

# Effective Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development

Key Findings

July 2008



Effective Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development

## Joint Study on Effective TC for CD





# Joint Study on Effective Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development

## *Why Technical Cooperation is Important*

Technical cooperation is seen as an important way of helping to build up country capability to lead and manage its own development agenda for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Technical cooperation commitments by OECD countries in 2006 amounted to US\$ 24 billion globally, constituting around one third of aid to the Government sector. Using it effectively is therefore critical if national development policy implementation is to be speeded up.

A number of previous studies strongly suggest that technical cooperation is not being used as effectively as it might be. For example, the Paris Declaration 2006 Monitoring Survey concludes that countries need to exercise more leadership in defining the role and outcomes of technical cooperation.

Therefore, the objective of this Joint Study is to attempt to fill some of these knowledge gaps about how to make technical cooperation work better.

## *What is different about this Joint Study?*

The overall strategy has been to facilitate a *country-led* approach to assembling concrete evidence on countries own experiences, focusing on:

- Examining the contribution of technical cooperation for capacity development from a wider perspective.
- Systematic surveys of examples of success factors and conditions.
- Systematic surveys of countries' views, experiences and reflections.
- Identifying measures for greater technical cooperation effectiveness.

The eleven participating countries from Asia and Africa selected themselves. The country studies were led by country management teams and study groups consisting of high level Government, development partner and civil society representatives. These teams coordinated analytical work and wide

ranging focus group discussions with key informants. In this way, country reports are strongly grounded in country realities and experiences.

The overall study methodology consisted of:

- Analysis of the national policy and operational environment.
- Analysis of sector/thematic policy and operational environments.
- Design of technical cooperation good practice analytical framework.
- Country selected good practice case study analysis.

The basic intention of the study has been to identify potential success conditions (benchmarking criteria) and to confirm that six key features given below will enhance the effectiveness of technical cooperation for capacity development:

- Country-led planning.
- Flexible and responsive design
- Embedding within an organizational change process
- Country-led management
- Complementarity with other forms of support
- Embedding within an organizational learning process

A comprehensive body of evidence has been assembled and analyzed by the Joint Study, including eleven 11 country case study reports, incorporating 65 examples of country selected good practice, and a synthesis report.

The Joint Study has been organized through a Steering Committee and Management Committee consisting of representatives from participating countries, including: Cambodia, Ghana, Kenya, Lao PDR, Malawi, Malaysia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam and Zambia, and development partners from the ADB, BMZ/GTZ, DfID, Japan, UNDP and World Bank.

### *What this study has found out: Some essences of study findings*

The study has revealed that countries are making significant progress in putting in place the enabling conditions within the overall *national* policy environment for technical cooperation. High level understanding of the importance of technical cooperation, interest in ensuring its effectiveness and knowledge of good practice is growing. Nevertheless, country reports acknowledge that formulation of national level policies and strategies for technical cooperation and capacity development and building capacity to implement these strategies needs to be progressed quickly.

Similar broad conclusions apply at the *sector* level. Well defined sector strategies and use of sector wide approaches are now prevalent in most countries. On the other hand, capacity development strategies and the positioning of technical cooperation remain uneven across the study countries. Country reports accord the highest priority to strengthening sector organizational capacity at central and local levels to formulate, manage and implement technical cooperation and capacity development priorities. There is a strong sense in country reports that development partners need to do more in helping to put these capacities in place.

In encouraging partner countries and donor partners to translate the study findings into practice, the study has tried to outline some possible country-led actions for improving technical cooperation and related capacity development outputs, outcomes and impact. In the report, a number of specific recommendations are proposed at national, sector and operational levels to put the necessary success conditions (benchmarks) in place. It is hoped that all involved stakeholders and interested parties will participate in continuing discussions in coming years on how to take advantage of the results of this joint study.

### *How this brochure is organized*

This brochure tries to give readers key messages from the main synthesis report in a summarized fashion. (See the Table of Contents below) In this brochure, findings and recommendations for actions are presented in eight sub-sections starting with policy and operational environment for both national and sector/thematic levels. They are then followed by six sub-sections for each of six key features, which are critical in ensuring the effectiveness of technical cooperation for capacity development.

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# Optimizing the National Level Environment for Technical Cooperation for CD

*"the public sector reform programme epitomizes country leadership in linking technical cooperation with broader reform programs..."*

Tanzania  
Country Report

The main conclusion identified from the Joint Study is that technical cooperation is more likely to be effective when:

- Technical cooperation is integrated into a country-led and well defined national capacity development strategy as part of a broader country development policy agenda.
- There is a well defined national level organizational mandate and responsibilities for implementing capacity development strategy and technical cooperation.
- There is high level commitment and understanding of the importance of technical cooperation for implementing country capacity development programs.

Overall, significant progress is being made at the country level to put these conditions in place but countries and development partners need to do more to accelerate the process.

## Enabling Country-led Approaches

A broad conclusion is that, through the growing number of joint country and development partner working groups for capacity development, more needs to be done to nurture and promote country ownership. Where appropriate, this needs to include nurturing latent country capacity and recognizing the potential of south-south and north-south-south cooperation.

A number of issues are identified to further strengthen the national environment, including:

- Put in place well articulated policy frameworks and operational guidelines for technical cooperation with clear organizational mandates for implementing and monitoring these policies.
- Strengthen country capacity to formulate its own national level capacity development and technical cooperation strategies.
- Strengthen country knowledge and information systems on technical cooperation and capacity development, drawing on the growing body of knowledge of international and country level good practice.
- Raise the awareness of senior Government officials and political groupings (e.g. parliamentary select committees) about the importance of technical cooperation.

The growing activity of joint technical working groups on capacity development and technical cooperation issues provides a strong foundation for addressing enabling and impeding factors.

