



PARIS21 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
1–2 July 2003
Paris, France

Record of the Proceedings

Day I, Session I
Chair: Anne Letsebe

Adoption of the Agenda & Introduction

The meeting was opened by the retiring co-chairman of PARIS21, Jean-Claude Faure, who noted that this meeting was an important step in the life of PARIS21, of which he was happy to have been part. He invited Anne Letsebe from the South African Presidency to take the session chair. Anne Letsebe expressed her gratitude for having been invited to chair this session in the absence of co-chair Pali Lehohla and conveyed his regrets that he could not attend himself due the imminent release of the South African population census data. She underlined the importance of statistics in her home country of South Africa and mentioned that PARIS21 had itself been instrumental in raising the profile of statistics in the country.

PARIS21 Progress Report (November 2002 – June 2003)

Regional Workshops

The PARIS21 Secretariat Manager reported on the successful organisation of five regional workshops since the last Steering Committee meeting in October 2002. He commented that these workshops have enabled data users, data producers, policymakers, parliamentarians, members of the media, and donors to start the process of resolving their issues. As a result of the workshops, countries have come to accept statistics as a development policy matter, rather than merely a technical one. Strategic statistical development plans (SSDP) are now viewed as a necessity in countries. The statistical capacity building indicators (SCBI) have also been accepted and welcomed as a key instrument to monitor and develop the statistical system. The need for donor collaboration is becoming urgent, as donors often engage in identical or similar projects in the same country. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and the need for donor collaboration have been focal points of discussion at the workshops. He also announced that the Secretariat has received a request that a workshop for Portuguese-speaking countries be organised. It was also suggested that PARIS21 address the special statistical issues relating to small countries by holding joint workshops for Pacific Islands and the Caribbean.

The European Commission representative welcomed the small islands states proposal, and France proposed this for the future work programme. The Francophone Africa representative questioned the utility of having a Portuguese-speaking country workshop, because many of those countries have already participated in a PARIS21 workshop and because language is not the fundamental criteria for establishing an event—the issues common to neighbouring countries are the important factors. The Swiss representative supported the idea of a Portuguese-speaking workshop but suggested that another sponsor might be more appropriate.

The Arab States representative noted that workshops were the start of a process of engagement with policymakers and users and not just an event. The representative requested that indicators of achievement be produced, to monitor whether or not PARIS21 has achieved its goals and that a document synthesising the experiences across all regional workshops be written.

The Committee then discussed follow-up to PARIS21 regional workshops. The representatives for the Arab States and the IMF stressed that the impetus for follow-up action needs to come from the country itself, with PARIS21 and its partners supplying the tools and knowledge for countries to use. The representative of the Arab States mentioned that activities should not be limited to PRSP countries. In some non-PRSP countries with very poorly developed statistical systems, PARIS21 needs to stimulate the demand side by linking the availability of statistics to improvements in governance. The Chair mentioned that countries were in a variety of states of statistical sophistication, and an assessment of these capabilities is required in order to deliver appropriate follow-up. The World Bank representatives felt that supply-side activities were already well provided for by the international community and that PARIS21 should focus on stimulating demand and strategic planning.

The Central and South America representative recommended that PARIS21 reduce the time lag between regional workshops and national follow-up and proposed that funds be identified in PRSPs for supporting sustainable statistical systems in the longer term; the example of Bolivia was cited. The Arab States representative asked for statistics on how many countries had requested follow-up activities after regional workshops and how many have implemented their own follow-up. The European Commission representative said that it would be helpful to know at what point in national follow-up PARIS21's intervention ends and donor intervention begins. The representative commented that indicators should be developed for monitoring increases in financing for statistical systems, both from government and donor sources, as they would also be a good indicator of PARIS21's success.

The Swiss representative expressed his concern that PARIS21 will not be able to manage the growing requests for regional workshops and national follow-up, as the work is potentially enormous. The Secretariat manager confirmed that there is a direct link between the size of the Secretariat and the speed with which PARIS21 can follow-up in country. The UNSD representative commented that, due to the Secretariat's small size, PARIS21 ought to focus on its strengths: advocacy and user-producer dialogue.

