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National mutual accountability and transparency in development cooperation:

Study on the findings of the Fifth DCF Survey

2018

2018 DCF Survey Findings Report

National Mutual Accountability and Transparency in Development Cooperation

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Abbreviations

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
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
FFSD	Financing for Sustainable Development
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
MA	Mutual accountability
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
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Glossary

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 favor 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]
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.[ii]
Mutual accountability	Mutual accountability (MA) is defined as "…accountability between the providers and recipients of development cooperation, for the effectiveness of that cooperation in producing development results."[iii] It addresses imbalances in the relationship between providers and recipients and serves as a driver for mutual learning and knowledge sharing. Participation by parliaments, civil society and local governments in national development cooperation forums is a top priority to hold executive governments responsible.
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	As a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to tackle many issues, including ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests, as well as financing and other means of implementation. It was adopted at the United Nations Summit on development in New York in September 2015.
Private sector	This includes local and foreign, 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, and can range from being highly structured to being loosely structured. They do not apply the rigor of evaluations.[iv]

National development strategy

A national development strategy, sometimes referred to as a national 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 development strategy may also include the identification of resources for implementation.

[i] E/2016/65, E/2017/76, UN (2016). DCF Policy Brief No. 1.
[ii] United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation, New York.
[iii] UNDESA (2012), Mutual accountability for development cooperation results: where next?, New York.
[iv] United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), New York.

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Executive summary

Since 2009, the Development Cooperation Forum surveys have examined key enablers of mutual accountability and transparency, with analysis structured around national development cooperation policies, country results frameworks, national development cooperation forums and development cooperation information systems, and the related capacity support needs (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Main features of key enablers of mutual accountability and transparency

National development cooperation policy	Country results framework	National development cooperation forum	Development cooperation information system
Vision Priorities Targets	Monitoring targets Long-term impact	Multi-stakeholder dialogue Review progress against targets	Accurate, comprehensive and timely data

Over time survey findings have shown substantive changes made to how national governments articulate and approach the mobilizing of support to align their development cooperation with national priorities. Yet, pertaining to some of the issues, there has been stagnation of progress. Analyses of the 2018 survey findings provide the following insights.

Aid versus broader development cooperation policies. The 2016 DCF survey showed countries typically having aid policies in place informed by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. While recognizing the critical role played by aid, the 2016 study highlighted the broader concept and practice of development cooperation reflected in the 2030 Agenda. In this subsequent 2018 survey, responding countries reported including a more diverse range of development cooperation aligned with their national development priorities. Just over half of respondents reported their national development cooperation policies covered the use of domestic resource mobilization strategies. The inclusion of South-South and triangular cooperation in national development cooperation policies is also encouraging. Policies, though, were less likely to cover private finance for sustainable development or issues related to blended finance. Better understanding is needed on what this broadening in the scope of policies entails – in terms of filling gaps in existing national development cooperation policies, changing processes, and consultations.

Better engaging the range of development cooperation partners. While some of the enablers have slowly started to reflect engagement of a wider range of actors, this is not the case for all, leaving scope for their improved use for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. Countries still reported minimal use of their national development cooperation policies for articulating institutional responsibilities within the government, the inclusion of national stakeholders and domestic beneficiaries, the role of philanthropic organizations, private sector actors and NGOs. Though, compared to 2016 findings, more countries responded consulting with local governments in the design of their policies. Many national development cooperation forums are also yet to assume a multi-stakeholder character, and involve mainly international development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations. Non-state actors, NGOs/civil society, the private sector, and private philanthropic organizations are reported to have a low-to-moderate level of involvement in these forums.

Setting of targets for development cooperation partners and non-state actors. The majority of responding countries has a framework for monitoring the performance of development cooperation. It is encouraging to know that compared to previous years there is a smaller proportion of countries that reported partners used parallel results frameworks. The monitoring of progress continues to focus on national governments, with insufficient attention given to progress of international development cooperation partners in meeting their commitments. This is partly a consequence of the difficulty many national governments experience in setting targets for international development cooperation partners. As few as 38 per cent of countries with country results frameworks reported that the monitoring of targets improved alignment of partners' activities with national and sectoral priorities.

Strengthening periodic, multi-stakeholder review of development cooperation processes. Two previous DCF surveys noted weakness in monitoring progress against national development cooperation policy targets. As in the 2016 survey, very few countries reported commissioning an independent evaluation of international development cooperation in the past 12 months, and fewer signaled the intention to do so. Minimal evaluation may be indicative of insufficient capacity in responding countries. Several countries still did not involve their parliamentarians in national development cooperation processes. Yet, encouraging is the high number of countries that have development cooperation information systems in place. These contain information primarily on disbursements and progress with implementation of projects and programmes, technical cooperation and capacity building. There are gaps in the scope of the development cooperation information systems in many of the responding countries, most notably, the tracking of progress with untying development cooperation, tracking gender-disaggregated expenditures and results, and tracking the use of development cooperation to combat different types of inequalities.

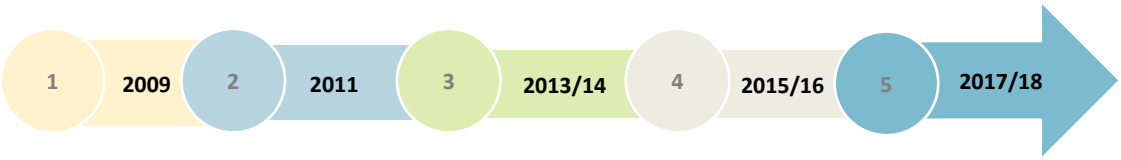
Capacity support needs. Support for strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacities is one of the two most pressing capacity building needs identified in this survey round. This is especially the case for impact evaluations of NDCPs and international development cooperation. National governments also identified the need for capacity support in tracking South-South cooperation, monitoring and evaluating private sector and the development of integrated monitoring and evaluation systems for development cooperation. With a new generation of NDCPs, there is even greater urgency for parliamentarians to receive capacity support for their oversight role in development cooperation.

1. Introduction

The Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) conducts biennially the DCF Surveys as part of its mandate to review trends and progress in international development cooperation and provide policy guidance and recommendations (Figure 2). Findings have aimed to support developing countries in their efforts to strengthen development cooperation-related policies, institutional frameworks, practices, and the quality and impact of their partnerships. The surveys have also served to advance action-oriented global policy dialogue on these issues. This, the fifth survey in the series, forms part of the substantive preparation for the 2018 Development Cooperation Forum.

FIGURE 2

The DCF surveys are designed to incentivize behavioral changes



The DCF Survey
- Includes questions on targets for individual development partners
- Encourages inclusive multi-stakeholder participation
- Emphasizes the critical role of citizen-based monitoring
- Goes beyond the aid/development effectiveness agenda

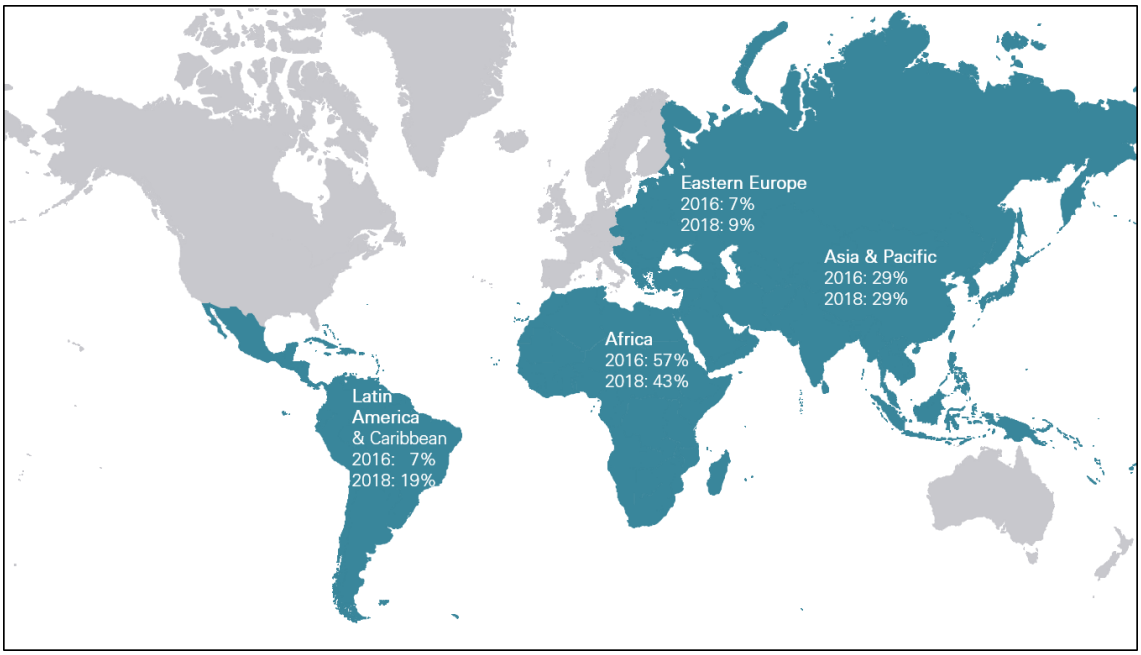
At the 2016 DCF, a diverse group of development cooperation actors reflected on the important role of international development cooperation in supporting national sustainable development strategies and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Discussions of the 2018 DCF, and the supporting preparatory analytical work, including the survey study, will build on this. Readers are encouraged to refer to the summary of the meeting as well as previous survey reports.[v]

All developing countries were invited to participate in the DCF surveys. A total of 58 countries participated in this 2018 survey (Figure 3), equaling participation in the previous exercise. The response rate may have been affected, however, by the change in date for the 2018 DCF from July to May, which required shortening the length of the exercise and hence the time for governments to respond. Forty-four countries participated in previous DCF surveys, while 14 countries joined the exercise for the first time. As in previous exercises, the largest share of respondents came from the African region. The most pronounced difference in the 2018 survey is the increase in the Latin American and Caribbean countries participating: 11 countries (19 per cent) from this region participated in the 2018 survey compared to 4 countries (7 per cent) in 2016. Participation from the Asia-Pacific region remained unchanged, with 17 countries (29 per cent) participating in both surveys.[vi]

Findings are structured around the five main enablers of mutual accountability and transparency. The report aims to set out key issues from previous rounds of the exercise, provide empirical evidence on the current state of play, and propose practical actions to strengthen mutual accountability. Like previous surveys, individual country responses are kept anonymous and findings and case studies provided without attribution.

FIGURE 3

Geographic coverage of participating countries 2016 and 2018 surveys



[v] Findings of the Fourth DCF Survey, Findings of the Third DCF Survey, Findings of the Second DCF Survey, Findings of the First DCF Survey.

[vi] The regions were configured differently for the two surveys. In the 2016 DCF Survey, there was a category 'Arab States". This was amalgamated with the Asia-Pacific region in the 2018 DCF Survey. Also note that Europe includes Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Western Europe.

2. Mutual accountability and transparency in international development cooperation

The concept of mutual accountability and transparency has been part of the international development cooperation discourse for well over a decade. Now, given the universal 2030 Agenda, its advancement for effective development cooperation and results is imperative. The Agenda calls for revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development, including mobilizing an unprecedented scale of development cooperation from diverse sources and improving its effective use. This demands greater transparency, holding governments of both developed and developing countries accountable not only to one another but importantly to their citizens. It also necessitates quality partnerships among all stakeholders to support these processes. The DCF surveys, and their analysis, are structured around key enablers of mutual accountability and transparency (Box 1).

BOX 1

Key enablers of effective development cooperation

National development cooperation policies (NDCPs) are the policy framework governing international development cooperation. An NDCP provides the country government's vision and priorities for development cooperation, the roles and responsibilities of development cooperation partners and other stakeholders, and the development cooperation-related targets to be achieved. Without this policy framework clarifying the 'rules' for international development cooperation, country governments run the risk of fragmentation and ineffective use of development cooperation, leading to poor development results. NDCPs should be informed by national development priorities and aligned with national development plans or strategies and the SDGs.

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. Ideally, CRFs should be aligned to national development strategies, reflecting the SDGs, and linked to national budgets. Like NDCPs, CRFs should ideally be developed in consultation with multiple stakeholders, including local governments and the most vulnerable groups in society.[vii]

National development cooperation forums (NDCFs) enable dialogue between governments and international development cooperation actors. With the increased emphasis on multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships, NDCFs provide an important platform for development actors to review progress and engage in mutual learning for improving mutual accountability and better development results.

Development cooperation information **systems** (DCIS) enable mutual accountability and transparency by providing country governments and development cooperation actors information that is accurate, comprehensive and timely. Importantly, the information should be accessible to all development cooperation actors including the public, and support the processes of monitoring and review of progress against development cooperation targets.

