



2019 GLOBAL LEARNING EVENT

Working Better Together at country level
through a Joint Programming Process

Kampala, Uganda (19-21 November 2019)



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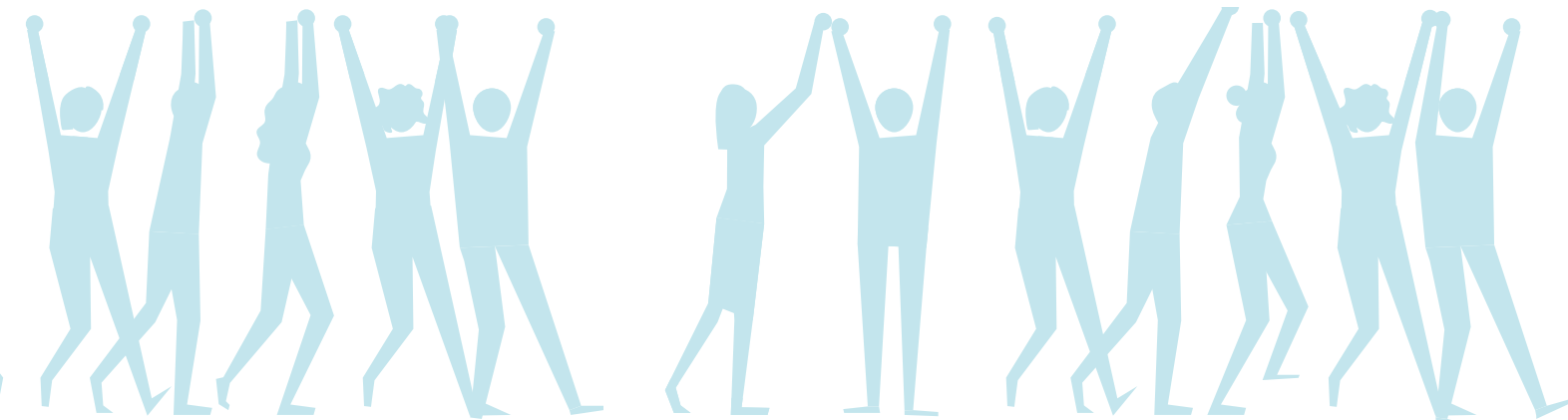