## Key Recommendations for Action

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Initiate greater coordinated and cooperative efforts between countries and development partners to formulate and promote a regional and cross-regional technical cooperation policy agenda.
- Design and implement cross-regional, regional and national capacity development/ technical cooperation knowledge management, awareness raising and advocacy action plans, drawing on growing country/development partner experiences and good practice.
- Strengthen country capacity to conduct capacity development assessments, formulate country level capacity development strategies, roadmaps and targets and technical cooperation policies, priorities and related operational guidelines.
- Strengthen country capacity to design and implement technical cooperation classification systems through government information systems with linkage to national reform priorities.
- Introduce greater devolution of authority to and strengthening of development partner country capacity to engage in capacity development/ technical cooperation strategy and programming.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

*Case Study Highlights: Country Partnership Groups Helping to Align Capacity Development/Technical Cooperation Priorities with National Development Plans*

In 2002, partnership roles were clarified and refined in the Tanzania Assistance Strategy and again in 2006 in its successor, the Joint Assistance Strategy for Tanzania (JAST), which provides a five year framework that guides the management of development cooperation. A results-based Joint Program Document (JPD) is essentially a development partners’ response to National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty and the JAST. Annual joint reviews and an Independent Monitoring Group help secure mutual accountability aided by JAST’s performance assessment and monitoring framework.

The Hanoi Core Statement was formulated by Government of Vietnam within weeks of the Paris Declaration. Organizational arrangements for coordinating thematic policy harmonization have been established under the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) through the Partnership Group for Aid Effectiveness (PGAEE). These thematic groups focus on harmonizing operational procedures related to program design and appraisal, with a growing focus on cross-cutting capacity development strategies. Donors have committed themselves to aligning their support with the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006-10 targets.

**Study Spotlight: Changing Patterns of ODA Constitute an Opportunity**

Traditionally, technical cooperation has been seen as the main instrument of enabling country capacity development, primarily through knowledge, skills and technology transfer.

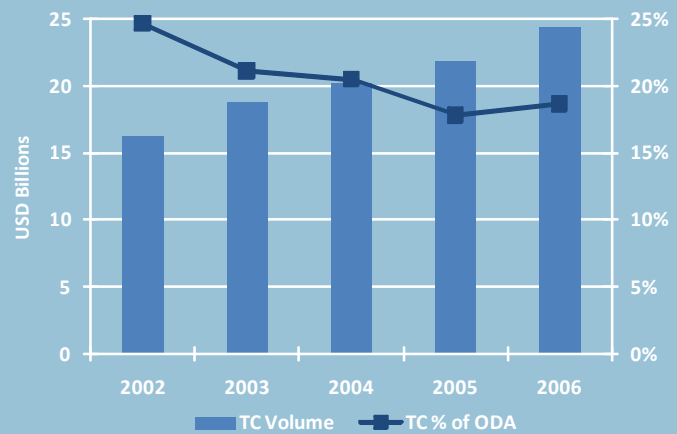
The pattern of ODA is changing. Although the volume of technical cooperation is increasing or remaining constant in many study countries, its share is declining. This is due to increased volumes of project and program aid (see *Chart*).

This presents an opportunity to accelerate country capacity development strategy implementation. The challenges are to strengthen country capacity to absorb these increased aid volumes and define the comparative advantage of different aid modalities in helping to achieve different kinds of development outputs/outcomes and results.

**Technical Cooperation and Capacity Development Results Chain: Ghana Public Financial Management**

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
International and regional consultants, local and overseas training and limited equipment supplies	Tax/revenue legal and regulatory framework; improved compliance capacity, more trained staff and better PFM MIS at center/local level	Improved tax collection rates and Parliamentary oversight of pro-poor national budget allocations and disbursements; reduced need for ODA loans

*Technical Cooperation: Global Commitment Trends*



**Study Spotlight: Focusing on Broader Outcomes of Technical Cooperation**

Country reports provide examples of the chain of results from technical cooperation to short-term capacity development outputs and longer-term outcomes (see below).

Early formulation of operational capacity development roadmaps, including identifying different forms of technical cooperation to achieve different outputs and outcomes, helps to ensure that these results chains are incorporated into design of technical cooperation programs.

## Optimizing the Sector/Thematic Level Environment for Technical Cooperation for CD

*"Technical cooperation focuses too much on short-term results ... and under-estimates the complexity of capacity development and system change ..."*

Cambodia  
Presentation,  
Tokyo 2008

The main conclusion identified from the Joint Study is that technical cooperation is more likely to be effective when:

- Technical cooperation is integrated within a sector strategy and a country-led sector wide approach and/or program based approach.
- Technical cooperation priorities are informed by a comprehensive and phased capacity development strategy and plan.
- Technical cooperation is embedded within capacity development operational roadmaps, designed and managed by country teams.
- Technical cooperation is complemented by other forms of complementary support with sector organizational capacity to coordinate.

Overall, substantial progress has been made by most countries in fulfilling these conditions, although capacity development roadmaps are still in their infancy.

### *Building up Sector Organizational Capacity for Technical Cooperation Planning and Management*

A broad conclusion is that, although countries and development partners sector working groups are increasingly active, measures to strengthen sector organizational capacity to lead and manage technical cooperation is a priority.

A number of issues are identified to further strengthen the sector/thematic environment, including:

- Conducting country-led sector organizational capacity assessments, at multi-levels, to help guide capacity development plans and technical cooperation priorities.
- Formulating criteria for use by sector managers in decisions over which forms of technical cooperation can best meet different kinds of capacity development outputs and outcomes.
- Country managers and development partners working together to ensure that technical cooperation and other forms of support are complementary and potential donor divisions of labor are clearly defined.

Another important message echoed in many country reports is that the potential advantages of harmonized approaches to technical cooperation are welcomed (e.g. pooled funding). However, countries highlighted that any harmonization should not be at cost to maintaining variety of forms of technical cooperation.

Another important message is the importance of development partners maintaining a long-term perspective on technical cooperation and capacity development, given its complexity.

