

# Concept Note

Regional Workshop East Asia Division  
April 30th – May 2nd 2019, Phnom Penh

*This concept note serves as a document for preparation and gives relevant background information and links on the workshop's topics. It lists the key issues to be discussed as well as the relevant questions to be prepared in the inputs by the SCOs. For easy reference to the workshop program, the sections are numbered accordingly. For further information on development effectiveness please consult our [Shareweb](#). All working documents will be regularly uploaded to [the workshop's event page](#).*

## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES AND NEWS FROM THE SDC HO & SECO**

The EAD regional workshop 2019 has a special focus on **development effectiveness (DE)**. The objectives are:

- *Participants are updated on the newest developments in Berne*
- *The role of **DE as key instrument for the implementation of the Agenda 2030** is clarified and the region-specific DE approaches are identified*
- *Structured working relations between the country offices, SDC HO and the future **Swiss Co-Chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC)** are established so as to foster country contributions to the global DE dialogue*

The implementation of the Agenda 2030 requires strong partnerships and a constructive and inclusive dialogue with different actors at country and at global level. In the context of the [Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation \(GPEDC\)](#), countries and relevant development actors have agreed on key principles for effective development cooperation in order to accelerate the results stipulated by the goals of the Agenda 2030. In the course of the seminar, participants will discuss the various dimensions of DE at the country-level, critically assess their development cooperation in the light of the DE principles, outline how the latter manifest in their cooperation partnerships and detect thereto-linked challenges. Crucial topics of discussion are the engagement and inclusion of civil society organization (CSOs) and the private sector (PS). Opportunities, modalities and limitations of such partnerships will be reflected upon.

## **Swiss GPEDC Co-Chair Thomas Gass and Senior Level Meeting of the GPEDC 2019**

Ambassador Thomas Gass, Vice-Director General of SDC and Head of the South Cooperation Department, will be officially appointed Co-Chair of the GPEDC at the [Senior Level Meeting \(SLM\) in New York \(13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> July 2019\)](#). In the role as Co-Chair, which will last two years, Switzerland has the opportunity to shape and influence priorities and working modalities of the GPEDC. **Initial reflections on the elements of the Swiss mandate in the GPEDC** are the following:

- *Clarify the contribution of DE to the Agenda 2030, particularly to “leave no one behind”*
- *Deepen dialogue with Southern providers, including China*
- *Contribute to “data for development and SDG data”*
- *Review the GPEDC Global Monitoring Framework in order to make it simpler and more country-relevant*
- *Continue and consolidate work on private sector engagement (PSE) and DE*
- *Address fragility, humanitarian context and governance in DE*

In order to be successful as Co-Chair, a strong and permanent link to country realities and dynamics will be crucial. At the regional workshop, the DE focal point would like to initiate the critical relationships to SCOs in order to provide inputs to the Co-Chair. Over the course of the workshop, **inputs by SCOs on the following overall questions** will be gathered:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What are the experiences of the SCOs with the GPEDC and processes related to DE?</i></li> <li>• <i>What should the priorities for the Swiss Co-Chair from the perspective of SCOs be?</i></li> <li>• <i>How can the GPEDC change its working modalities to make the process more relevant at country level and for reaching the goals of the Agenda 2030?</i></li> </ul> |
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Finally, in part 1, participants will be updated on the newest developments at the SDC HO as well as on relevant activities of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

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## **PART 2: FRAMING THE TOPIC OF DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE GPEDC AND ITS ACTIVITIES**

The narrative, focus and name of the process related to DE has been evolving over time – and will keep on changing. It started out in 2000 as an attempt of **traditional DAC-donors to harmonize their procedures and practices** in order to lessen the burden of partner countries to comply with different requirements. This work culminated in the [Rome High-Level Forum in 2003](#). It soon became clear that the dialogue had to include recipient countries and other development actors like **CSOs and the PS**. At the [Accra High Level Meeting in 2008](#), the focus thus lied on **country ownership** and **development effectiveness**. In the next phase and leading up all the way to the [Busan Agreement in 2011](#), two issues were pivotal. First, it became clear that a large number of **fragile and conflict-affected countries** needed special attention. Hence, modalities to work with and in those contexts were defined in the [New Deal in 2011](#). Secondly new and emerging Southern Donors became increasingly relevant. A special effort was made to reach out to them and their “*common but differentiated responsibility*” was recognized in the Busan Agreement. Subsequently, all BRIC donors signed on to the Busan Agreement, and the focus changed from development effectiveness to **effective development cooperation**.