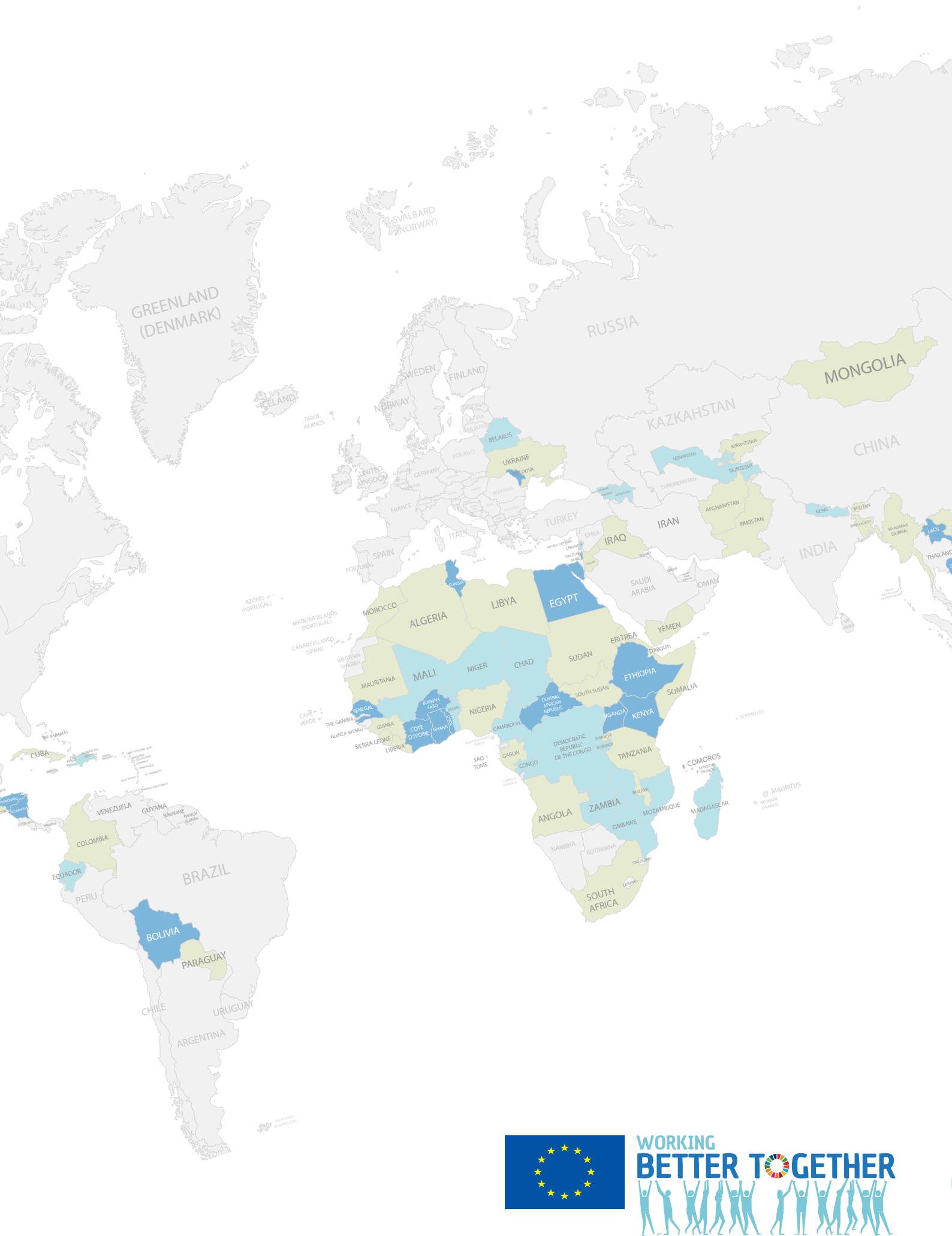
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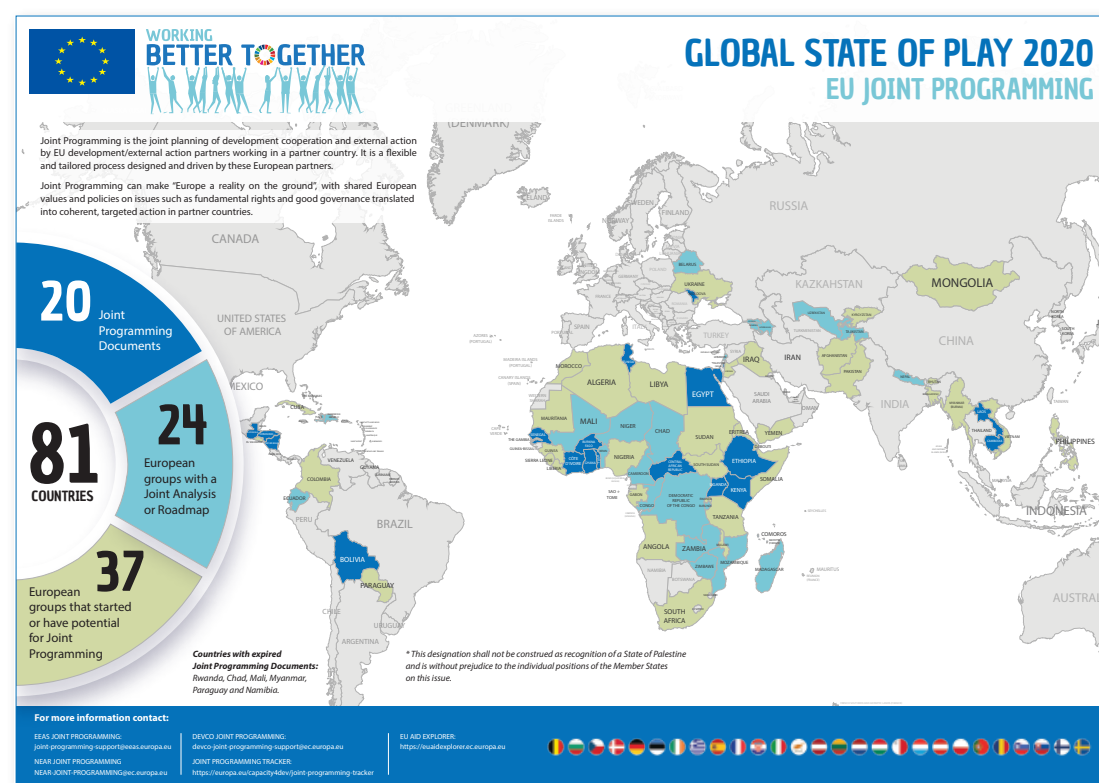
Objectives of the 2019 Global Joint Programming Learning Event

