very few NDCPs covered the issue. Where NDCPs made reference to disaster risk reduction, they referred to natural disasters linked to climate change. These NDCPs tended to belong to countries that have a history of climate-related natural disasters.

Country #1: The NDCP of this SIDS highlighted the opportunity to use climate financing innovatively to upscale, upgrade and climate-proof infrastructure to assure the resilience of people and communities, and not only the resilience of physical assets. It emphasized the importance of mainstreaming climate change and disaster risk reduction at national level and in sector-level development. The NDCP stressed the critical role international development cooperation plays in disaster response and recovery, and the necessity for better coordination among international development cooperation partners.

Country #2: The NDCP of another SIDS aims for development cooperation investments that are climate resilient and has integrated climate change risks in some of its policy analysis tools. The policy calls on partners to use these tools in the design of programme and project level development assistance. The country has established a trust fund to support disaster recovery and reconstruction and encourages development cooperation partners to allocate climate finance directly into this facility.

Country #3: The NDCP of a third SIDS emphasises the importance of coordination of disaster relief efforts of all national and international partners, domestic and international development cooperation through national structures. The policy, noting the challenges that middle-income countries experience in accessing ODA, proposes funding approaches should be more focused, so that climate change activities are preferably financed through climate finance and ODA is reserved for areas not eligible for climate finance. This country is in the process of reviewing its NDCP and it is envisaged that the new NDCP will pay greater attention to disaster risk reduction and climate finance.

Country #4: The NDCP of this LDC stresses the importance of climate finance to support implementation of its climate change strategy, national adaptation programmes and actions to mitigate disasters. Climate finance is also required to develop capacity to access, leverage, coordinate and deploy climate finance. The NDCP requires all development partners to report their climate change related expenditure (on-budget and off-budget), onto the DCIS, for transparency and better planning of climate change mitigation activities.



Box 4: Targets in NDCPs

The NDCP of this country, a least developed country, aims to enhance government ownership of development, ensure alignment of external partners' programmes with their national development strategy for achieving the SDGs, and strengthen the management and coordination of ODA. The NDCP sets out a comprehensive list of commitments required of international development partners and government, and identifies specific targets that are monitored to assess progress against these commitments. It includes baselines against which progress is assessed. The targets are a mixture of quantitative and qualitative targets. Below are examples of these targets.

Targets for international development partners

- Increasing use of country systems: extension of budget support: 57% (2004/05) to 80% (2017)
- Increased use of multiyear programs for predictability: Baseline 88% of development partners
- Use of Joint Policy Matrix for general budget support: 0% (2008) to 70% (2017)
- Use of joint assessment studies

Targets for government

- All aid on budget by 2017
- Improved quality Public finance management systems – reflected in commitments of Joint Policy Matrix and release of general budget support
- Use of M&E framework: all sector plans have M&E frameworks; variations in selection of indicators, all align to M&E framework for the National Development Strategy 2017-2020

3.5 Monitoring and review

Evaluating policies is necessary to determine the extent to which objectives of the policy are being met and what changes, if any, are required. Periodic evaluations of NDCPs, as distinct from the routine monitoring of projects and programmes, can add value to countries' efforts to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation. These evaluations also provide an excellent opportunity for mutual learning among stakeholders. Country and global contexts are dynamic, and policies need to be evaluated or reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they remain relevant to the changing circumstances. Evaluation or review of the NDCP can assist countries to assess the extent to which the NDCP is achieving its objectives, gaps or areas for improvement in the CRF, and the operational efficiency of the development cooperation infrastructure including the DCIS and NDCE.

There are no 'hard and fast' rules about when these evaluations or reviews should be conducted; for example, updating every 3-5 years in line with the review of the national development plan or strategy could be one approach. More generally, it is good practice to specify in the NDCP when it will be reviewed. There may be significant national events, such as a change in government, that may warrant review of the NDCP before its official review date.

Most countries in previous DCF studies (2016, 2018) reported that they had not conducted or commissioned an independent evaluation of international development cooperation. This continued to be the case in 2020, where 72 per cent of countries reported that they had not yet conducted or commissioned such an evaluation.

In a sample of NDCPs reviewed, several of the NDCPs make provisions for monitoring and evaluation of development cooperation activities. (Box 5) They tend

Box 5: Approaches to monitoring & evaluation in Latin American countries

NDCPs of countries from the Latin America and Caribbean region cover the evaluation of development cooperation in great detail, which may be indicative of the high value these countries place on evaluation. This may also be a result of the dual role played by many countries in the region as both developing countries which use ODA as a source of development finance and as international development cooperation partners who offer financial and non-financial support to other developing countries.

Country #1: The NDCP of this high-income country discusses monitoring, evaluation and learning in development cooperation. Its approach is to build national evaluation capacities through developing common methodologies, guides and training to enable national actors to conduct evaluations. The NDCP highlights the importance of having adequately resourced development cooperation coordination units and access to real-time data for effective monitoring and evaluation of development cooperation. The NDCP requires that an evaluation plan be developed, identifying projects selected for evaluation (based on criteria) and communicated in the annual operational plan. It requires data disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age and geographic region, and that where appropriate, evaluations should adopt participatory approaches that involve project beneficiaries. The NDCP encourages the use of peer review as a means of mutual learning.

Country #2: The NDCP of this upper middle-income country sets out in detail the principles and mechanisms for the evaluation of projects and programmes. Evaluation is seen as necessary, not only for accountability but also for learning. All programmes have to be evaluated on completion and case studies documented and disseminated for learning. The NDCP prioritises joint evaluation between development cooperation partners and implementing agents as a means to build national evaluation capacities.

Country #3: The NDCP of another high-income country in the region stipulates that the policy be evaluated at mid-term and at the end-of-term of the policy to assess the extent to which the policy has achieved its intended results and to identify what changes should be made to the policy. Furthermore, the NDCP proposes a multi-stakeholder evaluation team with representatives from government, international development cooperation partners, academia, civil society and the private sector, and that the results of the evaluation be made public.

to emphasise routine monitoring of projects and programmes. There were four NDCPs that made provision for the periodic evaluation of the NDCP. One NDCP stated that there should be an external evaluation of the policy every two years, while another made provision for an annual review of the NDCP.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has highlighted the important oversight role that parliaments play in international development cooperation; it has urged governments to provide annual progress reports on the implementation of NDCPs to their respective parliaments.¹¹ Parliaments could play a stronger role in oversight, as only 39 per cent of countries in the 2019/2020 DCF survey indicated that parliament reviewed the policy in a public hearing before the policy came into effect. The same percentage reported that their NDCPs required progress reports be submitted to parliament.

3.6 Proposals for further action

- i. Countries that do not have stand-alone NDCPs should be encouraged to develop one or ensure that NDCPs are clearly identified within national sustainable development plans.
- ii. NDCPs should include and make provision for regular comprehensive reviews of the policy. Review cycles should take into account significant changes in the national, regional or global context.
- iii. Countries developing new NDCPs or reviewing existing ones should ensure that their NDCPs incorporate a better understanding and assessment of development risks that could impact on achievement of sustainable development. They should also reflect on how international development cooperation partners can support building resilience.

4. Country Results Frameworks (CRFs)



4.1 CRFs for monitoring and review

The 2030 Agenda underscored the imperative of CRFs to monitor and evaluate the contribution of international development cooperation to achieving the wide-ranging commitments and ambitious targets in the SDGs. CRFs bring a results focus to development cooperation, reinforcing country ownership and alignment with national sustainable development strategies. CRFs also enable knowledge sharing and mutual learning between governments and their partners in international development cooperation, as well as domestic actors and stakeholders. The information from CRFs and progress reports on results can usefully inform policy dialogue, identify successes for scaling up and challenges to be addressed, while contributing to improved transparency in development cooperation.

Developing CRFs in close consultation with partners and stakeholders can enhance trust in and encourage their use by external partners. While parallel frameworks serve the needs of external partners to monitor progress and report to their capitals/headquarters, they have a number of unintended consequences for developing countries. Most significantly, parallel frameworks undermine or detract from efforts to strengthen country ownership and country systems. They also fragment development cooperation information¹² and put an extra reporting burden on developing countries, straining limited capacities.

Previous DCF surveys found considerable room for improvement in CRFs and proposed that capacity support to developing countries to develop and strengthen their

CRFs should be prioritized. As mentioned in Section 2 above, 24 countries reported that they had received capacity support for their CRFs.

4.2 Prevalence of CRFs

A notably lower number and percentage of countries reported that CRFs were in place in 2020 compared to the previous survey. Twenty-nine of 52 countries (56 per cent) reported that they had a CRF or equivalent framework to review the performance and results of international development cooperation, compared to 72 per cent in 2018. Twenty-three countries (44 percent) had no CRF or other framework in place. (Figure 15)

The interviews with a sample of countries revealed various explanations for these data, which may be applicable for other countries. Reasons for not having a CRF or similar tool ranged from lack of need for a CRF to obstacles to operationalizing them. One explanation given was that NDCPs were in the process of being developed or revised, which would subsequently inform a CRF. Another reason advanced was that there was no demand for a CRF given that development cooperation formed a very small proportion of public resources. One country indicated that monitoring of progress was dispersed across various ministries and not centralized in a single CRF. Another country stated that implementing and maintaining a dedicated CRF was too costly and so it instead relied on the central planning authority to monitor progress in a limited way.