The French and Swiss representatives suggested that Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs—see “*Partnership*” section below) can be a good tool to facilitate country follow-up by passing the responsibility of national follow-up to regional and international organisations.

Task Teams

The Secretariat Manager reported that task teams have been a very successful and popular feature of PARIS21's work. The International Comparison Programme has used the SCBIs to assess statistical capacity in 30 countries. He commented that the SCBIs are an excellent example of what PARIS21 can provide to the international statistical community. He further stated that he would like to report in October on the implementation of the SCBI questionnaire in countries. He would like countries to begin using it themselves as a management tool and to continue the development and improvement of the questionnaire.

The IMF representative commented that Lebanese statistical authorities have conducted a self-evaluation of a number of statistical domains in their country using the SCBIs and reported their impressions to her. The head of the agency found the SCBIs “to be a very practical, useful framework and guide for our Ministries, Agencies and Administrations in evaluating capacity and

identifying weaknesses and requirements. Such benchmarking is essential in identifying investments required to build capacity and preparing national action plans. I believe that the exercise should be done for all the Arab countries, and we would be prepared to cooperate with you in this connection.”

The Secretariat Manager announced that the Secretariat will develop Strategic Statistical Development Plan guidelines by the October 2003 meeting for the Steering Committee’s approval. The Improved Statistical Support for Monitoring Development Goals task team held a meeting in early June 2003 that underlined the need for stronger dialogue between data producers and policymakers. The Rural and Agricultural Statistics team now has a full-blown programme of work that is being funded through the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building.

The Swiss representative reported that the METAGORA project held an inaugural meeting on 23–24 May 2003 in Paris. The European Commission will transmit to the OECD detailed terms of Reference (TORs) to be included in the contract document which is being submitted to the OECD Council for approval. It is expected that the project will be hosted in the OECD by August or September 2003. It has been requested by the OECD that METAGORA liaise with the OECD’s Govnet.

New task teams have recently been proposed by partner organisations for statistical training, health statistics, labour statistics, improved dissemination of statistics, and sub-national statistics. The Secretariat Manager recommended the creation of a team on costing statistical activities.

The DFID representative then presented a proposal for a project on the “Better use of Multisectoral Data Especially for Decentralised Governance and Local Accountability”—see document# *P21/SC(2003)5*. He underscored the added value and use which might be obtained by combining data from different sectors to inform cross-cutting issues nationally and also to energise decentralisation and local community empowerment. An emphasis is now being placed on accountability of service providers, and local data is increasingly being demanded for this. He proposed to set up a task team to exploit existing data and make better use of it using newly available techniques such as poverty mapping. The DFID representative requested an initial reaction from the Steering Committee in order to flesh out a full, costed, outlined proposal for a task team by the October 2003 meeting.

Several participants cautioned against the establishment of too many uncoordinated task teams, particularly those for whom a currently existing institution already has the mandate (e.g., ILO with labour statistics or WHO with health statistics). Task teams should contribute to the PARIS21 objectives specifically. Most participants were supportive of the proposed teams on costing statistical activities and the better use of multisectoral data. It was suggested that the costing statistical activities work collaboratively with the SSDP team as the work is linked.

The European Commission representative referred to the last Steering Committee meeting in which the creation of a statistical training task team had been discussed. He would be glad to provide the TORs. The World Bank representative commented that task team budgets ought to be funded by the convenor institutions as much as possible and not out of the PARIS21 Secretariat budget. The Arab States representative suggested that the Secretariat develop criteria for establishing task teams to ensure that they remain within the mandate of PARIS21.

Decisions on any new task teams were deferred to October. It was noted that there should be a clear justification for why PARIS21 is best placed to host any new task team as opposed to a UN agency.

