

Work Plan of ERD's Aid Effectiveness Unit (AEU): 2010-2011

1. Introduction

While gains have been made since the Rome Declaration (2003) and the Paris Declaration (2005), the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) recognised that progress was slow in implementing the aid effectiveness agenda. Much more needs to be done to ensure that the 2010 commitments on the quantity and quality of aid are met. The bottlenecks and challenges were identified during the Accra High Level Forum (HLF-3) and the AAA focused on those areas more explicitly (for example, in paragraph 15 on donors making more use of country systems and paragraph 23 for donors and partner countries on incentives to insist on delivering results)¹.

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and Development Partners (DPs), agree that the overarching challenge is to make aid more effective to achieve real development outcomes.. Improving aid effectiveness is a joint responsibility of all stakeholders. Strong government leadership and a proactive role are crucial for systematically integrating aid effectiveness into national planning, programming and reporting mechanism.

The GoB and its DPs have taken steps towards implementing global aid effectiveness agenda. The establishment of **Aid Effectiveness Unit (AEU) (previously known as PRS-HAP Cell)** in the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance in June/2006 as a focal point to assist GoB in implementing the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness is the most step in this direction. A harmonised action plan was formulated to anchor the PD principles within national efforts for achieving positive outcomes from the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR)/5-Year Plan. Development Partners pledged their commitment to rally around this focal point in order to implement the principles of the Paris Declaration, subsequently, AAA and beyond.

To cope up with the challenges, the AEU has revised (Annex-1) the earlier prepared a Road Map, now detailed into a revised Work Plan for the period January 2010-December 2011. The Work Plan (**a living document**) briefly describes the planned activities and sets a time frame for their completion.

2. Objectives of the Work Plan

The main objectives of the Work Plan are to help in:

- a. achieving outcomes from mandated activities within a stipulated time frame
- b. disseminating aid effectiveness agenda to all stakeholders, especially to implementing agencies
- c. creating enabling environment within AEU and the GoB to attain sustainability

¹ The Accra Agenda for Action, 3rd High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness, September 2-4, 2008, Accra, Ghana

Other objectives of the Work Plan include the following:

- identifying the knowledge gaps and challenges on how to make aid work better;
- strengthening knowledge on aid effectiveness and capacity development, drawing from the growing body of global knowledge and country level good practices;
- raising awareness among senior government officials and political groupings about the importance of aid effectiveness;
- facilitating country-led planning to enhance government capacity for using sector/organizational performance tools, incorporating sequencing of critical capacities and mapping of aid priorities and modalities.

3. Planned Activities

The major activities planned for AEU are shown in Annex 1. These activities, grouped into ten categories, are briefly described below. Reference is used in the text in relation to the serial numbers of planned activities as they appear in Annex 1.

A. Development of a Joint Cooperation Strategy for Bangladesh

The Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS) is conceptualised as a commitment toward building stronger, more effective partnerships between GoB and DPs, based on such fundamental principles as ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability to help accelerate reducing poverty and promoting prosperity. The strategy is envisaged to be a living document consisting of action plans and milestones. The JCS is the outcome of a broad-based agreement between GoB and 15 DPs articulated in a Statement of Intent, signed in August 2008. The AEU, with support from the JCS Working Group, is working as the Secretariat and is responsible for developing and implementing JCS and the Work Plan is one of the outputs of its continuous strides for implementing PD principles and AAA on aid effectiveness. (Annex 1, component A).

The drafting of the JCS Paper was done by the members of the GoB led JCS Working Group and experts in close consultation with representatives of GoB, DPs, Civil Society and other stakeholders. The first draft of the JCS Paper was completed in December 2009, after which widespread consultations/dialogues were held, in continuity, with major stakeholders. The feedback from all these consultations/dialogues was incorporated in the second draft (March 2010). After final round of dialogues and consultation in May 2010, the JCS Paper is finalised. The Government and 18 Development Partners signed the Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS) for the period 2010-2015 on 2 June 2010. Mr. M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, Secretary, ERD on behalf of Government of Bangladesh and the Heads of concerned Missions and Agencies, on

behalf of their respective countries and agencies signed the document. The Hon'ble Minister for Finance, Mr. Abul Maal A. Muhith, MP and the Hon'ble Minister for Planning, Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) A K Khandker, BU, MP were present in the ceremony and witnessed the signing. The signatories among the Development Partners were the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Germany, the Islamic Development Bank, Japan, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, the United States, and the World Bank. The challenge now is to make sure that the JCS Action Plan is implemented in appropriate manner, based on GoB ownership and in line with the partnership principles.

