POLICY BRIEF 1 – STRATEGIC LEVEL

Based on Case Study Assessments of Local Governance Programmes

Background & Objectives

Local governance projects and initiatives are always designed to induce change at partners' level. Therefore, "measuring" to what extent national/local development partners have been strengthened and to what extent change has happened is of particular interest. This can only be done by clarifying how results measurement in a multi-stakeholder set-up is currently practiced, what tools are developed for that purpose and what experiences have been made with their application.

SDC indentified the biggest interest and 'learning field' at the outcome level of their projects/programmes and therefore mandated HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation to analyse six SDC supported programmes in the areas of local governance. The selection of case studies was done along criteria ensuring a combination of diverse outcome monitoring (OM) methodologies and their

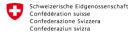| Case Study	Methodology Applied
MSP Serbia	Outcome monitoring system in 6 municipalities (based on Outcome Mapping methodology), focus on project outcome indicators with scoring system
SHARIQUE Bangladesh	Outcome monitoring tool in 150 LGU: quarterly OM sheets for each LGU along 17 indicators and 120 sub-indicators, with a scoring system to measure change
SAHA Madagascar	Outcome monitoring tool, based on Outcome Mapping used within a cycle of two program phases, put into practice with 46 municipalities/associations and approx. 100 indirect partners
LOGOS Kosovo	Citizens-based satisfaction survey organised on a yearly basis in 10 municipalities (9 partner + 1 control). Focus on outcome indicators and changed perceptions along the governance criteria
PS-ARD Vietnam	End-beneficiaries satisfaction survey conducted twice (baseline + end of the programme) in two partner provinces with a representative sample of 400 households). Focus on improved quality of public services in the ARD sector and inclusion in local planning
CONCERTAR Bolivia	M&E system in a larger program, based on cooperation with around 18 'mancomunidades' (intermunicipal associations), extended to dimensions of coordination between different state levels and public policies at national level

application in different continents and contexts. This learning project thus puts the focus on the measurement of outcomes in local governance programmes.

The objectives of the two policy briefs are to summarise the recommendations of this learning project and provide development practitioners with short guidance – on strategic and on operational level - to strengthen programme interventions in outcome measurement based on key learnings from the case studies.

Recommendations

The following list of recommendations is primarily based on the key lessons drawn from the reviewed case studies and does therefore not aim to be exhaustive (for the more detailed analysis and recommendation please refer to the analytical paper). Evidence suggests that a stronger involvement of the donor would be beneficial for ensuring the overall consistency, coherence and continuity of the OM system.

1) **Power relations**: Measuring change relating to power relations proved to be for most programmes a big challenge. Further conceptual (and methodological guidance) work is needed to equip the donor community/programmes with adequate and effective tools to measure effectively power relations and respective changes of behaviours in practice.

2) **Measuring policy influence:** Practice suggests that the donor may be better placed to monitor certain macro level/longer term dimensions such as changes at the national policy level, legislation, etc. and must take a leading role in measuring policy influence. OM related to policy influence should be coordinated with other programmes/donors, optimally integrated into one joint system. In addition, it should be coordinated (in best case aligned) with national government and/or other national actors (e.g. civil society organisations, local government associations) systems. Projects tend to use simple cause-effect logic and/or to overestimate their contributions.

3) **Data analysis and link to a context monitoring:** An in depth analysis of the OM data/results is crucial to be able to draw right conclusions regarding the effective progress/results at outcome level and/or to make possible adjustment in a programme strategy. OM must thus be closely linked to context monitoring (PEA).

4) **Harmonization and attribution:** Harmonization of OM systems with other programmes/donors is an obligation of development cooperation and the donor community confirmed this issue in different international documents such as the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Aid Effectiveness Agreement. Special efforts for harmonization of OM systems must be taken by each donor and programme. Possible obstacles such as different programme focus, target areas/groups, attribution gaps and reporting systems must be addressed. A change of rules (and mindset) with regard to reporting is needed, accepting that outcomes are the result of different actions. This shift implies also on the acceptance and perception of attribution more towards contribution. , .

5) **Alignment**: Alignment with national monitoring systems is a precondition for sustainability of OM. Its feasibility needs to be reflected from the beginning under the lead of the donor agency. SDC should foster ways to better embed its OM systems on national level and thus support national monitoring systems and data collection. Even if full alignment is not possible, all efforts must be undertaken to ensure at least partial alignment with national systems. Institutional space should be developed allowing the partners to develop capacities in OM. This is an important prerequisite for any initiative to make partners responsible for change!

Need for Action & Open Issues

Need identified	Comments
Need to provide guidance, what should be the main purpose of outcome measurement in a project/programme	Currently, the primary purpose is in most cases to measure project results (project focus). If an OM shall serve policy dialogue purpose, the questions of alignment and harmonization need to be addressed and clarified from the beginning.
Need to address the challenge of attribution gaps	Guidance on how attribution gaps should be addressed is needed (e.g. link to the context monitoring, complementary tools/data, harmonization with other programmes/donors, alignment with national monitoring systems).
Need for guidance on defining outcome indicators	Although each context is specific and a rigid indicator check list would not be appropriate, a clearer framework on "outcome indicators" is needed to ensure more consistency and to avoid too heavy data collection. The 5 good governance principles should serve as overall framework.
Need for tools and methodologies on how to measure change in power relations	Specific and in practice validated tools & methodologies are required to: a) conduct a baseline assessment of power relations in project and programmes; b) regularly monitor change in power relations and in how far the initiative/project/programme has contributed to it
Need to clarify the term of cost effectiveness	Cost effectiveness is a term not yet clearly defined, particularly for governance programmes. A broader discussion is needed, resulting in a certain definition of the concept, specific tools on how cost-effectiveness can be assessed to measure change.