PARLISTAT

To improve co-ordination of donor activities at the country level, by increased transparency of donor activities the Secretariat manager proposed the creation of a Partnership Library of Statistical System Documentation (PARLISTAT). PARLISTAT would be an online database of information related to national statistical systems and would potentially include mission reports, web addresses, contact information, video clips, the outcomes of peer reviews, etc. He announced that the Secretariat will provide a concept note, costing information, and a mock-up of the system by October 2003 for the Steering Committee's approval. Several participants noted that other initiatives and institutions (e.g., the UN Statistics Division and World Bank) have engaged in projects with content overlapping that of PARLISTAT and that PARIS21 therefore ought to liaise closely with them and avoid duplication of effort.

Advocacy

The Secretariat mentioned that, with the success of the PARIS21 advocacy film and its subtitled translation into several languages, new material for French-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and Arab-speaking audiences is in preparation. The Secretariat also announced that it is undertaking an update of the *Why Statistics?* advocacy web site with the assistance of the World Bank. Consultants will be engaged to document best practices and success stories in using statistics in a policy context. Audio-visual material will also be presented in the new version of the *Why Statistics?* site. The Secretariat has prepared a draft version of a do-it-yourself guide for partners organising workshops for stakeholders in statistical systems. The guide will include material in film format and advocacy products for use with workshop participants. A consultant's roster has been developed (60 consultants to date) to aid partners in identifying experts for their projects in support of PARIS21 objectives.

The UNSD representative suggested that PARIS21 liaise with his organisation, as it has a consultants roster of its own.

The French and Swiss representatives commented that the newsletter is not sufficiently targeted toward policymakers. It ought to contain more substantial pieces on the need for statistics and advocacy to decisionmakers. It was recommended that the newsletter focus less on PARIS21 activities and be more attractive to decisionmakers and data users.

Worldwide Report

The Secretariat manager proposed that a worldwide report on the use of statistics and the state of statistical systems be established. He recommended that PARIS21 members collectively mobilise resources and develop ideas to provide this important tool to the international community. The Secretariat will provide a concept note and budget by the October 2003 meeting.

Budget

The Secretariat manager reported that the Secretariat will be able to complete the work programme for this calendar year with current funds, but further funding is necessary to carry out work beyond December 2003. He also noted that additional staff would be required to manage the follow-up being requested from partners.

Membership

The Secretariat manager announced that, in response to a Steering Committee request at the October 2002 meeting, the PARIS21 membership directory—see document# *P21/SC1(2003)4*—is now available and will be generated on a regular basis. The manager requested guidance from the Steering Committee on making the membership more representative of developing countries and job

types (e.g., policymakers, members of the media). The Committee asked that the Consortium meeting and Secretariat products appeal specifically to decisionmakers to increase their participation in PARIS21 activities.

Partnership

The Secretariat manager declared that PARIS21 has engaged in Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with partner institutions to establish a common set of goals. The MOU is intended to institute a partnership between PARIS21 and international/regional/national bodies and to agree on common objectives.

Discussion

Several Steering Committee members requested that future progress reports clearly delineate PARIS21 activities of the past and proposals/plans for the future and indicate items which require decisions by the Steering Committee. Several speakers also requested more information on the link between PARIS21 and World Bank Trust Fund activities and how these two initiatives collaborate.

The Secretariat manager announced that Mary Strode will be leaving the Secretariat in August after four years of dedicated service. It is hoped that she will continue to work with PARIS21 in some capacity and that a replacement from DFID can be secured to take over her responsibilities.

The chair closed the morning session by highlighting the recurrent themes of user–producer dialogue and country-level follow-up.

Day I, Session II **Chair: Jean-Claude Faure**

PARIS21 Evaluation (report from the Evaluation Team)

The Evaluation Team from Oxford Policy Management presented the methodology and findings of the evaluation of PARIS21—see the draft evaluation report in document# *P21/SCI(2003)2*. The evaluators successfully contacted 137 PARIS21 stakeholders—100 of whom engaged in face-to-face interviews. Six developing countries were visited, and the CODI III meeting was used to contact a number of country representatives. The team reviewed the impact, relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of PARIS21 using its current logical framework (log frame) and categorised each of the 7 outputs as “promising,” “moving,” and “potential.”