While the prevalence of CRFs has dropped since 2018, the usage of existing country-led results frameworks has also not improved. Survey results suggest that external

Figure 15: Prevalence of country results frameworks 2020 compared to 2018

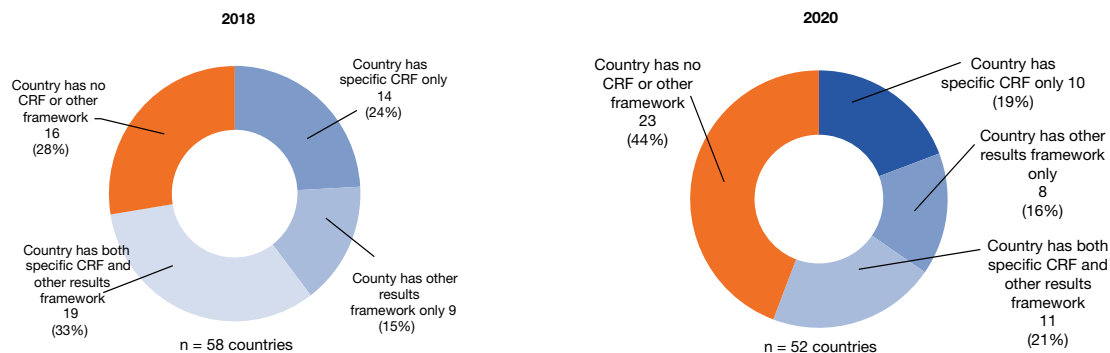
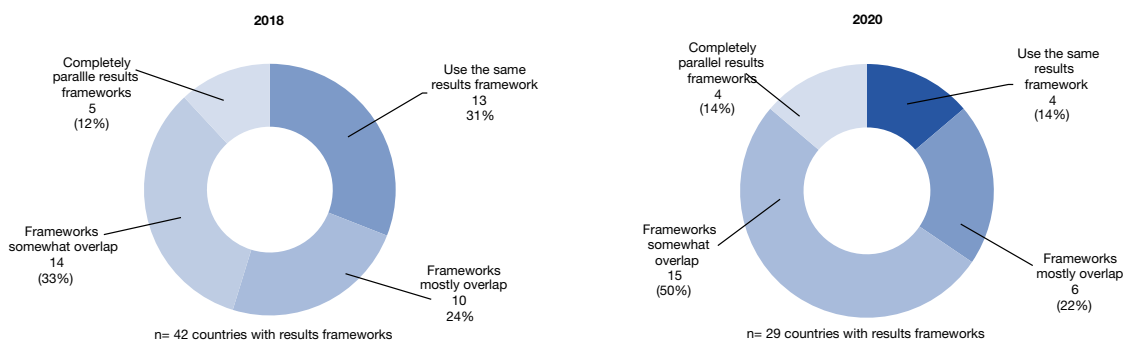


Figure 16: Extent to which partners have parallel results frameworks



partners are more likely to use parallel or near-parallel results frameworks than they are to use the developing country-led results framework. Only 36 per cent of countries responded that they and external partners used the same, or mostly overlapping, results framework compared to 55 per cent of countries in 2018. (Figure 16)

As in previous rounds, the 2019/2020 DCF survey identified challenges faced by developing countries in operationalizing results frameworks, including the quality and reliability of data, the costs of data collection, and the lack of technical skills. The reporting obligations of international development cooperation partners to their capitals were also identified as reason for the use of parallel frameworks. Responding countries articulated their need for capacity support to strengthen their DCIS, monitoring and evaluation capacities and improve the quality of data for monitoring development cooperation.¹³

4.3 Targets in CRFs

Past DCF surveys have identified the importance of setting targets for development cooperation actors in order to strengthen effectiveness of development cooperation. In this regard, there has been improvement in some areas in 2020. Fifty-five per cent of countries with CRFs reported that their CRFs contained targets for individual development cooperation partners, compared to 32 per cent in 2018. Target-setting also improved at local and regional levels of government, with 59 per cent of countries reporting targets for this level, compared to 41 per cent in 2018. Setting of targets for OECD-DAC partners is low, for reasons discussed in section 3.4 of this report. (Figure 17)

4.4 Monitoring and review

Countries are giving attention to monitoring and review of progress towards targets in their CRFs of both developing countries and development cooperation partners (Box 6). In 2020, 23 of 28 countries (82 per cent) with CRFs reported assessing progress in the last two years towards targets, compared with 71 per cent of countries in 2018. Furthermore, 27 countries (96 per cent) indicated that their line ministries assessed progress against sectoral targets. Twenty-four countries (83 per cent)¹⁴ reported that assessments were done jointly with their international development cooperation partners, and 22 countries (76 per cent) indicated that the results of assessments were discussed at the national development cooperation forum or similar structure. (Figure 18)

Slightly more than one-third of countries (36 per cent) reported that monitoring highly improved alignment of external partners' activities with national priorities, and 57 per cent of countries reported that monitoring moderately improved alignment. This means that 93 per cent of countries with CRF perceived the monitoring of targets as a contributing factor to improving alignment of external partners' activities with national priorities (Figure 19). This is an improvement over the 2017/2018 results, where 78 per cent of countries reported improvement in alignment of partners' activities with national priorities. Governments and partners jointly defining targets and discussing progress at NDCFs, backed up by higher quality data from DCIS, can help to further improve alignment with national priorities.

Figure 17: Targets for actors in country results framework

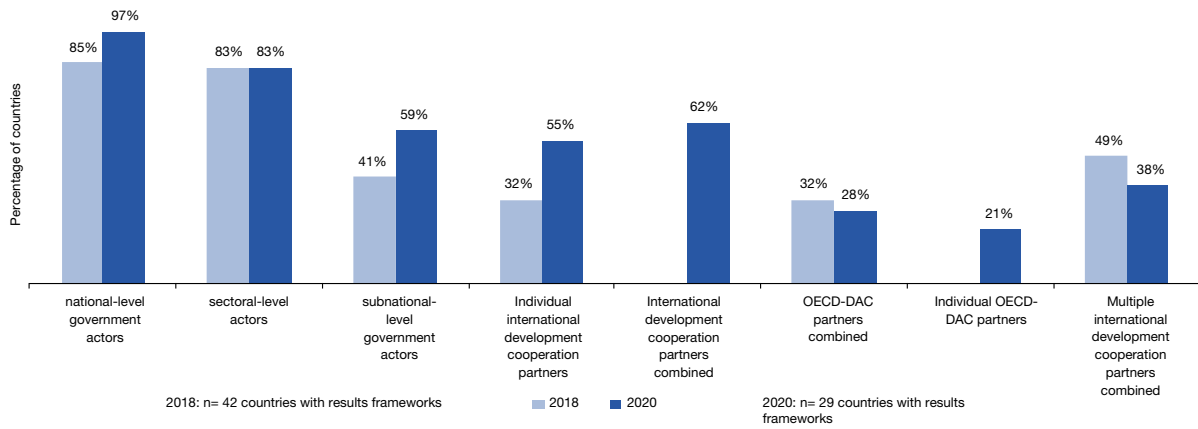
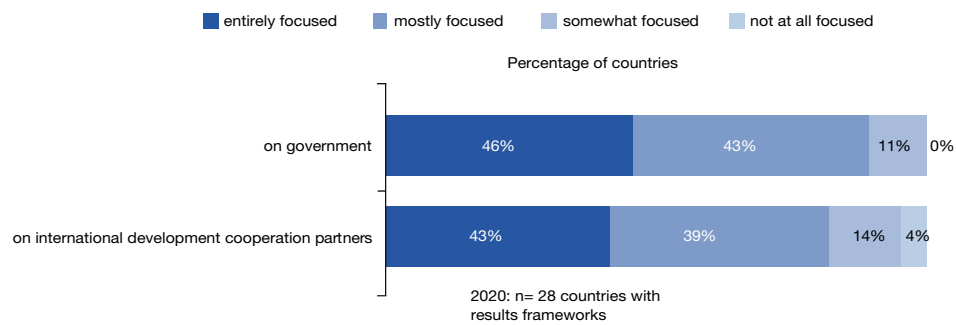
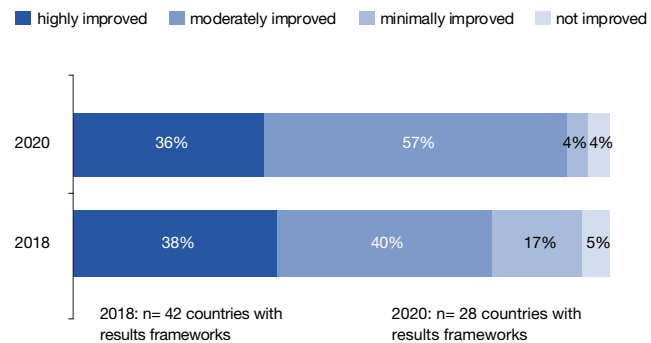


Figure 18: Focus of reviews



Note: Percentages in this figure may not total 100 owing to non-response by one or more respondent, or due to rounding.