B. Dissemination of Aid Effectiveness

In order for GoB to take up the challenges and lead from the front, a core group of highly-trained officials is proposed, in the action plan, to be formed with 15-20 government officials and provided Training of Trainers (TOT) on aid management. This core group will then be entrusted with the responsibility of training around 120 officials from 40 ministries/divisions/departments on the same aid management issues. In addition, another 120 officials at the field level, who are responsible for project/programs implementation, will be trained up by the core group. The training will focus on how to implement the Paris Declaration/AAA principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and such other issues as National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR)/5-Year Plan, Public Financial Management, Procurement, and Monitoring.

C. Implementation and follow-up of JCS

In order to monitor the implementation of JCS and its follow-up, the AEU, under the guidance of the JCS Working Group, will review the progress of implementation of the strategy at regular intervals during the period June 2010- July 2011. Monthly, quarterly and annual reviews will be held for this purpose. It is envisaged that the JCS Working Group will be renamed the LCG Aid Effectiveness Working Group in 2010 to fit the overall LCG structure for dialogue and coordination.

D. Paris Declaration Evaluation, Phase-II

The Paris Declaration Evaluation- phase II at the country level started in January 2010 and will end in December 2010. The evaluation is ongoing, although the process suffered some delay in the contracting phase. The AEU is deeply involved in this task. The major milestones for AEU on the PD Evaluation include development of country specific Terms of Reference, appointment of consulting firm for carrying out the evaluation, drafting of the

first, second and final versions of the evaluation report holding three rounds of dialogues on the report with stakeholders and obtaining the endorsement of the Govt. of Bangladesh.

E. Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF)

The Government of Bangladesh, in collaboration with development partners, organized a high level “Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF)” meeting in Dhaka on 15-16 February 2010. It was the first such event since 2005, and it took place one year after the current government took office. The objective of the forum was for the Government to share, and discuss with development partners, its long-term plan to reach middle income status by 2021 (Vision 2021); the content of its new National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction; and its proposed reforms and delivery priorities. The event was well attended by development partners, including 36 development agencies and donors, and more than 80 civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector representatives.

Improving development effectiveness and programme delivery were at the heart of all discussions, with governance issues (the need for institutional and policy reforms, local government strengthening, improved implementation capacity and reduced corruption) and climate change featuring prominently. The Government of Bangladesh reaffirmed the Government’s determination to increase domestic revenue mobilization and improve budget implementation.

Commitments were captured in a ‘BDF Agreed Action Plan’ outlining 25 concrete action statements for Government to be supported by development partners. These action points will be taken into action within next BDF 2011. The AEU has played a vital role in organizing this important event and will now work on the BDF Agreed Action Points over the next year. A GoB – DP follow up meeting on the BDG Action Points are planned for late September/early October 2010.

F. Monitoring the Paris Declaration /DAC Survey

For monitoring the implementation of the Paris Declaration, Bangladesh opted for third round of the DAC Survey (Bangladesh conducted both the 2006 & 2008 Surveys) to be conducted during January - June 2011. The activities of AEU in this exercise will be very similar to those mentioned in Section C above.

G. Local Consultative Group (LCG) and related issues

Improving dialogue between GoB and DPs is one of the important elements of the JCS action plan in order for LCG to support Bangladesh in achieving targets of the NSAPR/5-Year Plan and MDGs in an effective manner (“doing the right things in the right way”). The need for

LCG restructuring was agreed with LCG plenary and steps are on to take it forward in close cooperation with GoB. It's envisaged that GoB and DPs will focus on the LCG restructuring during the coming months, aiming for a LCG WG structure fully owned by GoB and reporting to the LCG Plenary on a regular basis.