### *Key Recommendations for Action*

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Develop methodologies and tools for joint sector capacity assessments, incorporating staff development programs for country and donor staff in their use.
- Develop principles and guidelines for the formulation of partnership principles for technical cooperation and capacity development, within a SWAp/PBA, incorporating transparent assessment of country development partner and technical cooperation modalities comparative advantages.
- Develop country level guidelines for joint government/development partner surveys of client satisfaction with services and organizational change advocacy strategies and mechanisms, incorporating well-defined country and development partner roles and responsibilities.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

## Case Study Highlights: Organizational Learning and Capacity Assessment, Kenya Education and Zambia Water Sectors

Over the last ten years in Kenya, the education sector has benefited from an extensive range of capacity development projects, focusing on district and school management development and science and mathematics education. Regular project performance reviews, many originating in the mid-90's have informed sector capacity development/technical cooperation strategy. For the education sector, a

Government white paper in 2005 led to a sector strategic plan and the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP). Lessons learned on technical cooperation for capacity development from existing bilateral projects are informing future capacity development strategy and improving technical cooperation management capacity, incorporating annual joint reviews.

In Zambia, rural water sector policy is implemented through the National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (NRWSSP). Over many years, government, with technical cooperation support, has implemented a wide range of activities at local government and community levels. Much of the information on technical cooperation effectiveness and programme implementation needed to be systemized as part of organizational learning. In 2003, government established a Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Unit (RWSSU), which alongside a University of Zambia research centre, plays a key role in using lessons learned to inform future technical cooperation priorities for capacity development.

### Study Spotlight: South-South Cooperation, The Thailand and Malaysia Perspective

These two country reports focus on the country learning during transition from ODA recipient to development partner in providing bilateral technical cooperation. Use of study tours and institutional twinning feature strongly in these programs (see *Photo*).

### Malaysia South-South Cooperation: Integrated Agricultural Development in Malawi



### Study Spotlight: Country Benchmarks on Sector Strategy, SWAp, and CD/TC Frameworks

Country reports assess the status of sector strategy and the extent to which capacity development and technical cooperation strategies and roadmaps are incorporated. As shown in the *Table* below, sector strategies are well developed, but operational approaches to capacity development and technical cooperation less so in many sectors studied.

	Sector Strategy	SWAp	Sector CD Assessment	CD Priorities	CD Strategy	TC Priorities	TC Strategy
Cambodia Health	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Ghana PFM	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning
Ghana Education	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Kenya Education	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Lao PIP	Extensive	Beginning	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Malawi Education	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Malawi Health	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Tanzania Agriculture	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Tanzania Health	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Vietnam PFM	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Zambia Water/Sanitation	Extensive	Significant	Extensive	Extensive	Extensive	Limited	Limited

Extensive

Significant

Limited

Beginning

# Optimizing Technical Cooperation Design and Operations for CD

## 1. Country-led Planning

*"Technical assistance works best when it was demand-led - client agencies invited it and specified what they wanted from it."*

Pakistan  
Country Report

The main conclusion is that country-led planning can make technical cooperation more effective, especially if enabled by the following conditions:

- A strong demand for organization capacity improvement to implement a set of pressing and identified priorities.
- A well defined source of country leadership with the necessary organizational authority.
- Clearly sequenced capacity development results and aligned technical cooperation.
- Well-defined organizational and management mandates at multi-levels, increasingly at local and community levels.
- Agreed partnership principles for technical cooperation planning, consistent with country planning cycles.

Another finding is that selective technical cooperation can help catalyze putting these success conditions/benchmarks in place.

### *Enabling Country-led Approaches*

Other important conclusions from the good practice examples of country-led planning are:

- Demand for country leadership can come from a number of sources (e.g. urgent MDG policy implementation, pressing work force shortages).
- Sources of leadership can come from a number of sources, within or outside organizations, and technical cooperation can help nurture leadership.
- Sector organizational learning about technical cooperation effectiveness can help to build up country confidence to lead planning processes.
- Strengthening the organizational mandate can provide the necessary authority for country leadership and decentralization legislation helps local level leadership of technical cooperation planning.
- Joint sector capacity assessments with countries, development partners and civil society participation can help initiate country-led planning.
- Joint sector capacity assessments, through country sector working groups, help strengthen country leadership mandates.

Another important conclusion is that sector capacity assessments need to link capacity development and technical cooperation priorities at different levels of the organization in order to avoid organizational gaps.

A related conclusion is that multi-level technical cooperation programs need to be carefully synchronized in order to minimize potential difficulties of donors supporting different levels of the organization (e.g. centre, district, community).

### *Key Recommendations for Action*

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Provide sector planners with the tools and skills to formulate long-term sector capacity development strategies and technical cooperation priorities.
- Formulate sector level partnership principles for capacity development/technical cooperation planning/ implementation, incorporating transparency over the efficacy of different technical cooperation aid modalities and individual donor comparative advantage.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

*"Capacity development inputs are usually most directly targeted at individuals ... but results are sought in terms of organizational development and performance."*

Pakistan Country Report



### Case Study Highlights: Examples of Country Led-Planning

**Orangi Water and Sanitation Project, Pakistan.** The project originated from a pilot project in 1980 to serve the needs of the Karachi urban poor. Local expertise, no foreign technical assistance, has helped stimulate beneficiary demands and strengthen community capacity to apply low cost water and sanitation technologies. A key factor in the success of the project has been to nurture latent community capacity, facilitated by local staff. Another feature has been the high attention accorded to extensive interaction between Government and beneficiary communities at the planning stage so that capacity development for service delivery at the grass roots level is fully consistent with local perspectives and capacity realities.

**Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Unit, Zambia.** The project originated from concerns over the capacity of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to implement an agreed reform process. Initially the Ministry received technical cooperation to strengthen its own operations. Subsequently, it was recognized that a specific organizational location; a rural water supply and sanitation unit within the Ministry, was necessary to coordinate planning and management of water sector support programs. Further technical cooperation has helped develop common planning tools and unit personnel are now engaged as managers of water sector reform program components. The existence of a widely supported policy environment has been critical in sustaining organizational capacity improvement. Community participation in the design and implementation of safe water and sanitation projects is a key feature (see *Photo*).