Against this background, the [GPEDC](#) was founded in 2011 as a multi-stakeholder platform to support the creation of innovative and inclusive partnerships based on DE principles. It includes

161 recipient as well as donor countries, multilateral organizations, CSOs and PS representatives. The different actors are represented in the governance structure of the GPEDC: its secretariat – the Joint Support Team (JST) – is run by and affiliated to both the UN System (UNDP) and the OECD-DAC. The GPEDC works specifically towards the realization of SDG 16 (*effective, accountable and inclusive institutions*) and SDG 17 (*global partnership for sustainable development*), which in turn are linchpin requirements for the realization of all other SDGs. Furthermore, in order to advance regional and country-level implementation of DE principles, voluntary [Global Partnership Initiatives \(GPI\)](#) in key areas of work have been founded by state and non-state GPEDC members to generate evidence-based knowledge and policy relevant solutions on how to increase the impact of development cooperation. Switzerland, together with Madagascar, leads the GPI on Results and Mutual Accountability. The GPEDC's work and discussions thus bridge the gap between the global policy dialogue and the implementation of the effective development agenda at country-level. The first review of its contributions was held at the [High-Level Meeting in Nairobi in 2016](#), which brought together all different partners and led to the adoption of the current GPEDC Work Program. The latter will come to a close at the SLM in July 2019.

### **The Principles of Effective Development Cooperation**

The four DE principles lie at the heart of effective development cooperation and constitute a practical **framework of mutual accountability** for all partners, recipient and donor countries, multilateral DP, CSOs and the PS. They are:

- 1. Focus on results:** Governments agree to establish transparent, country-led results frameworks with clear targets able to support strategic policy-making based on their own national priorities. Development partners (DP) commit to align their cooperation accordingly, thereby promoting country ownership.
- 2. Ownership of development priorities:** To use country-systems ensures long-term domestic capacity building. All DP should strengthen and effectively use Public Financial Management (PFM) and procurement systems. Country ownership also means to further untie aid and to improve the predictability of cooperation funds from donors.
- 3. Inclusive development partnerships:** Governments should create an environment that enables the participation of CSOs and the PS when formulating their national development agendas. To be constructive and of mutual benefit, multi-stakeholder initiatives and public-private partnerships need a sound regulatory framework and a platform for institutionalized dialogue.
- 4. Transparency and accountability:** Mutual accountability among all development actors needs to be strengthened through inclusive reviews. Information on development budgets should be publicly available. Governments also commit to include development funds in national budgets to guarantee parliamentary oversight. These efforts create mutual trust among partners and foster legitimacy vis-à-vis the broader public. In this context, accurate data is pivotal in order to adequately track and evaluate development progress.

## **GPEDC Global Monitoring**

The main practical approach to support the implementation of DE principles is the **GPEDC Global Monitoring**. The monitoring started in 2013, with a second round in 2016 and a third round in 2018. The result of the latter will be presented at the GPEDC SLM in 2019. 85 partner countries and over 100 DP participated in the 2018 monitoring. 59 countries are low and lower-middle income countries, while 48% of them represent a fragile and 14% even an extremely fragile context. This provides a unique insight on implementation at country-level by the different partners. The data is put together by a national coordinator/focal point appointed within the partner country's government and includes inputs from DP, CSOs and the PS. The GPEDC monitoring framework consists of [10 indicators](#) which cover the various aspects of the four DE principles. After validation, the GPEDC JST evaluates the data at both the global and the country level. Next to a [progress report](#), it publishes partner country-specific profiles.

## **Monitoring Results of the SDC's East Asia Division Partner Countries**

[Mongolia](#), [Myanmar](#), [Lao PRD](#) and [Cambodia](#) all took part in the monitoring round in 2016. Except for Mongolia, the countries also participated in the 2018 monitoring round (the results of which are not yet available).

## **Monitoring Results of Switzerland**

Switzerland took part in all previous monitoring rounds. For DP, a unique feature of this monitoring is that they are rated by its partner countries against their DE commitments. In sum and compared to the DAC-average, the results of [Switzerland's 2016 monitoring data](#) showed it achieved good progress in the untying of aid, average results or stagnation in aid predictability and transparency, and low results in the context of use of country systems, on-budget aid and alignment with country results frameworks. Overall, the Swiss performance is weaker in middle-income countries and fragile states. Based on the 2018 monitoring results, **SDC will review its progress and address areas in need of additional efforts.**

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## **PART 3: COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS – CAMBODIA**

**DE is a country-led process.** The way it is integrated into the relevant procedures of planning, finance and resource mobilizations and donor coordination varies from country to country. Many countries have built relevant instruments like aid information systems and created dedicated platforms for dialogue. The GPEDC monitoring conveys a picture of the current implementation of DE principles, however, it is not a mere technical procedure: it should also figure as a starting point for an **effective dialogue and political process** between all development stakeholders, create accountability and promote learning and discussions on how to improve development cooperation and coordination. These country-level processes are dynamic and change in the course of the Agenda 2030 implementation and based on the evolving donor structure.