Figure 19: Extent to which monitoring of targets improved alignment



Note: Percentages in this figure may not total 100 owing to non-response by one or more respondent, or due to rounding.

Box 6: Country results framework in NDCP

Following a review of the state of development cooperation in 2016, one African country developed a new NDCP that affirmed and strengthened its leadership role in setting the agenda for development cooperation and improving its effectiveness. This was done in anticipation of a large increase in financial flows following the country's emergence from conflict. The NDCP is comprehensive, with a set of hierarchical objectives that cover the 2030 Agenda; each objective has a strategy and accompanying actions to achieve the objectives. The NDCP includes a comprehensive results framework to monitor progress with the vision, strategic objectives, operational objectives and actions. The results framework sets out the objectives, indicators, sources of data for monitoring, baselines (in some instances), and targets. Examples of these are included below:

<p>Objective at level of Vision: Substantially reduce the country's dependence on aid by 2063</p>	<p><i>Indicator:</i> Share of total aid in relation to GDP (Baseline: 10.65% - 2014; Target: <3% - 2063)</p>
<p>General objective: Affirm the leadership of the state in governance, strategic and operational management of aid</p>	<p><i>Indicator:</i> Number of strategic objectives achieved or exceeded by 2030. (Target: 6)</p>
<p>Strategic objective: Define an egalitarian system of territorial and demographic equalization of aid targeted at the most vulnerable populations</p>	<p><i>Indicator:</i> Ratio between the amount of aid per region receiving the most aid and the amount per region receiving the least aid (Baseline: not known, Target 3 by 2030)</p> <p><i>Indicator:</i> Ratio between per capita aid per region receiving the most aid and per capita aid per region receiving the least aid (Baseline: not known, Target 3 by 2030)</p>
<p>Strategic objective: Develop decentralized cooperation partnerships between foreign local authorities and country's local authorities, as well as decentralized budget support in order to support the decentralization process</p>	<p><i>Indicator:</i> Number of partnerships (Baseline: 5 partnerships, Target: >5 partnerships by 2030)</p>
<p>Operational objective action: Participate in the International Aid Transparency Initiative and use data that meets the standard of the International Aid Transparency Initiative</p>	<p><i>Indicator:</i> Number of technical and financial partners who provide their help data in IATI format (Baseline: 87, Target: >87 by 2030)</p>

4.5 Proposals for further action

- i.** Developing countries that do not have CRFs or similar means for monitoring results of development cooperation are encouraged to develop CRFs (or equivalent) that are aligned with their national sustainable development plans. CRFs need not be stand-alone documents and can form part of the NDCP.
- ii.** International development cooperation partners should align with country-led results frameworks, both in the planning and monitoring stages, and consequently avoid the practice of using parallel frameworks.
- iii.** International development cooperation partners should continue to support strengthening of development countries' capacities in using results-based approaches to development cooperation, including the operationalization of CRFs.
- iv.** Developing countries should invest in strengthening their negotiation capacity to secure agreed targets from international development cooperation partners. This is especially necessary where responsibility for development cooperation is shared, for example, between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. Development Cooperation Information Systems (DCIS)

5.1 DCIS for generating credible evidence

Effective development cooperation requires accurate, reliable, and timely information. Development cooperation information systems (DCIS) enable governments to collect this information in a structured way, thereby facilitating analysis and reporting on development cooperation. An effective DCIS generates credible evidence that can be used to inform development cooperation policies, programmes and projects. Advances in technology present governments with an array of tools for data collection, analysis and reporting, in development cooperation as well as other areas.

Previous DCF surveys identified several areas for improvement in DCIS and recommended capacity support to developing country governments to develop and enhance their DCIS. Areas identified for improvement included tracking development cooperation ‘beyond ODA’, expanding the sources of data for the DCIS, and ensuring availability of the DCIS to a wide range of stakeholders, especially parliaments.

5.2 Use of DCIS

DCIS continue to be used mainly for monitoring and evaluation of international development cooperation flows (97 per cent of countries) and individual projects

and programmes (90 per cent). It is encouraging that, in 2020, a larger percentage of countries (77 per cent) are using DCIS for assessing mutual progress towards effectiveness commitments, compared to 60 per cent of countries in 2018. (Figure 20)

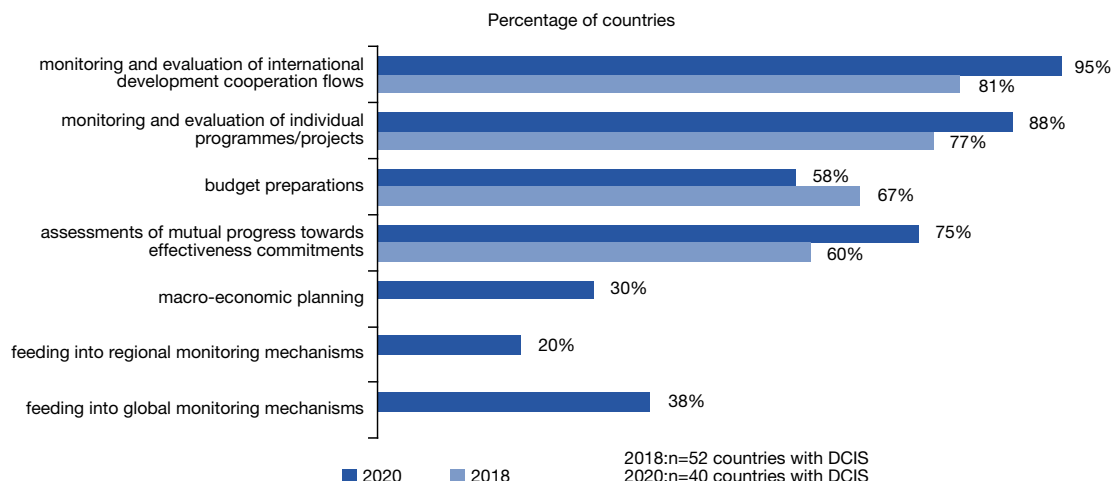
“Using the DCIS has reduced duplication of projects and activities and increased untied aid.”
– Survey respondent

A DCIS that has comprehensive and accurate information should serve as an important data source for informing developing countries’ efforts in mobilizing and managing domestic and international financial resources in support of national sustainable development plans. The

2019/2020 found that 58 per cent of countries use their DCIS for budget preparations, compared to 67 per cent of countries in the 2017/2018 survey. A small percentage of countries (30 per cent) use the DCIS for macroeconomic planning. The quality (comprehensiveness and accuracy) and timeliness of the data in the DCIS may limit their use for budgeting and macroeconomic planning, with implications also for the contribution of the DCIS to integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs). (Box 7)

A positive finding is that more than one-third (38 per cent) of countries are using their DCIS to feed into global monitoring exercises, for example, DCF assessments of

Figure 20: Uses of DCIS





trends, progress and emerging issues in international development cooperation, the GPEDC monitoring exercise and the International Aid Transparency Initiative. One-fifth of countries (20 per cent) use their DCIS to feed into regional mechanisms, for example, regional mapping of SDGs.

5.3 Prevalance and scope of DCIS

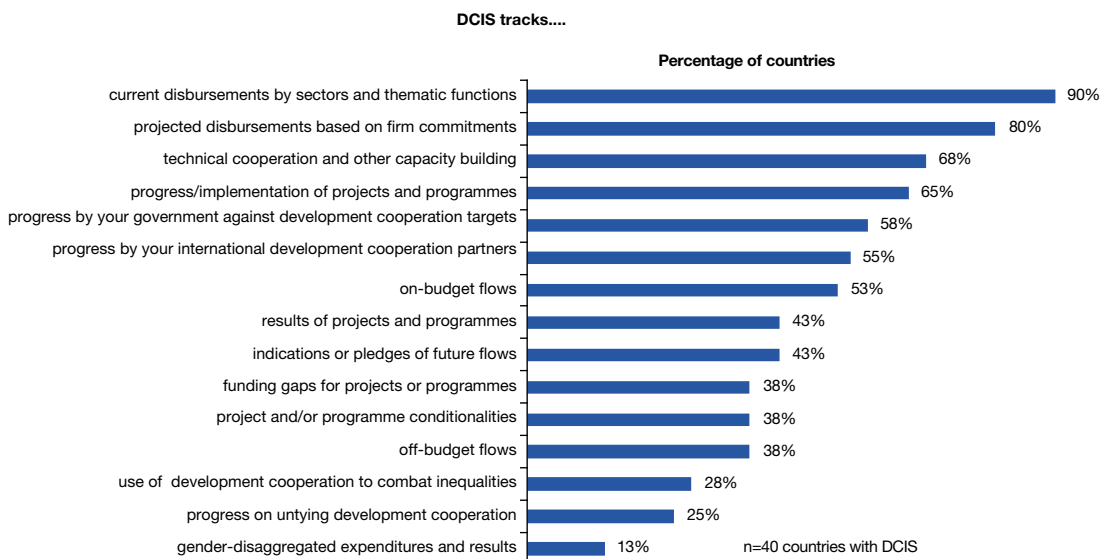
Forty of 52 countries (77 per cent) have a dedicated system for tracking international development cooperation at country level. Of these, 16 countries have additional systems to collect information on international development cooperation. This is a notable drop from the 2017/2018

DCF survey results, in which 90 per cent of countries reported having a DCIS or other system for tracking international development cooperation.