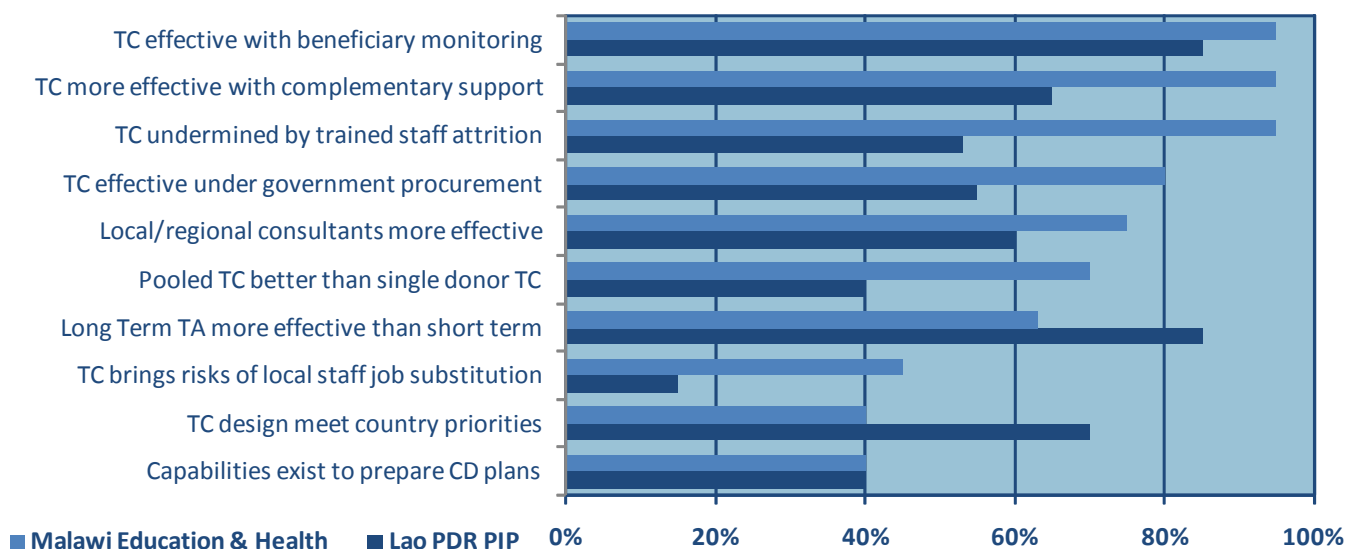
Community Water Projects, Zambia

### Study Spotlight: Assessing Conditions that Help to Make Technical Cooperation Effective

Country reports incorporate countries views on what factors enable or impede effective use of technical cooperation. In the case of the education and health sectors (Malawi) and Planning and Investment Ministry (Lao PDR), specific perception surveys were undertaken (see *Chart* below). These suggest that building up country capacity to undertake its own capacity assessments is a priority. There was also a perception that technical cooperation could be better aligned than it is with country priorities.

There is also a view that ensuring measures to address staff attrition and potential staff substitution issues as part of technical cooperation planning is important, especially in Malawi where attrition of doctors and nurses is high.

### Sector Level Success Conditions for TC Effectiveness (% of Respondents that Strongly Agree/Agree)



## Optimizing Technical Cooperation Design and Operations for CD

### 2. Flexible and Responsive Design

Need for "increased mapping of most effective technical cooperation modalities... linked to different types of capacity development outputs and outcomes."

Joint Study Workshop Tokyo, 2008

The main conclusion is that flexible and responsive designs can make technical cooperation more effective, especially if enabled by the following conditions:

- Long and medium term time horizons for capacity development roadmaps, based on shared understanding of organizational development priorities.
- Sector managers' commitment and capacity to monitor capacity development and technical cooperation activities and propose adjustments.
- Development partner willingness to delegate technical cooperation decision making to sector managers.
- Willingness to adjust technical cooperation modalities and activities on the basis of joint monitoring/evaluation exercises, especially on the part of the donor country offices.

Country initiated organizational assessments are an important entry point to ensuring a shared understanding between countries and development partners of the need for flexibility and responsiveness.

#### *Common Features of Good Practice Examples*

The good practice examples demonstrate a number of common features, incorporating:

- Joint country/development partner performance reviews of technical cooperation, including set milestones when they will take place, can help to raise awareness of the need for flexibility.
- Building measureable and time lined capacity development outputs and outcomes needs to be part of any performance review and design change.
- Flexibility can be addressed in a number of ways, either at the initial design stage or as part of a more iterative review and forward planning process.
- Extensive consultation with beneficiaries, including information and advocacy campaigns on technical cooperation can help define the boundaries of changes to design and when.
- For training programs, obtaining regular feedback from trainees is vital in order to inform any changes in staff development priorities.

The broad finding is that taking a long-term view, rather than focusing on short-term capacity development outputs is intrinsic for a flexible and responsive approach.

Without a long-term engagement it is not always easy for development partners to be sufficiently sensitive to often subtle changes in organizational capacity priorities.

#### *Key Recommendations for Action*

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Enhance country capacity to use sector organizational performance assessment tools, incorporating sequencing of critical capacities and mapping of technical cooperation priorities and modalities.
- Develop tools for formulating capacity development results chains related to technical cooperation support, incorporating well-defined milestones for technical cooperation performance review and adjustment.
- Formulate tools and operational guidelines for effective joint country/donor monitoring and evaluation of capacity development outputs/ outcomes and technical cooperation inputs.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

*Case Study Highlights: Examples of Flexible and Responsive Design*

**Thailand South-South Cooperation for Agriculture Small Enterprises in Timor Leste.** The project was initiated by a visit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to Thailand in 2007 to conduct a survey on the one village, one product (OVOP) practices. The mission observed specific OVOP practices in agriculture, alongside gaining an understanding of its history, management, marketing and technical support. On return to Dilli, the Minister chaired a seminar for over a hundred participants from the private sector, Government and community groups. The result was formulation of a flexible and responsive proposal for SSC support, recognizing the need for implementation to be responsive to local capacity and evolving needs in a post conflict environment.

