A major emphasis of global efforts to implement the new agenda will be placed on the achievement of integrated, agreed development results - lasting changes it brings to the lives of the poor -, with clear roles for all actors, shaped by their distinct capabilities and responsibilities. This has gained renewed urgency with a new global sustainable development agenda now firmly in place.

Monitoring the results and impact of development cooperation requires an effective, inter-related effort to share information and monitor and review progress made at sectoral and national level, with governments tasked to track, collect, assess and exchange relevant information.

Many tools for monitoring and review of development cooperation exist at all levels. Rather than setting up new ones, a key task is to rationalize existing ones around shared objectives to strengthen authority and coherence.

This brief is a first attempt to assess how to best make use of existing country results frameworks in development cooperation for this effort.

The brief, prepared by Ms. Elaine Venter, Independent Consultant and Faculty Associate at Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria (South Africa), is a work in progress. Deliberations at the DCF Uganda High-level Symposium and pre-meeting on CRFs will inform a second version of this brief.

References to specific country experiences are representative of similar findings in other countries.
Background and context

The United Nations Member states have endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. The SDGs will guide the next fifteen years of development policy and implementation.

The SDGs are much broader in application than the MDGs and will require unprecedented global commitments and the willingness of United Nations Member states to link the SDGs with existing or emerging national (sustainable) development strategies and related strategic frameworks to promote their realization.

The 2030 Agenda builds on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which sets out concrete steps for aligning all financing flows and policies related to economic, social and environmental priorities to support the achievement of the SDGs.

The expanded demands of the SDGs are accompanied by a substantial increase in country level development frameworks, generally and sectorally, and an increasing diversity of stakeholders interested in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The nature, scale and scope of development cooperation is already adapting to the new reality encapsulated in the SDGs. It is one of several ways of supporting countries in their effort to achieve their national development priorities.

Countries are therefore faced with the challenge of finding coherent, realistic and easy-to-implement ways to consolidate nationally identified priorities with regional and global development goals, and specifically the SDGs as they relate to specific country context. Negotiations of the SDGs and its financing framework have also demonstrated a common concern for robust follow-up and review, driven by structured knowledge sharing and mutual learning.

**Anchoring SDGs at country level: How can mutual accountability enablers contribute?**

Recognizing the importance of monitoring, review and knowledge sharing about progress in development is paramount to the successful achievement of development goals. It builds on strong domestic accountability between the government and its citizens and their representatives. Such robust exchanges can provide the necessary encouragement to change behaviors, foster ownership of agreed development goals by all stakeholders and improve the quality of development cooperation policies and interventions to achieve sustainable development results. Putting in place clear and easy-to-implement measures to review such progress and facilitate knowledge sharing and mutual learning in a timely and effective way will be critical to ensure allocation and effective use of resources and, ultimately, the implementation of the SDGs.

The following six enablers of mutual accountability in development have been identified in ongoing analytical work for the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF).

- Political leadership
- National development cooperation policies
- Effective dialogue structures for development cooperation
- Data and information
- Capacity development
- Monitoring Frameworks

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1 Annex A
To ensure countries build on existing efforts when implementing the SDGs, it is critical to reflect on the relevance of these enablers to support the achievement of the SDGs at country level. The application of the enablers will be critical in realizing the SDGs within the context of the CRFs at country level. Effective functioning of CRFs may depend on the extent to which other enablers are put in place.

**What are new requirements for country result frameworks in the SDG era?**

CRFs as monitoring frameworks have the potential to link means of implementation considered development cooperation with SDG implementation at country level in a tangible way.

Several different definitions of CRFs exist. All of them share common elements, including a result level expectation guided by longer term objectives, the importance of causal relationships between inputs and outputs and outcomes and clearly defined goals, targets and indicators.

To be effectively used, CRFs must be conceived as a representation of the partnership between governments and their external partners, but they should be guided by governments’ leadership.