- Promising outputs were: (1) Increased political commitment to statistics; (4) User–producer dialogue; (5) Comprehensive statistical strategic planning
- Moving outputs were: (2) Capacity to produce/use statistics; (6) Improved collaboration among partners
- Potential outputs were: (3) Partnership principles applied; (7) Effective donor collaboration

PARIS21’s strengths were outlined as the uniqueness of the dialogue initiated between statisticians and policymakers, its neutrality, its sponsorship and promotion of certain studies that would not have been done otherwise, south–south co-operation, and increased international partnership in task teams and between countries. Interviews with seven countries who participated in the early PARIS21 workshops showed that five had begun statistical planning processes. Of the five countries, three had undertaken statistics plans as a result of the workshop, and two obtained significant contributions to their plans from PARIS21 activities. All seven countries had attempted serious follow-up of their workshop action plans.

The areas which now require further strengthening are country-level donor co-ordination emphasising the data needs of key development indicators and MDG related programmes, formal national follow-up, and the assessment of workshop impacts.

The evaluators recommended strengthening the Secretariat with the addition of non-statistical staff, for example development economists. It was stressed that PARIS21 needs increased donor support from those currently contributing little or not at all, in particular significant donors in North America and Nordic countries. The evaluation concluded that the PARIS21 initiative should be extended for another three years (i.e., until 2006) with more targeted and measurable objectives, to be agreed by the Steering Committee.

PARIS21 Evaluation (report from the Evaluation Reference Group)

The representative from the Evaluation Reference Group, a sub-committee of the Steering Committee with the addition of three seasoned evaluators, presented the group's report—see document# *P21/SCI(2003)3*. The Reference Group met to select the consultants for the evaluation, to guide the Inception Report, and to provide comments on the draft report to the consultants. It was agreed that the Reference Group would provide a brief methodological report to the Steering Committee.

The report expressed confidence in the evaluation findings but noted that the terms of reference had been ambitious for the time and resources available to undertake the evaluation, and more explicit evidence was required in the report to fully support the findings. The Reference Group's task was confined to reviewing the evaluation's methodology but recommended that more attention be given in the final version to several issues, including the relevance, uniqueness, and usefulness of PARIS21; the relative roles of national and regional workshops; the trade-off between the short-term information needs of policy such as PRSP and MDG indicators and longer-term capacity building and the appropriate balance in PARIS21's future workplan between supporting the supply side and building awareness/demand among data users.

Discussion

Co-chair Pali Lehohla addressed the Steering Committee via teleconference and expressed his appreciation for the evaluators' work. He asserted that the evaluation must be used as a tool to shape PARIS21's future, if the Steering Committee decides to continue the partnership. He expressed some concerns about the new governance arrangements for PARIS21 and felt that a joint chair from a developing country government was an important component in ensuring PARIS21's continuing relevance to countries and that links with UNSC at that level should be retained.

Most participants expressed their appreciation for the evaluation report, particularly as it was completed in a very short timeframe. They agreed that the Secretariat needs a greater focus, more explicit objectives, and outputs which are within PARIS21's power to deliver in addition to the outcomes for the wider partnership of PARIS21.

The DFID representative commented that the inclusion of non-statisticians in the Secretariat might be useful although they need not necessarily be development economists, but could be other policy analysts for example.

The World Bank representative requested that the final version of the evaluation report mention that the evaluation was funded by the World Bank Development Grant Facility, for internal World Bank procedures and for the record.

The DFID representative asked that the purpose of PARIS21 Donors meetings be made more explicit and that their agendas be more focused to attract those who are not already contributing to PARIS21. It was agreed that the Secretariat would draft an advocacy memorandum for potential donors that outlines the conclusions of the evaluation and the wider benefits of supporting statistics. This memorandum would accompany official requests for financing and be delivered in advance of the next Donors meeting in order to enable a detailed, targeted discussion at the meeting.