**The Kafue District Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Program, Zambia.** A key feature is that all technical cooperation and complementary support are guided by the district development plan which is constantly reviewed in response to perceived changes in priorities. 17 area development committees have been setup as part of awareness raising and demand for water facilities and as a result, the number of grant applications has increased significantly in response to these demands. A key success condition is the long process of consultation between Government and donors on a flexible design which included wide consultation with local leaders and incorporating their views in the design.

**Study Spotlight: Adjusting Technical Cooperation Approaches on the Basis of Regular Performance Reviews**

Country reports highlight the importance of regularly reviewing how well technical cooperation is progressing and adjusting approaches accordingly. For example, the Christian Health Association of Malawi exchange program was originally designed to use international consultants.

After a review, it was concluded that South-South cooperation, using expertise from Kenya and Zambia, might be more appropriate since aspects of North-South knowledge, skills transfer and understanding of the Malawian situation were less relevant.

Subsequently, the beneficiary organization concluded that the experiences from this arrangement were more relevant and meaningful. Other country reports suggest that a mix of North-South and South-South approaches to providing technical cooperation is becoming more prevalent.



PIP Planning Workshop, Lao PDR

**Study Spotlight: Focusing on Longer-Term Results of Technical Cooperation**

Country reports highlight the importance of incorporating anticipated development results, not just short-term outputs, into the design of technical cooperation. The formulation of the program of support for strengthening public investment planning in Lao PDR (see *Photo*) is one such example. Early results (see *Table*) suggest that this support is beginning to positively influence broader national development planning and monitoring processes.

**Adopting a Long-Term Perspective to CD for Public Investment Planning, Lao PDR**

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
International and local consultants, local training at central and provincial levels	Revised PIP regulatory framework, organizational mandate, structure and staff job descriptions; improved PIP MIS and trained staff; availability of local training programs	Increased central and provincial capacity for PIP planning and pro-poor ODA expenditure allocations and monitoring	Improved NPRS indicators and MDGs; better information to policy makers and House of Assembly members

## Optimizing Technical Cooperation Design and Operations for CD

### 3. Embedding in Organizational Change

*"In the good practices identified, a common feature appears to be a combination of both political will and sector organizational leadership..."*

Joint Study  
Synthesis Report

The main conclusion is that being embedded in an organizational change process can make technical cooperation more effective, especially if enabled by the following conditions:

- A well defined source of demand for organizational change, stemming from clients' service dissatisfaction.
- A willingness and capacity at political and managerial levels to lead and manage change.
- A shared willingness by country organizations and donors to advocate change
- The creation of quick wins to build confidence in change, including technical cooperation and complementary support.

Provision of low key and "behind the scenes" technical cooperation can help catalyze and support the process.

#### *Conclusions and Lessons Learned from Country Good Practice Examples*

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the good practice case studies selected by countries:

- The source of demand for organizational change and performance improvement can vary and originate within or outside the organization.
- Countries and development partners can work together to stimulate change through advocacy and client satisfaction surveys.
- Technical cooperation can play an important role in helping to catalyze change through stimulating internal and external organizational learning.
- Technical cooperation can help build up senior managers confidence and capacity to manage the change process.
- Twinning and peer-peer learning between similar organizations within or outside a country can play an important catalytic role.

Another important conclusion from the good practice case studies is that carefully building quick wins into the initial organizational change process, covering political champions outside the organization, individuals within it and beneficiary groups can help sustain change.

Technical cooperation can be effective in helping to catalyze such change, including strengthening country capability to undertake organizational visioning processes and identify and support potential leaders and managers.

#### *Key Recommendations for Action*

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Implement joint country/donor client satisfaction surveys to help stimulate organizational change demand.
- Formulate operational guidelines for organizational visioning processes, political and managerial leadership identification and development processes.
- Develop country level guidelines for joint assessment of organizational capacity, identification of critical capacities and whether technical cooperation absorptive capacity exists.
- Identify measures for 'quick wins' at various organizational levels and for external champions of change to sustain change momentum through well targeted and complementary support.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

*"Technical cooperation can play a key role in identifying information needs, helping to set up systems and enable information exchange between internal and external users."*

Joint Study Synthesis Report

### Case Study Highlights: Examples of Embedding Technical Cooperation Within Organizational Change

**Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction, Lao PDR.** An influential champion can initiate and sustain organizational change. Previously, much of the technical cooperation was located in discrete project units. Over the past ten years, the Minister has personally led a more holistic approach to capacity development at central, provincial and district level. The Minister has been responsible for the creation of the Road Maintenance Funds and the decision to abolish Project Implementation Units in order to channel all aid projects through a central line department. Technical cooperation is embedded in this process, which includes decentralization, outsourcing and promoting local responsibility for community roads.

#### **Whole School Development Program, Ghana.**

The impetus for the program was implementing free compulsory basic education and enabling local education decision making by districts, schools and communities. Technical cooperation programs were embedded in this process, incorporating strengthening the capacity of the central Ghana Education Service and improved service delivery capacity and management at district and school levels. This allowed for strengthening the capacity of existing systems rather than creating new ones to bypass previously inefficient arrangements. A positive feature is that community participation in schooling has been enhanced and district education personnel have become more engaged in community stakeholder consultations.