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

Figure 4 illustrates the prevalence of these enablers among countries participating in the survey. Countries typically use a combination of these tools, and in some cases the enablers overlap, as in the case of national development cooperation policies (or equivalent policy) and country results frameworks. These enablers continue to evolve, Figure 5 shows countries receiving capacity support to develop and upgrade their enablers. Yet, their articulation continues to prove a practical foundation for understanding the approaches taken by countries.

FIGURE 4

Key enablers of effective development cooperation

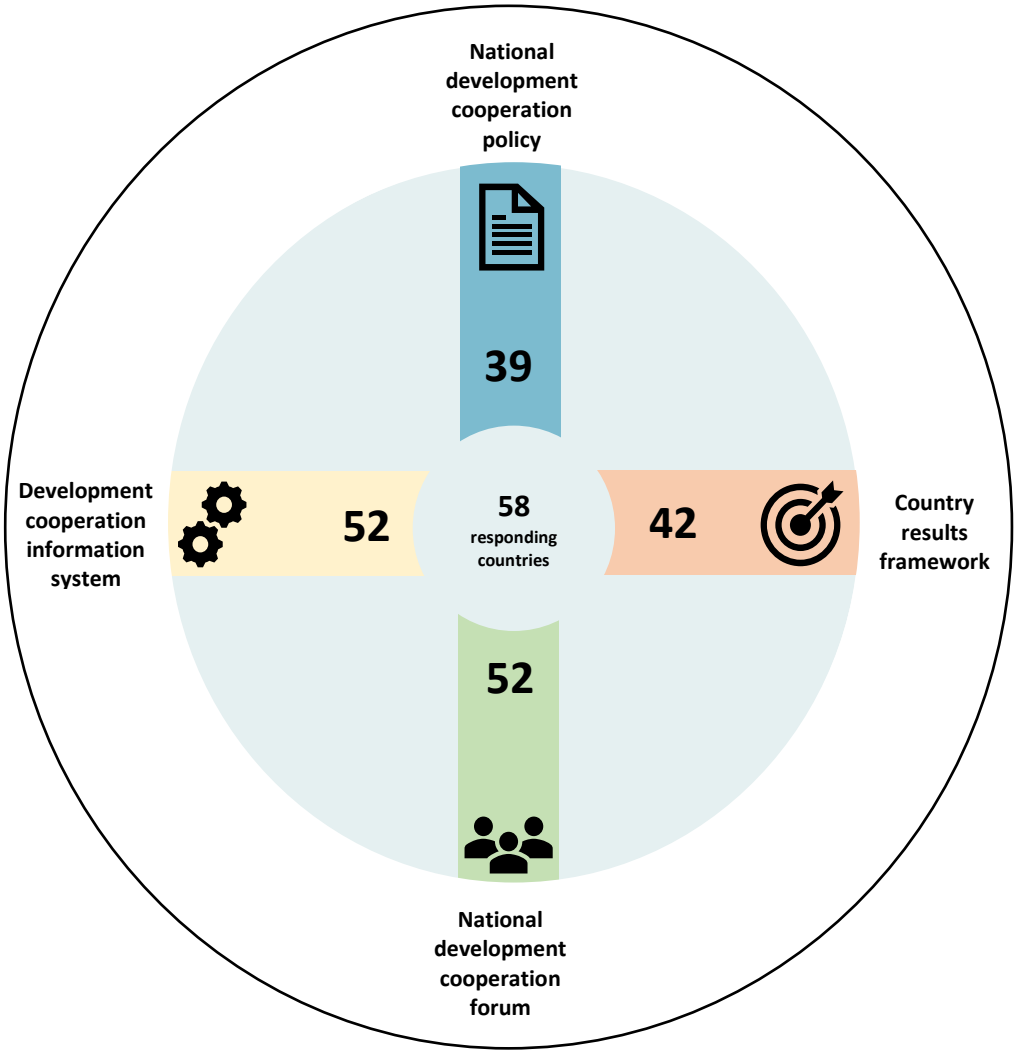
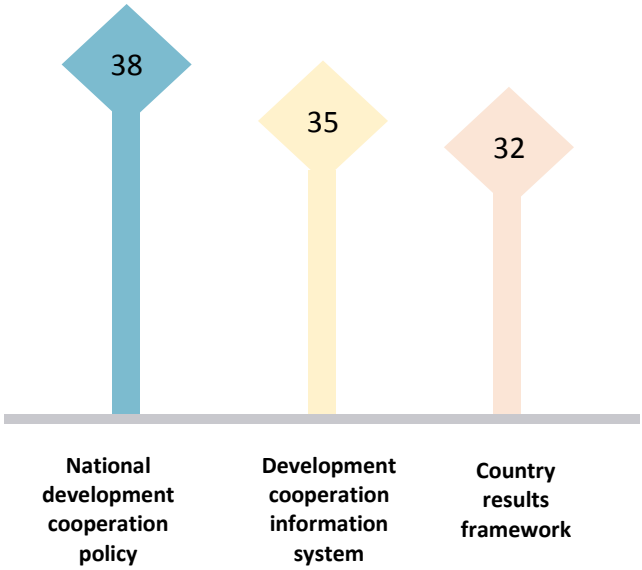


FIGURE 5

Number of countries reporting having received capacity support to develop or upgrade their enablers



[vii] E/2016/65

3. National development cooperation policies

3.1 Key issues on NDCPs

Recommendations of the 2016 Development Cooperation Forum highlighted the importance of policy frameworks for guiding development cooperation at country level, encouraging national governments to introduce NDCPs if no such policy exists, or to improve existing NDCPs.[viii]

Compared to 2013, the 2016 survey showed an improvement in the alignment of priorities of national development plans and strategies. National development cooperation policies evaluated were predominantly aid policies. There was minimal consultation with different levels of governments – such as local and other sub-national governments that act as important implementers of development cooperation.

Previous surveys also found a small fraction of NDCPs with targets for individual partners, making it difficult to ensure alignment between individual partners' contributions and national governments' development cooperation priorities. NDCPs also lacked inclusiveness targets, calling for this issue to be prioritized not only by national governments but all development cooperation actors.

Disconcerting was the weak monitoring and evaluation of impact of development cooperation against targets. Parliamentarians' limited involvement in the design of NDCPs was identified as a related issue; and this group was less likely to receive capacity support for this oversight role.

3.2 Prevalence and changing nature of NDCPs

Close alignment of NDCPs with national development plans promises better partner support of national priorities

Thirty-nine of 58 countries (67 per cent) responding to the 2018 survey reported they had NDCPs or a similar policy in place. Nearly all countries with NDCPs (38 of 39 countries) have a national development plan or strategy, and the majority of countries (26) believe that their NDCPs are highly aligned with these. This close alignment between NDCPs and national development plans bodes well for ensuring that development cooperation partners are supporting national priorities.

For NDCPs to be effective they need to reflect the country context or circumstances. Therefore, there is significant variation in the content, design and implementation process, and monitoring of NDCPs from country to country. There are however items typically covered in NDCPs, namely, background and rationale, guiding principles, key policy objectives, and implementing institutions and mechanisms. Box 2 provides two examples of the structure of NDCPs, with more detail provided in Annex B.[ix]

This said, there remains a sizeable number of countries that operate without national development cooperation policies in place, that rely on the national development plan or strategy to guide development cooperation. Countries lacking NDCPs typically had a policy pending approval or planned to finalize one within 12 months (9 countries).[x] More information is needed on how countries without NDCPs coordinate and mobilize their development cooperation. Among responding countries without NDCPs were countries affected by conflict and fragility with peacebuilding strategies or similar frameworks in place (Box 3).

BOX 2

Samples of the content of national development cooperation policies

Lower Middle-Income Country	Small Island Developing State
Preamble 1. Introduction 2. Development cooperation: achievements, challenges and opportunities 3. Strategic objectives 4. Principles, tools and partnerships for Strategy Implementation 5. Partnership and dialogue arrangements 6. Institutional arrangements 7. Monitoring and evaluation 8. Conclusion	Part I: Introduction Part II: Policy framework Part III: Implementation and coordination mechanisms Part IV: Provisions related to tax exemption and visas Annex A: Country's project cycle Annex B: Role of Development Coordination Committee

BOX 3

Frameworks of countries affected by conflict and fragility

One participating country affected by conflict and fragility uses its ***Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan*** to coordinate development cooperation. The Plan provides a framework to connect the country's recovery needs with the technical and financial resources of development cooperation partners. It also serves as the framework used by the multi-stakeholder platform of government, parliament, the private sector, civil society, the religious sector, and development cooperation partners to dialogue and monitor progress against commitments made. According to a key informant interviewed, the Plan has allowed for partners' interventions to be aligned with national challenges. It has also assisted in ensuring predictability of resources, and the allocation of resources to priority programmes and geographical areas.

A second country affected by conflict and fragility has an overarching ***Peace and Development Framework*** and national priority programmes to which development cooperation partners are required to align their activities. Recognizing the need to deepen mutual accountability of the government and its many development cooperation partners, the government developed a mutual accountability framework that sets out the principles governing development cooperation in the country. The framework includes deliverables for the government and its partners, and progress against these deliverables is reviewed annually in coordination dialogues between the government and its development cooperation partners. Through deepening mutual accountability, the government hopes to achieve self-reliance in developing the country in the long-term. The current national budget reportedly is based on a much higher proportion of domestic resources than was the case 10 years ago, and is seen by the government as an indication of increased self-reliance.

Understanding how countries without NDCPs operate can illuminate context-specific practices

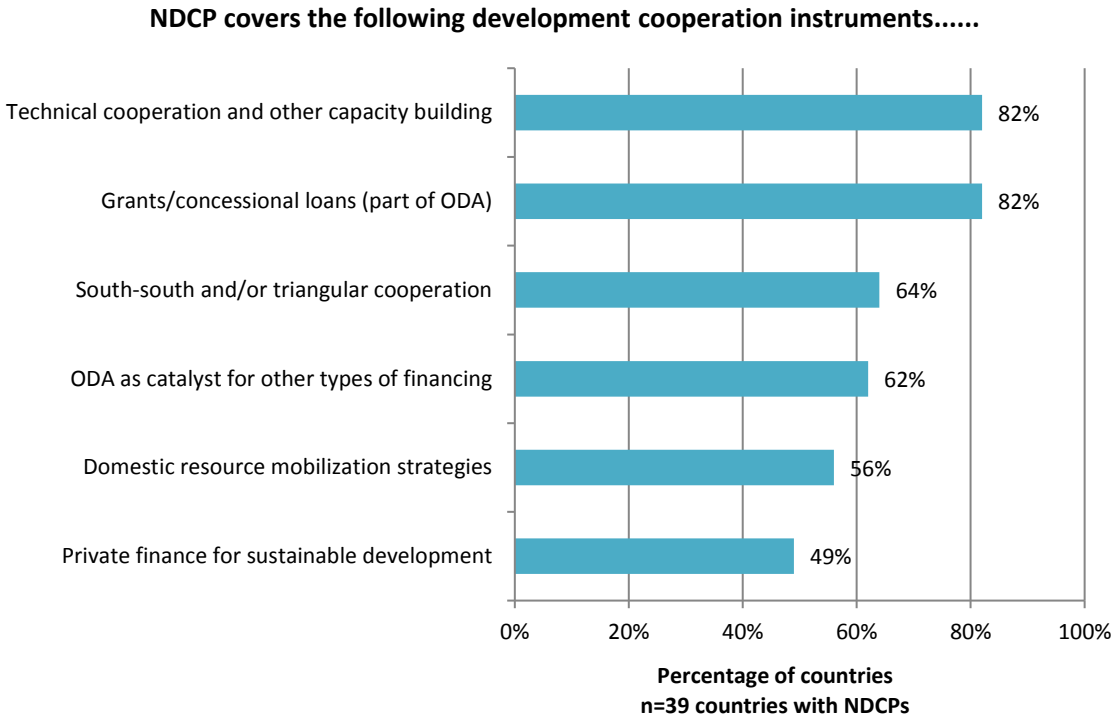
Significantly, national development cooperation policies reviewed in this round cover a broad range of means of implementation, beyond aid. Eighty-two per cent of countries with NDCPs reported their NDCPs covered technical cooperation and capacity building. The same percentage indicated their NDCPs covered ODA in the form of grants/concessional loans (Figure 6). Sixty-four per cent of countries have NDCPs that make provision

for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation (Box 4). The use of domestic resource mobilization strategies is reflected in more than half of these NDCPs (56 per cent). Fewer than half of the countries with NDCPs had policies covering private finance for sustainable development.

FIGURE 6

Coverage of development cooperation instruments in NDCPs

More than ever, NDCPs cover a wide range of means of implementation



Only 36 per cent of countries with NDCPs covered the role of private philanthropic organizations; 46 per cent addressed NGOs and CSOs; and 49 per cent private sector actors, for example, multinationals and small and medium enterprises. Private philanthropic organizations, especially large ones, wield considerable influence in countries they support, and it is important that their roles are clearly articulated in NDCPs (Box 5).