The chair concluded that the Steering Committee had authorised the evaluation report's recommendation that PARIS21 be extended until 2006 and that the Secretariat will therefore draft a work programme for 2004–2006 and a resource requirement strategy.

Day II, Session I

Chair: Richard Manning

Proposed Logical Framework & Targets

The Evaluation Team presented a critique of the existing PARIS21 log frame and suggested a new one, which retained the “goal” and “purpose” from the original log frame prepared in 2001. The team felt that the original goal was sound, but that the outputs may need adjustment. An additional level may be required for an initiative such as PARIS21, where the Secretariat is not itself responsible for producing the higher-level outcomes. The evaluators proposed a community log frame, with PARIS21 as the co-ordination instrument. The outcomes in the proposed log frame were intended for the wider partnership, with specific output objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) for the Secretariat itself.

The previous log frame included seven “outputs.” The evaluation team felt that seven were too many and proposed three outcomes, a subset of the original seven, for the PARIS21 partnership. For each outcome, new OVIs were assigned to measure the PARIS21 partnership's performance. The retained outcomes suggested were: (1) Strengthened capacity to produce, analyse, and use key statistical and other information amongst public sector, academic, and civil society organisations; (2) Comprehensive strategy covering information needed nationally (and internationally) to inform, implement, and monitor policies; and (3) More effective donor collaboration, leading to more efficient use of official development assistance relating to generation and use of statistics.

For the Secretariat itself, five outputs and their corresponding OVIs were proposed by the evaluators, who emphasized that the proposals were merely suggestions. The outputs were: (1) Information flows for community goals; (2) Facilitation of country-level donor co-ordination; (3) Co-ordinated programme to strengthen demand for programme performance data; (4) Benchmarks for costs of statistical products; and (5) Measures of quality in use of statistics for results-based management.

Discussion

There was wide support for the separation of the outcomes/outputs into the two levels: Secretariat and community. However the specific, community outcomes OVIs caused concern and require more debate.

Several participants commented that an improved user–producer dialogue was missing from the outcomes proposed by the Evaluation Team and that the resources needed to achieve these goals must be identified. Developing country representatives asked for the inclusion of an outcome for which country governments could take responsibility for developing and coordinating statistics within their own political processes. Others were concerned that outcomes which affected partner

organisations would need to be discussed and agreed with the lead agency responsible. The external environment must be included in the process of developing specific community OVIs.

The Secretariat was asked to continue the discussion electronically, and members were asked to submit additional comments to the Secretariat and to a small sub-committee of volunteers (Post-Evaluation Sub-Committee). A number of donors required a funding proposal by early autumn, in order to start their internal negotiations. A new log frame would be prepared by the Secretariat for mid-September 2003, together with a work programme, and the costs of achieving it. The new log frame would be agreed at the next Steering Committee meeting.

The DAC Chairman agreed to give some thought to strengthening PARIS21's relationship with DAC members and supported the proposal that the Consortium meeting address current policy issues and their statistical needs and be linked to activities of other organisations.

Governance Arrangements

The Evaluation Team presented a revised governance structure for PARIS21, recommending replacing the Steering Committee with a Council, with stronger representation from developing countries and policymakers, giving a 50/50 balance to those from developing countries and those from OECD countries. The proposed Council would have one chair, a prominent person who could be a retired developing country president or minister of finance keen on evidence-based policymaking. It would meet once per year, with a smaller Executive Committee meeting three times per year. The Consortium meeting would be reduced to once every three years. This revised structure is intended to enable PARIS21 to reach out more effectively to policymakers and to reduce the costs of Steering Committee and Consortium meetings.