The primary focus of a CRF is to illustrate how development cooperation can help to achieve development objectives agreed in national sustainable development plans, and linked to results at the output, outcome and impact level. CRFs usually outline the areas and indicators to be monitored, the frequency of monitoring and reporting, the format for the process of assessment or review against the indicators set in the framework, and the roles and responsibilities of different actors.

CRFs are an important learning tool that serves to identify how proposed outcomes and impact of development cooperation is achieved. They inform policy dialogue and change by informing about progress and challenges. Political leaders, policy makers and development partners are guided in their relationship and common development goals through the CRF reports, both in terms of successes – what to take to scale and institutionalize, as well as challenges experienced – what must be adapted.

CRFs vary in scope and content, and may exist in addition, or be combined with, other national monitoring frameworks that monitor current and projected disbursements, and where available, indications of future commitments in development cooperation. They are typically the outcome of negotiations between governments and their external partners. Traditionally, designing and implementing a CRF depends on a close partnership between these actors. Its priorities and time frames are usually also linked to a country’s Medium Term Strategic Frameworks.

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**The Cambodia government** regards country results framework as a tool to linking and coordinating policy with resource, activity and monitoring. In line with this, use of robust results frameworks are embedded in national systems thanks to the extended use of PBAs since 2004 that has resulted in an increased emphasis on establishing a common strategy and programming framework for all partners. The Public Financial Management Reform Program uses a common results framework at two levels – a higher-level objectives and more detailed framework for identifying additional objectives, indicators, activities and resources. The gender results frameworks of the programs link an overall vision to detailed indicators and activities. Another sector that benefitted from is Agriculture and Water. The results framework strengthens resources alignment and results-based monitoring. The Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs), which were strengthened using results based methodologies in 2012 are now a well-established tool for setting common goals and jointly monitoring process. JMIs have

**Bangladesh**, supported by their development partners developed the “Bangladesh Development Results Framework” in 2011, which have also been incorporated in the sixth five year plan. The 2nd review report was done in 2014, and they contribute the success of the framework to Government leadership and high level commitment between government and the DPs through a collective dialogue mechanism. **Source:** Power point presentation at the building block on results and accountability, side event :DCF, NY, 11 July 2014
Certain elements of the CRFs, often identified by external partners, require more prominent recognition in the SDG era. They include: the CRF being rooted in national sustainable development plans; promoting ownership and leadership by government officials; encouraging an integrated results framework that spans across priority sectors; and promoting data sourcing for the CRF through an expanded development cooperation framework, which should include both development partners, but also philanthropic organizations, private sector and public-private partnerships.

**What can be a common understanding of CRFs going forward?**

Taking all of this into consideration it is proposed that the following working definition is considered:

*The CRF is an actionable strategic and integrated monitoring framework which (1) consolidates agreed country level development cooperation priorities, linked to global development objectives; (2) puts these priorities in a causal relationship with development cooperation interventions at the different results levels; (3) assesses the interventions through clearly defined goals, targets and indicators, (4) executed under government leadership and (5) supported by cross-sectoral assessments supported by citizens, CSOs, other interest groups, the private sector and external partners.*

This proposed definition makes provisions for a CRF framework that is:

- **An expression of national sustainable development priorities** – All development initiatives should be guided by the country priorities as determined by the needs of the country;
- **Integrated with global and regional development priorities (e.g. the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs) as they relate to the country priorities** – From country case studies and research, and in view of the SDGs, it becomes clear that one challenge faced by countries is the diversity of development priorities and the resulting transaction costs for governments. Integrating the SDGs into the CRFs could help to customize the SDGs to support existing national priorities, while also adapting the CRF to be more integrated with global frameworks such as the SDGs;
- **Defined at the results level** – The focus of the CRF on result level goals and indicators creates a platform that focuses on change and impact, as opposed to most other frameworks that measure activities and often do not report on change;
- **Under the leadership of the government** – The leadership of governments as it pertains to the achievement of their development goals are arguably the most important element of the definition, irrespective of the level of aid dependency. This is the foundation for sustainability and long term impact;
- **In partnership with a broad range of interested stakeholders** - In response to the need expressed by partner countries for fewer, more integrated frameworks and strategies and the recognition of the full range of relevant stakeholders playing different roles to give effect to the development goals of a country, it is strongly recommended that all relevant stakeholders have a seat at the “CRF table”;
- **Oriented towards longer term expectations for change** - This is a standard element of the CRF as it focuses on the results level, reflecting longer term development goals; and
- **A knowledge sharing tool that guides progress and encourages change** – One of CRFs’ greatest strength is its ability to provide timely and evidence-based monitoring information for purposes of management, accountability, and change.

