



SUPPORT TO STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING

LIGHT REPORTING MECHANISM

Proposal for Future

Introduction

At the request of its Steering Committee in June 2005, the PARIS21 Secretariat undertook the initiative of putting in place a Light Reporting Mechanism on support to statistical capacity building by development partners. To launch the process, the Secretariat began with a pilot exercise which covered ongoing activities in Sub-Saharan Africa during the period 2004-05.

The results of this Light Reporting Exercise are presented in the 2-volume document, “*Review of Support to Statistical Capacity Building in Sub-Saharan Africa – From Reporting to Collaboration*”. A draft of the document, presented at the FASDEV II meeting in Addis Ababa in February 2006, was well-received and deemed useful for both beneficiary countries and development partners. For beneficiary countries, it could serve as a basis to improve the mobilization of resources for the implementation of their NSDS and to formulate action plans for statistical capacity building activities, while for development partners, as a management and advocacy tool to improve donor harmonization and collaboration in the statistical area.

Proposal for the Future of the LRM

The lessons learned from the pilot light reporting exercise point to the need for a debate among development partners on the usefulness of a Light Reporting Mechanism and how to improve it in order to move forward on improved collaboration in the area of statistical capacity building. The debate could consider the following points regarding the usefulness of the LRM:

- **the usefulness of the mechanism to development partners:**
 - as a management tool to identify where partner support could be used more efficiently, thus avoiding duplication, promoting complementarity in different efforts, and filling gaps. In this regard, it can be used to plan and coordinate technical assistance;
 - as an advocacy tool to promote the importance of statistical development and its support by partners. It could lead to a development partner strategy to support SCB and the preparation of a periodic report on SCB by each development partner.
- **usefulness of the mechanism to developing countries**
 - to identify the gaps between their statistical needs and actual support, along with ongoing NSDS work. It would be useful in improving the design of their NSDS, particularly during discussions on funding of the strategy. Ideally, updating and monitoring this information could be done through the country’s NSDS implementation monitoring system;
 - to complement GDDS – regular updates of countries’ metadata and plans for improvement will keep development partners informed about improvements and future needs in statistical capacity;
 - to address not only the “input” side of partners’ support, but also the outputs and outcomes of this support, and, in some cases, to discuss the impact evaluation of the support.
- **usefulness of the mechanism to the international statistical system and the development community**
 - as a tool to monitor progress in support to SCB by the international community
 - as a complement to DAC’s CRS, opens the discussion on how to improve the CRS, so that it could report more comprehensively on activities related to statistical capacity building;
 - as a basis for reflection by partners to elaborate an International Strategy for Statistical Capacity Building (as Africa’s RRSF). This would permit the definition of a common policy that could lead to the harmonisation of development partners’ activities.

With regard to how to improve the LRM, based on the pilot exercise, the following actions are proposed:

- **verifying results of the pilot exercise in a few countries** (select countries that have a variety of partners and statistical activities) with both government sources and field offices of development partners. This would (i) give a more realistic picture of SCB support; (ii) help establish a baseline on support to SCB for future rounds of the reporting mechanism in the countries visited; (iii) identify reporting issues to be improved in the LRM as a whole;
- **clarifying differences between DAC's Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the LRM:** the CRS and LRM are based on the same data source, yet their objectives and reporting coverage are different. To identify and clarify more in-depth these differences, discussions with a few development partners where the discrepancies appear large, e.g., Canada, France, and Germany, would satisfy any concerns about "double reporting";
- **reviewing of LRM content**, based on the "verification" discussions. *A priori*, this should include agreement on (i) standard definitions and concepts of SCB and statistical areas; (ii) how to limit duplication in reporting of support by distinguishing the various financing mechanisms (e.g., bilateral and multilateral assistance directly to countries; bilateral financing to multilateral organisations, bilateral and multilateral funding through intermediary organisations); (iii) a cut-off date for reporting (different accounting periods of partners); and (iv) how to handle planned or envisaged activities. A revised questionnaire would result from these agreements;
- **launching the LRM in another region:** In view of the effort required to collect the information, it is prudent to extend the LRM to one region at a time. The selection could be decided during the PARIS21 Steering Committee meeting in April). Possible candidates include Central America, South Asia and the Middle East;
- **designing and monitoring the web-based database.** At present, the responses to the LRM questionnaire are stored in an Excel-based database. To facilitate regular updating and accessibility, a web-based database needs to be developed. In addition, the logistics of its maintenance (e.g., modalities, regularity of reporting, information access, security issues, enhancement issues) need to be addressed and agreed upon. The host of the database needs to be determined, as this will have an impact on the design of the database (e.g., availability of hardware/software, restrictions);

The table below presents details of this proposal, including a timetable and budget, excluding staff cost.

**Proposal for the Future of the Light Reporting Mechanism
Action Plan, 2006-07**

Action	Schedule	Responsible	Budget (US\$)
Verification of results			20,000
Select countries (e.g., Niger, Mauritania, Tanzania, Angola)	End-Apr 06	PARIS21	--
Conduct missions	May-July 06 (4 wks)	De Leva	20,000
Update database	June 06	De Leva	--
Clarifying differences between CRS and LRM			5,000
Select partners (e.g., Germany, France, Netherlands, Canada, EC)	End-April 06	PARIS21	--



Action	Schedule	Responsible	Budget (US\$)
Visit partners	April-May 06	De Leva/Blazyk	5,000
Review of LRM content Organise Forum of key donors to discuss recommendations of LRE	July 06	De Leva	35,000 20,000
Discuss SCB issues & donor collaboration at CCSA meeting	Sept 4-5, 06 (1/2 day)	Simonpietri/De Leva Williams	15,000
Launch LRM in another region Select region LRM process	End-April 06 Sept 06-Mar 07	PARIS21 SC Team	50,000 -- 50,000
Design/monitor web-based database Design web-based Test database	Oct 06-Jan 07	Consultants	90,000 50,000
Test database	Jan 07)
Prepare system documentation	Feb 07		25,000
Prepare user documentation	Mar 07)
Maintenance	Mar 07-onwards		15,000
Total			200,000