The main objective of the workshop was to facilitate peer-learning among the European development partner practitioners (country/field offices and headquarters) on [working better together](#) through a *joint programming* process¹ at country level, based on experiences to date with a strong focus on practical implementation at the country level. The event was conceived to also support the expected European *joint programming* preference in the next multi-annual financial framework of the European Union.

The specific objective of the workshop was to provide the participants with the necessary support, tools and ideas for more effectively implementing *joint programming* through:

An update on the framework for [working better together](#) *joint programming* and *joint implementation* and the state of play globally:

- An opportunity to showcase the value-added and impact of *joint programming* through sharing country experiences and *joint programming* stories;
- A sharing of challenges encountered in taking forward a *joint programming* process and the pragmatic approaches and solutions found at country level;
- A look at the linkages between *joint programming* and *joint implementation*, and other multi-stakeholder processes at country level.



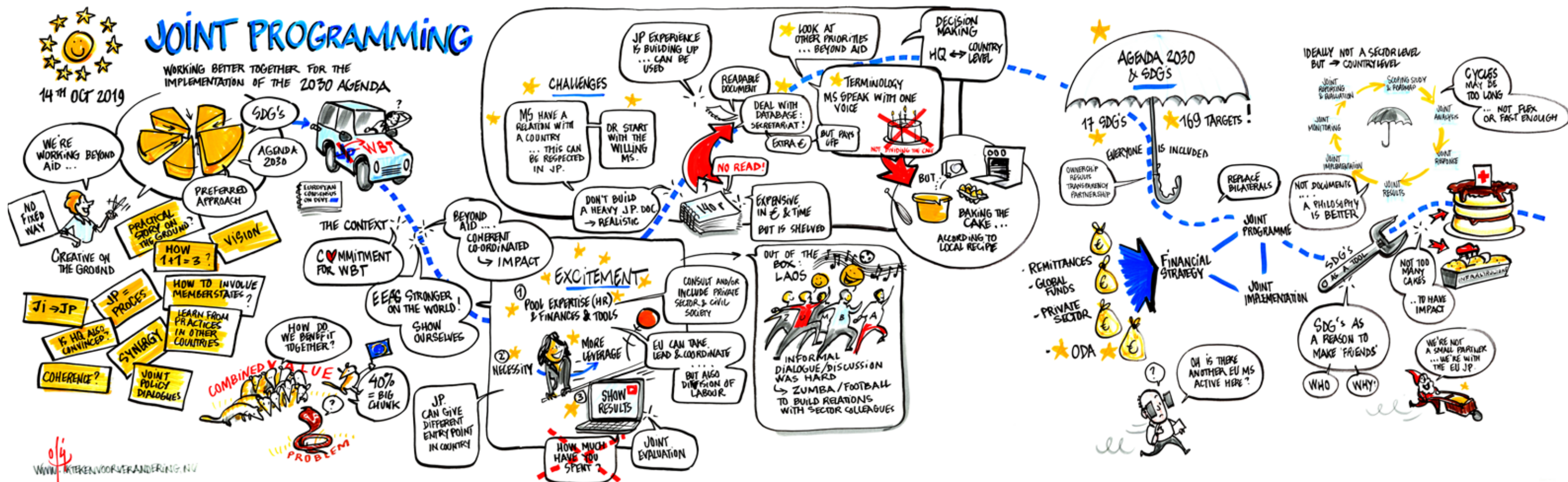
¹ A process of joint analysis and joint response (which can be joint messaging, joint action and joint visibility)

Summary and main results of the event

The Global Learning Event brought together 80 European participants from DEVCO and EEAS, EU Delegations, Member States capitals, their Embassies and their development agencies (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom) and Norway. The EIB and ECHO also participated from their respective regional offices in Nairobi and the Practitioners Network was also represented by its Presidency alongside the participation of several its members. The event brought together colleagues working in 23 partner countries, mainly from the African continent.

Main elements of the learning event included: case studies from five countries, an update from EEAS and DEVCO, and a series of focused discussions on working with European development finance institutions, aligning with multilateral partners, integrating civil society into *joint programming* processes, reflecting on the triple nexus approach in fragile countries and linking *joint programming* to *joint implementation*. The Global Learning Event highlighted that for the EU and its Member States it is imperative to work better together at country level, so the discussion focused more on how to do this and to which extent, rather than if it should happen. There was a common consensus that there is both a need to make use of everyone's capacities/ expertise and to better integrate the SDGs into our [working better together](#) approach. Moreover, the EU programming, linked to the next EU multi-annual financial framework, also provides an opportunity to scale up *joint programming*. Participants agreed that by aligning our European actions in country, we make ourselves more politically relevant and increase our leverage.





Key outcomes of the learning event

Participants discussed the added value of European partners [working better together](#) (WBT) at country level through a *joint programming* process, noting that WBT can result in 1+1=1.5 or 1+1=3 depending on the view of those participating in the process. There was common consensus that [working better together](#) through *joint programming* should strive to achieve more than just the sum of the partners' bilateral programmes – it should have an added-value, multiply the effect of individual programmes and thus make the additional investment in coordination worth the effort.

Participants emphasised some important issues and challenges, including:

Welcoming the change in terminology from *joint programming* to [working better together](#) through a *joint programming* process at country level. The term “*joint programming*” was seen as misleading as it tended to make people think only of a programming exercise and did not capture all the positive elements of increased European coordination and coherence, such as joint policy dialogue, joint messaging. Nor did it capture the ambition of European partners to bring coherence to their actions beyond development, by looking at European external action priorities in an integrated way at country level.

The added value of [working better together](#) through *joint programming* and *joint implementation* is in building on each other's capacities and expertise, increasing the group knowledge and strengthening collective capacity.

This enables participating European development partners to understand their relevance in each country/ political context and can help define common messages. Giving one message with different voices was seen as a clear added value of enhanced European coordination.

- **It is critical to learn from other countries**, that are more advanced in *joint programming* processes, to understand better how they have overcome common bottlenecks/obstacles in *joint programming* such as sector definition and non-aligned programming cycles. A reflection on what is different at country level in the ways of working between the European group following the investment in *joint programming* is also helpful for those just starting out in a *joint programming* process.
- **Clarification of what *joint implementation* means is needed.** Consensus emerged that thinking jointly about implementation (in all its forms) is at the heart of the [working better together](#) approach. This implies conceptualising financial and non-financial ways of working together, thinking jointly and coherently about implementation and going beyond delegated cooperation.
- **Political backing for engaging in *joint programming* remains necessary.** While European partners' ambition is clear, their ability to move towards this ambition requires greater support from Capitals and Heads of Mission (HoMs) to become a reality.