The CRF should always be designed and adapted with the constantly changing development landscape and local conditions and partners in mind. Even though the CRF will adhere to certain principles, its operationalization is a dynamic, and ever evolving process.
Strengthening CRFs for a multi-stakeholder environment

Achieving complex and inter-related development priorities, such as the SDGs, but also many national priorities, is more and more dependent on systematic and vibrant partnerships at all levels among many development partners working together at the same time – a partner countries’ government agencies, external public partners, private sector and civil society organizations. Successful partnerships manage to effectively connect funding and expertise with local resources, implementation capacities and ownership.

The effect of fair and equitable multi-stakeholder partnerships will greatly depend on a global enabling environment that provides the basis for true ownership, coherence and alignment of international support, taking into account specific characteristics and priorities.

It is increasingly challenging for developing country governments to meet the reporting demands of diverse CRFs, including those by partners, with their own timelines and reporting requirements.

The increased support of different partners will enable governments to deliver much faster and more fully on their commitments, addressing the development needs of their citizens. Yet, responding to the reporting needs of each partner while getting a good picture of the overall impact of a partnership or collaborative effort and the contribution of different partners places new burden on CRFs.

The way most CRFs in development cooperation are designed they should be well suited to relate to new modalities of development cooperation, for example, the emerging medium-term expenditure frameworks and sector-wide programming approaches that encourage country ownership and partnerships that are focused on achieving shared development objectives.

National legislation and policies increasingly reflect how to monitor new types of external partners, more capacity will be needed to oversee and monitor their activities. At the same time, at national level, efforts are under way to increase transparency on results by the government.

Reflections on how to enhance the monitoring of country results from development cooperation will have to go hand in hand with a rethink of which government ministries or entities will lead the national monitoring, review and knowledge sharing efforts. Typically, in the past, the portfolio of aid has been managed between the Finance and Development Ministries. But with greater private sector involvement, Sector Ministries and many others will all interact as primary partners and thus play increasingly important roles.

Governments will benefit from CRFs that are adjusted to this new reality of diverse, substance-driven partnerships and approaches. More resources will be needed at all levels to align the design and implementation process of CRFs to the more complicated models of funding encapsulated in many multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Why should CRFs be a priority in knowledge sharing, monitoring and mutual learning?

CRFs can be empowering and encouraging as they report on achieving proposed change and betterment of peoples lives through development cooperation, and /or alerts leadership to a lack of progress or change.

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3 Philippe Scholtes and Tim Wall, Engaging with the Private Sector in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, pg23, Making It, Number 16, 3rd Quarter 2014.

thus exerting pressure to adjust and rethink their policies and investments.

Yet, a sound CRF is only as good as the data it uses. The results-based CRF can only be useful if supported by actual monitoring efforts, driven by up-to-date indicators, and adjusted to operational strategies in place.

Any forward-looking development cooperation policy must be based on regular retrospective performance assessments. Linking the SDGs to CRFs will require that indicators related to means of implementation are taken up in CRFs at country level and regularly reported on. This requires careful calibration between global and national development cooperation priorities, in line with national development cooperation strategies. The localization of the SDGs through CRFs can be a powerful push towards greater transparency vis-à-vis citizens and other stakeholders.

