

Summary of day 4 of the e-discussion on the VSD typology tool

Summary of the **3 contributions** on day 4 (16.11.2018). The discussion topics were related to the question of the operationalisation of the tool.

- (1) There was a request for more guidance in how to position a project in the four quadrants. What is your recommended procedure or guiding principles to 1) fill in the quadrants / 2) to visualize your project interventions / 3) to link the 3 tools?
What method would you suggest ensuring stakeholder participation?**

The need for more guidance on how to use the tool was not confirmed by the participants on day 4 of the discussion. Rather, participants re-emphasized that the tool is very useful to check the position or comprehensiveness of a VSD project or portfolio. It further helps assessing a specific project in its willingness to address VSD issue. It is found positive that the two add-ons as complimentary checks were developed, and the question was raised whether more add-ons based on more transversal issues or even sectoral issues should be developed.

Participants recommend to first use the tool within the donor community to better understand the VSD and LMI landscape. Regarding the procedure there can be a combination of the above-mentioned three points, not only knowing *where* we are working, but also *how* we are working.

Regarding stakeholder participation, the tool is very useful for policy dialogue and for policy makers. Methods of stakeholder participation could be various and developed depending on countries context.

- (2) What kind of further support is needed to make it fully operational (besides the guideline and the announced revision of the Common Outcome Indicators)?**

Participants state that it is important to first analyze where and when to use the tool and then practice the tool and based on the lessons learnt to adapt / further improve the tool.

- (3) Do you agree with this statement: “Projects with a more clearer focus do better in terms of results achievements and those which try to tackle all four quadrants at the same time, get behind?”**

The participants of day 4 did not agree with this statement. According to a participant, the request for a clear focus (e.g. one quadrant) is too often used as an excuse to not address what should be addressed to make it really work on a sustainable manner, or to not invest enough on what should be invested in.

While the tool can help getting a clearer picture of the VSD landscape (*how many projects, what size of projects, projects by whom, readiness of key stakeholders to cooperate, information culture, etc.*) different aspects are decisive for the success of a project (e.g. qualification and capabilities of the project leader and team, financial and time resources).

Working in all four areas can be more challenging in terms of work load and variety of partners, but at the same time it can also be complementary. However, one project cannot work alone and fully in four areas. Therefore, it is important for the donors (emphasis is on coordination among donors, not only one donor) while tendering such projects to know how to best position it, and later it is the responsibility of the implementer to align with other implementers. The same challenge is faced within a project working in four areas. Staff covering various area need to coordinate and work together and not in isolation. Here the role of management is crucial.

This tool is useful for a systemic approach as a “radar” to map and identify triggers to pull depending on the evolution of VSD systems in a proactive manner (not everything can be really planned in advance) rather than in a systematic and mechanical manner (planned in a logframe). Even with the best Theory of Change not every development can be predicted and projects should be to ready to intervene wherever necessary.

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