BOX 4

Coverage of South-South cooperation in national development cooperation policies

NDCPs of responding countries reflect to varying degrees their engagement in South-South cooperation. One interviewed country is updating its policy to address in greater detail its South-South cooperation. Its current NDCP articulates its role as a 'recipient' and 'provider' of development cooperation, and its objective to increase its participation in South-South and triangular cooperation through:

1. Building up the country's institutional capacity to participate actively in South-South and triangular cooperation.
2. Identifying areas and issues of mutual interest and/or benefit for experience sharing and horizontal learning.
3. Positioning the country as a technical cooperation provider, actively involving the various sectors and levels of government.
4. Directing sectorial and traditional donor financial and technical resources to support South-South and triangular cooperation actions.

The NDCPs of two small developing countries, in outlining their approach to South-South and triangular cooperation, emphasized mutual learning and sharing of development solutions, which include knowledge experiences, good practices, technology and resources. They use staff exchanges and peer reviews with other countries in the region, and see regional mechanisms and regional institutions as vehicles for accessing South-South cooperation.

National governments are working on the alignment of their NDCPs with the 2030 Agenda. Of 39 countries that have NDCPs (or equivalent), 25 (64 per cent) reported that their NDCPs addressed the 2030 Agenda, and 14 indicated they planned to update their NDCPs to reflect the 2030 Agenda. Understanding the qualitative aspect of these findings is an issue for consideration in the next survey round.

Adjustments to NDCPs address the 2030 Agenda – mechanisms involved require further research

BOX 5

Better engaging private philanthropic organizations

One national government, recognizing the influential role played by private philanthropic organizations, established a platform to engage these actors. Through this, the government is able to inform private philanthropic organizations about national development priorities and guide private philanthropic organizations to areas most in need of development cooperation or where these organizations can make the most impact. The platform allows the government to facilitate engagement between private philanthropic organizations and sector ministries.

3.3 Consultation in the design of NDCPs

Ninety-five per cent of countries responded government ministries and, notably, 74 per cent of sub-national governments and 61 per cent of parliaments were consulted in the design of their NDCPs (Figure 7). Previous DCF surveys raised concerns about the relatively low number of countries that consulted their sub-national governments and parliaments in NDCP design. The 2018 DCF Survey suggests a changed situation.

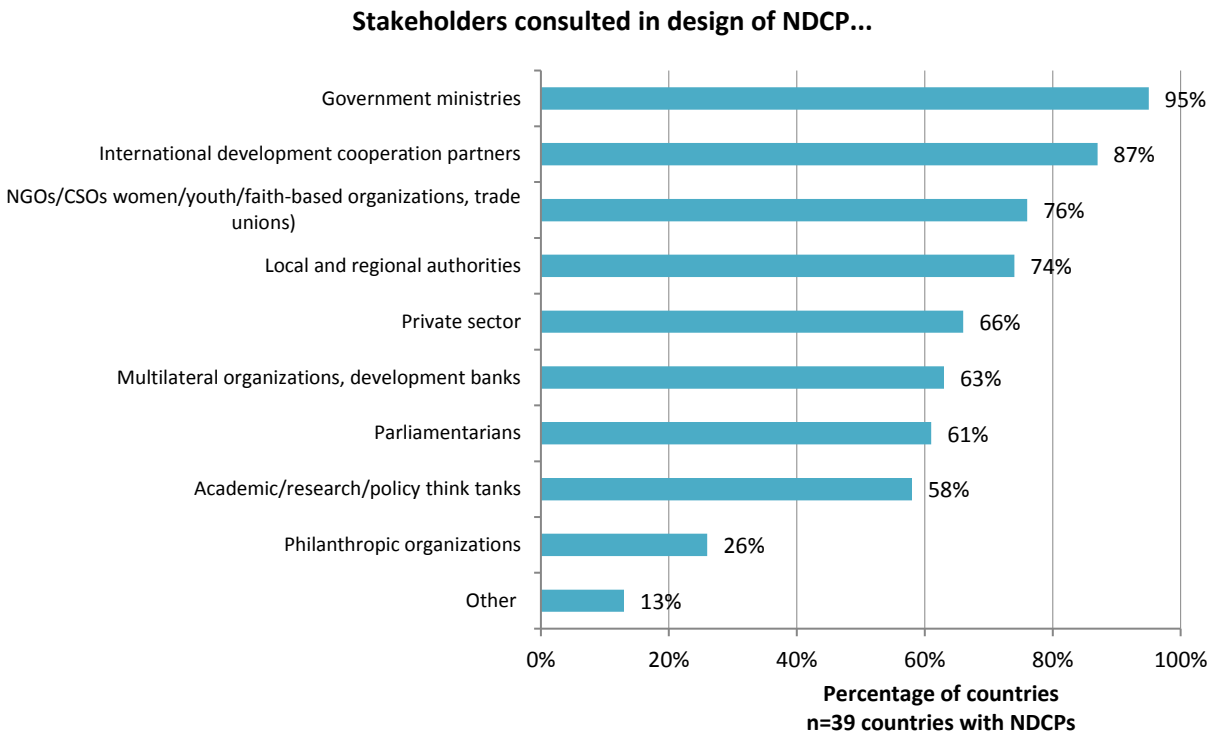
As many as 87 per cent of countries with NDCPs reported that they consulted international development cooperation partners in the design of NDCPs. Multilateral organizations, including development banks were consulted in 63 per cent of countries with NDCPs. Yet, as will be pointed out, fewer than half of the countries with NDCPs have targets for international development cooperation partners. Further research is needed to understand the challenges in setting targets in NDCPs, especially for international development cooperation partners.

Knowledge exchange can help further quality engagement of different stakeholders in NDCP design

Non-state actors were consulted in the design of NDCPs. As many as 76 per cent of countries with NDCPs reported they consulted non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations in the design of their NDCPs. Only 26 per cent of countries indicated they consulted private philanthropic organizations in the design of their NDCPs. As independent organizations, often headquartered outside the countries in which they operate, engaging private philanthropic organizations can be challenging.

FIGURE 7

Stakeholders consulted in design of NDCP



It is worth noting that 66 per cent of countries with NDCPs reported they consulted private sector in the design of their NDCPs. One national government has established a forum for engaging the private sector on development matters (Box 6). Like other sectors, the private sector, is not homogenous. Future iterations of the survey plan to explore the types of private sector organizations consulted and their respective roles.

BOX 6

A forum for engaging the private sector

One national government has established a ***Government-Private Sector Forum*** that meets annually for in-depth discussions on issues that concern the private sector. There are nine working groups that inform the content of discussions for the annual forum. The government views the forum as an important mechanism for on-going dialogue with the private sector to address blockages to private sector development. The government encourages direct dialogue between the development partners and the private sector, and capacity support to the private sector. The private sector is represented in the country's development cooperation forum and is encouraged to contribute to the national development policy.

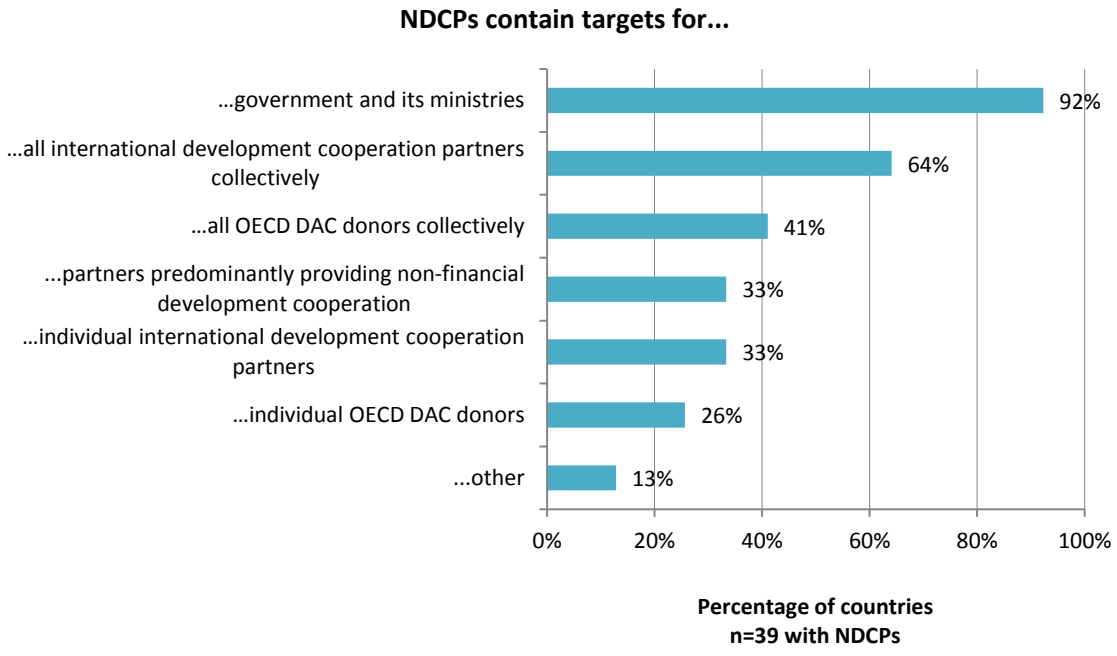
3.4 Targets in NDCPs

Despite partners' high involvement in NDCP design, few policies contain targets for this group

Sixty-four per cent of countries have NDCPs that contain targets for all international development cooperation partners collectively, despite the high number of international development partners involved in NDCP design (Figure 8). Only 33 per cent of countries have NDCPs that contain targets for partners who predominantly provide non-financial development cooperation. Although the NDCPs submitted by participating countries referred to indicators and targets, upon preliminary investigation few contained examples of these. Box 7 provides an example from one country's NDCP that does. Nine of 39 countries with NDCPs (23 per cent) reported having gender-specific targets, fewer than the previous survey.

FIGURE 8

Actor targets covered in NDCPs



BOX 7

Example of targets in national development cooperation policies

One country's NDCP outlines objectives with targets and indicators for: (a) development cooperation modalities that promote effective and sustainable development; (b) capacity development for strengthened country systems; and (c) international development cooperation partners.

Objective 1: External resources are used to promote effective and sustainable development	Indicator: Share of ODA provided through programme-based approaches (Baseline: 28 per cent; Target: 50 per cent)
Objective 2: Partnerships focus on capacity development and systems strengthening	Indicator a): Use of country public finance management systems (Baseline: 32 per cent; Target: 50 per cent) Indicator b): Use of country procurement systems (Baseline: 20 per cent; Target: 35 per cent)
Objective 3: All development actors are convened in a partnership to promote equitable and broad-based growth	Indicator a): Aid on-budget (Baseline:79 per cent; Target 90 per cent) and disbursed on schedule (Baseline 91 per cent; Target: 95 per cent) Indicator b): Conducting annual meetings and mutual assessments of progress, including Joint Monitoring Indicators

3.5 Monitoring and review

Independent evaluation of international development cooperation remains minimal

Only 13 countries commissioned an independent evaluation of international development cooperation in the past 12 months, showing minimal improvement compared to 12 countries in the 2016 DCF Survey. Only 5 countries signaled their intention to commission such evaluations in the next 12 months. Of the 13 countries that commissioned evaluations, 12 reported that the evaluation had an impact on development cooperation. More information on the nature of impact assessment is needed. The evaluations appear to have been accepted, as 10 national governments have adopted their recommendations. Implementing partners have adopted recommendations to a lesser extent than governments.

Minimal evaluation may be indicative of insufficient capacity in responding countries, as well as a lack of demand for evaluation on the part of government and parliaments. Several countries identified the need for capacity support in various aspects of monitoring and evaluation, especially impact evaluations of their NDCPs and international development cooperation. They also identified the need for capacity support in tracking South-South cooperation, monitoring and evaluating the private sector and the development of integrated monitoring and evaluation systems for development cooperation.

BOX 8

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is addressed in NDCPs with different levels of detail. Some NDCPs focus on the structures and processes for monitoring and evaluation of the policy, for example, *annual reviews* with development cooperation partners. Others set out *goals and objectives* of the monitoring and evaluation system, for example, to facilitate the tracking of progress and effectiveness of development cooperation, as well as *identify implementation challenges.*

One country's NDCP has a *high-level monitoring and evaluation framework* that sets out the strategic goals and objectives of its Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy, with indicators and targets that will be monitored. The framework covers evaluation activities to complement the monitoring of targets. It proposes, for example, a mid-term evaluation of the Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy, as well as an evaluation of the strategy's contribution to achieving the development results set out in the National Strategic Development Plan.

Slightly more than half of countries with NDCPs (55 per cent) were required to report progress to parliament, the same result held for the 2016 DCF Survey (Box 9).

A new generation of NDCPs necessitates improved capacities of parliamentarians

BOX 9

Reinvigorating parliaments in their oversight role

In an interview with one country it was found that the interest of parliament in development cooperation is waning as the volume of ODA to the country is declining and other priorities compete for the attention of parliamentarians. There is therefore a challenge of how to reinvigorate parliaments to play their oversight role in an SDG-era requiring a wide range of development cooperation. The interview pointed to the need to sensitize parliamentarians to the important role of other forms of development cooperation, beyond ODA.

