



OED REACH

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Based on *The Multi-partner Evaluation of the Comprehensive Development Framework: Synthesis Report*.

The Comprehensive Development Framework: A Multi-Partner Review

- The Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF)—launched by the Bank in 1999— has become an important influence on the global development agenda. It helped shape initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Monterrey Consensus, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Its core principles have gained the support of most donors and recipient countries.
- Intensive field studies of six countries show progress in implementing the CDF principles, particularly where one or more of the principles have been applied over a number of years.
- These positive changes are fragile. Implementing CDF principles requires changes in entrenched behaviors and institutional practices—not easily or quickly done. Thus dedicated and consistent attention is needed by top donor leadership and recipient countries to ensure momentum is sustained.

Building on the aid community's recognition that the full potential of international aid was not being realized, World Bank President, James D. Wolfensohn launched the CDF in early 1999. Two ideas are at the heart of the CDF: that the way aid is delivered, not just its content, has an important influence on its effectiveness, and that poverty reduction is the fundamental goal of international aid. Four principles are at the foundation of the CDF: *Long-Term, Holistic Development; Results Orientation; Country Ownership; and Country-Led Partnership*. While the principles are not new, bringing them together as a unified concept and championing the package as important to the global development community is an important innovation.

Evaluating the CDF

In late 1999, the Committee on Development Effectiveness asked the World Bank's independent Operations Evaluation Department (OED) to assess CDF implementation, identifying which factors helped and hindered progress and the impact CDF principles had on behaviors and outcomes. A broad array of stakeholders—representing donor and recipient countries, multilateral agencies, and civil society and private sector organizations—designed and funded a multi-partner evaluation. The work was overseen and the findings were endorsed by a 30-member Steering Committee and a 5-member management group. OED and the World Bank's Development Economic Research Group (DECRG) provided the evaluation secretariat.

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Main Findings and Recommendations

The evaluation's findings are listed below, by principle.

Long-Term Holistic Development Framework

Recipient countries typically have long-term visions and strategic frameworks, but these can translate into outcomes only via a disciplined budget process.

Donors should support efforts to strengthen budget processes and align their assistance with national development strategies. They should provide reliable predictable financing with transparent multi-year indicators. Holistic approaches to development problems require dialogue across sectors. Yet both donor and recipient country bureaucracies tend to be organized by sector, fostering institutional "silos" that inhibit cross-sector dialogue and planning.

All donors, and particularly the **World Bank**, should show leadership in developing better mechanisms for designing and implementing cross-sectoral programs.

Results Orientation

Recipient countries: The weak capacity of central and regional public agencies makes it difficult to implement a results orientation government-wide. While sectorwide approaches and medium-term expenditure frameworks have introduced a results orientation in the budget process, many recipient countries appear to have adopted the results approach primarily to satisfy donors and have yet to embed results-based systems into the core operations of government.

Donors should no longer look to funds disbursed or inputs delivered as their only measure of success. Development programs should have measurable objectives linked to concrete outcomes to which all stakeholders hold themselves accountable. Despite some advances, monitoring and evaluation activities are still mainly donor driven and funded and not well integrated into normal government operations. Donors should strengthen and use country-led monitoring and evaluation systems and avoid setting up separate structures to service their projects and special needs.

The **World Bank** should enhance its capacity to track and analyze the implementation of CDF principles and their impacts.

Country Ownership

The relevance and sustainability of political and institutional reforms require breadth of ownership among a wide range of stakeholders. The evaluation found evidence of progress; governments and donors increasingly consult with selected stakeholder groups about development strategies. But ownership is not necessarily broad; in many countries ownership remains confined to the executive branch of the government, and consultation with sectoral and regional authorities, elected officials and legislators, and marginalized groups is selective, sporadic or not timely.

Donors should work with the governments to devise an approach for consulting with elected officials, local governments and nongovernment representatives, and vulnerable groups of people.

In order to enhance country ownership, the **World Bank** should clarify its role in reviewing PRSPs as some countries believe review by the World Bank Board of Directors constitutes approval and therefore inhibits country ownership.

Country-Led Partnership

The PRSP is helping to improve the alignment between donors and recipient countries, but the transaction costs of delivering aid remain high and donors continue to engage in unproductive competition. Reform will require both recipients and donors to change their behavior and processes, giving up some individual interests to achieve better development outcomes through joint action.

Recipient countries should place responsibility for aid coordination at a high level of government, and give this function sufficient resources, authority, and political support to manage the aid process. Many donors face domestic political resistance to harmonizing procedures, providing budget support, or reducing the use of international consultants, and won't move to greater country leadership in the presence of corruption or economic mismanagement. Recipient countries should implement and enforce procurement and other

accountability rules that will engender donor confidence.

Donors should avoid micro-managing the country aid process, and provide the capacity building and resources countries need to assume aid management—for example, by supporting the creation of independent country-level aid review panels.

The **World Bank** should continue to decentralize its operations and delegate authority to country offices. In addition, the Bank should select and reward staff, in part, on the basis of their partnership performance. And the Bank should practice what it preaches on harmonization and simplification.

The Road Ahead

Further research and exchange of experience among recipient countries are needed on how to build up country-owned monitoring and evaluation systems and expand involvement of civil society and the private sector in the CDF process. Some promising opportunities have recently emerged for donors and recipients to move ahead—including the New Partnership for Africa's Development; the Monterrey Consensus; and the Rome Declaration on Harmonization. The World Bank can and should play a lead role in integrating the CDF principles into these global initiatives, and in identifying additional avenues for progress.