Governments should consider investing in more robust CRFs to promote not only effective monitoring and knowledge sharing, but also to provide adequate information needed to direct efforts towards the mobilization of resources for the SDGs in the right direction.

**Challenges**

To fully harness this potential, governments and other stakeholders may want to consider addressing a series of challenges, depending on their specific country context:

1. **Public participation** in the planning and budgeting cycle differs greatly from country to country, and is generally not sufficient to guarantee an extensively consulted result.

2. Even where political leadership has acknowledged the importance of CRFs, the involvement of political leaders stops in practice at the level of political endorsement. There is greater need for broader leadership and buy-in, beyond the highest political level.

3. CRFs in most countries do not live up to their potential of promoting transparency, knowledge sharing and responsiveness. This is a result of weak application of certain, and sometimes all, of the MA enablers. Linking the SDGs with the CRF will further complicate this. The large number of indicators will exacerbate existing capacity and resource challenges to monitor the CRF. The availability and collection of data for results will become even more resource intensive, but remains a critical prerequisite for CRFs.

4. The SDGs can, in many cases, not be seamlessly linked to the CRFs, as they require some adjustments in terms of their application and effectiveness at country level. The potential involvement of a broader range of stakeholders (private sector, PPPs, philanthropic organisations, etc.) will require new thinking of roles and responsibilities, reporting, increased capacities, etc.

5. The existence of parallel systems by external partners is still very common, and, according to interviews with country representatives, were one of the greatest challenges. Some partners use their own results frameworks, log frames and indicators to be able to demonstrate their results and the performance of recipients in appropriate ways. This may be misaligned with country priorities or imply a considerable reporting burden on developing countries, especially in countries with high fragmentation.

6. **Results measurement is disconnected from the budget**: The diversity of delivery channels makes it cumbersome to apply the most appropriate monitoring and review approaches in different contexts.

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5 The initial findings of the 4th national mutual accountability survey show mixed progress on all mutual accountability enablers.
7. The knowledge and evidence base is insufficient to inform drafts and amendments of national development cooperation policies. Providing adequate, timely and easy-to-use information will be one of the most challenging endeavours, with many countries referencing insufficient data bases and limited capacities to collect and interpret data. The implementation of the SDGs will require governments to generate better quality and more disaggregated data on development cooperation to optimize the decision making processes behind allocation of development finance and other means of implementation.6

Policy recommendations

1. The goals and targets of the SDGs and the associated indicators – once agreed – should be linked to CRFs, with a clear understanding that their purpose is to support the country achieving its development goals. Starting in mid 2016, SDG indicators related to means of implementation could be integrated into CRFs for development cooperation or, where there is potential duplication, agreement should be reached that existing CRF indicators will, in specific circumstances, continue to be used as proxies for the SDG indicators.

2. Much more resources will be needed to engage all partners to design and adjust CRFs in light of the SDGs and national sustainable development strategies in future. Resources will also be needed for full-fledged consultations that include all stakeholders and will require an integrated approach to develop CRFs, facilitated through the establishment and/or expansion of institutional platforms at country level.

3. Intra country exchanges, inter-regional learning and sharing of best practices on CRFs and show casing the integration of the SDGs into the CRFs must be encouraged.

4. CRFs are not standing on their own. CRFs require capacitated institutions, systems and processes, reliable data collection and processes (including the participation of society in the collection and provision of data), transparency and accountability and involvement of the community to achieve the results. Traditionally, and increasingly with the SDGs in mind, external partners are encouraged to support the strengthening and application of the data and information enabler.

5. A culture of citizen leadership should be encouraged to promote development cooperation results, motivating citizens to own the development agenda in the country and engage in CRFs for development cooperation, ensuring broadest possible dissemination, oversight and transparency and participation in the CRF. This could be achieved through the creation of incentives when citizens participate and contribute to achieving CRF objectives. It is also important for the political leadership to encourage and establish a positive value system, (e.g “Ubuntu” – I am because you are, it takes a village to raise a child), and cementing an awareness among citizens that the future of their country is their responsibility.