In a DCF side event, *the Inter-Parliamentary Union* (IPU) raised the importance of parliaments engaging institutionally in the processes of this new generation of NDCPs that address a wide range of means of implementation. Governments will need to provide annual progress reports on the implementation of the NDCPs to parliaments so that they are made duly aware of what works and what does not and are able to adjust budgetary and legislative work accordingly.

While accountability remains a deeply political affair, parliaments that seek to exercise their oversight role are found to have a lack of capacities and legal frameworks to perform their role effectively. Parliaments need to be better capacitated to discern strong development cooperation policies from weak ones. This requires a good grasp of the principles that should inform the design of NDCPs, including the kinds of issues that can be covered in the policy, and the consultative process that precedes policy. This in itself needs more parliamentary capacities and awareness.

Source: DCF Side Event at 2018 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development. Available at: https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/events/2018/dcf-side-event-2018-ecosoc-forum-financing-development

3.6 Proposals for further action

- **Countries without NDCPS.** A sizable number of countries still without NDCPs rely on their national development plans or strategies to guide their development cooperation. The contexts under which these countries operate, their approaches to mobilizing and guiding development cooperation and the relative effectiveness of these approaches need to be investigated.
- **Alignment with the 2030 Agenda.** The scope and use of NDCPs is changing in line with the new realities and expectations for international development cooperation, reflected in the 2030 Agenda. Better understanding is needed of what this adjustment entails – in terms of filling gaps in existing NDCPs, changing processes and consultations.
- **Reflecting South-South cooperation.** National governments are in the early stages of reflecting their South-South cooperation in their NDCPs. Governments are using NDCPs to articulate the focus of their development cooperation, priorities for the institutionalization of their SSC, and support needs. This can benefit from knowledge sharing and mutual learning.
- **Private sector engagement.** Countries are exploring different mechanisms to engage private sector and philanthropic organizations. Sharing of best practice to advance quality engagement is needed given present low levels of involvement in NDCP processes.
- **Multi-stakeholder review of NDCPs and development cooperation.** Periodic and multi-stakeholder review of NDCPs and their related processes need to be strengthened, to include the beneficiaries of development cooperation, including women and vulnerable populations. More broadly, exploring quality of consultations with non-state actors, including civil society, is a priority.
- **Involving, enabling and empowering parliamentarians.** Practical steps need to be taken to involve parliamentarians, including equipping members of parliament institutionally, financially and technically to undertake oversight activities. This includes empowering parliamentarians to take decisions based on the quality of NDCPs.

4. Country results frameworks

4.1 Key issues on CRFs

Previous DCF survey exercises found developing countries introducing country results frameworks with varying degrees of success. Some participating countries offered clearly defined and well-specified examples.

The use of parallel results frameworks has appeared as a perennial issue in the DCF survey findings. Developing countries saw these as indicating a lack of confidence in the robustness of national systems.

Surveyed countries have typically responded that reviews of progress focus on what has been achieved by government, rather than a more balanced review, focused equally on international development cooperation partners.

This is linked to the challenge of setting targets for international development cooperation partners. Targets have typically been for government, and less prevalent for international development cooperation partners, undermining the notion of mutual accountability.

4.2 Prevalence of CRFs and parallel results frameworks

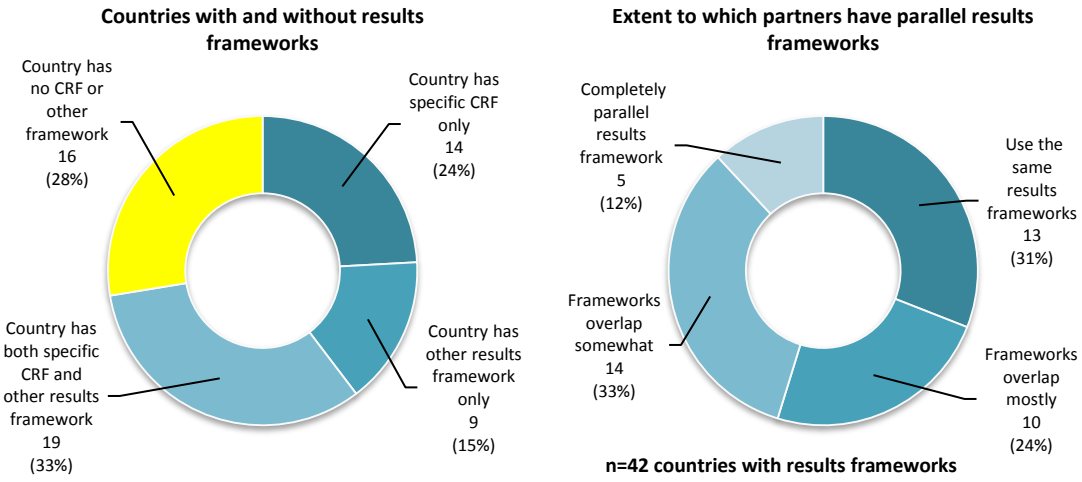
Progress can still be had in reducing the use of parallel results frameworks

Forty-two of 58 countries (72 per cent) responding to the 2018 survey have a framework for monitoring the performance of international development cooperation. Of these countries, 33 had specific country results frameworks. Some countries also specified having results frameworks in their NDCPs as opposed to a stand-alone document. It is worth noting that 19 countries have a specific country results framework for development cooperation as well as another document containing performance targets on international development cooperation (Figure 9). This other document was usually the national development plan or strategy with which the NDCP was aligned.

Survey findings show a noteworthy tendency away from parallel results frameworks, with only 12 per cent of countries reporting that development cooperation partners have completely parallel results frameworks, and 31 per cent that the same results framework is used (Figure 9). Whether this is indicative of stronger leadership among national governments remains to be probed.

FIGURE 9

Prevalence of country results frameworks and parallel partner frameworks



4.3 Targets in CRFs

Targets for development cooperation actors beyond government remain minimal

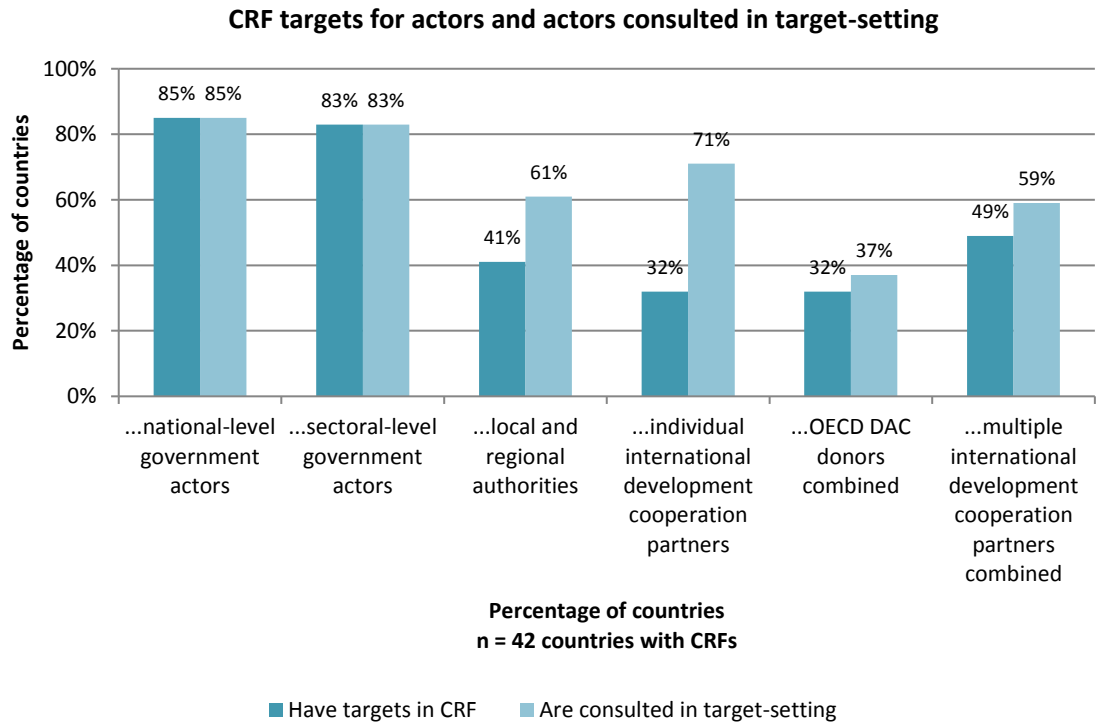
The low prevalence of CRF targets for development cooperation actors beyond national governments was raised in previous surveys, and persists in the 2018 DCF Survey. Only 32 per cent of countries had CRFs that contained targets for individual development cooperation partners, and OECD DAC partners. The situation for multiple international development cooperation partners combined is somewhat better, but still less than half of countries (49 per cent) had CRFs with targets for these partners. Local and regional authorities also had targets in less than half of CRFs (Figure 10).

One would expect that actors who have targets in CRFs, would also be consulted in the setting of these targets. This is the case with national-level government actors and sector-level government actors. As many as 85 per cent of countries with CRFs have targets for national-level government actors and the same percentage consult national-level government actors in the setting of targets. Similar results hold for sectoral–level actors (Figure 10).

Though, while most international development cooperation partners are consulted in the target setting process (71 per cent of countries with CRFs indicated this was the case), only 32 per cent of countries with CRFs reported that their CRFs contained targets for individual international development cooperation partners. Reasons for low prevalence of targets for development partners in CRFs need to be investigated.

FIGURE 10

Consultation and targets for development cooperation actors



4.4 Monitoring and review

Thirty of 42 countries with CRFs (71 per cent) have undertaken an assessment of progress towards targets in the CRF in the last two years, while line ministries in 35 countries with CRFs (83 per cent) review progress against sectoral targets. Furthermore, 38 countries (95 per cent of countries with CRFs) discuss the assessment of progress in the national development cooperation forum or similar mechanism holding governments and development cooperation partners mutually accountable.

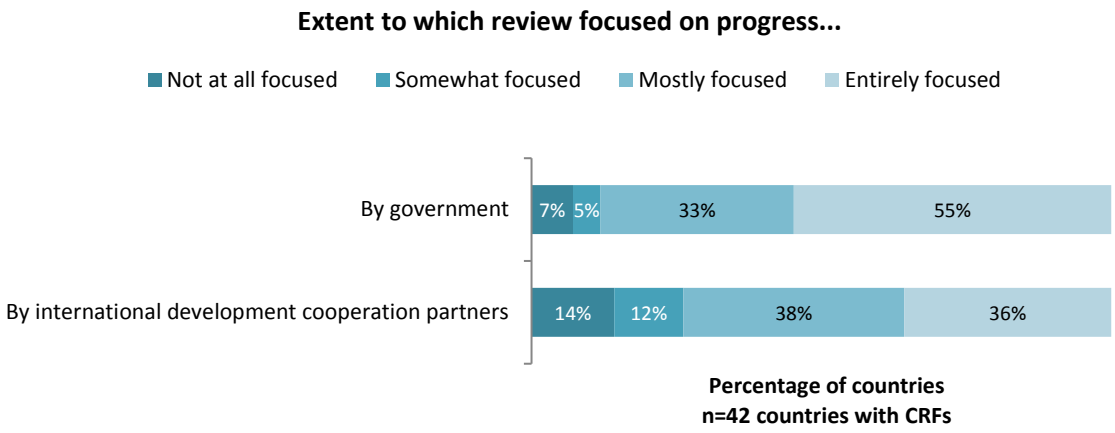
Assessment of progress focuses predominantly on government, and less so on partners

National governments reported the assessment of targets is done jointly with their international development cooperation partners (80 per cent). One country explained joint assessment of targets in the CRF provided them and their international development cooperation partners with a common framework against which they could plot a roadmap for change.