There have been no major changes in the scope of DCIS since the 2017/2018 DCF survey. Development cooperation information systems continue to be used mainly for tracking current and projected disbursements. More than two-thirds of countries' DCIS track technical cooperation and capacity building (68 per cent). (Figure 21).

Countries must be able to track results of projects and programmes to assess their progress and the effectiveness of development cooperation. They also require information on all development cooperation flows, funding gaps and conditionalities in order to plan and implement effectively.

Figure 21: Scope of DCIS



Box 7: Country experiences of DCIS

Country #1: This LDC has had 10 years' experience with the DCIS. Despite the creation of a new DCIS with development partners, maintenance costs proved too high. The country has now developed its own local and low-cost system, which has been running for two years and is showing good results. Maintaining the system is challenging, in part because of high staff turnover in the development cooperation coordination unit. Other challenges include the voluntary nature of data entry by external partners and ensuring the quality of data. The country is working on linking the DCIS to the budgeting system and procurement system. It is also enhancing the system to enable sharing of data with other countries in the region and considering proposals to make data provision mandatory. An important lesson shared: Keep the DCIS simple for data entry and use, and provide clear user guidelines for navigating the system.

Country #2: The DCIS in this Lower middle-income country is housed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry believes that the DCIS has added value, enhancing transparency and accountability. The government is able to see the progress and impact of development cooperation. One challenge is that updating information is expensive.

Advice to others:

- Develop a DCIS that is robust and capable of collecting and updating a large volume of information/data.
- Be clear on the type and availability of information needed for the DCIS.
- Ensure that the information is reliable so that it can be used strategically for implementation.
- Try to get real-time information to facilitate decisions and adaptation based on the reality on the ground.
- Enable access to DCIS by policy-makers and build confidence in its information/data.

Country #3: This Upper middle-income country developed its DCIS in 2015. The country redesigned the DCIS in 2019 to enable projects to be linked to the SDGs and the National Sustainable Development Strategy. The redesigned DCIS is now maintained locally at a lower cost. The development cooperation coordination unit is the main user of the DCIS and extracts information for annual reports that are, in turn, distributed to international development cooperation partners. However, international development cooperation partners, who input data and update annually, have complained that the new system is not user-friendly. The development cooperation coordination unit is now assisting the partners to input the data.

Country #4: The DCIS of this SIDS reports on the status of projects funded by government and other development cooperation actors. This includes information on expenditure, progress and challenges. The DCIS is rudimentary and much work must be done manually/off-line, such as the analytical reports for presentation to executive authorities. A new system is being developed that will capture the entire project management cycle. Staff in project management units will be trained to use the new DCIS.

Fewer than 50 per cent of countries responded that their DCIS tracked results, off-budget flows, funding gaps and conditionalities.

One area where there appears to be a slight improvement in DCIS is tracking the use of international development cooperation to combat inequalities, which increased from 13 per cent of countries in 2017/2018 to 28 per cent in 2019/2020. However, this remains a small percentage of countries using their DCIS to support achievement of this critical objective.

One of the SDG 5 indicators measures the percentage of countries that have systems to track allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. The DCF surveys have consistently raised the near-absence of tracking gender-disaggregated expenditure in DCIS, yet progress remains limited. Only 13 per cent of countries with DCIS reported that their systems tracked

gender-disaggregated expenditure and results in 2019/2020, reflecting no change since 2017/2018 and a decline from 23 per cent in 2015/2016. The 2020 Financing for Sustainable Development Report (FSDR) notes that between 2015 and 2017, approximately 11 per cent of commitments to statistics from bilateral donors targeted gender data, up from three per cent between 2010 and 2012.

5.4 Access to DCIS

The 2019/2020 DCF survey found that 95 per cent of countries have national-level government ministries as regular users, followed by international development cooperation partners (80 per cent of countries) and multilateral organizations excluding multilateral development banks (60 per cent of countries). International NGOs, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and trade

unions were not identified as regular users of DCIS information. Previous DCF surveys showed similar results.

In the 2019/2020 DCF survey, 53 per cent of countries responded that parliaments were regular users of DCIS information. This is a slight increase over the 48 per cent countries that reported parliaments as regular users in the 2017/2018 survey. (Figure 22)

Transparency of international development cooperation requires accessibility to DCIS information by a diverse range of actors and stakeholders. In the 2019/2020 DCF survey, 65 per cent of countries have legislation or other mechanisms that require governments to make development cooperation information available to the public.

Access to development cooperation information has improved for a number of development cooperation actors and stakeholders, including national and local and regional levels of government and international development cooperation partners. In 2019/2020, 58 per cent of countries responded that their DCIS were fully accessible to parliaments compared to 40 per cent in 2018. (Figure 23)

Half of the responding countries in 2019/2020 have made their DCIS fully accessible to non-state actors: 50 per cent of countries have DCIS fully accessible to academia/research/policy think tanks; and 48 per cent of countries have DCIS fully accessible to the media and the general public. The comparative figures for 2018 were 33 per cent, 33 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively. It is also worth noting that 43 per cent of countries have DCIS fully accessible to persons with disabilities compared to 25 per cent in 2018.

The DCIS is fully accessible to national NGOs/CSOs in 53 per cent of responding countries and fully accessible to international NGOs/CSOs in 45 per cent of respondent countries. The CPDE's 2019 report found that 59 per cent

of surveyed countries perceived CSO access to development cooperation information at country level as good to very good. The report raised concern, however, that a sizeable minority (41 per cent) perceived access to be poor or non-existent.¹⁵

Information on projects, monitoring and evaluation reports, and loan and grant agreements are fully accessible to stakeholders in 85 per cent, 70 per cent and 60 per cent of countries, respectively. Fewer countries have made procurement contract bidding and award documents, as well as documents on conditionalities of development cooperation, fully available to stakeholders (Figure 24). Improved accessibility and reporting in these areas could help effectiveness of decision-making and monitoring and review of diverse financing mechanisms.¹⁶

5.5 Sources of information for DCIS

Responding countries continue to heavily rely on information and data from their international development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations, relative to their own ministries. If international development cooperation partners do not provide quality and timely information, this has a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of the DCIS (see section 5.6). In 2020, 83 per cent of countries with DCIS used information from international development cooperation partners and 78 per cent of countries sourced information from multilateral development banks. This is in contrast to the lower percentage of countries that reported using information from their own ministries: 68 per cent use information from the ministry responsible for national development planning, 65 per cent use information from line ministries, and 60 per cent use information from ministries responsible for the budget.