H. Meetings and workshops

The AEU is responsible to organise and host a number of regular meetings during the planned period. These meetings include:

- JCS Working Group meetings
- JCS Steering Committee meetings
- Small Working Group/Task Team meetings on PD Evaluation, Monitoring Survey etc.
- Inter-ministerial meeting on aid effectiveness issues

In addition, the Unit is committed to organise and manage a number of workshops/trainings related to aid effectiveness and JCS. Officials of ERD and the AEU are responsible for representing Bangladesh in various aid effectiveness related workshops/events at home and abroad.

I. Participation in mid-term HLF in Columbia

The Government of Bangladesh (A Secretary, ERD led delegation) participated in the mid-term HLF held in Columbia in 2010 (called as South-South Cooperation). The **High Level Event on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development** was hosted by the Government of Colombia on 24-25 March 2010 in Bogota. It was a rich event which brought together more than 400 high-level representatives from over 130 developed and developing countries including Bangladesh, multilateral and regional organisations, civil society and parliamentarians with the objective of sharing experiences and lessons and identified key elements on South – South cooperation. AEU has participated with two case stories on South-South Cooperation, namely, (i) Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP) in Burichang Upazila of Comilla District in Bangladesh (ii) Bangladesh-Korea ICT Training Centre for Education, in the important event.

J. Preparation for 4th HLF in Korea

The AEU is responsible for taking all necessary preparations (e.g. drafting articles, presentations, reports, etc.) for participating in the 4th HLF to be held in Korea in December 2011. A high level delegation from the Government is expected to participate in the 4th HLF in Korea.

4. Outcomes and Deliverables

The expected outcome of the AEU, ERD, including the JCS Working Group, is more effective management of aid in Bangladesh as evidenced in upcoming Paris Evaluations-Phase II and DAC Survey. The overall goal is improved poverty reduction and positive movements towards the MDGs. Key deliverables to make that happen are:

- Implementation of JCS Action Plan (2010-2011) and taken into action;
- Implementation of BDF Agreed Action Points and follow-up (stock-taking in Sept/2010 and holding next BDF/mid 2011);
- Dissemination of Aid Effectiveness Agenda;
- Paris Declaration Evaluation -Phase II (upto December 2010);
- Monitoring the DAC Survey-2011(upto September 2011);
- Other related activities (GoB Planning Process, Aid Management Policy in Bangladesh);
- Participation in different global forum on Aid Effectiveness including High level participation in the 4th HLF in Korea (December 2011).

5. Conclusion

The Work Plan shows that a wide range of activities are planned to be undertaken by the AEU during 2010-2011. With only four technical officers working in the Unit, it is necessary to engage consultants on part-time and long-term basis and make available a pool of consultants/consulting firms for upcoming tasks. The Government, quite comfortably, adjusted with the current managerial support from UNDP and could concentrate on programme activities for their intended results. It will also be necessary to allocate resources (from donor side) for implementing the planned activities in time. The members of the JCS Working Group will also play an important part in supporting the AEU over the coming two years.

Annex 1: ERD AEU's Work Plan: Status of Planned Activities (2010-2011)

SI No.	Activities	Year of 2010								Year of 2011													
		May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
A.	Development a Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS)																						
1	SoI signed (August 2008)																						
2	First draft (August 2009)																						
3	Final draft (April 2010)																						
4	Consultation on JCS (Parliament, CSOs, GoB & DPs)																						
5	Finalization of JCS																						
6	Approval of JCS by the Government																						
7	JCS signed with 18 DPs																						
B	Dissemination of Aid Effectiveness																						
1	Forming a core group (15-20)																						
2	Train Government Officials by core group (120)																						
3	Train Field Level Officials (responsible for implementation) 120																						
C	Implementation and Follow up of JCS																						
1	Monthly review																						
2	Quaterly Review																						
3	Annual Review																						
D.	Paris Declaration Evaluation, Phase-II																						
1	Development of country specific TOR																						
2	Appointment of consulting firm (May 2010)																						
3	First draft of PD Evaluation document (June 2010)																						
4	Dialogues on first draft of PD Evaluation																						
5	Second draft of PD Evaluation																						
6	Dialogues on second draft PD Evaluation																						
7	Final PD Evaluation prepared																						