Fifty-five per cent of countries reported joint assessments focused 'entirely' on progress achieved by government, and 33 per cent 'mostly'. By contrast, only 36 per cent of countries indicated that reviews focused 'entirely' on international development cooperation partners, and 38 per cent 'mostly' (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11

Focus of reviews of progress

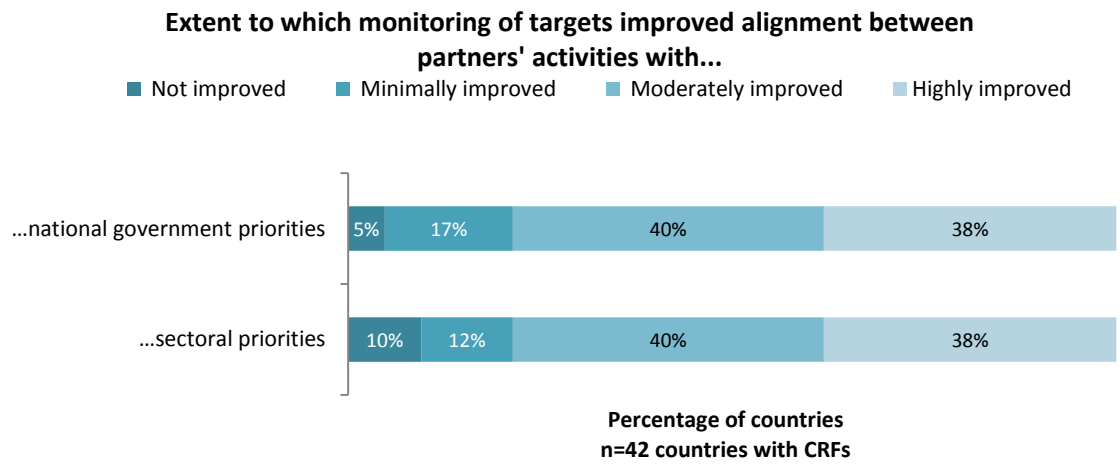


Few countries report monitoring of targets highly improved alignment of partners activities with national and sectoral priorities

Thirty-eight per cent of national governments report that the monitoring of targets has highly improved the alignment of international development cooperation partners' activities with national government and sectoral priorities. Forty per cent of countries reported moderate improvement in alignment (Figure 12). One country explained the clear objectives, targets and indicators in CRFs contributed towards better alignment between national government priorities and interest areas of development partners.

FIGURE 12

Extent of improvement in alignment with priorities



Participating countries reported improved transparency due to CRFs has led to more accountability in achieving results. Providing roles and responsibilities of government and other development cooperation

actors, the use of CRFs has also improved adherence to the division of labor. CRFs have encouraged dialogue between government and development cooperation actors, as well as served as the basis for joint assessment of progress against targets. They have also contributed to improved monitoring and evaluation processes and efficiencies in reporting on development cooperation.

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"Government is more regular and structured in the monitoring and evaluation process. Government is taking more ownership in identifying the challenges and way forward. These are well communicated with different stakeholders. Sometimes targets are adjusted after consultation to achieve better results. Development partners are also mindful of linking their own results framework with the CRF. It has enhanced transparency and encouraged efficient programme delivery."

4.5 Proposals for further action

- **Capacity needs.** Capacity support needs to be prioritized in developing country results frameworks or improving existing ones. This includes supporting technical skills-development to construct relevant indicators and measurable targets, analyze data on development cooperation, as well as financial resources to commission such evaluations.

- **Harnessing capacity support.** National governments should be encouraged to include these capacity needs around CRFs in their development cooperation consultations with international development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations, including development banks.

- **Overcoming barriers in setting targets for non-state actors.** It is necessary to explore with national governments barriers faced in developing targets for international development cooperation partners and non-state actors.

- **Setting inclusiveness targets**. Addressing bottlenecks in setting inclusiveness targets needs attention given the persistence of these issues.

5. National development cooperation forums

5.1 Key issues in NDCFs

The 2016 Development Cooperation Forum highlighted the need for investing in institutional capacity to convene national development cooperation forums as multi-stakeholder platforms engaging all relevant partners.[xi] These forums are typically government-led.

Previous DCF surveys found that while NDCFs were intended as multi-stakeholder platforms, in practice they engaged a narrow range of stakeholders. Traditionally, international development cooperation partners (OECD DAC partners, other bilateral partners and multilateral organizations) had higher involvement in NDCFs than other stakeholders.

There was a strong tendency for NDCFs to review the performance of government only, and more specifically, the performance of the ministry in charge of international development cooperation coordination of international development cooperation partners and other non-state actors.

NDCFs primarily used government sources and information provided by international development cooperation partners' analysis of progress. As a multi-stakeholder platform, an effective NDCF should ideally draw on diverse sources of analysis of progress, providing different perspectives on issues and possible solutions.

5.2 Prevalence and value of NDCFs

The primary use of NDCFs are as a platform for information sharing on government priorities

Most countries responding to the 2018 survey, 52 of 58, have a forum for discussing overall progress in international development cooperation by partners and national stakeholders. These NDCFs are government-led, chaired by senior officials from national governments, and have secretariats staffed with national government officials.

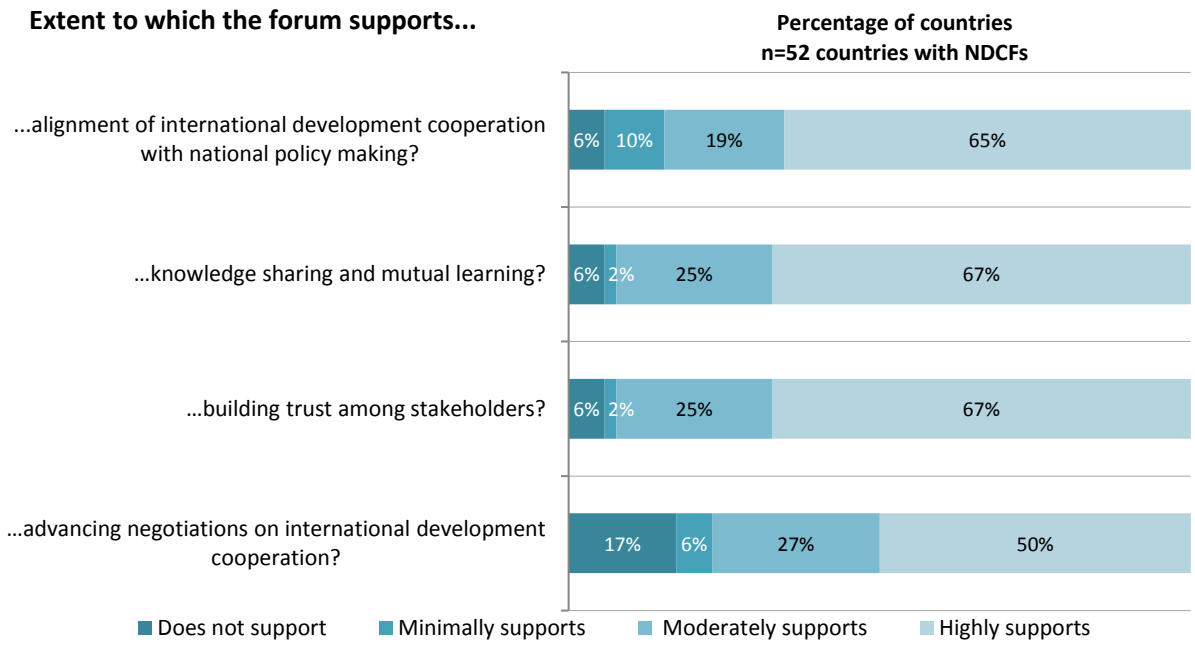
NDCFs appear to be used mainly as forums for information sharing about priorities of governments and international development cooperation partners and are seen as a first step towards achieving alignment with national priorities. Countries with more established forums report using these for dialogue, problem solving and mutual learning.

Sixty-seven per cent of responding countries see these forums as greatly supporting knowledge sharing and trust building among stakeholders. Nearly two-thirds of countries (65 per cent) suggested that NDCFs had a strong role in aligning international development cooperation with national policy-making (Figure 13).

Fewer respondents (50 per cent of countries) reported the same sentiment regarding NDCFs' role in advancing negotiations on international development cooperation. This is to be expected as negotiations are ordinarily done on a bilateral basis. Though, NDCFs, through trust building and information sharing, can indirectly contribute to negotiations on international development cooperation.

FIGURE 13

Primary purposes of national development cooperation forums



5.3 Stakeholder engagement in NDCFs

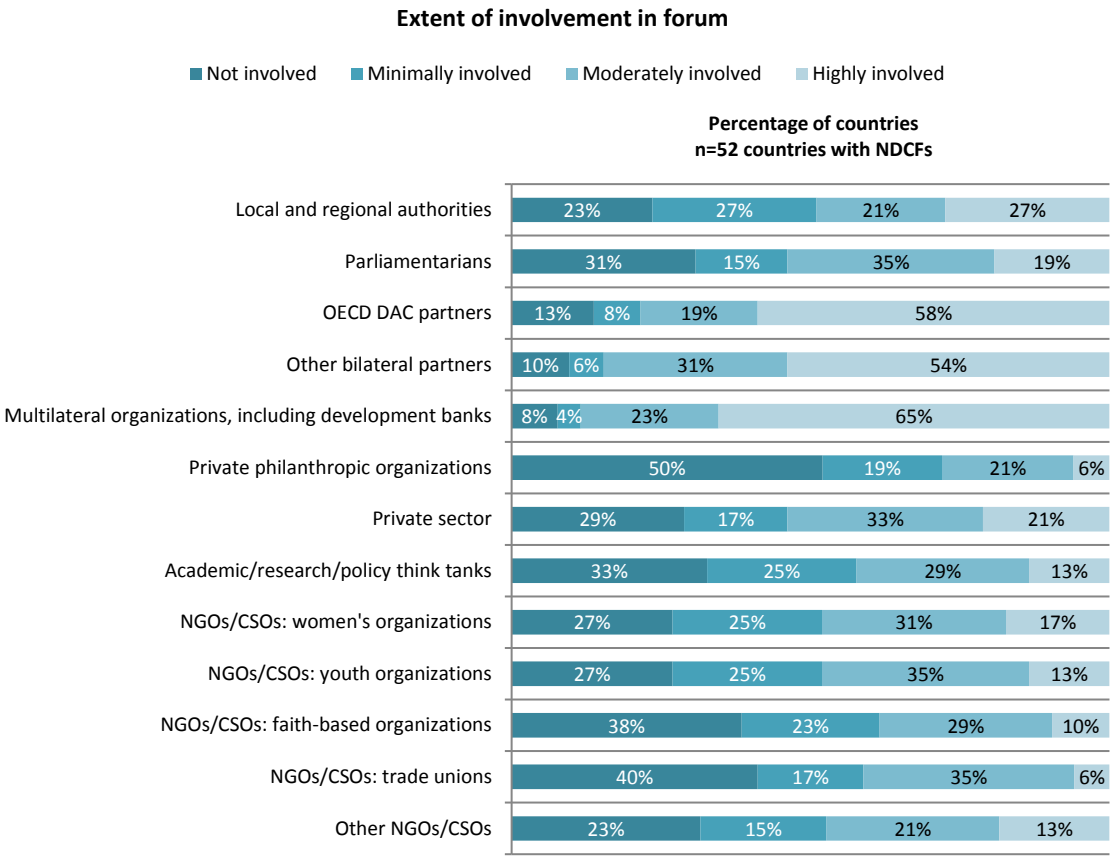
There is room for stakeholders, beyond partners, to engage in these forums

As in previous surveys, the 2018 survey found NDCFs tend to involve a narrow range of stakeholders (Figure 14). International development cooperation partners (OECD DAC partners, other bilateral partners and multilateral organizations including development banks) are more involved in NDCFs than other stakeholders. Sixty-five per cent of countries reported high involvement of multilateral organizations, 58 per cent OECD DAC partners, and 54 per cent bilateral partners.

By contrast, local and regional authorities have relatively low involvement in NDCFs, with only 27 per cent of countries reporting a high-level of involvement of this group. This requires attention, given their role in implementing development programmes. Local authorities need to be empowered to engage with international development cooperation actors at the local level. NGOs/civil society organizations, private sector and private philanthropic organizations also have relatively low involvement.

