

## **Joint Programming Regional Workshops for Eastern Africa, West Africa and Central Asia**

### **OVERALL SUMMARY**

*In line with 2016 Council Conclusions on stepping-up Joint Programming and the follow-up letter of HRVP Mogherini and Csrs Mimica and Hahn to the EU Delegations to make Joint Programming the preferred approach to programming external development assistance, Joint Programming workshops are organised back-to-back with EU regional seminars. To date, three of those have taken place (Eastern Africa, West Africa and Central Asia), for which you will find summaries below.*

*This series of regional workshops aimed to take stock of recent trends and dynamics of Joint Programming, to review the state of play, to exchange experiences and lessons learned when engaging with Joint Programming and to discuss how to best address the challenges to advance Joint Programming. The discussions largely confirmed the findings of the Joint Programming evaluation and the 2016 Analysis of the 65 Head of Mission reports and notes. Joint Programming promotes a strategic and coordinated EU development cooperation in line with development effectiveness principles. The process has also been valuable in strengthening the EU voice and clout towards the partner country governments and stakeholders on broader strategic and sensitive policy issues.*

*These three regional workshops also meant to bridge the communication gap between Headquarters and field and two of them have included the participation of Member States. Flexibility in adapting Joint Programming to the local context is generally perceived as crucial and advocated strongly by all Joint Programming practitioners. Also, the political/strategic dimension of trust-building and knowledge-sharing were crucial building blocks in elevating the quality of cooperation among all development partners. Finally, a number of misperceptions around Joint programming were directly tackled and helped the participants (EU and MS alike) to better understand the practical and political importance of the policy*

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### **JOINT PROGRAMMING REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR EASTERN AFRICA IN DJIBOUTI – 26 MAY 2017**

The Joint Programming workshop in Djibouti gathered participants from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (Heads of Delegation and Heads of Cooperation). The EIB (Regional Representation East Africa) was also present. The workshop was organised back-to-back with the East Africa regional seminar and served to exchange experiences among EU Delegations and discuss the options for JP in different contexts.

JP has a solid history in certain countries of the region. In Ethiopia, the EU+ Joint Cooperation Strategy was one of the first signed joint documents in the ACP world. A Joint Co-operation Strategy EU+-Ethiopia for 2017-2020 is under preparation with EU Member States on board for a reinforced JP. In Kenya, the JP preparation process started in late 2012. Guiding Principles for JP were adopted by all EU Heads of Missions in 2013 leading to the EU Joint Cooperation Strategy in Support of Kenya's Medium-term Plan 2014 – 2017.

This history enriched the discussion of the prospects and dilemmas in JP, which helped in clarifying the variation in understanding of the purpose and contents of JP. These varied from a 'projectised'

perspective (tool for engaging in co-funding and coordinating) to a joined-up EU perspective (tool for improving impact, coherency and policy dialogue). It was noted that in countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya or Uganda, there are pre-existing well-developed coordination systems at sector level, which involve all players, with no need to duplicate the platforms by creating EU-only coordination mechanisms.

The lessons and challenges from the specific country experiences were shared and provided valuable insights of the process of JP.

- The importance of the process, sometimes more than the outcome, was highlighted. It can take time for partners to engage and to build trust, but the process results in 'binding the group together'.
- The need for flexibility, especially in a region subject to internal and external shocks, was stressed. Joint context analyses, as they ensure common understanding of the challenges and the bases from which to build, could be repeated at regular intervals.
- JP intends to ensure complementarity of programmes. However, the multiplicity of instruments, even considering only EU funds (bilateral geographic programmes, thematic instruments, ECHO, EU Trust Funds, EIB) makes it challenging. Other European partners add a measure of complexity to the process.
- Furthermore, the normal turn-over of staff may weaken institutional memory and can change commitment and dynamics of the process.
- Ownership is also a recurring challenge. Ensuring governments' participation remains a goal, which requires gradually progressing from resistance to tolerance, from tolerance to interest, from interest to active participation.
- Development cooperation is highly political and needs to be managed sensitively as there are added dimensions of e.g. corruption, social inequalities, etc.
- More effort should be put into engaging with non-traditional donors (Gulf States, China, Arab Funds and Islamic Banks are important donors in the region), as it is often not clear how they allocate their funds.

#### **JOINT PROGRAMMING REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR WEST AFRICA IN BRUSSELS –16 JUNE 2017**

The Joint Programming workshop of the EU regional seminar for West Africa in Brussels took place in an innovative format. For the first time, representatives from EU Delegations in West Africa, JP focal points from Member States capitals, as well as geographic departments for EEAS and DEVCO were gathered. The aim was to take stock of recent trends and dynamics of JP in the region, building on the Head of Mission reports and the independent evaluation of JP; to review the state of play and exchange experiences and lessons learned on JP in West Africa; and to discuss how best to address the challenges to advance JP in West Africa.

JP is achieving concrete progress in the West African region, which is key in the EU and Member States external relations and faces challenges such as migration, security and climate change. JP strategies are in place in several partner countries. In Mali, France and Germany were the first Member States to replace their bilateral development cooperation documents by the JP ones. In

Senegal, the *Document de Stratégie Conjointe Européenne pour le Sénégal* will feature as the National Indicative Programme for the EU in 2018-2020.