- **It is necessary to incentivise and institutionalise the *joint programming* process.** This requires having incentives from HQ/Capitals to Heads of Mission to embrace the objective of collective European action as a core part of their work at country level. This represents quite a ‘cultural change’ and needs to be facilitated by Heads of Mission involvement at country level. A *joint programming* process should also consider specific incentives for partners' participation, such as the *joint programming* document being prepared in a way that provides a basis for bilateral Member States programming and avoids double work.
- **Conflicting programming cycles and timeframes do continue to be perceived as a challenge for *joint programming* at country level.** It was noted that several Member States systems allow for the harmonisation of programming cycles and processes with country cycles which is the best basis for a *joint programming* cycle. For others, pragmatic solutions/agreements that allow them to align their programming with agreed European objectives when their cycles allow can support engagement.
- Once the *joint programming* document has been developed, **maintaining the momentum to keep the process going** was seen as a challenge especially as everyone has their own priorities (EUD and MS). Maintaining regular dialogue and joint activities were a key incentive to bring people together and examples of joint field missions, retreats, regular dialogues with external actors etc. were shared as ways to keep momentum.
- It was emphasised not to get lost in sector definitions but **focus on strategic priorities.** [working better together](#) is a country-tailored process, hence the decision on terminology to use is taken at country level. Participants also highlighted that articulating our European response around strategic priorities, instead of sectors, provides a platform to better integrate political priorities as well as to better communicate our ‘European’ interests.



Learning from Joint Programming Processes

This session focused on practitioners sharing how they undertook a *joint programming* process, what was important for their country context and what advice they would give to colleagues in terms of structuring the process. Country presentations from Mali, Mozambique, Burundi, Uganda and Senegal provided a range of examples of how the flexibility of *joint programming* allowed tailoring a process that fit to the country context and the joint European interests.

Key messages from the presentations and subsequent discussions noted:

- **Just do it and in a way that makes sense in your country context!** Actively tailor the process to fit the country context and follow a co-creation dynamic. In Mozambique, European partners developed a concise joint action plan which aims at guiding the group towards a joint strategy. Senegal highlighted the leverage effect of *working better together* through *joint programming* at country level, not only in financial terms but also on the European political agenda.
- **How to get resources to support the process** - One of the continuing challenges faced by European partners at country level is the limited resources available to support the process, hence the need to be innovative: the example of the joint secretariat in Mali was shared.

- **Emerging partners, new sectors and cross-cutting issues** - Working better with non-traditional donors such as Brazil, China or Russia represented a point of interest. In Senegal, China's development bank is expected to join European partners in a project where it has committed to use national procurement procedures as well as European standards. Cambodia is undertaking an analysis of Chinese aid at country level as part of the update of its joint analysis. Cooperation areas like culture, which have sometimes been left behind in *joint programming* processes, were also flagged as having the potential to promote Europe and give additional visibility to European priorities.
- **Need for better integration of the triple humanitarian – development – peace nexus** in the *joint programming* process and *working better together* with ECHO. Facilitating better connectivity between humanitarian and development efforts by, for example, understanding the differences in the actors' mandates, engaging in joint needs assessments and missions, and exchanging of good practices from fragile contexts.
- **Building trust and chemistry** - Building trust continues to be raised as a key enabling factor for successful *working better together* through *joint programming*. Joint activities at country level have proven to be successful in developing trust and a team building spirit among European partners.
- **Potential *working better together* tools and documents that are in use were presented, including:**



Mali - sector notes feeding into a broader joint analysis, a European projects database.



Mozambique - joint action plan, joint Heads of Cooperation (HoC) field visits.



Burundi - joint political analysis and joint conflict analysis leading to common communication messages. Joint retreats with Heads of Mission, Heads of Cooperation, Political Counsellors to build understanding on mutual political-development dependency and interplay.