These DE-related processes shall be illuminated taking the example of Cambodia. A representative of the *Council for the Development of Cambodia* (CDC) will give a presentation on the following topics:

- *How does Cambodia put DE into practice?*
- *What are important instruments, processes and responsibilities for DE in Cambodia?*
- *Taking into account the GPEDC global monitoring round 2018, what are achievements, best practices, challenges and future priorities in the DE context?*
- *What are Cambodia's expectations to DP, CSOs and the PS on how to jointly improve DE in order to accelerate progress?*

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#### **PART 4: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR THE AGENDA 2030**

The new development agenda is more inclusive than ever before and brings together actors with different backgrounds, expertise and potentials. Thus, it is imperative for them to join forces and enter into effective **partnerships** and **multi-stakeholder initiatives** (MSI). While the SDGs formulate *what* sustainable development strives to achieve, the DE framework captures *how* development cooperation and partnerships should be organized and implemented in order to meet the Agenda 2030 objectives. A major challenge for different development actors is their **successful coordination**. From the perspective of DP, coordination is important so as to avoid fragmentation and duplication of efforts. In Cambodia, a prominent approach to this is the [European Joint Programming](#) to which Switzerland is contributing as well. Tacking stock from the input on [the role and practice of MSI in Cambodia](#), a **panel** with representatives of different development stakeholders from or active in Cambodia will further debate and illustrate their specific role and contribution to the DE implementation. The panel will dive deeper into the following questions:

- *From the perspective of the different partners, what are important instruments and processes for them to contribute to DE?*
- *What is the role and relevance of instruments like the European Joint Programming for DE? What will be the impact of the UN systems reform?*
- *What is role of the PS or CSO in DE? What are existing platforms for dialogue, and what are the key issues?*
- *What are good practices of effective development cooperation in Cambodia - and challenges remain?*
- *How will the GPEDC monitoring results be leveraged to address remaining challenges? How can this dialogue be structured in order to include all relevant partners and to motivate successful changes?*

## PART 5: CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION OF THE DAY

Summarizing the discussions of Day 1, participants will jointly reflect on the following:

- *What kind of favoring preconditions and support from DP do countries need to better implement the DE framework?*
- *How and under which conditions can the DE framework and the GPEDC monitoring results help to foster an effective and inclusive policy dialogue?*
- *What are the potentials and limitations of MSIs in DE implementation?*

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## PART 6: WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The commitment to strong and effective partnerships calls for the **sustainable engagement of the private sector (PSE) through development cooperation**. Given the scope of the Agenda 2030 and its ambition to “leave no one behind”, it is pivotal to harness the experiences, creativity, innovation and resources of the PS. Additionally, PSE is essential for specifically reaching SDG 8 (*economic growth and decent work*). In turn, current development challenges represent unique opportunities for businesses to deliver innovative solutions and access new markets with underserved target groups. That said, while the potential benefits are numerous, different concerns and risks need to be addressed in order to align PSE with the SDG framework. Moreover, it is essential that governments are clear on how PSE can contribute to national development priorities and, therefore, ensure an adequate regulatory environment. The GPEDC has identified PSE through development cooperation as a key issue area and published a [paper on effective PSE](#) based on 900 PSE examples in four countries. Drawing from that, [the GPEDC currently consults principles and guidelines for effective PSE](#) to be launched at the SLM in July 2019. The latter will substantiate what it means to translate and apply the DE principles in partnerships with the PS.