The participants stated their strong commitment to JP ('the power of quantum') for its political and strategic impact and stressed the obligation to strive for improved development effectiveness. However, Member States expectations of JP are sometimes different. While it is perceived by some as a development coordination process, others see it as a way to convey a political message and speak with one voice. The more Member States engage in the exercise, the stronger is the leverage in the policy dialogue with the partner country. A recurrent challenge identified is the partner country's government lack of interest and ownership (also recognised as a persistent hurdle in the 2016 Analysis Heads of Mission reports and the JP evaluation). Some governments do not see the benefits of engaging in JP and show a preference to manage bilateral relations with donors. However, this should not prevent the EU and its Member States to embark on JP and coordinate their support to a given country, all the more so that ownership of the partner country can evolve over time (see also the remarks in the East Africa report).

The participants also mentioned the human resources constraints to face the workload needed to move JP forward. Costs of coordination are sometimes felt to be high in the first phases of JP, even though the return on investments and overall benefits are usually recognised as the process advances.

Other issues which figured during the workshop:

- A cornerstone of JP is its flexible nature. Keep it simple and tweak the ambitions to the local context.
- Synchronisation is an ideal situation for JP as it gives concrete ground to alignment to national policies, and strengthens the policy dialogue. However, this model approach is difficult to implement on the ground and should not be seen as a pre-requisite.
- JP can be instrumental in advancing division of labour across and within sectors, but nevertheless some sectors remain 'orphaned' even after JP.
- In terms of promoting donor coordination, the EU External Investment Plan was mentioned as being a helpful means and opportunity of working together. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa was also referred to as an instrument gaining more leverage in West Africa.
- In fragile situations and conflict-affected countries, flexibility and reactivity are crucial to adapt to rapidly evolving circumstances. Joint analysis is the foundation to build any response to a crisis and to engage in JP.
- Situational/conflict analysis can be a useful tool and entry point. Development and humanitarian tools are necessary, as the EU needs to show how it works together from emergency to development.
- The new communication strategy through the JP tracker website was received positively, with the involvement of Heads of Cooperation for the provision of updated information on their countries.

**JOINT PROGRAMMING REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL ASIA IN TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN –14 JULY 2017**

The aim of the workshop in Tashkent was to advance beyond the preparatory stages of Joint Programming in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and to explore possibilities for Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to use JP tools and practices, such as through feasibility/scoping studies. It was well-attended from Member States side: the French and Czech ambassadors were present, as well as 5 other MS (Finland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia) and a like-minded partner (Switzerland). In addition, several implementing agencies participated: GIZ, KfW, AFD, as well as an external expert of the JP technical assistance team.

On substance, the discussion on JP was valuable. It addressed some misperceptions about the complexity of the exercise and pointed out to what its potential added value in the specific context of Central Asia. The presentation by EEAS and DEVCO made clear that JP is politically relevant by advancing both development principles, as well as leveraging the EU voice to the partner country. JP and joining up the European voice/messaging can counterbalance the rising influence of the countries like Russia, China, Japan, Korea in the region. However, it is important to demonstrate that the EU is “not only about lecturing partner countries”.

The French Ambassador to Uzbekistan supported JP and recalled the French commitment to the process. Other interventions highlighted the need to find ways to strengthen the EU/European group and find ways to improve coordination, coherence and reducing overlaps in the support provided to the partner countries concerned. Switzerland as like-minded partner also committed to work closely with the EU. In sum, a clear backing by the MS present for JP was observed, with a strong focus on the need for a joint analysis of each country situation to provide the basis for a future sustained relationship, including a joint response.

An important outcome of this workshop was the pledge by all parties to engage in the JP process and to continue cooperating between the EU, Member States and Switzerland (incl. relevant development agencies in the process) and thus strengthening the relations of the EU/European group. Progress would need to become tangible ahead of the November Regional Ministerial meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in which HRVP Mogherini and Commissioner Mimica will participate, so that the progress can be politically welcomed and benefit from visibility at the highest level.

More specifically:

- In Uzbekistan, the drafting of / consultation on a joint analysis including Switzerland could be initiated, working towards a Joint Strategy which should be as much as possible aligned to the government's new reform programme. An external expert mission can be foreseen to support this first step of the process (ie developing a joint analysis), and thus paving the way for a Joint Strategy.
- In Kyrgyzstan the current roadmap indicates an intended adoption of a JP document by the end of 2018. By the end of 2017, first draft of a joint analysis should be prepared.

- In Tajikistan the feasibility exercise of 2016 provides the basis for further action. Accepting that synchronisation of cycles may be possible only from 2021 onwards, a roadmap for European cooperation should be drafted before the end of 2017, and explore the ways of going beyond development cooperation, as referred to in the HoM report of November 2016. It will lay the groundwork for (i) operationally organise the European cooperation and establish regular meetings, as well as for (ii) a timeline to have a joint analysis.