*Training of School Development Facilitators, Ghana*

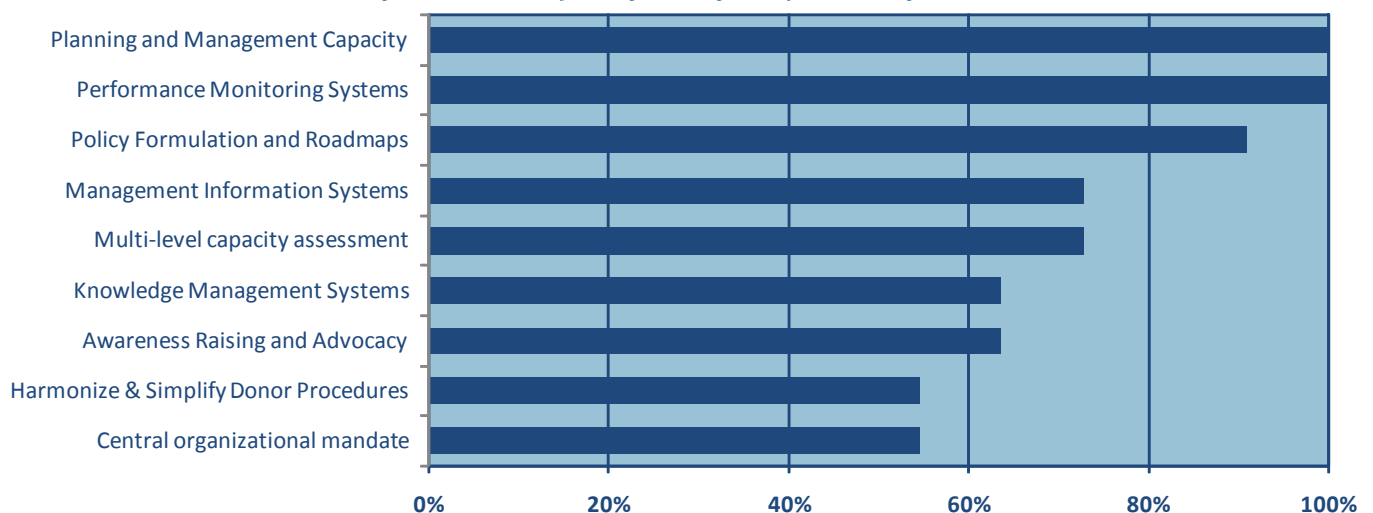


### Study Spotlight: Upgrading Information and Knowledge Management Systems

All country reports highlighted the importance of strengthening information and knowledge systems related to the effectiveness and impact of technical cooperation. In the case of Vietnam, the team in the Ministry of Finance designed its own methodology for doing so. Country reports also identified priority actions (see *Table* below).

For example, in Cambodia the Council for the Development of Cambodia has put in place technical cooperation information systems between central and sector agencies. In Malawi, steps are being taken by the Debt and Aid Division in the Ministry of Finance to strengthen collection, analysis & dissemination of statistics on technical cooperation. Many other country reports indicated their intention to do the same.

#### *National-Level CD/TC Priority Actions Frequency Analysis of 11 Study Countries*



## Optimizing Technical Cooperation Design and Operations for CD

# 4. Country-led Management

*"Once again, sensitive and unobtrusive use of technical assistance to strengthen country managers confidence and capacity is sometimes useful."*

Joint Study  
Synthesis Report

The main conclusion is that country-led management can make technical cooperation more effective, especially if enabled by the following conditions:

- Broad consensus on technical cooperation priorities, through country-led capacity assessments and technical cooperation needs identification.
- Well defined authority and delegation to sector managers for technical cooperation decision making at multi-levels.
- Confidence and capacity for technical cooperation performance management and monitoring, sometimes with low key technical assistance support.
- Jointly agreed roles and responsibilities for selective donor role in technical and financial management processes.

Unobtrusive technical cooperation can help ensure these conditions are put in place.

### *Common Features of Good Practice Examples*

Country case studies point to a number of lessons learned about facilitating country-led management:

- Joint organizational assessments between countries and development partners can help achieve consensus on priorities and put country managers in the driving seat.
- Introduction of new legislation and regulations on organizational mandates can stimulate country-led management of technical cooperation.
- Agreements on country managers roles and responsibilities in decision making and, sometimes, direct procurement of technical cooperation helps consolidate country led management.
- Steps towards harmonization of technical cooperation, with country managers taking the lead on pooled funding priorities, is seen as a sign of confidence in country management capacity.

However, even in the good practice examples there was a strong recognition of the need to strengthen country sector capacity to manage and monitor technical cooperation performance. This applies increasingly at local levels of sector organizations as demand for capacity improvement grows at district and community levels.

### *Key Recommendations for Action*

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Formulate sector level principles and guidelines for securing country level management and reporting of technical cooperation, with clearly defined operational roles of sector agency managers and development partner.
- Agree principles and guidelines for harmonization of development partners technical cooperation procurement and monitoring arrangements.
- Design and implement staff development programs for sector/thematic technical cooperation managers, alongside identification of national and sector level focal points for country technical cooperation management.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

*"the public sector reform programme epitomizes country leadership in linking technical cooperation with broader reform programs ..."*

Tanzania Country Report

## Case Study Highlights: Examples of Country-Led Management of Technical Cooperation

**Multi-Donor Trust Fund Project, Vietnam.** The design of the project responds to jointly agreed priorities between Government and development partners for the financial sector modernization process within the Ministry of Finance. This experience of this initiative has also further enabled Government capacity to manage and coordinate external resources for the implementation of the broader PFM reform program. Instead of using technical assistance, line departments designed the action plan and activities for their individual areas of PFM reform. The technical Fund Management Unit has a facilitating role where necessary. Thus, Fund operations more effectively meet line departments' needs as well as responding to their implementing capacity.