Figure 22: Regular users of information from the DCIS

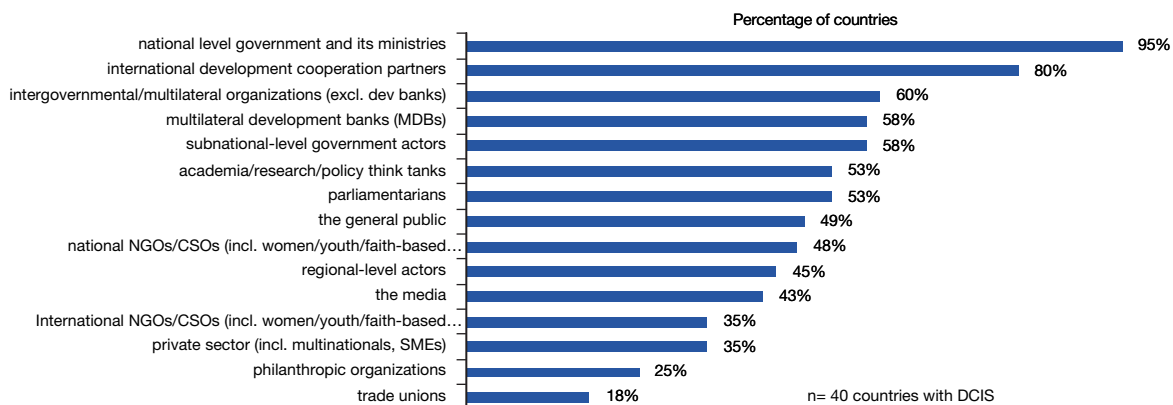


Figure 23: DCIS fully accessible to actors and stakeholders

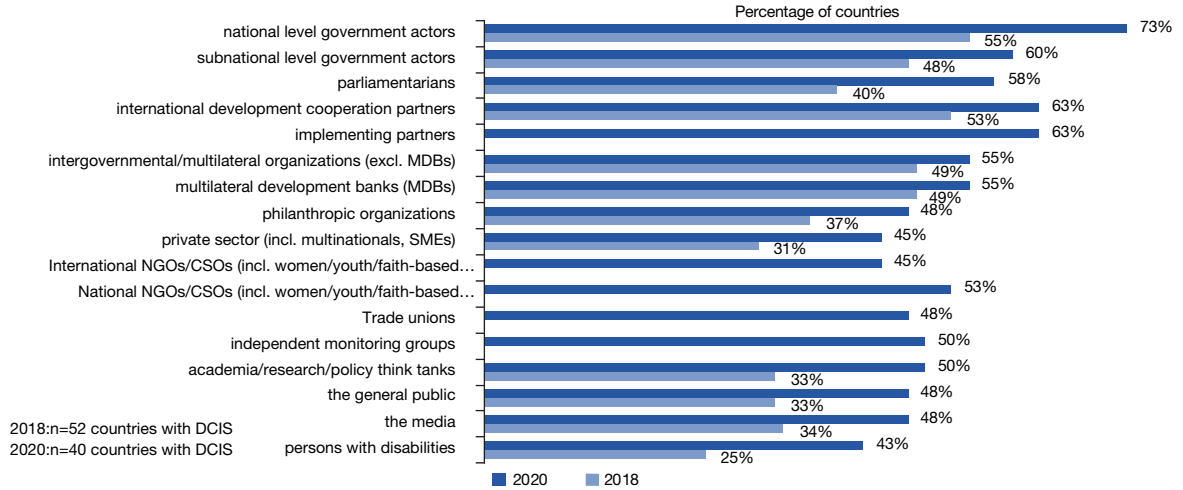


Figure 24: Types of information fully accessible to stakeholders

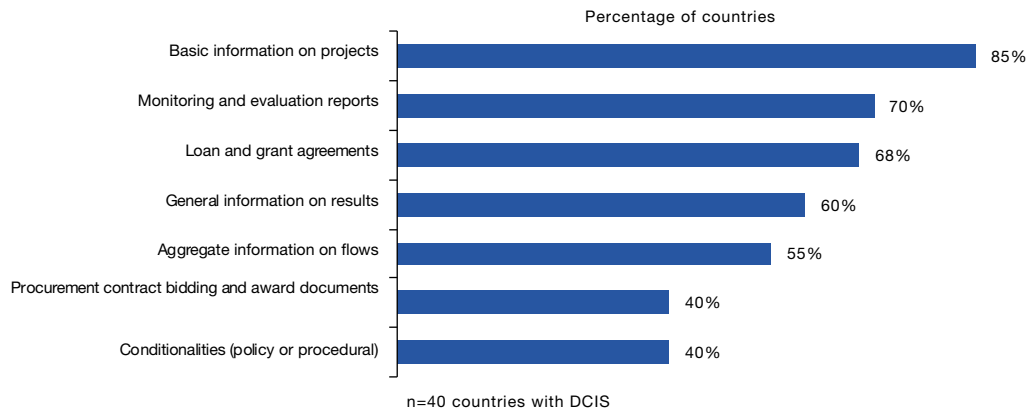


Figure 25: Sources of information for DCIS



Only 33 per cent of countries used information sourced from local and regional governments. The lower usage of data from government ministries at national and subnational levels may be indicative of capacity challenges in these organizations. It may also reflect a lack of incentives or onerous reporting processes for submitting information to the national ministry responsible for the coordination of development cooperation. (Figure 25)

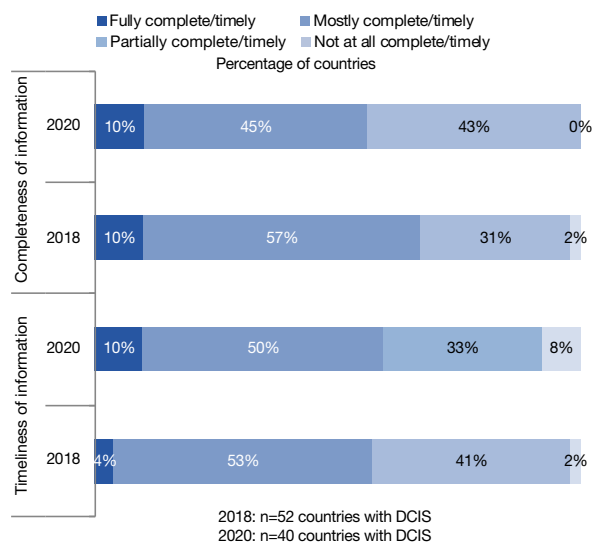
Survey respondents identified the need for capacity support to strengthen their DCIS. As highlighted by two interviewees, an important lesson was that developing the DCIS locally enhanced country ownership of the DCIS. Also, strengthening capacities of government ministries and local and regional governments to generate quality and timely information can contribute greatly to enhanced country ownership of the DCIS.

Non-state organizations were least likely to be used as sources of information for the DCIS. Respondents to previous surveys indicated that one of the reasons for not using information from non-state actors was legal/regulatory restrictions on the use of information from non-official sources, as well as concerns about the quality of the data.

5.6 Quality of DCIS information

As demonstrated in Figure 25, international development cooperation partners are the main source of information for DCIS in the responding countries. The completeness and timeliness of the information they provide therefore plays a large role in the quality of the DCIS. Just over half of the countries with DCIS (55 per cent) reported that data were mostly or fully complete in 2020 compared to

Figure 26: Quality and timeliness of information from international development cooperation partners



Note: Percentages in this figure may not total 100 owing to non-response by one or more respondent, or due to rounding.

67 per cent of countries in 2018. The timeliness of information from international development cooperation partners appears to have improved slightly: 60 per cent of countries assessed the information as fully timely or mostly timely compared to 57 per cent in 2018. (Figure 26)

In a positive sign, the number of countries identifying the lack of quality data as a significant barrier to change in international development cooperation has dropped, from 64 per cent of countries in 2018 to 56 per cent in 2020.

“It [DCIS] has created a culture of transparency and is helping to better coordinate and align international cooperation efforts that the country receives and provides,”

– Survey respondent

5.7 Impact of DCIS

Several countries that participated in the DCF survey believe that their DCIS have contributed to greater transparency and effectiveness in international development cooperation.

Countries mentioned that the information generated by the DCIS provides a basis for dialogue and contributes to improving the quality of dia-

logue between governments and their partners as well as domestic stakeholders. They also stated that the DCIS reduced duplication by providing a comprehensive overview of projects and programmes supported through international development cooperation. The DCIS and its accessibility to a diverse range of stakeholders including the general public has, according to one country, created an incentive for international development cooperation partners to provide timely, complete and accurate information. Another country commented that the DCIS helped to improve the level of predictability of development cooperation inflows and improved government’s access to financial and operational information of development cooperation partners. (Box 8)

Box 8: Improving data quality of DCIS

This African country used the opportunity presented by the 2030 Agenda to improve the quality and timeliness of data for the DCIS. It changed from relying solely on census data that was only collected every 10 years, to using data that public administration systems generated routinely. For example, rather than relying solely on census data, the DCIS is now able to obtain more current and timely information on the users of health services by using data from health administration systems.

Greater use of routine public administration data required intensive capacity building at national and local levels. Every quarter, statistical data officers analyse the data. There is greater uptake and use the information, since it is more frequently updated. Monitoring and review through the Voluntary National Reviews provide another incentive for improving the quality of data.

Obtaining reliable data from international development cooperation partners remains a challenge. There are discrepancies between the data from development partners and the data from those implementing the projects. The DCIS is helping to improve this by resolving discrepancies at the point of data entry.

Currently, access is limited to national and regional government officials, and a few international development cooperation partners. The country is working on improving civil society access to the DCIS. Currently civil society organizations can obtain information by contacting the focal point in their sector. Civil society organizations do not have access to input data because of quality concerns.

5.8 Proposals for further action

- i. National governments should improve DCIS to facilitate collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by gender and by other vulnerable groups. Gender markers and other inequality markers should be attached to all projects, programmes and initiatives facilitated through development cooperation. This will be critical as the impacts of COVID-19 could deepen existing inequalities.
- ii. International development cooperation partners should support developing countries to develop DCIS that can be maintained locally. They should also continue to improve the timeliness and quality of the development cooperation information they provide to the DCIS.
- iii. Developing countries and international development cooperation partners should invest in strengthening existing DCIS and capacities for data and statistical analysis. This includes capacity to extract and analyse data from existing databases to reduce transaction costs of data collection and improve the analytical quality of reports.
- iv. Developing countries are encouraged to continue to improve the accessibility of their DCIS to non-state actors.

6. National Development Cooperation Forums (NDCFs)



6.1 Multi-stakeholder platforms for accountability and learning

The 2030 Agenda emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships for the achievement of the agenda, as expressed in SDG 17. Where they existed prior to the SDGs, national development cooperation forums (NDCFs) were essentially forums bringing together the ministry responsible for coordinating development cooperation and international development cooperation partners (in particular OECD-DAC partners, other bilateral partners and multilateral organizations). As observed since the 2016 DCF survey study, adapting NDCFs to be inclusive of a wider range of stakeholders, international as well as domestic, has been an evolving process.

The shift to more inclusive NDCFs has been slower than the pace of change in NDCPs, which increasingly reflect the diverse landscape of development cooperation actors and instruments required to achieve national sustainable development objectives. Encouragingly, the two previous DCF surveys found that national development cooperation forums increasingly engaged line ministries and local and regional governments.