FIGURE 14

Stakeholders involvement in forum



5.4 Monitoring and review

Reviews of progress focus on government ministries, with little attention given to performance of partners

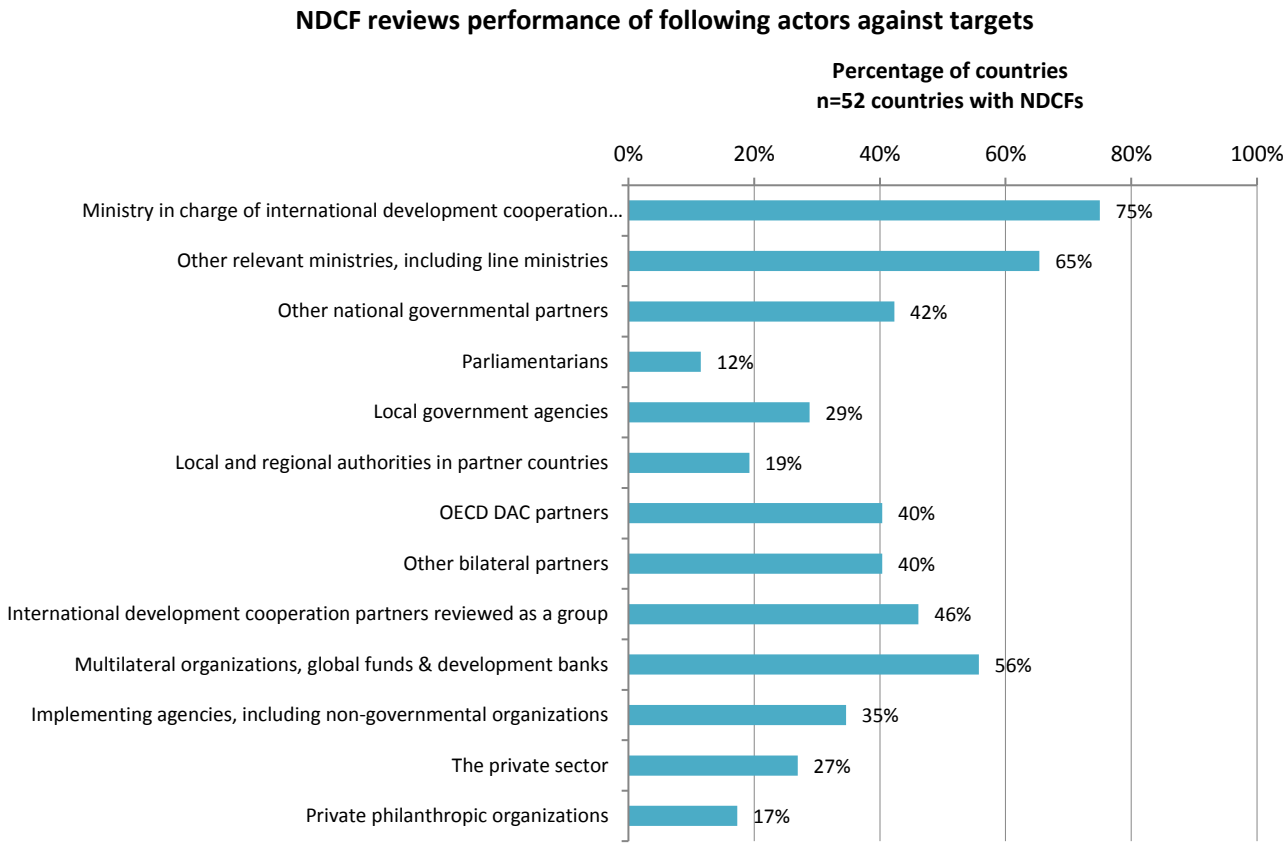
NDCFs serve as a platform for reviewing progress against targets. To support mutual accountability and transparency, it is reasonable to expect that NDCFs review the performance of all relevant development cooperation actors. Yet, by far NDCFs focus their reviews on the performance of government ministries, in particular, ministries in charge of coordinating international development cooperation (Figure 15). This aligns with results showing that NDCPs and CRFs mainly contain targets for national governments.

While international development cooperation partners, OECD DAC partners, other bilateral partners, and multilateral organizations, have a higher level of involvement in NDCFs, they are less likely to have their performance measured against agreed targets reviewed by NDCFs. This calls into question the extent to which these development cooperation actors are held accountable in the developing countries where they operate.

Performance of non-state actors, namely, NGOs, the private sector and private philanthropic organizations, is reviewed in few countries, as was also found in previous DCF surveys. They also seldom have targets in NDCPs and CRFs, and have low levels of involvement in NDCFs.

FIGURE 15

NDCF review of performance against targets



5.5 Sources of analysis of progress

Use of independent sources of analysis remains limited

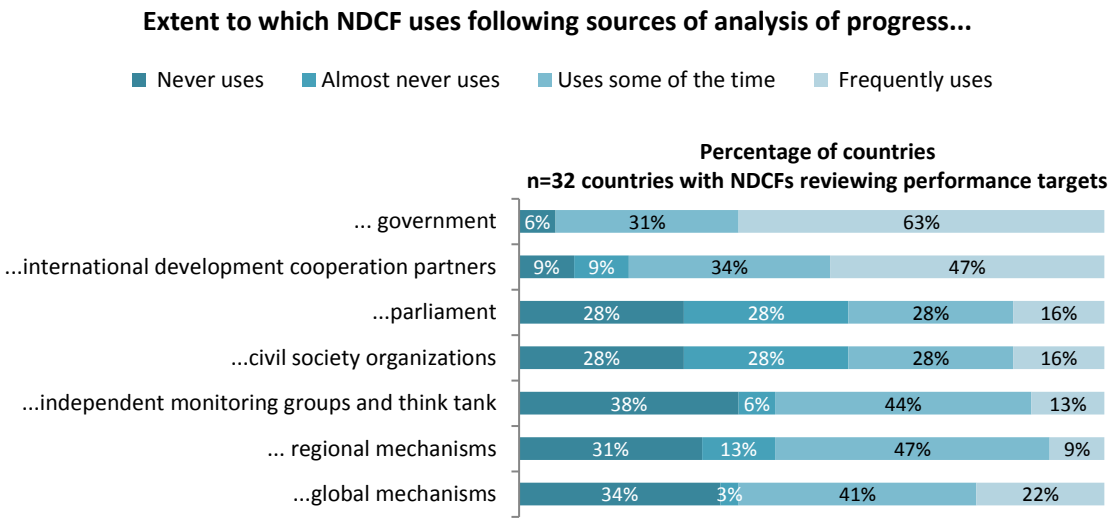
Government provided most frequently used sources of analysis (63 per cent), followed by international development cooperation partners (47 per cent) (Figure 16). The use of analysis from regional and global mechanisms is an area that could be improved. Twenty-two per cent of countries reported frequent use of global mechanisms and 9 per cent of regional mechanisms as sources of analysis. It remains unclear whether this is due to governments not being fully conversant with information available from these mechanisms, or whether information is not relevant or sufficiently accessible to national governments.

NDCFs seldom make use of analysis of independent monitoring groups and think tanks, and civil society organizations. Only 16 per cent of countries reported that they frequently used sources from civil society organizations, and 13 per cent reported use of sources from independent monitoring groups and think tanks. There may be several reasons for this. For example, if these actors or stakeholders are not part of the NDCF, the latter is not likely to use them as sources of analysis of progress. There may also be concerns about the quality of the analyses, and/or low levels of trust between governments and these stakeholders. Parliaments

too are not frequently used as sources of analysis of progress; this issue needs to be explored to deepen understanding of the role that parliaments play in different countries and their institutional capacity.

FIGURE 16

Sources of analysis of progress used in NDCFs



5.6 Impact and overall effectiveness of NDCFs

Several countries expressed NDCFs opened communication channels between government and development partners, sharing knowledge and information, building trust, and improving alignment between government priorities and the activities of international development cooperation partners.

SURVEY COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES

Respondents explain how NDCFs impact development cooperation effectiveness.

Supporting alignment: *Governments through the forum are able to clarify /state their development priorities. Development partners are more aware and mindful of national priorities while developing their strategic plans. Government organized periodic forums where constructive discussions could take place, possibilities could be explored to work together and avoid duplication, and there could be greater collective response and engagement of non-traditional donors, private sector and CSOs.*

Building trust: *Having a forum in place has strengthened the trust between the government and development partners, as well as the understanding of how to resolve policy issues and implementation bottlenecks. It has also provided concrete recommendations through dialogue of how to make progress on commitments, such as those related to mutual accountability and managing for results.*

Sharing knowledge and mutual learning: *The forums support sharing of national achievements, experiences including the challenges and lessons learnt, and effectiveness of development cooperation - reviews of policies and actions by the government and development partners and discussing ways forward.*

Dialogue and debate: *The establishment of forums has given different stakeholders the opportunity to discuss and debate a given theme from different perspectives, share experiences and commonly reflect on the difficulties encountered in finding appropriate solutions, where each stakeholder reports apropos their level of responsibility.*

The establishment of the forum has formed a permanent dialogue between the government, civil society, the private sector and development partners to discuss priorities and coordinate actions; development partners have started to provide information on disbursements and deliver on their commitments.

Yet, responses point to room for improvement. Almost half of responding countries saw NDCFs as moderately effective (48 per cent), 33 per cent highly effective, while 13 and 6 per cent saw these forums as slightly effective or ineffective respectively.

SURVEY COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES

"[A]fter remarkable gains when they were initiated in the early 2000s along with the mutual accountability frameworks, the forums have more recently (since 2009) become increasingly ineffective in improving or influencing behaviours of both government and partners".

"That is the problem. A lot of discussion but limited follow-up and action taken on M&E outcomes."

5.7 Proposals for further action

- **Linking NDCF processes to Voluntary National Reviews.** The low levels of engagement of non-state actors in national development cooperation forums should be addressed. This will require willingness on the part of national governments to have non-state actors participate, and improving non-state actors interest in being engaged. Consideration should be given to linking these forums with exercises in preparation for Voluntary National Reviews of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, ensuring that discussions on NDCPs are considered in this process.

- **Special dialogue platforms.** National governments should consider creating platforms where it can have meaningful dialogue with different types of non-state actors, for example, a private sector platform. It is essential that these special platforms be linked to the national coordination forum to avoid creating parallel structures.

- **Empowering local governments.** Local governments should be supported with capacity to participate in NDCFs. Consideration should be given to encouraging local-level development cooperation forums where appropriate, linked to the national development cooperation forum.

- **Improved coordination between global and regional mechanisms and national governments.** Global and regional mechanisms should engage with national governments to ascertain what kind of analysis would be most useful for NDCFs, and how best this information can be made accessible.

6. Development cooperation information systems

6.1 Key issues on DCIS

Previous DCF surveys have shown access and regular use of information from the DCIS limited to a small core of development cooperation actors, namely government, international development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations. The need to support parliamentarians and sub-national government bodies with access and in using DCIS information has also been raised.

DCIS were predominantly used to track ODA. This is to be expected given that ODA forms the largest component of development cooperation for many developing countries. As ODA has been declining in middle-income countries, other forms of development cooperation will become more important. DCIS will need to reflect these changes.

Development cooperation information systems tend to draw on a narrow range of information sources. International development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations (including development banks) are the main sources of information for DCIS, followed by finance/economic planning ministries and line ministries. Sub-national governments and non-state actors' information is used less frequently.

The effectiveness of the DCIS is dependent on the quality of the data collected by the system. In the 2016 DCF survey countries were positive about the completeness of the information. Lack of gender-disaggregated information on expenditures and results was raised as an issue.

6.2 Prevalence and scope of DCIS

Tracking off-budget flows, partner progress and untying are some of the areas where progress is needed

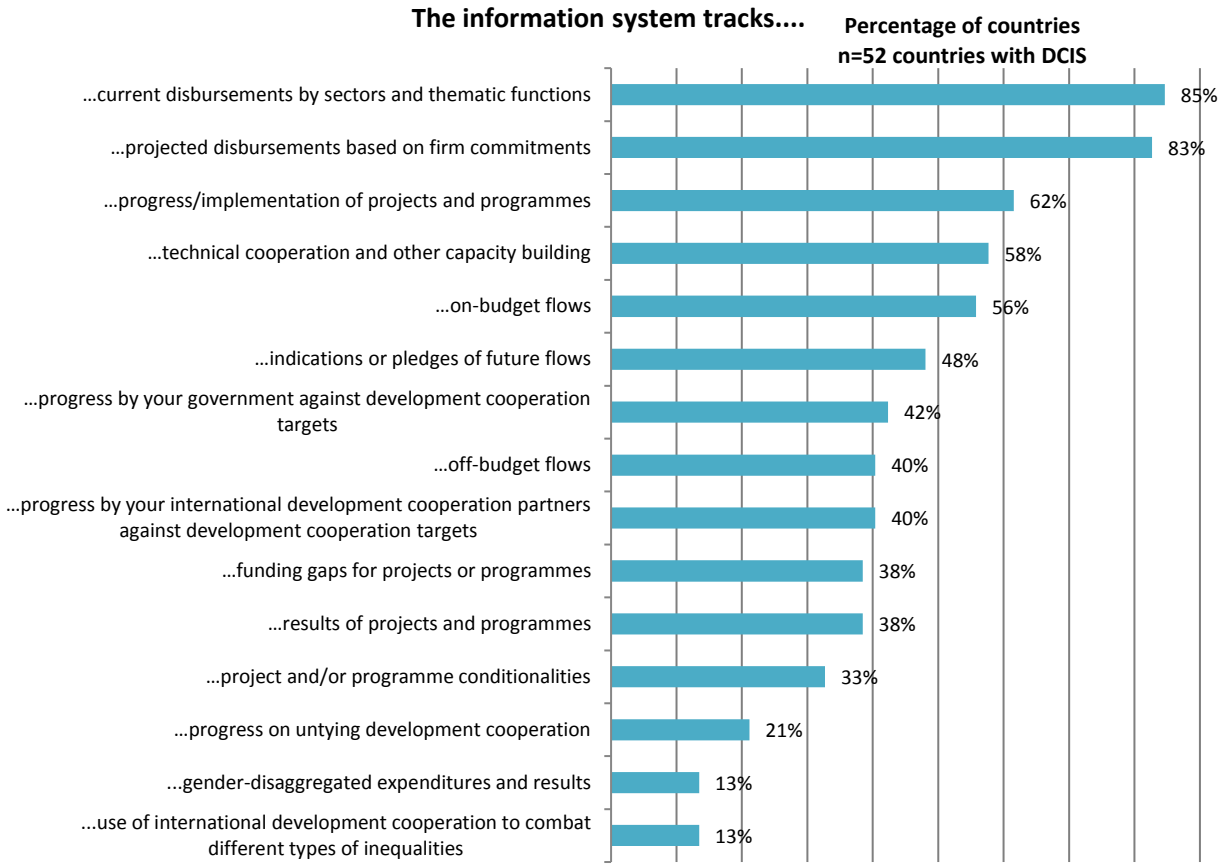
Fifty-two countries reported having a system for tracking international development cooperation at the country level. Of these, 39 countries have dedicated development cooperation information systems, and 13 countries used other systems. Eleven countries indicated that their DCIS fed into regional monitoring mechanisms, and 19 into global monitoring mechanisms, for example, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

Countries have DCIS that track current disbursements (85 per cent of countries with DCIS) and projected disbursements (83 per cent). To a slightly lesser extent, the DCIS tracks progress with implementation of projects (62 per cent) (Figure 17). Several important elements of development cooperation are not tracked in the information systems of respondent countries. For example, only 40 per cent of countries reported that their systems tracked off-budget flows and progress made by international development cooperation partners against their commitments, and only 21 per cent of countries reported tracking of progress with untying of development cooperation. These limitations of the DCIS undermine mutual accountability and transparency in international development cooperation.