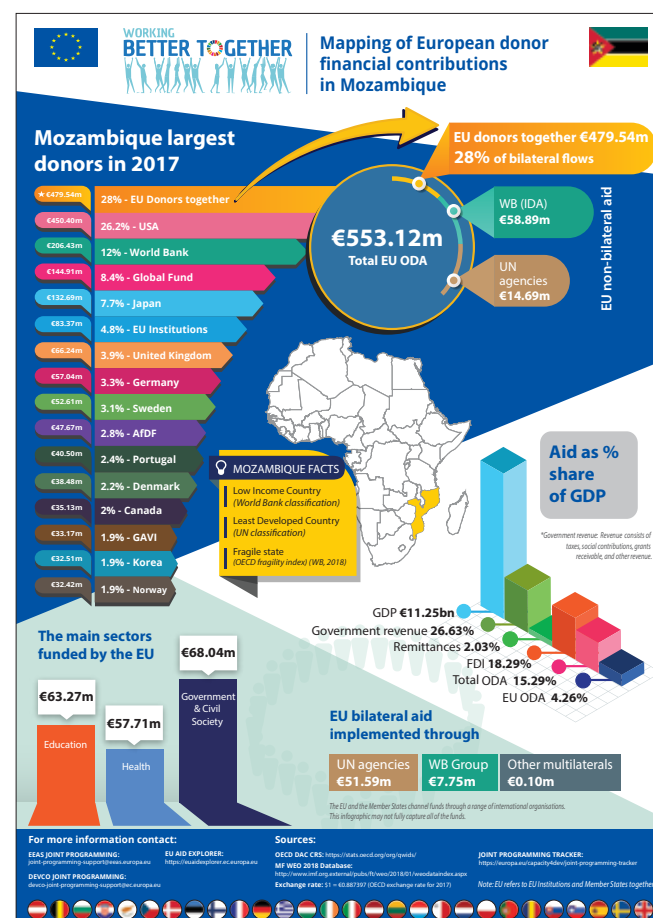
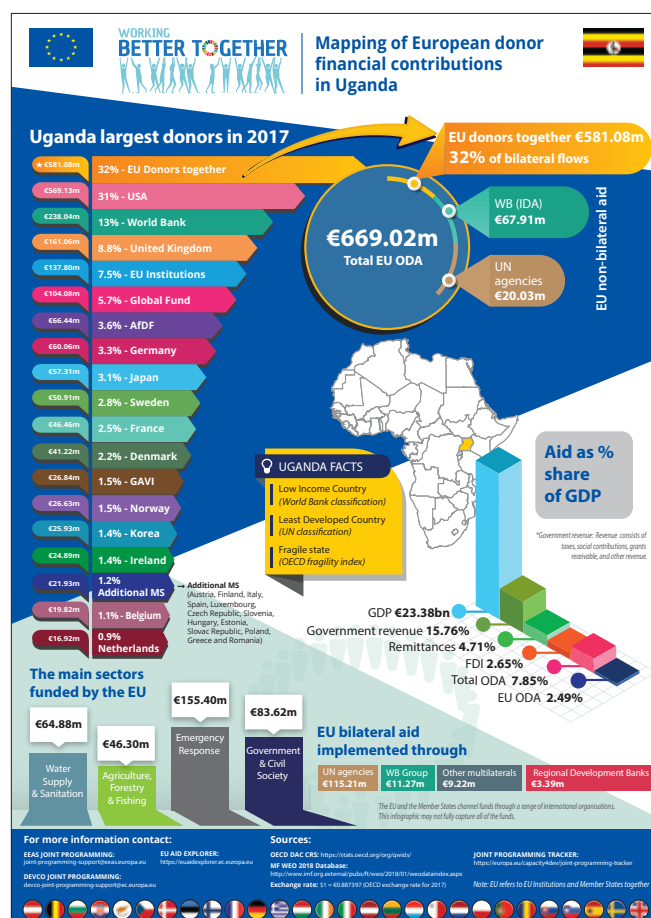


Uganda - joint dialogue with the government, joint blending operations (with agencies such as FMO, AFD, KfW), and increasing engagement of the private sector.



Senegal - integration of the gender action plan and civil society roadmap in the *joint programming* document, common visual branding for projects implemented by various European agencies, joint budget support, annual progress review of the *joint programming* document through consultations with key stakeholders.

- **Use best practices in *joint implementation*** ("what works") as a basis for discussion on working together as European partners on strategic objectives (e.g. during joint analysis). These priorities can then provide a strategic frame for thinking jointly about implementation.
- **Start with the willing, no matter how small a group.** It is important to emphasise that *joint programming* and thinking jointly about implementation is a process. Starting the process with European partners who are willing and able and demonstrate the benefits to other European partners to incentivise them to join. This includes the non-resident partners and Member States without bilateral envelopes. A working together better approach should focus on the process/method, not on the product!



What can we learn from Joint Implementation?

The panel included European practitioners from AECID, Germany, British Council, EU, GIZ, Practitioners Network and Sida, all working in different contexts and therefore representing a mix of country level (Haiti & Togo) and headquarters level. Practitioners presented their experiences of the value added they found through *joint implementation*.

Key messages emerging from discussions included:

- **European partners' development cooperation impact is scaled-up through joint implementation.** In Togo, the *joint programming* process helped open-up space for formal and informal exchanges between European partners, which deepened trust and was overall a mutually beneficial process. *Joint implementation* can of course exist without *joint programming* but there is greater impact when *joint implementation* translates European objectives into collective action.
- **Joint implementation is much more than delegated cooperation agreements.** Their main benefits from *joint implementation* come through joint policy messaging and joint dialogue, allowing the European group to speak with a single voice. Experience of transfer agreement from Haiti was shared. This modality is still too rarely used by Delegations, and discussions highlighted that further guidance on how to propose and manage transfer agreements would be welcome.
- **Links between joint programming and joint implementation were clearly seen** - *joint implementation* can feed the joint analysis process and provide inputs on the feasibility of the joint response in *joint programming*. The *joint implementation* study currently being finalised by the Practitioners Network will provide further concrete examples of the added value for different European partners and agencies to work together at country level.
- **There is a need to enhance cooperation between the Practitioners Network, capitals and country level representations of Member States development agencies.** Implementing agencies can/are tapping into layers of society and decision making in partner countries that HQ/capitals do not have access to or have limited time for. The Practitioners Network can be used strategically to provide information to better understand a country context and its political economy as well as providing a network through which European messages could be amplified.
- **Theory of change can provide a core analysis to joint programming processes at country level.** By agreeing a theory of change – both for a country and for sectors as a regular part of joint analysis can support the formulation of clear, concise joint messages in a joint response.
- **Twinning is a useful instrument to bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and partner countries.** Twinning is being expanded to DEVCO countries (beyond Neighbourhood and Pre-accession), providing an additional entry point/modality for working with Member States to draw on European expertise.