Discussion

The Secretariat Manager recommended that the Steering Committee also try to redress the gender imbalance in its composition. The ex-officio member of the Steering Committee recommended retaining the chairman of the OECD/DAC on the PARIS21 Steering Committee in some capacity (either as co-chair or as vice-chair). The UNFPA representative maintained that the PARIS21 mandate has been intentionally vague and flexible to encourage creativity. This light bureaucratic structure, able to respond to changing needs rapidly, has been one of the factors in PARIS21's success and should therefore be retained. The Arab States representative suggested rotating, limited terms for Steering Committee members and supported doubling the number of developing country representatives—namely, each region should be represented by one statistician and one policymaker. He also suggested that the idea of regional chapters be revived to strengthen regional PARIS21 activities and that representatives consult with their members regularly.

There was some support for the nomination of developing country participants by regional bodies. It was agreed that the developing country representatives should propose a new system for appointing developing country representatives to the Steering Committee.

Most of the participants recommended retaining the current governance structure, with modifications to include more policymakers and to strengthen developing country representation. The current Committee was considered to be effective and enlargement could introduce inefficiencies.

The CIS representative emphasised the need to hold a Steering Committee meeting in tandem with a regional or national workshop and suggested Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic as a possible venue. The Arab States representative recommended that the next Consortium meeting be held in Tunis, Tunisia.

The Chair supported the idea of holding Consortium and Steering Committee meetings in developing countries but commented that there are costing and logistics issues to be researched first. He felt that it was the Secretariat's responsibility to make this decision. He also commented that he was equally comfortable with retaining his status as co-chair of the Steering Committee or changing to a vice-chair. He felt that it may be difficult to convince a high-profile former president or minister to accept the chairmanship.

The meeting closed and a farewell lunch was hosted for the retiring co-chairman Jean-Claude Faure, at which the manager of PARIS21 expressed his thanks on behalf of the Steering Committee for the inspiration and support of Mr. Faure in guiding the work of PARIS21 since 1999.

Conclusion

It was agreed that:

- The Steering Committee authorised the evaluation report's recommendation that PARIS21 be extended until 2006 and that the Secretariat would prepare a strategy for 2004–2006.
- A revised log frame, funding proposal, and work plan will be prepared by the Secretariat by mid-September for submission to the October Steering Committee. Members were invited to send additional comments to the Secretariat by the end of July.
- Decisions on any new task teams would be deferred to the October Committee meeting.
- The Secretariat will draft an advocacy memorandum for potential donors that outlines the conclusions of the evaluation and the wider benefits of supporting statistics. This memorandum would accompany official requests for financing and be delivered in advance of the next Donors meeting in order to enable a detailed, targeted discussion at the meeting.
- The current Steering Committee governance arrangements will remain in effect until October 2003.
- Existing developing country representatives will meet electronically to propose a process for election of new developing country members to the Steering Committee, for recommendation to the Post-Evaluation Sub-Committee.
- Based on the Steering Committee's and evaluation report's recommendations, the Secretariat will prepare a draft terms of reference for the Steering Committee. A Post-Evaluation Sub-Committee comprising Richard Martini (DFID), Philippe Pommier (France), Shaida Badiie (World Bank), Jürgen Heimann (European Commission), and Hasan Abu-Libdeh (Arab States) will assist the Secretariat in preparing and reviewing these documents.
- The Steering Committee will provide written comments on the evaluation report to OPM (anne.thomson@opml.co.uk & cc: contact@paris21.org) by 11 July 2003.
- The final evaluation report will be delivered to the Secretariat by 14 August 2003 and will be made available in its entirety on the PARIS21 website.
- The evaluation report will be presented to the October 2003 Consortium Meeting.
- The Secretariat will circulate a revised TOR for the Tools and Methods task team by the end of July 2003 for Steering Committee comments.
- The next Consortium and Steering Committee meeting will be held 15–17 October in Paris, and the Steering Committee will suggest ideas for a meeting theme by 14 July 2003.
- A Donors meeting may also be organised at the same time and be based on the advocacy documents prepared and aimed at attracting new funders.