Only 13 per cent of countries reported that their system tracked gender-disaggregated expenditures and results, and the same percentage of countries reported that their systems tracked the use of development cooperation to combat inequalities. This is not surprising given NDCPs and CRFs seldom contain gender-specific targets and targets related to addressing inequalities.

FIGURE 17

Scope of development cooperation information systems



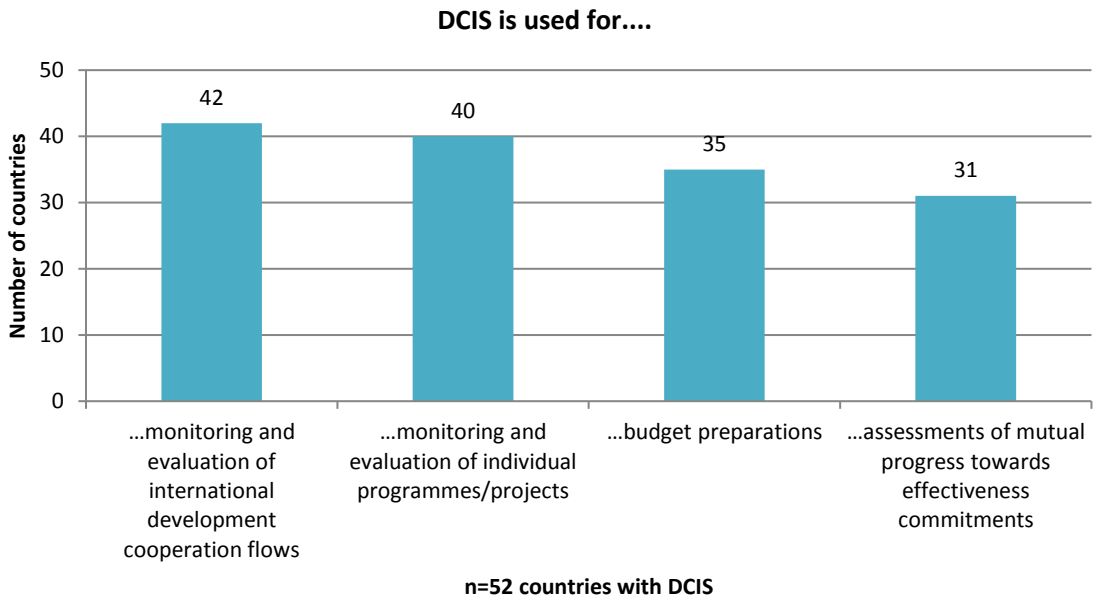
6.3 Access and use of DCIS

There remains scope for DCIS use in budget preparation and assessment of progress

A challenge faced by developing countries is how to make better use of DCIS to support mutual accountability and transparency and overall more effective development cooperation. Countries mainly use DCIS for monitoring flows of international development cooperation (42 countries), and monitoring and evaluation of individual programmes and projects (40 countries) (Figure 18). The use of the DCIS for budget preparations and for assessment of mutual progress towards effectiveness commitments is slightly less frequent. This is not markedly different from the 2016 survey results and is to be expected given that many of these systems were designed as conventional aid information systems.

FIGURE 18

Uses of DCIS



2018 findings are similar to previous DCF survey findings with respect to access and regular use of information from the DCIS. As many as 90 per cent of countries identified government ministries as regular users, followed by 77 per cent of countries that identified international development cooperation partners. Government ministries and international development cooperation partners are also reported to have somewhat better access to the DCIS than other development cooperation actors (Figure 19).

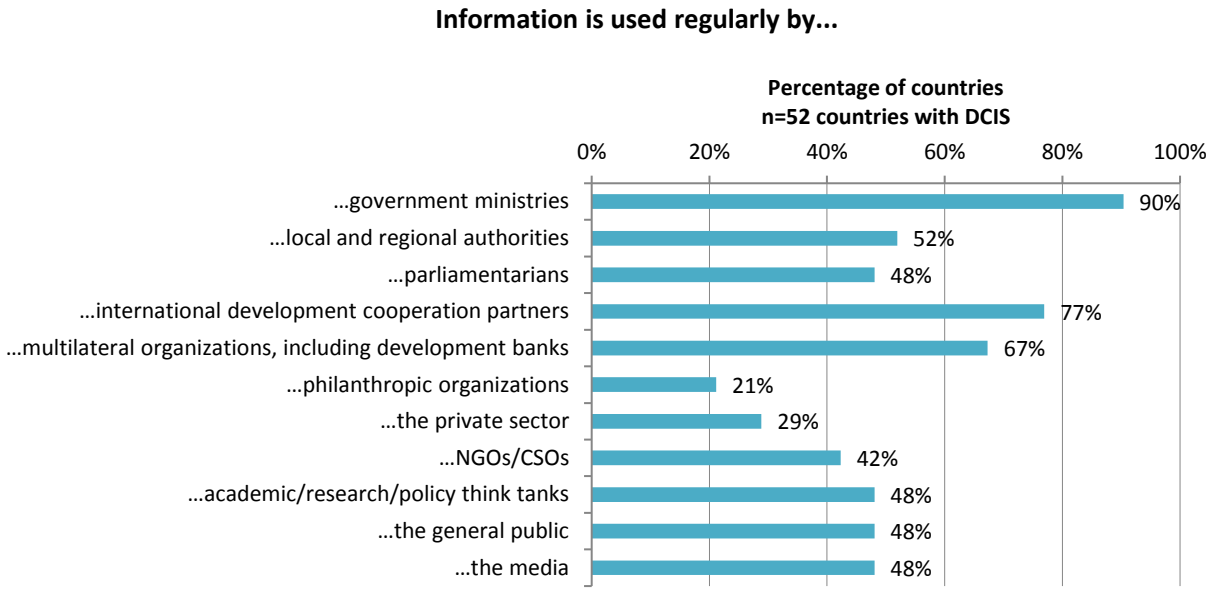
Low use of DCIS by parliamentarians is a concern given their oversight role

Parliaments have a critical oversight function, making it worrisome that only 48 per cent of countries reported regular use of the information from the DCIS by parliamentarians. Local and regional authorities are reported as regular users by 52 per cent of countries. Parliamentarians and local and regional authorities are reported to have the same access to the DCIS as international development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations, so it is likely that there are other factors that may be influencing this relatively irregular use. Other considerations may be the relevance of information, awareness of DCIS or capacity (time, resources, and skills) to access and use the information.

Non-state actors tend not to be regular users of information from the DCIS, and also tend to have low levels of access to the DCIS. The limited accessibility of information to the media and the general public undermines the transparency of international development cooperation.

FIGURE 19

Accessibility and use of information from the DCIS



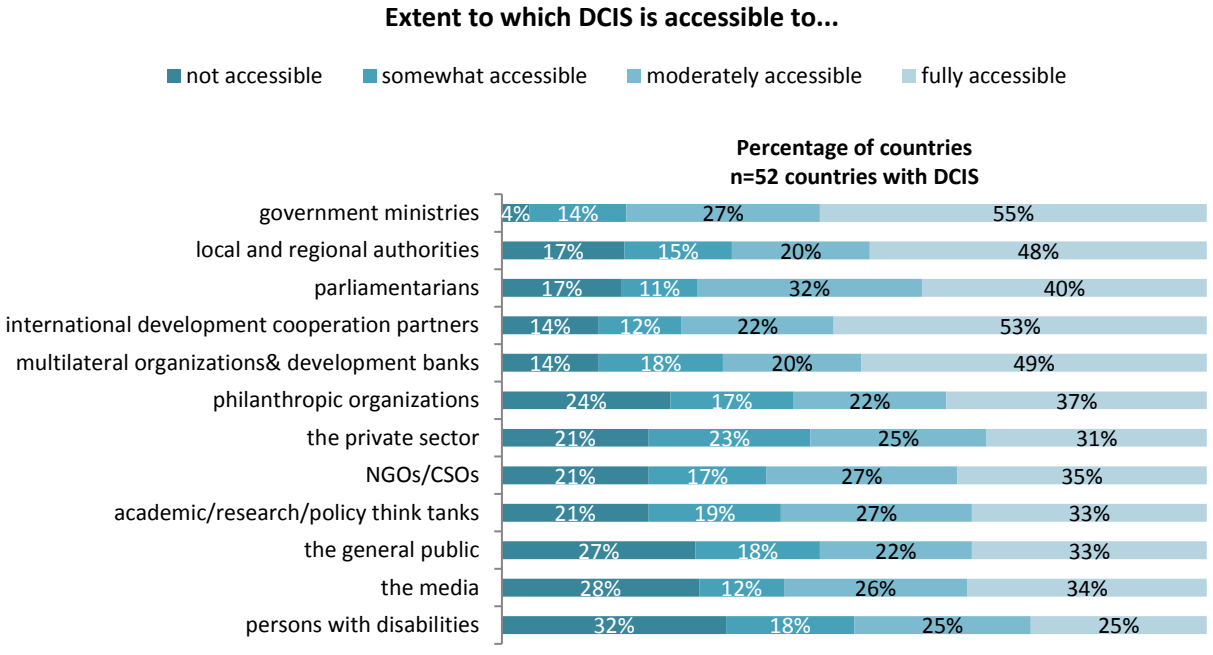
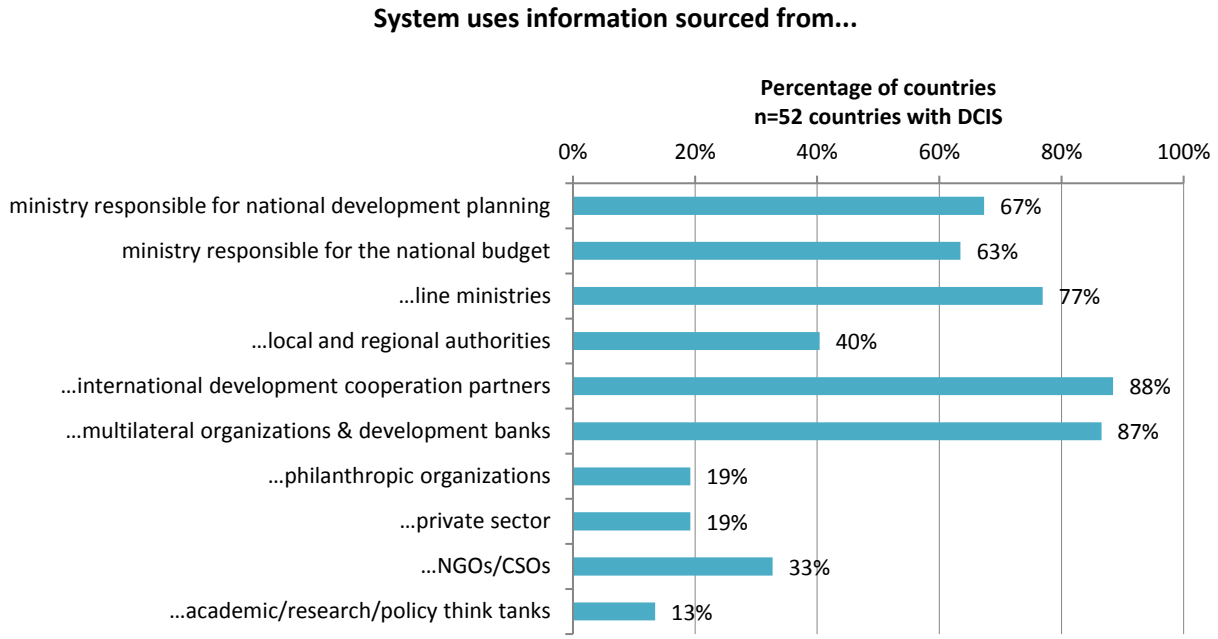


FIGURE 20

Sources of information used by the DCIS



6.4 Sources of information for DCIS

There is high reliance on information from partners and multilateral organizations

There appears to be a heavy reliance on information from international development cooperation partners and multilateral organizations. This may be a reflection of the challenge that countries have in obtaining reliable data from national sources. Some surveyed countries indicated that their legislative and regulatory frameworks did not permit or encourage the collection and use of data from non-state sources, while others pointed to the lack of capacity of NGOs/civil society to provide good quality information.