Joint Programming process: choices and options

Including European Financial Institutions & Development Banks in Joint Programming processes: is it possible?

Discussions were framed by a review of European Development Finance Institutions (EDFIs) and experience from Kenya. Aid, public sector loans and private sector investment are complementary development finance strategies, however it is still unclear how best to engage EDFIs in *joint programming* processes. The EDFIs' activity level has been steadily increasing in scale and strategic relevance, hence discussion explored complementarities between development finance strategies and instruments.



- Development cooperation is changing, and it is an absolute necessity to bring European Development Finance Institutions (EDFIs) and other actors together under the umbrella of *working better together* through a *joint programming* process.
- There is a clear added value of closely coordinating and working alongside EDFIs, including leverage effect (millions to billions) and the availability of specific skills and expertise from EDFIs such as the use of guarantees. EDFIs can also benefit from European partners sound country context knowledge particularly with regards to the political economy and governance modalities.
- Concrete modalities of engagement with EDFIs need to be country tailored. EDFIs' involvement in joint analysis should become common practice (and a mutually beneficial process). EDFIs could also be engaged in joint policy dialogue.

Working more efficiently at country level: integrating the civil society roadmap and *Joint Programming*?

This session discussed whether it would be interesting and useful, at country level, to integrate the civil society roadmap and *joint programming* processes, which are both undertaken at country level by the EU and Member States. The discussion reflected on how this could be done and what would the advantages and challenges of integrating the processes at country level be.



- The question is not about the value of having a civil society roadmap, but about the 'philosophy' of how European partners engage and with whom during *joint programming* processes. An updated civil society mapping should be part of any joint analysis to better understand who is civil society in the partner country and their relations to the government. Further guidance was requested on how to 'select' civil society interlocutors, and how to structure a strategic joint European engagement with civil society, which should be included in the joint response.
- Discussion showed that it was critical to ensure that Member States are full participants in the elaboration and follow-up of the civil society roadmap.
- New programming (e.g. post-Cotonou) provides new opportunities for merging/cross-referencing the *joint programming* process and the civil society roadmap process. There may be a need to differentiate between countries: in some countries it may be relevant and efficient to have more interconnected processes, and possibly merged documents; in others, particularly where democratic space is severely reduced, separate documents might be better.

Exploring the potential of a joined-up Europe

This session was organised using world café model of interaction on selected topics through several rounds of short facilitated discussions among different small groups of participants. The aim was to bring out good practices, discuss challenges in a constructive way and draw on the collective knowledge in the room for the benefit of joint learning.

How can *working better together* through *Joint Programming* be aligned with the Agenda 2030 and help partner countries progress towards the SDGs?

European partners need to reflect on how to improve communication between the UN and the European family about ongoing SDG processes to identify entry points where European partners can effectively provide support/visibility to the SDG agenda. European partners can also work together to identify national (political and development) priorities and frame them within the SDGs making SDGs more tangible at the national level and supporting their integration into the National development Plan (if not already done by the UN), as the main reference document for donor programming. European partners working together can also set an example and encourage the larger donor group to reflect on how best development partners can support the partner country in operationalising the SDGs. As a shared agenda, the SDGs can also provide a grounding for European dialogue with partner governments.

The role of private sector in *Joint Programming*

European priorities at country level include attracting European investments (FDI) and promoting the European business model in partner countries. Modalities for engagement could include consultations with the private sector (trade unions, women/youth entrepreneurs), actions under the EU Compact for Growth and Jobs in Africa (results included in the joint strategy e.g. in Chad) and/or support to capacity building of the local private sector. Challenges that could prevent private sector investment in the country, such as overall business environment, corruption and tax regulations, should form part of the joint analysis.



How can a *Joint Programming* process in fragile and conflict-affected contexts be more effectively coordinated with the triple nexus approach (humanitarian/development/peace)?

Coordination of nexus approach is difficult because of the difference in terms of mandate between humanitarian actors (with principles of neutrality) and bilateral actors. Humanitarian agencies have different cultures of operating and different needs in terms of visibility in time of crisis. The nexus process is often done in silo, and the lack of communication between the development and humanitarian response is not conducive to better coordination. As crisis are often managed by HQs with limited resources to engage in coordination processes at country level it is challenging to make a connection with a country based *joint programming* process. However long-term crisis need to be managed by partner governments with support of development partners and this would make a connection to *joint programming* critical.