In Switzerland, both [SDC](#) and [SECO](#) have committed to promote sustainable PSE in their development and economic cooperation. Each SCO in the EAD’s partner countries will showcase what it means to engage with the PS on the ground and give a short input on the following questions:

- *What are the SCOs’ experiences and main challenges when working with the PS?*
- *What roles does the PS play in our programs?*
- *What are the main obstacles for expanding PSE in the future?*
- *What safeguards are there in place to mitigate the risks associated with PSE?*

Following the SCO’s inputs from the field, participants will debate and reflect on these further questions:

- *In which areas/sectors lies the biggest potential of PSE in the EAD’s partner countries?*
- *Where can we build on current PSE successes and harness further opportunities?*
- *What kind of support and guidance to SCOs is required and feasible to do this?*

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## **PART 7: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY**

In this session, participants will discuss a crucial component of inclusive development partnerships and progress acceleration: **the engagement of CSOs**. Based on the declaration of the [Busan Partnership in 2011](#) and the [Nairobi Outcome Document of 2016](#), where the relevance of CSOs as “*independent development actors*” was acknowledged, partner countries have committed to substantially include CSOs in their policy dialogue and national development programming. In order for CSOs to be able to contribute to development and operate in their dual function – **as development service providers and as actors in their own right** – partner countries must ensure an open civic space with an adequate tax and regulatory system. That said, CSOs worldwide currently face new obstacles that constrain their actionability. Also, they often lack the resources to improve their own accountability and transparency mechanisms as stipulated in the [Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness](#). Within the GPEDC’s monitoring framework, indicator 2 specifically measures the efforts made towards enabling the full development potentials of CSOs. Given CSOs’ local expertise and their link to political constituencies that governments sometimes lack, they figure as key actor in ensuring maximum impact of development assistance that “leaves no one behind”. Thus, it is equally in DP’s interest to give long-term support to CSOs to build up their capacities, facilitate their coordination and to develop strategies on how to promote their institutionalized engagement, e.g. in multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSI).

The SCOs from Laos and Myanmar (referencing [the study on MSI of 2018](#)) will each give a presentation on the situation of and the modalities of cooperation with CSOs, the role of MSI and highlight the following issues:

- *What are current challenges and critical developments in the civic space context?*
- *What is the current status of CSOs in terms of their capacity, legitimacy, transparency?*
- *How does SDC work with CSOs given their dual role in the country programs?*
- *What is the relevance of MSI in delivering DE?*
- *How (if at all) did the GPEDC monitoring process and results promote a more inclusive policy dialogue with the government? How could its impact be increased?*
- *How and in which fora does SDC address issues around CSO empowerment – and what is SDC’s cooperation strategy with other DP in this regard?*

Tacking stock from the field experiences, participants will assess the following questions:

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- *What kind of support would be impactful and sustainable to address the various (capacity) constraints of CSOs?*
  - *How can DP support CSOs as actors in their own right?*
  - *How can the DE framework be leveraged to create an enabling environment for CSOs at country-level?*

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## **PART 8: DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND USE OF COUNTRY SYSTEMS**

A crucial pillar of the current development paradigm is that development should be led and owned by countries themselves. In the DE agenda, this approach is mirrored by the notion DP's obligation to deliver assistance based on **country-led results frameworks** and to make **use of country systems**. That said, the implementation of these principles is not always straightforward as countries' own working modalities and preferences can shift and adapt over time. Furthermore, the current trend to deliver development cooperation through thematic vertical instruments (e.g. trust funds) raises the question of how to interpret and advance the principle of using country systems accordingly.

The SCO in Mongolia will give a presentation on the main challenges encountered with regard to the use of country systems and the principle of country ownership of development priorities. It will tackle the following topics:

- *What are the overall challenges and possible tensions with the SDC's current strategy with the principle of using country systems in Mongolia?*
- *How well does SDC align its programs with national development priorities – and where does it fall short (and why)?*
- *How does SDC address systemic shortcomings (e.g. corruption) in its programs as well as in its policy dialogue with the government?*

Inspired by the country presentation, participants will further debate the following issues:

- *How to interpret and implement DE principles like the use of country systems and ownership of development priorities if the latter are dysfunctional or barely non-existent?*
  - *What are legitimate and well-founded reasons to refrain from using country systems?*
  - *How to incrementally bridge the gap between the DE principles of using country systems and the reality on the ground?*
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## PART 9: DE AND MULTILATERAL PARTNERS

A short input will illuminate the topic of effective development cooperation from the multilateral perspective and address how the UN system reform affects the DE process.