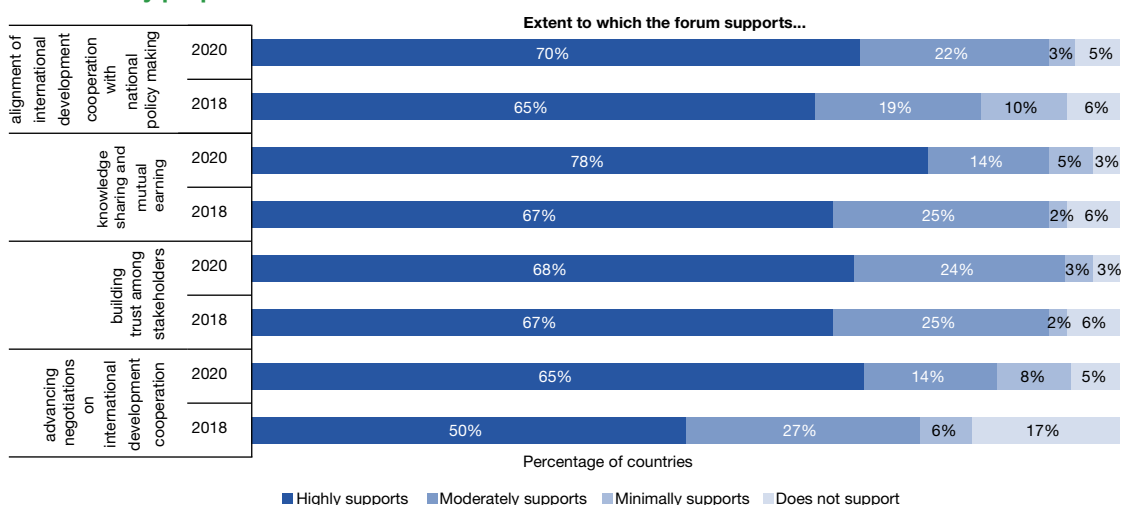
The results of the 2019/2020 DCF survey reflect increasingly positive views of the value of NDCFs as an enabler of effective development cooperation. (Box 9)

6.2 NDCFs and their use

In 2019/2020, 37 countries (71 per cent) had a main national forum or other forum for discussing overall progress in international development cooperation with external partners and other stakeholders. While this is a solid majority of countries, it does show a decline from the 2017/2018 and 2015/2016 surveys where 90 per cent of countries and 86 per cent of countries, respectively, reported having such forums. It is worth noting that 30 countries (58 per cent) in 2019/2020 had additional forums where overall progress in international development cooperation was discussed. In most instances these were sector working groups and partner-specific forums, such as private sector forums.

Countries most frequently identified NDCFs as highly supportive of knowledge and mutual learning (78 per cent of countries), closely followed by alignment of international development cooperation with national policy making (70 per cent). Overall, countries tended to be more positive about the value of NDCFs in the 2020 DCF survey than was the case in 2018. Specifically, NDCFs were seen as highly supportive of the advancement of negotiations on international development cooperation (65 per cent of countries in 2020 compared to 50 per cent in 2018). (Figure 27)

Figure 27: Primary purposes and value of NDCFs



Note: Percentages in this figure may not total 100 owing to non-response by one or more respondent, or due to rounding.



6.3 Stakeholder engagement in NDCFs

Inclusiveness of the diverse range of development cooperation actors is an important principle underpinning the 2030 and Addis Agendas, as it enables countries to draw on these actors' complementary strengths in implementation. NDCFs typically involve national ministries and international development cooperation partners (in general), OECD-DAC partners, multilateral organizations and development banks, and implementing partners. (Figure 28)

Local and regional governments (LRGs): There has been a positive shift in the extent to which LRGs are involved in NDCFs. In the 2019/2020 survey, 70 per cent of countries responded that this level of government was highly or moderately involved in NDCFs. Only 11 per cent of countries responded that LRGs were not involved at all, and 19 per cent responded that they were minimally involved in NDCFs (Figure 28). This contrasts favourably with the 2017/2018 survey, where 50 per cent of countries reported high or moderate involvement of LRGs in NDCFs, and 23 per cent were not involved at all.

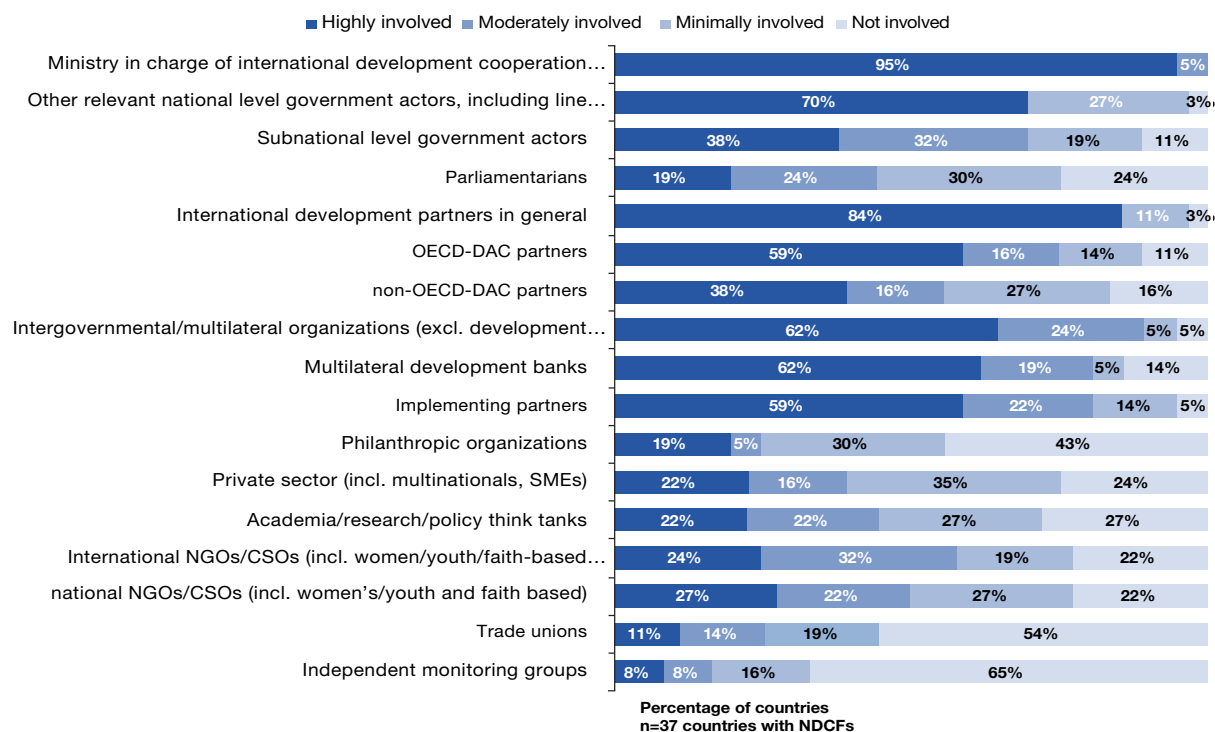
The need to engage LRGs in NDCFs cannot be over-emphasized. LRGs play a critical role in the achievement of the SDGs, as all of the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the mandates and work of local and regional governments. Local governments are not only implementers of the 2030 Agenda, they are also well placed to link the global goals to the needs and interests of local communities. Increased development cooperation, including development finance, at the LRG

level can amplify their impact. The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has been advocating strongly on the critical role played by LRGs through the localization of the SDGs, and the need to strengthen national voluntary review processes to ensure the fully-fledged participation of LRGs.¹⁷

Parliaments: In 2019/2020, 43 per cent of countries with NDCFs responded that parliaments were highly or moderately involved in their NDCFs, and nearly a quarter (24 per cent) responded that parliaments were not involved at all. This is a decline from the 53 per cent of countries that reported involvement of parliaments in the 2017/2018 survey. The surveys did not explore the reasons for limited participation of parliaments in NDCFs, and this could be an area of further research in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Non-state actors: Even though NDCPs of most countries identified roles for non-state actors in development cooperation, these actors were not involved in NDCFs to the same extent as state institutions, international development cooperation partners, international multilateral organizations and development banks. Independent monitoring groups, trade unions, and philanthropic organizations were the least likely to be engaged in NDCFs. Participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in NDCFs is much lower than participation of international development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations. This resonates with the concerns raised in the recent CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) survey about the limited CSO

Figure 28: Stakeholder involvement in forum



Note: Percentages in this figure may not total 100 owing to non-response by one or more respondent, or due to rounding

Box 9: Examples of NDCFs

National Development Cooperation Forums (NDCFs) across the world have several characteristics in common. Senior government officials usually chair the NDCF, and at times this role goes to very senior politicians. NDCFs meet at least once a year, and they usually have a dedicated secretariat staffed by government officials and located in the ministry responsible for the coordination of development cooperation. NDCFs serve as the platform for annual dialogue between governments and development cooperation actors (mainly international development cooperation partners) to review commitments of the past year and to identify priorities for the next year. Several countries have additional structures, for example, sector working groups that meet more frequently during the year and feed into the NDCF. Below are two examples of how NDCFs operate in a sample of countries that participated in the 2019/2020 DCF survey.

Country #1: This Upper middle-income country has a high-level forum chaired by the Prime Minister with the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The forum meets annually to review progress and identify priorities for the next year. The forum includes and attract participation of all international development cooperation partners, bilateral and multilateral organizations. Subnational-level governments do not participate directly in the forum and are instead represented by the Ministry responsible for local government. Non-state actors, for example, national and international NGOs, the private sector, and academia do not participate in the annual forum meetings. A dedicated secretariat staffed by government officials supports the functioning of the forum. In addition to the national forum, there are six annual thematic coordination meetings. The country reported that in practice the forum highly supports alignment of development cooperation with national priorities, knowledge management and learning, building trust among stakeholders, and advancing negotiations on international development cooperation.