The entry point for facilitating more synergies between *working better together* through *joint programming* and the nexus approach includes identification of joint entry points such as priority populations and geographical zones as well as an integration of humanitarian efforts into development plans. Actions that could support such an approach would include organising joint European support missions with a focus on integrating the nexus into a *joint programming* process, further exchange of good practices of nexus approach as an integral part of joint analysis, creation of a European nexus working group bringing together different EU and Member State actors.

Organising special learning sessions to contextualise the European *working better together* approach in fragile & crises affected states would be welcomed. The new EU programming 2021 – 2027 is a key window of opportunity for more systematic collaboration between development, humanitarian and peace actors, fully respecting the mandate of each one.

How can a *Joint Programming* process make European partners work better with the multilaterals?

European partners *working better together* through *joint programming* and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) should not be seen as competing processes but rather as complementary actions that allow for a strategic dialogue between the UN system and European family. Experience from Kenya suggests that the *working better together* process can facilitate and even intensify European dialogue with the UN. European partners should be aware of the new UN structure (including empowerment of UN Resident Coordinators Office) and explore how to make use of this new country set up as effectively as possible.

How can *Joint Programming* add value when there is a good donor coordination structure in a wider group of partners?

Both European coordination and wider donor coordination have value. European partners together can help further strengthen the overall donor coordination by taking on active roles and demonstrating the added value of strong donor coordination. A European *working better together* approach makes it easier for European partners to speak as one and thus have greater leverage with partner government. A division of labour on message delivery towards government and other partners can make the group work efficiently and provide visibility to all participating European partners and the group as whole. *Joint programming* can also support an increased impact of cooperation through cost sharing of the coordination administrative functions and a common reporting mechanism. At country level a European approach can also be an important counter-balancing actor that can assist partner countries in their development model choices. Good coordination by the European group helps improve overall donor coordination by already harmonising policy positions, harmonising positions on per diems etc.

Can *Joint Programming* be used to develop a more development effective collaboration with other development actors such as foundations?

The starting question is whether foundations should be considered implementing agencies or donors to coordinate with. Some foundations have useful expertise: e.g. the German political foundations on governance; an Italian foundation on electricity in Somalia; The Aga Khan Foundation in basic services; the Clinton Foundation on sexual and reproductive health and rights in Sub-Saharan Africa; or the American Foundation CARR in Mozambique on natural parks. But in other cases, there can be challenges in separating values/interests. There seems to have been a natural and easy starting point with e.g. TOTAL, whereas it has been more challenging in other cases. European partners need to learn from and build on the experience of Member States already working with foundations.

How can *Joint Programming* and *Joint Implementation* be of mutual benefit?

Participants noted limited knowledge of the existence of the Practitioners Network and expressed interest in learning more about their role and activities. It was agreed that Member States agencies should not formally be part of the *joint programming* process in that the policy role lies with the Member States Development Counsellors, but the process should be designed to capitalise on their technical know-how and field level implementation experience. The Practitioners Network can provide feedback to the Commission on the impact of European cooperation and should take initiatives to support mutual reliance between members to make European assistance more efficient.

There is a consensus that *joint programming* should lead to *joint implementation* ('natural course of action') and it would be interesting to reflect on what linking *joint programming* and *joint implementation* means concretely by looking further at examples. *Joint implementation* should capitalise on agencies' know-how, but real and perceived conflicts of interest must be avoided. *Joint programming* and *joint implementation* as an approach for European partner to work better together can create a virtuous circle of engagement.

Key messages for headquarters/capitals

Development cooperation is an element of foreign policy. As such, development cooperation needs a political lens and European partners should adopt an integrated approach (political relationship, development, trade). There is an existing political commitment through the Foreign Affairs Council to work better together as the EU and Member States. Discussion and negotiation on the scope of the EU mandate is political, hence a European **working better together** approach at country level remains highly political and requires support for and from the Heads of Mission. Such a coordinated and coherent approach is a way to advance the European interests in country and so gives joint European engagement a more political flavour.

There is a need for a clear and consistent message on **working better together** through a *joint programming* process from Capitals to Member States embassies and their development agencies. European Heads of Mission need to be involved and kept informed of developments and agreements in *joint programming* and *joint implementation*, as well as actively discussing and endorsing key documentation.

European Heads of Mission need to support the colleagues taking forward **working better together through a *joint programming* process.** Clearer guidance needs to be given to the EU Delegations to take up a more intensive European coordination role at country level. Under a **working better together** approach, *joint programming* and *joint implementation* processes and related actions need to be further institutionalised which requires both an organisational and a cultural change. It also requires necessary resourcing particularly at country level. In the same vein, a better-coordinated joined-up European approach should help to further break the silos between technical dialogue, policy dialogue and high-level political dialogue.

Transparency of both EU and Member States programming process is necessary. Understanding each other's programming processes, timeframes, expectations and mandatory requirements enables open discussion and provides realistic foundations for *joint programming* and *joint implementation*.