**Primary School Management, Kenya.** The impetus of the project was to enhance the leadership and management capacity of nearly 17,000 school principals, in order to ensure accountable use of funds. The central education Ministry and development partners were jointly committed to these reforms, setting up a broad based steering committee which engaged with planners, managers and implementers. In this way, technical cooperation (both local and international consultants) was constantly guided by country priorities. Subsequently, other networks (e.g. a head teachers support group, zonal parents associations) continued to feed back their sense of capacity development priorities and technical cooperation needs.

### Supporting School Development Planning, Kenya



### Study Spotlight: Focus on Local Level Capacity Development

Country reports look at a number of factors that can help ensure that capacity development and technical cooperation programs are country-led (see *Table* below). The overall assessment is that progress has been encouraging, but further efforts are needed, especially developing road maps and more use of country procurement systems. A striking feature of many good practice examples is their focus on strengthening district and facility level management capacity. This is frequently part of building up capacity for service decentralization underpinned by legislative reforms.

### Status of Key Enabling Factors for Country-led Management

	SWAp	Sector WG	CD Roadmap	Joint Review	Pooled TC Funding	Country TC Decision	Country TC Procurement
Cambodia Health	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Ghana PFM	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Ghana Education	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Kenya Education	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Lao PIP	Beginning	Significant	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning	Beginning
Malawi Education	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Malawi Health	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Tanzania Agriculture	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Tanzania Health	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Vietnam PFM	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
Zambia Water	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning
	Extensive	Significant	Limited	Limited	Limited	Beginning	Beginning

## Optimizing Technical Cooperation Design and Operations for CD

# 5. Complementarity with Other Support

*"there are as many technical cooperation delivery models as there are country partners."*

Zambia Country Report

The main conclusion is that complementary support can make technical cooperation more effective, especially if enabled by the following conditions:

- Mapping of organizational and management needs, identifying technical cooperation and other complementary support.
- Existence of sector capacity development roadmap and targets which define complementarity of technical cooperation and other support.
- Country operational guidelines which recognize the comparative advantage of different technical cooperation modalities and development partners.

A broad conclusion is that these conditions are more likely when technical cooperation is embedded in a SWAp or program based approach.

### *Common Features of Good Practice Examples*

Country case studies point to a number of lessons learned about how best to ensure complementary support:

- Building complementary support into the overall sector strategy and program at the design stage.
- Reaching early agreement with development partners on who will finance specific aspects of technical cooperation and other forms of complementary support.
- Using comprehensive mapping of organizational needs as an entry point to ensuring complementary support is part of organizational performance improvement.
- Regular reviews of organizational performance can help identify capacity gaps which complementary support can often fill.
- Involving beneficiaries in mapping of organizational needs and reviews of organizational performance can be an entry point to identifying complementary support needed.

A broad observation is that there is frequently insufficient coherence in technical cooperation strategy and designs between central institutional reforms, central and mid-level organizational development and grassroots management and implementation capacity building.

A contributing factor appears to be a tendency of different development partners to focus technical

cooperation at these different levels of the sector, which potentially can undermine a coherent and long capacity development vision and technical cooperation strategy and even create an imbalance in technical cooperation priorities.

### *Key Recommendations for Action*

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Formulate tools, operational guidelines and staff development programs for formulating capacity development/ technical cooperation support frameworks, which identify other critical complementary support activities.
- Formulate operational guidelines for assessing the efficacy of pooling of technical cooperation resources (funding, expertise), alongside agreed guidelines for ensuring greater transparency in the selection and funding of technical cooperation.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

*"agreement and consensus amongst donors on complementary roles and support, including reduced competition and the need for visibility."*

Joint Study Workshop, Tokyo, 2008



## Case Study Highlights: Examples of Complementarity of Other Support with Technical Cooperation

**Malaysia South-South Cooperation for ASEAN Smart School Project.** As an aid beneficiary, a large proportion of technical cooperation received by Malaysia had been part of a larger program which included infrastructure and equipment. Drawing on this experience, Malaysia SSC adopts a similar approach for its Smart School Project which is designed to promote ICT application in schools in ASEAN countries. The project initially provides computer laboratories in schools, equipped with PCs, other computer peripherals and courseware. At a later stage of implementation, teachers were sent to Malaysia and trained in ICT and appropriate pedagogical skills and how to effectively use ICT in teaching methods and lesson planning.

**Participatory Agriculture Development and Empowerment Project, Tanzania.** The objective of this project is to strengthen the capacity of rural communities and local Government authorities to plan and implement more demand side agricultural development initiatives. Technical cooperation was provided to help design initial capacity improvements, resulting in 254 villages involved in participatory planning. Pooled donor support provides a diverse range of support, including equipment, small scale infrastructure, training, support for public private partnerships and technology linkages. Communities now manage the related financial management and procurement processes.

*Sustainable Agro forestry, Tanzania*



### Study Spotlight: A Diverse Range of Forms of Technical Cooperation Remains Common

Country reports demonstrate that the forms of technical cooperation used remain diverse but complementary support in the form of equipment, infrastructure and particularly budget support is more variable (see *Table* below).

A growing feature is the involvement of communities in selecting the best mix of technical cooperation and complementary support. Strengthening the capacity of local level authorities to manage community led approaches is also a growing feature of many country reports, including advising communities on what forms of technical cooperation work best in achieving identified capacity development priorities.

### Range of Sector Technical Cooperation Types and Complementary Activities

	Consultants	Study Tour	Institutional Twinning	Training	Equipment	Infrastructure	Budget Support
Cambodia Health	Extensive				Extensive	Extensive	Beginning
Ghana PFM			Beginning	Extensive		Beginning	Beginning
Ghana Education			Beginning	Extensive		Extensive	Extensive
Kenya Education				Extensive			Extensive
Lao PIP				Extensive		Beginning	Beginning
Malawi Education				Extensive			Extensive
Malawi Health				Extensive			Extensive
Malaysia SSC		Extensive		Extensive			Beginning
Tanzania Agriculture							Extensive
Tanzania Health				Extensive			Extensive
Thailand SSC			Extensive				Beginning
Vietnam PFM	Extensive		Beginning			Beginning	Beginning
Zambia Water					Extensive	Extensive	Beginning

Extensive

Significant

Limited

Beginning

## Optimizing Technical Cooperation Design and Operations for CD

# 6. Embedding within Organizational Learning

*"The most important lesson learned is that there must be a demand within the specific organization, network or group of individuals..."*

Joint Study  
Synthesis Report

The main conclusion is that embedding technical cooperation within an organizational learning process can make it more effective, especially if enabled by the following conditions:

- A demand within the sector organization, and outside it, for use of management information and lessons learned.
- Adoption of a multi-level organizational learning process and internal/external communication strategy.
- A willingness to allow independent monitoring surveys of organizational performance to inform learning by countries and donor agencies.