Country #2: This Least Developed Country has a national forum that meets annually to discuss and review progress on issues of strategic development and financing for development. The Prime Minister chairs the forum, and senior level government officials, international development cooperation partners and non-state actors attend the annual meeting. The seniority of the government officials and public representatives at the forum is considered a major incentive for external partners and the private sector to send senior delegates. The country also has a consultative group that comprises government officials and international development cooperation partners, co-chaired by a representative of each. The consultative group aims to ensure coordination of development cooperation to minimize duplication of efforts. The country's final draft NDCP positions the NDCF as an inclusive forum for all actors, including civil society, the private sector and academia. Its responses to the 2019/2020 DCF survey indicate that it needs to do more to engage these actors as well as subnational governments more effectively in the forum.

Box 10: Experiences in engaging the private sector in NDCFs

Country #1: This Least Developed Country has a well-established NDCF that contains sub-forums or pillars for different sectors. The pillar for the private sector has been in place for some time, but the government experiences difficulty in getting the private sector fully on board. The formal private sector is small and has not seen the benefit of participating in the forum. The advent of COVID-19 has seen a greater interest from the private sector in working with the government.

Country #2: Another Least Developed Country's NDCP covers public-private partnerships and development finance specifically for the implementation of infrastructure projects. The private sector, however, is not a formal member of the NDCF but may be invited as an observer or invitee to address a specific matter on the agenda. The development cooperation coordination ministry indicated that, although it consults the private sector in development processes, it has not given the private sector incentives to participate in the NDCF so far.

Country #3: This Least Developed Country's NDCP identifies the business sector as an important development partner and intends to develop appropriate platforms and hubs for inclusive, structured and multi-stakeholder dialogue with the private sector. Work on strengthening the engagement of the private sector is in progress but has some way to go. The development cooperation coordination ministry identified the absence of a private sector engagement strategy as a gap, and so they have not been effective in communicating to the private sector how they can contribute. The distinctive mind-set of the private sector was also identified as a challenge.

Country #4: This African country pointed to its strong relationships with the private sector as a development partner. The NDCF has a dedicated slot on the agenda for the private sector, which is represented in the forum by a senior office holder from the sector. The private sector also served in the country's working group on the SDGs and participated in its Voluntary National Reviews.

Lessons learned in engaging the private sector:

1. Involve the private sector from the outset and not as an afterthought.
2. Provide clear incentives, showing the private sector how they can benefit from participation in the NDCF.
3. Strengthen private sector buy-in by seeking ideas from the private sector on initiatives and projects in their area of expertise.
4. Work with umbrella bodies, often more organized and able to reach their members and coordinate their inputs and participation in processes.

engagement in multi-stakeholder mechanisms. The CPDE survey of 22 countries found that most CSOs assessed the quality of existing multi-stakeholder dialogue practices as highly unsatisfactory.¹⁸

Private sector: The 2030 and Addis Agendas recognize the important role of the private sector in contributing financial resources and technical expertise, and the need for effective public-private dialogue on sustainable development. In the 2019/2020 survey, 38 per cent of countries with NDCFs responded that the private sector was highly or moderately involved in NDCFs. This is considerably lower than the 2017/2018 results that reported 54 per cent of countries had high or moderate private sector involvement in NDCFs.

The private sector is not homogenous and ranges from large corporations to small, medium and micro-enterprises. Countries have varying experiences in engaging the private sector in development cooperation and in the NDCF. This is to be expected as the size of the private sector, the level of maturity of the sector and the enabling environment vary from country-to-country. (Box 10)

The NDCPs are also a determining factor in the nature and extent of private sector engagement in development cooperation. The sample of countries interviewed in the

DCF study reflects the different experiences of countries in engaging the private sector in NDCFs.

Recent analysis by the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance has under-scored the potential for improving the quality of engagement between developing country governments and private sector actors in support of national sustainable development strategies, including by facilitating discussions on investment products, regulatory challenges and investment incentives.¹⁹ The DCF survey results further emphasize that capacities of developing countries to engage the private sector vary significantly in the context of NDCFs.

6.4 Monitoring and review

In past years, NDCFs mainly reviewed progress made by national government actors, in particular, ministries responsible for coordinating international development cooperation. This is not surprising given that targets in CRFs and NDCPs at the time were primarily for national governments of the developing countries.

The 2019/2020 DCF survey results show great improvement in coverage, with 70 per cent of countries

Figure 29: NDCF review of performance against targets

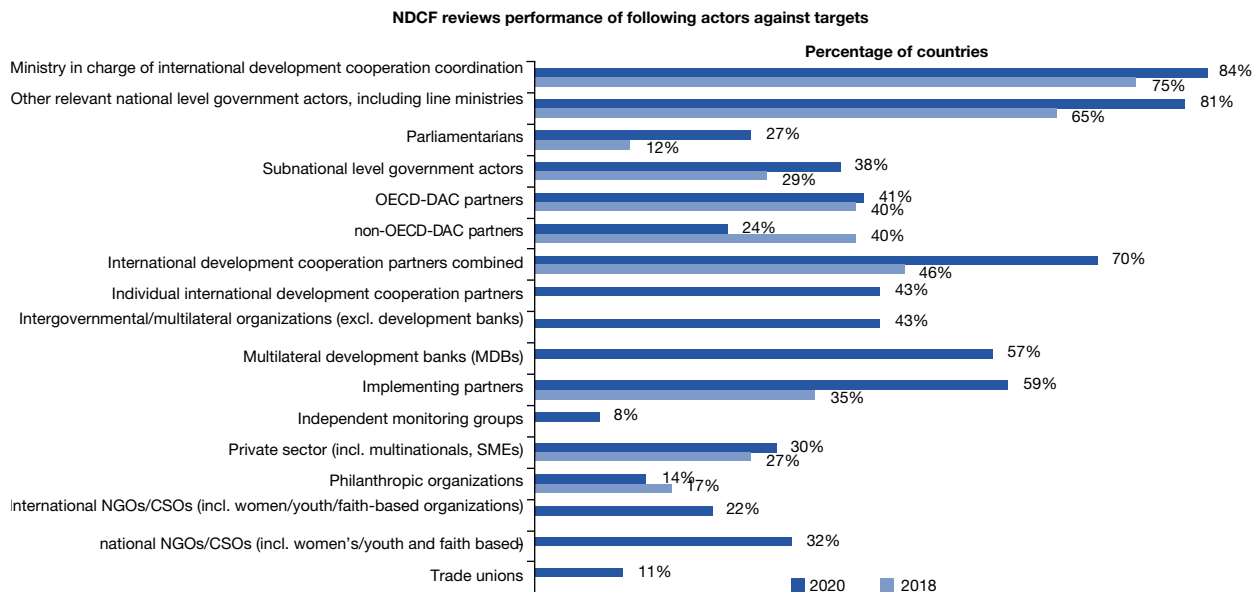
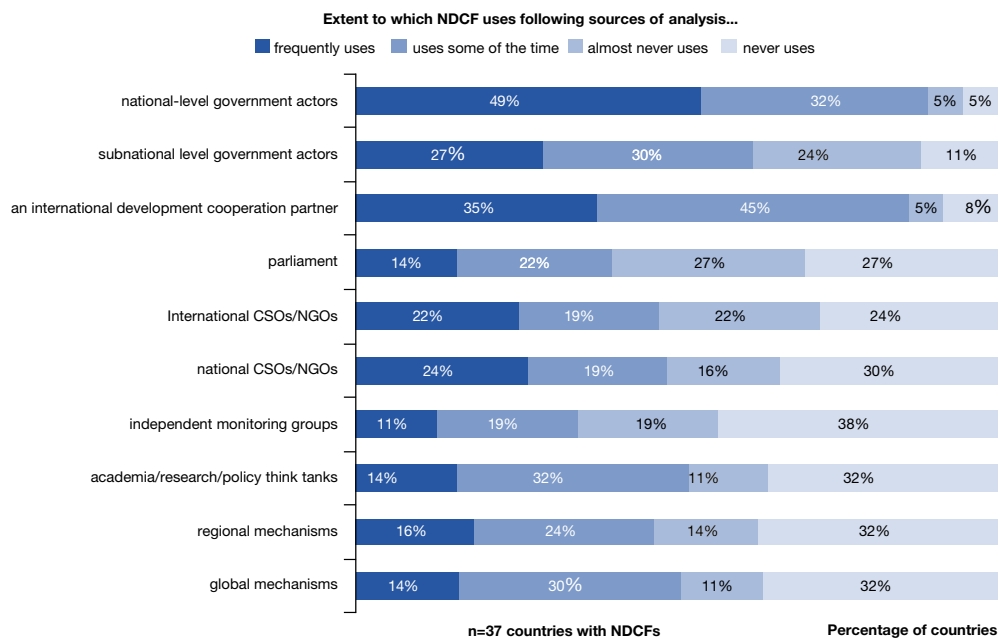


Figure 30: Sources of analysis of progress used in NDCFs



reporting that their NDCFs reviewed targets of international development cooperation partners as a group, compared to 46 per cent of countries in 2018. There was also an increase in the percentage of countries reporting that their NDCFs reviewed progress against targets for local and regional governments, implementing partners and the private sector. The percentage of countries that reviewed progress against targets for OECD-DAC partners and other non-OECD-DAC/bilateral partners remained below 50 per cent, as in 2018 (Figure 29). Of the countries with NDCFs, 32 per cent reported that they

frequently used the CRFs to assess progress against targets and another 35 per cent of countries indicated the CRFs were used some of the time.