Information for the DCIS is drawn mainly from international development cooperation partners (88 per cent) and multilateral organizations including development banks (87 per cent). Government sources were less likely to be used – 77 per cent of countries reported using information from line ministries, 67 per cent reported using information from the national ministry responsible for development planning, and 63 per cent reported using information from the ministry responsible for the national budget. Local authorities are even less likely to be used as sources of information for the DCIS (Figure 20).

Only 13 per cent of countries identified academic institutions/research/policy think tanks as sources of information, and 19 per cent identified the private sector and private philanthropic organizations as sources.

6.5 Quality of DCIS information

As many as 37 countries identified the lack of availability of quality data as one of the three most significant barriers to change in their international development cooperation. Most of the capacity support needs that

national governments identified related to support needed for strengthening the DCIS. Examples of capacity support needs include:

- Development of an integrated development cooperation data management platform
- Upgrading the existing aid information system and developing a web-based data repository for monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs
- Strengthening the national statistical system and generation of data on development cooperation; including this in broader efforts to generate quality data for SDG implementation
- Data collection and analysis, including trend analysis on development cooperation commitments and disbursements
- Capacity building of users of development cooperation information systems

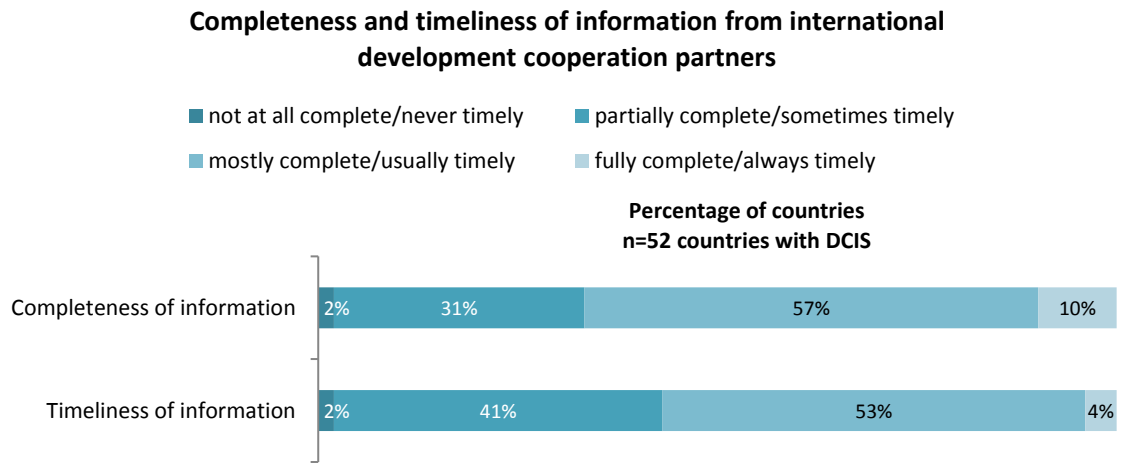
Strengthening statistical capacities is key to improving DCIS

International development cooperation partners are the main providers of information for DCIS, and therefore have a significant impact on the quality of information provided by the DCIS. As was the case in the 2016 DCF survey, countries were positive about the completeness of the information provided by international development cooperation partners, with 57 per cent of countries rating the information as mostly complete, and 10 per cent as fully complete (Figure 21).

Countries' assessment of the timeliness of information received from international development cooperation partners was slightly less positive, leaving room for improvement. Four per cent of countries rated the information as 'always timely' and 53 per cent as 'usually timely'. Delayed information is not useful, even when information is complete.

FIGURE 21

Completeness and timeliness of information from international development cooperation partners



6.6 Impact of DCIS

Notwithstanding the challenges countries face with regards to their DCIS, several countries believe that the DCIS contributes to strengthening mutual accountability and transparency. There were references to the DCIS improving transparency of international development cooperation as partners increasingly are required to provide information for the DCIS. Where the DCIS is known and accessible to non-state actors including the general public, the DCIS is seen to improve transparency.

Other impacts of the DCIS include providing the information that serves as a basis for dialogue and negotiation between government and its development cooperation partners, improving the quality of these dialogues. The DCIS is also seen to improve coordination between government and development partners, and among partners, as information on programmes and projects is made available through the DCIS.

Online DCIS accessible to the public make information transparent, improving incentives for timely accurate information

An online DCIS accessible to the public makes the information transparent, and serves as an incentive to provide timely and accurate information, according to one country as captured below.

SURVEY COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES

"The realization of the gap of information provided by partners has made the government more active in requesting timely and quality reporting. Through the Aid Information Management System (AIMS) government is producing a quarterly development cooperation factsheet. Government is consulting with its partners for better reporting and discussing resource gaps. As the system is online and accessible to all, DPs are now more conscious of their image and gradually taking interest in providing timely, complete and accurate data."

6.7 Proposals for further action

- **Prioritizing DCIS as part of SDG monitoring efforts.** Developing data capacity for the monitoring of development cooperation is a vital dimension of capacity support for broader SDG monitoring and should be prioritized as such.

- **Encouraging peer review.** National governments should be encouraged to use peer reviews, particularly with countries in the region, to solicit feedback on their DCIS and suggestions for improvements. Regional development institutions could facilitate these peer reviews. Regional sustainable development forums can provide platforms for such reviews.

- **Improving access and use for parliamentarians.** Parliamentarians should be enabled to access and use information from the DCIS. National governments should engage their parliaments to find out the information they need and provide them with the necessary access.

- **Improving timeliness of partner data.** Survey findings point to the need for improved timeliness of the information provided by international development cooperation partners to national governments.

- **Consideration of non-state sources of data.** Further probing into the low use of non-state sources of information for the DCIS is needed. In particular, minimal use of information from academic institutions and independent think tanks should be examined from both the supply and demand sides.

Conclusion

The scope and use of development cooperation practices are changing, in line with the new realities and expectations for international development cooperation reflected in the 2030 Agenda. This survey round has prioritized the investigation of concrete actions taken by national governments to adjust their policies and approaches – filling gaps in existing policies and evolving processes and consultations.

There is sufficient evidence of developing countries moving beyond ODA to address a wider range of instruments and partnerships in their national development cooperation policies. This also points to the need to advance data capacity for monitoring development cooperation as a vital dimension of broader capacity development for SDG monitoring. Coordination between national and regional mechanisms can be strengthened to support capacities and peer review in different elements of development cooperation processes, including development cooperation information systems.

Responses to the survey suggest further steps to address minimal monitoring and review of development cooperation. Beyond empowering parliamentarians in their individual capacities, processes should facilitate institutionalization of these functions to involve parliaments in reviewing the design of policies and to engage in debate with governments on development cooperation issues. Careful consideration needs to be given to what it means to establish different targets for different development cooperation partners, and where the specific bottlenecks lie, including in ensuring inclusiveness targets. This should include consideration of the United Nations own engagement through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and that of other international development cooperation partners.

[viii] E/2016/65.

[ix] Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016), National Aid Policies: Key Pillars of Mutual Accountability: a guidance note for stakeholders of development cooperation.

[x] Only three countries expressed lacking the capacity to develop a policy, while two countries shared there was no demand for a policy.

[xi] E/2016/65.

Annex

Annex A: Details of the 2018 DCF survey

The 2018 DCF survey is based largely on the 2016 DCF survey. The questionnaire was streamlined to make it more user-friendly and accessible to respondents. Where possible, the language used in the survey was simplified. The questionnaire was peer reviewed, including by the study author.

All developing countries were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was administered between December 2017 and February 2018. The response period was reduced after the date of the 2018 DCF was advanced from July to May. Countries were provided with guidance to assist them in completing the exercise. The DCF team fielded country queries, held teleconferences, provided materials and webcasts on the DCF website. Where the country context permitted, UN Resident Coordinators and members of UN Country Teams were invited to provide support to and/or participate in the consultations.

The survey was organized around the following areas:

- National development cooperation policies (NDCPs)
- Country results frameworks (CRFs)
- National development cooperation forums (NDCFs)
- Development cooperation information systems (DCIS)
- Support for capacity development
- Monitoring and review for development cooperation results

The survey required respondents to select responses or check against a list of options, or provide Yes/No responses. Some questions required respondents to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 (using Likert-type scale response anchors) the extent to which a practice takes place. There were also open-ended questions and provision for respondents to provide additional comments. Qualitative responses were explored through a series of interviews with countries.

Annex B: Examples of contents of NDCPs

Country A (Lower Middle-Income Country): Development Cooperation and Partnerships Strategy 2014-2018

Preamble: Explains legal basis of the strategy, and identifies the senior leader in government with overall responsibility for coordination and monitoring implementation of the strategy.

1. Introduction: gives background to strategy, shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness, emphasis on development results.

2. Development cooperation: achievements, challenges and opportunities: reflects on achievements (national ownership of agenda, harmonization, capacity development, managing for results). Challenges: Pressure on ODA from global downturn and graduation to MIC status. Opportunities provided by SSC and non-traditional partners in region.

3. Strategic objectives: sets out overarching strategic goal for development effectiveness, and strategic objectives to achieve the goal

4. Principles, tools and partnerships for strategy implementation

- Principles
- Programme-based approaches
- Results frameworks and results-based approaches
- Joint monitoring indicators
- Promoting resource transparency, accountability and results
- Partnerships to support development effectiveness

5. Partnership and dialogue arrangements

- Country development cooperation forum
- Government-Development Partner Coordination Committee
- Technical Working Groups
- Bilateral development partner portfolio reviews
- Private sector consultations
- NGO consultations

6. Institutional arrangements: sets out roles and responsibilities of various ministries and government structures.

7. Monitoring and evaluation:

- Links to national and sector development targets
- Monitoring development effectiveness
- Methodology for transparent reporting on development effectiveness
- Mid-term evaluation of the strategy
- Sector and project monitoring

8. Conclusion

Country B: Small Island Developing State: Development Cooperation Policy (2015)

Part I: Introduction

- Background
- Opportunities and challenges
- Vision
- Mission
- Objectives

Part II: Policy framework

a) Alignment with national development plan

b) Forms of aid (grants, budget support, loans, technical assistance, overseas volunteers, humanitarian aid, south-south cooperation, aid for trade)

Part III: Implementation and coordination mechanisms

- Development cooperation policy implementation
- Development Partners' Forum
- Other partnerships (civil society, private sector, philanthropic organizations)
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Responsibilities of development partners
- Government's commitment towards development cooperation effectiveness and reform
- Indicators of progress (have indicators and targets that include targets for partners as a collective)

Part IV: Provisions related to tax exemption and visas

Annex A: Country's project cycle

Annex B: Role of Development Coordination Committee

Annex C: List of other documents consulted

E/2018/55. Report of the Secretary General on 'Trends and Progress in international development cooperation'. 10 April 2018.

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Development Cooperation Forum, Accountable and Effective Development Cooperation in a post-2015 era: Background study, Third Mutual Accountability Survey, 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/dcf_germany_bkgd_study_2_ma_survey.pdf

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Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Nairobi Outcome Document, 1 December 2016, Nairobi, Kenya. http://archive.ipu.org/splz-e/nairobi16/outcome.pdf

Inter-Parliamentary Union, National Aid Policies: Key Pillars of Mutual Accountability: a guidance note for stakeholders of development cooperation, 2015, https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reference/2016-07/national-aid-policies-key-pillars-mutual-accountability

UNDESA, Mutual accountability for development cooperation results: where next?, New York, United Nations, 2012, see: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf/dcf_mutual_accountability_busan_study%2829jun%29

United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation, New York, June 2016, http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914

Since 2008, the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) Surveys by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs have provided evidence on the state of play in development cooperation on the ground. The DCF Surveys help governments to focus their observations of how effectively their development cooperation functions and why. The detailed analyses of findings are used to generate practical recommendations for policy makers and practitioners at the global, regional and national levels.

The Development Cooperation Forum review trends and progress in international development cooperation. It encourages greater coherence in development policy and among diverse actors, knowledge sharing and mutual learning. The DCF brings together ministers and senior experts from developing and developed countries, parliamentarians, civil society organizations and development banks, local governments, philanthropic foundations and the private sector.