6. Communication must be simple and easy to access, involvement of the media, printed, social and otherwise is necessary to involve citizens both in the role of holding government accountable, as well as implementers and owners of the development goals of the country.

7. The reduction of indicators should be prioritized.

8. Enforceability of the CRF is only possible if budgetary provision is made for increased capacities at institutions responsible for coordination and oversight. Enforceability through

a system of incentives and disincentives should be institutionalized. This could be achieved through the inclusion of the development indicators in performance agreements of departmental heads, and other government officials.

9. **CRFs must be anchored in national sustainable development plans.** This requires alignment with agreed priorities and adhering to other priorities identified by the political leadership and existing Public Financial Management (PFM) and monitoring and accountability efforts, such as monitoring and oversight bodies and related incentives and disincentives. The alternative is the use of parallel systems which has been outlawed as an option since the Paris Declaration in 2005.

10. **Successes and challenges of CRFs are increasingly well documented, allowing for all stakeholders to engage in the discussions on how to strengthen CRFs.** On the other hand, very little is known about results frameworks in developed countries, the dynamics behind them, successes, challenges and rationales. Greater transparency related to the CRFs of external partners could promote a greater understanding within the partner countries, and allow for more robust discussions and solutions towards optimal result frameworks on development cooperation globally.

11. **Efforts are under way to harmonize results measurement among partners and to engage them in the design of national frameworks, thus minimizing parallel frameworks.** Programme countries also assess the performance of development cooperation providers.

12. **To incentivize the use of CRFs, it can be vital to integrate them in existing efforts,** for example related to the national budgeting process and medium-term financing and expenditure frameworks. Extensive consultative efforts and strong capacity may be needed to ensure alignment of results measurement efforts with those outlined in existing systems, in line with agreed national priorities.

**Conclusion**

The development cooperation community has moved from using CRFs as an advocacy tool to an understanding that CRFs are a multi-purpose policy tool to promote information sharing, monitoring, mutual learning, enforceability of delivery on results and evidence-based management of development cooperation.

This has always been the intention of CRFs, but enforceability has been difficult, and even compromised in favor of political acceptance and advocacy of priorities. This is partly because it the familiarization and benefits of the CRF required time, relationships build on the sharing of information and responding to common indicators all took time. Over the last decade, CRFs have shown their value as a “change agent” framework, and it is proposed that more attention is given to the enforcement of the CRFs. This could be done with the support of incentives as previously pointed out. At the same time CRFs will provide an impactful and sustainable vehicle to give effect to the SDGs at country level. This will on the side of government ask for strengthened oversight institutions and capacities, whereas on the side of development partners, private sector, and other stakeholders, it will require a renewed commitment to working together, transparency, and investment in the priorities of the government.

This leaves one with a few questions that should be answered to take the process forward, namely:

- What can be done to make country-led monitoring and review of development cooperation and the use of results frameworks the default position in all countries?
• How should the SDG’s be integrated into the country result frameworks for optimal results?

• What should the incentives and disincentives be for external partners use existing country results frameworks instead of their own, parallel reporting tools?

• How can stronger engagement of all stakeholders in country-led monitoring and review of development cooperation and in the use of results frameworks be ensured? How can their capacities be strengthened for effective participation?
Based on the ongoing work of the Global Partnership Initiative on results and mutual accountability the following countries have country results frameworks or similar mechanisms in place: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda and additionally Peru.


## ANNEX B
### ACRONYMS

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAAA</td>
<td>Addis Ababa Action Agenda</td>
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<td>CRF</td>
<td>Country Result Framework</td>
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<td>JMIs</td>
<td>Joint Monitoring Indicators</td>
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<td>MA</td>
<td>Mutual Accountability</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MIC</td>
<td>Middle Income Country</td>
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<td>NDCPs</td>
<td>National Development Cooperation Policies</td>
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