While there has been a marginal increase in the percentage of countries that reviewed progress of local and regional governments, the percentage of countries that review such progress remains relatively low, at 38 per cent. This is consistent with findings of the latest UCLG report on the localization of the SDGs. It found that there was steady improvement in involving local and regional governments in reporting on the implementation of

the SDGs, but in practice only 42 per cent of countries gave local and regional governments an active role in the preparation of their voluntary national reviews. The report recommended greater support to local and regional governments to participate effectively in reporting and follow-up mechanisms. The report also recommended supporting bottom-up monitoring processes, such as Voluntary Local Reviews, to strengthen LRG participation in monitoring and reporting on SDG implementation.²⁰

6.5 Sources of analysis of progress

Using multiple sources of analysis of progress can expand the evidence base and bring more diverse perspectives to the discussions in NDCFs. Previous DCF surveys found that governments were the most frequently used sources, followed by international development cooperation partners. In the 2020 DCF survey, national governments, followed by LRGs and international development cooperation partners, provided the most frequently used sources.

Other sources of analysis continue to be used much less frequently. More than one-third of countries (38 per cent) reported that they never use independent monitoring groups as sources of analysis. Nearly one-third of countries (32 per cent) indicated that they never use academic/research/policy think tanks, regional mechanisms and global mechanisms as sources of analysis, and 30 per cent of countries never use national civil society organizations and national NGOs as sources of analysis. There may be several reasons for this, for example, actors not included in NDCFs are less likely to be used as sources of analysis of progress. There could also be concerns about the quality of the information. (Figure 30)

6.6 Impact and overall effectiveness of NDCFs

Most countries in 2019/2020 viewed their NDCFs as being effective in achieving their overall or primary purpose, namely, the alignment with national priorities, mutual learning, building trust and advancing negotiations in international development cooperation. Fifty-four per cent of countries rated their NDCFs as moderately effective and 30 per cent of countries rated their NDCFs as highly effective. This finding is similar to 2017/2018 where 48 per cent of countries rated their NDCFs as moderately effective and 33 per cent rated them as highly effective.

6.7 Proposals for further action

The 2019/2020 survey results show several improvements in NDCFs and strengths on which developing countries and other actors can build.

- i. National governments should encourage a wider range of development actors to participate in the NDCF than has been the case to date. They should encourage participation of stakeholders that have had limited involvement in the past, for example, philanthropic organizations, national civil society organizations, the private sector, trade unions, academia, and independent monitoring groups. This is an imperative for the response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic, and if countries wish to ‘build back better.’
- ii. Ministries responsible for local government can enhance the engagement of LRGs in NDCFs by strengthening capacities for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on development cooperation at the local and regional levels, to also contribute to VNR reporting.
- iii. International development cooperation partners should improve the quality of engagement with civil society organizations, including through the NDCFs. This can be achieved, for example through strengthening the enabling environment for national civil society organizations, capacity support for civil society organizations and holding civil society organizations accountable for their commitments.
- iv. National governments should improve the quality of engagement with the private sector. Units responsible for coordinating development cooperation should consider developing a strategy for engaging the private sector in the NDCF and their contribution to sustainable development. Countries can draw on the lessons shared by other countries in this DCF study and on proposals for stronger engagement on SDG implementation by the private sector.
- v. Trade unions have historically had limited engagement in NDCFs. Development cooperation coordination units should work with the ministry of labour and employee organizations to develop specific actions for engaging trade unions in NDCFs. COVID-19 has hit certain sectors of the labour force particularly hard, emphasizing the need to build fair wages and safe environments as economies build back their economies.

7. Conclusion

The 2019/2020 DCF survey reflects progressive improvement in development cooperation practices, with lessons for strengthening country ownership and systems. There is strong evidence that national development cooperation policies are widely viewed as essential components of the international development cooperation architecture and contribute to countries' national sustainable development strategies; this has implications also for the ongoing work on integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs). The substance of national development cooperation policies increasingly reflects the diversity of forms of development cooperation, including finance and other means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda. A growing percentage of NDCPs are covering domestic resource mobilization, private finance and South-South and triangular cooperation.

There are improvements in setting targets in country results frameworks, particularly for local and regional governments. Responding countries see value in the monitoring of CRF targets as a means to ensure alignment between the activities of international development cooperation partners and national priorities. However, the use of country-led results frameworks by international development cooperation partners remains relatively low, which limits their impact and weakens accountability.

Developing countries value development cooperation information systems for their contribution to improving the transparency and management of development cooperation. They are investing in enhancing their DCIS to provide timely, relevant and accurate information. There have been improvements in the range of regular users of the DCIS, for example, parliaments, with scope for increasing regular usage by stakeholders, for example, the private sector and philanthropic organizations. The quality of data is a challenge for some countries and affects the

extent to which developing countries are able to rely on the DCIS for planning and budgeting.

NDCFs are gradually assuming a multi-stakeholder character and serve as important platforms for reviewing progress against targets, and for mutual learning. The important role of local and regional governments (LRGs) in the 2030 Agenda is being recognized by developing countries, mirrored by their growing involvement in NDCFs since previous DCF Surveys. Much still needs to be done to make NDCFs more inclusive of non-state development actors, namely, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and civil society organizations. There is also scope for developing countries to encourage the participation of parliaments in NDCFs.

Support to countries to operationalize the key enablers of effective development cooperation is still necessary, as reflected in the capacity needs that respondent countries prioritized in the 2019/2020 DCF survey. The survey was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is very likely that capacity support needs will be even greater than initially reported. Vastly strengthened capacities for, among other things, mobilizing, managing and tracking financial and non-financial resources for the response and sustainable recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be critical.

COVID-19 presents an opportunity for developing countries, international development cooperation partners and other actors to improve the impact of their support to national sustainable development priorities and build back better from the crisis. They can learn from country experiences and use development cooperation to build resilience of developing countries to risks, by strengthening national capacities and supporting country systems.

Proposals for further action:

- i. Governments should consider reviewing and recalibrating their existing NDCPs to reflect the emerging realities of the COVID-19 period to achieve sustainable development, and ensure that their NDCPs are ‘risk-informed.’
- ii. International development cooperation partners should support countries to conduct comprehensive assessments and diagnosis of their financing needs and of the financial landscape to determine financing gaps, risks and policy and institutional constraints. This is also a first step towards developing an integrated national financing framework. INFF ‘pioneer’ countries should draw on developing countries’ experiences in operationalizing NDCPs and related enablers of effective development cooperation.
- iii. Governments should use their NDCFs to improve the quality of dialogue and partnerships with national stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to strengthen country-owned priorities as part of the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.
- iv. Governments and their international development cooperation partners should jointly develop clear criteria for redirection of development cooperation resources. Decisions to redirect resources should be not only aligned with countries’ recovery priorities but also informed by an assessment of the risks to the projects or programmes from which resources are directed.
- v. International development cooperation partners should support capacity strengthening of countries’ DCIS to enable them to track development cooperation resources from all partners for COVID-19-related activities. International development cooperation partners should aim to provide timely and accurate information on these resources.
- vi. Governments should seek to make better use of technology for managing and coordinating development cooperation, such as the use of technology platforms for more inclusive NDCFs, and the use of technology to enable the DCIS to extract and analyse large volumes of data from multiple sources.
- vii. Parliaments should develop their institutional capacities to ensure continuity in exercising their oversight functions during periods of uncertainty caused by major crises. They should also consider inclusion of development cooperation in their capacity building and orientation programmes for new members of parliament.
- viii. Now is not the time to turn away from international development cooperation. COVID-19 has reinforced the need for global cooperation and collaboration, both for immediate response and for longer-term recovery. The DCF will continue to ensure that risk-informed and climate-smart development cooperation remains a vital plank in efforts to build back better.

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 1. Calculated by the OECD DAC's new grant-equivalent measure. For more, see UN (2020) Financing for Sustainable Development Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development and [Data update following release of 2019 ODA data \(16 April 2020\)](#).
 2. Based on the OECD DAC's previous cash-flow methodology.
 3. Hanif, N. "[Build Back Better with Risk-informed Development Cooperation](#)", Development Initiatives blog, 5 May 2020.
 4. The [DCF](#) is open to all member States of the United Nations and relevant stakeholders and is a core function of the Economic and Social Council. It brings together decision-makers and experts from developing and developed countries, parliamentarians, local governments, civil society organizations, philanthropic foundations, international organizations and development banks, and the private sector.
 5. The DCF was scheduled for May 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 6. Some countries refer to NDCPs as aid policies, NDCFs as partnership forums, and DCIS as aid information management systems.
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