A related conclusion is that technical cooperation, if sensitively used, can play an important role in stimulating organizational learning.

### *Common Features of Good Practice Examples*

Country case studies point to a number of lessons learned about how best to optimize organizational learning:

- Adopting a multi-level approach, especially involving beneficiary groups in feeding back their lessons learned to sector organizations.
- Investigating the scope for using civil society groups to conduct small scale innovations and operational research to feed back into sector organizational knowledge and learning.
- Building up a climate of trust between sector organizations and other stakeholders before sensitive information is made more public.
- Identifying potential organizations within the sector which can play a pivotal role as repositories of knowledge and disseminating it appropriately.
- Linking knowledge sharing and lessons learned with broader information communication and advocacy strategies.

Technical cooperation can play a key role in identifying information needs, helping to set up systems and enable information exchange between internal and external users.

More broadly, the good practice examples also illustrate that well-targeted technical cooperation support to sector organizations and other groups (e.g. research institutes, NGOs, beneficiary groups) can help to stimulate organizational learning and mutual and

multi-level accountability (both horizontally and vertically) for service coverage and quality.

### *Key Recommendations for Action*

In some countries, many of these enabling factors are in place, in others less so. The broad recommendations from the Joint Study are:

- Formulate methodologies and staff development programs for organizational assessment of information and knowledge requirements and related capacity development/ technical cooperation planning needs.
- Formulate joint agreements on key organizational performance indicators and evidence, as a basis for monitoring technical cooperation effectiveness and organizational capacity development progress at multi-levels.

It is anticipated that national level country working groups will select the most appropriate ones based on their own assessment of priorities.

*"For the Government, ensure that TC statistics are published regularly ... to promote a wider understanding of technical cooperation trends and patterns. For the donors, ensure greater transparency in terms of technical cooperation data which is currently incomplete."*

Malawi Country Report

## Case Study Highlights: Examples of Embedding Technical Cooperation Within an Organizational Learning Process

**Piloting Innovations in the Health Sector, Cambodia.** The Ministry of Health and various partners have been working together to improve service delivery at the operational district level. One initiative has been to compare the cost effectiveness of alternative approaches, including Ministry partnerships with third party contractors and mechanisms that link organizational performance to various rewards and incentives. In addition, alternative approaches to strengthening health management are being tested. Regular reviews of these innovations, alongside consultation with development partners feeds into forward policy, strategy and program development. Technical cooperation is embedded in this organizational learning process at various levels.

### **Support to the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education, Malawi.**

This coalition consists of 46 civil society organizations committed to quality education. Technical cooperation has been provided to the coalition for a number of years focusing on building its capacity to conduct education budget analysis. Organizational learning processes include training and exchange workshops aimed at strengthening the coalition's district level networks to conduct budget monitoring. The coalition is also actively engaged with members of the Parliamentary Education Committee and development partners over education budget policies and priorities. The technical cooperation program is designed in such a way that coalition members can help shape capacity development strategies and regularly learn from each other.

### *Secondary School Science, Malawi*



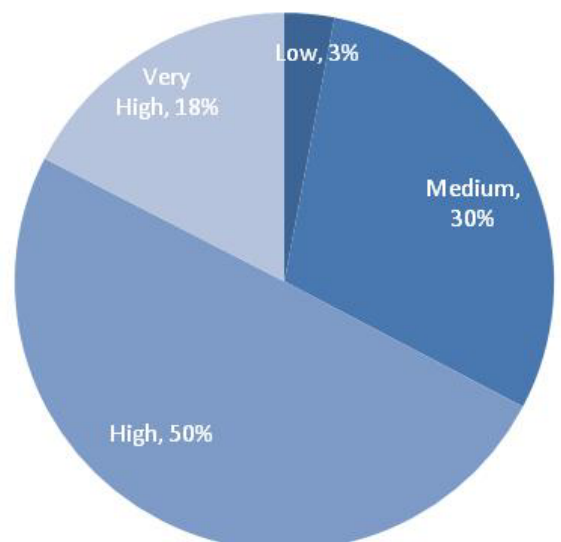
## Study Spotlight: Knowledge About What Makes Technical Cooperation Effective is Growing, but More Needs to be Done

Countries are adopting a range of approaches to building up an understanding of how best to embed technical cooperation in an organizational learning process and how best to use previous lessons learned. In many countries, key informants were surveyed and focus groups consulted. In Pakistan, a series of capacity development “write shops” were used to assemble knowledge. In Vietnam, a specific survey was conducted (see *Graph*).

The overall conclusion is that building up organizational learning takes time and such learning is helped if there is a well defined repository for this knowledge. For example, over a period of twenty years, the Ministry of Education in Kenya has been managing technical cooperation for school management capacity building. Lessons learned are informing new strategies, including greater use of South-South cooperation.

In Zambia, after many years, Government established a Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Unit, which alongside a University of Zambia research centre, acts as the repository of knowledge on technical cooperation effectiveness. In other countries, central planning, economic, finance and development Ministries appear to be playing a growing role in managing this kind of knowledge and disseminating it.

### *Effectiveness of TC for Organizational Learning, Ministry of Finance, Vietnam*



# Joint Study on Effective Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development

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