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## PART 10: CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION OF THE DAY

Summarizing the discussions and inputs of Day 2, the participants will reach some conclusions of the following questions:

- *What kind of support and preconditions do SCOs need from the SDC HO to better engage with the PS in order to contribute to the national Agenda 2030 priorities?*
  - *How and under which conditions can an enabling environment for CSOs be supported?*
  - *How can SDC and SCOs promote a policy dialogue with governments on this issue?*
  - *What are the potentials and limitations of a better use country systems?*
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## PART 11: DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN COMPLEX AND FRAGILE CONTEXTS

To spur development in fragile and conflict-affected countries is one of the most pressing challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and pivotal in realizing the Agenda 2030. The overwhelming majority of extremely poor people at risk of being left behind lives in a fragile or war-torn context. As such, **development cooperation that is coherently linked to humanitarian and peace efforts is particularly crucial in fragile countries**. Following the Busan Agreement, the members of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) agreed on the aforementioned [New Deal](#), which reaffirms the importance of DE principles when delivering assistance to countries transitioning out of fragility towards peaceful and inclusive societies.<sup>1</sup> However, the [implementation of DE principles in fragile states](#) often faces fundamental obstacles, above all in the context of use of country systems and the alignment with national results frameworks. From the perspective of DPs, a difficult **trade-off between use of country systems and the quality and effectiveness of their development cooperation** can arise in fragile and volatile contexts. Furthermore, the lack of compelling country-level data and statistics to track development progress is a major concern. Against this background, [a GPEDC working group is currently debating a proposal for a tailored and more flexible monitoring approach](#) to better account for the complexities and needs of fragile states. The approach will be finalized leading up to the GPEDC SLM in July 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> In the New Deal, DE principles are captured by the guiding concept of TRUST: Transparency, Risk-sharing, Use and strengthening of country systems, Strengthen capacities, Timely and predictable aid.

The SCO in Myanmar will give a presentation on SDC's operations in this complex country (i.a. armed conflict, ethnic fragmentation, partial state control over territory) and illustrate what it means to implement DE in the day-to-day work:

- *What are the main challenges to the implementation of the DE framework?*
- *How does the humanitarian-development-nexus shape SDC's programs in Myanmar?*
- *How to reconcile the need to build state capacity and accountability vs. working with service delivering non-state actors that obstruct integration into the administration?*
- *How are development projects and their progress managed and tracked in the context of political instability?*
- *So far, how did the GPEDC monitoring results foster a more effective and inclusive policy dialogue (if at all)?*

In the following, participants will elaborate the following questions in group work:

- *What are the main elements of your specific country context in relation to governance and fragility?*
- *Which are the main cooperation partners? How do you cooperate with the main stakeholders in your country (government, non-state actors, CSO, etc.)?*
- *Looking at the four DE principles, how does the country context affect their application and alter interpretation?*
- *Is there a common understanding among donors about the consequences of / reaction to the context with regard to development cooperation?*

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## **PART 12: CONCLUSION ON DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

In this final session dedicated to DE session, participants will reach common conclusions and discuss final critical issues and future challenges of the DE agenda and its implementation. The following questions shall be debated:

- *From the EAD country perspective, what are current and future priorities of SDC and SECO in the context of DE?*
- *How can SDC and SECO contribute to an improved DE dialogue and implementation at country-level?*
- *How should the SCOs and SDC HO / Focal Point DE work together on DE, especially during the GPEDC Co-Chairmanship of Thomas Gass? How can regional experiences be fed into the global level process?*
- *What kind of support and guidance do SCOs expect from the SDC HO / Focal Point DE to successfully implement DE?*

## **PART 13: CHINA IN THE REGION**

In this second-last workshop session, participants will explicitly turn their focus on China and reflect on our development cooperation in the light of China's ever-growing influence in the region. The entrance of China onto the international development stage brings as many new opportunities as there are challenges. On the one hand, its approach to development and socio-economic growth is rooted in an altogether different paradigm and understanding of such processes. On the other hand, China is absent in the DE agenda as supported by the GPEDC and tends to **juxtapose its own narrative of "win-win cooperation" in opposition to the DE principles.**

Against this background, the SDC HO will inform the participants on its ongoing and planned activities in China and discuss the practical implications of the Memorandum of Understanding with CIDCA for the EAD's countries. In a following **fishbowl discussion**, participants – together with a representative from the think tank [Centre for Policy Studies](#) – will reflect on the following questions:

- *What are the opportunities and risks of China's growing presence (with BRI and LMC) in the region?*
- *The visible and invisible Chinese influence – what role for Western countries?*
- *What are SCOs experiences and best practices when working with China? What are specific country-level ideas for future cooperation with China?*
- *How should SDC /SCOs enter into a dialogue with China on effective development cooperation at county level?*
- *What are recommendations on the way forward for Switzerland?*

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## **PART 14: CONCLUSION, EVALUATION OF THE DAY AND CLOSING**

The very last session of the seminar will be reserved for concluding remarks and any other business. An evaluation of the seminar will be conducted at the end of the workshop.

*The final report, workshop inputs and relevant documents will be made available on the [DE Shareweb](#) for all participants.*