It is also necessary to issue clear instructions related to implementation of the current *joint programming* documents linked to future programming work. Countries that have well-established *joint programming* processes and documents require guidance on the articulation between future EU programming and *joint programming*, notably when the *joint programming* document is aligned to a country planning cycle and therefore does not fit a standard EU programming cycle of 7 years. Countries that are in the early stages of *joint programming* process need to be able to maintain the momentum and keep the European coordination process going, keeping in mind that future EU and Member States programming could bring new and differing priorities into play. Support from HQ for country level processes and time for country level coordination with Member States is important.

There is a need for a software solution to enable the sharing of documents (including confidential ones) efficiently between EUDs and Member States at country level. One of the key challenges faced by European partners at country level is the limited resources available to support the *joint programming* process, hence the need to be innovative and find ways forward that will enable easier collaboration, document sharing and joint planning.

The Global event allowed for a sharing of lessons and a better understanding of respective institutions, cultures, processes, a key ingredient for building trust. Building trust between and within organisations was raised as a key enabling factor for European partners to work better together at country level, creating the right 'chemistry' for successful *joint programming* and *joint implementation* processes.



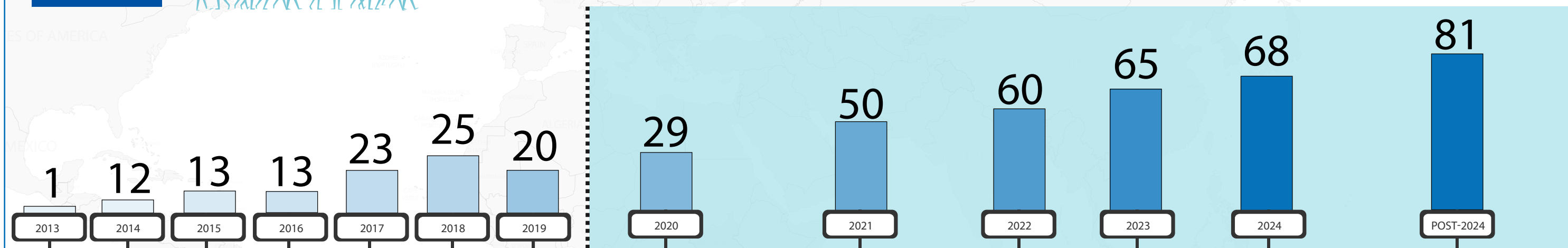


Participants at the global learning event





Progression in Joint Programming Documents (2020)



EXISTING JOINT PROGRAMMING DOCUMENTS

ETHIOPIA	CAMBODIA	COMOROS	LAOS (2)	BOLIVIA	KENYA (2)	HONDURAS
	CHAD	UGANDA		BURKINA	NICARAGUA	
	GUATEMALA	EXPIRED COUNTRY IN 2015		FASO	SENEGAL	EXPIRED COUNTRIES IN 2019
	KENYA	ETHIOPIA		CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC		CHAD
	LAOS			EGYPT		MALI
	MALI			ETHIOPIA (2)		MYANMAR
	MYANMAR			GHANA		NAMIBIA
	NAMIBIA			IVORY COAST		PARAGUAY
	PARAGUAY			MOLDOVA		RWANDA
	RWANDA			PALESTINE*		
	TOGO			TUNISIA		

EXPECTED CONTINUATION OF JP DOCUMENTS ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL/POLITICAL CYCLE

CAMBODIA (2)	BOLIVIA (2)	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (2)	BURUNDI (2)	MALI (3)	
CHAD (2)	GHANA (2)		HONDURAS (2)		
COMOROS (2)	IVORY COAST (2)		KENYA (3)		
EGYPT (2)	LAOS (3)		SENEGAL (2)		
ETHIOPIA (3)	MOLDOVA (2)		TOGO (3)		
GUATEMALA (2)	NICARAGUA (2)				
MALI (2)	PALESTINE (2)*				
UGANDA (2)	TOGO (2)				
	TUNISIA (2)				

PROJECTED START OF NEW JP DOCUMENTS BASED ON THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/POLITICAL CYCLE

BURUNDI	ARMENIA	MONGOLIA	AFGHANISTAN	ANGOLA	COLOMBIA	ALGERIA	PARAGUAY
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	AZERBAIJAN	NIGERIA	BENIN	BHUTAN	LIBERIA	BELARUS	RWANDA
EL SALVADOR	BANGLADESH	SOMALIA	CUBA	CONGO BRAZZA	PAKISTAN	ERITREA	
KYRGYZSTAN	BURKINA FASO	SUDAN	DRC	MALAWI		GEORGIA	
MADAGASCAR	CAMEROON	TAJIKISTAN	ECUADOR	PHILIPPINES		IRAQ	
MOZAMBIQUE	DJIBOUTI	TANZANIA	HAITI			JORDAN	
NEPAL	GABON	UKRAINE	MOROCCO			LEBANON	
	GAMBIA	VIETNAM	NIGER			SAO TOME E PRINCIPE	
	GUINEA	ZIMBABWE	UZBEKISTAN			SOUTH AFRICA	
	LIBYA		ZAMBIA			SOUTH SUDAN	
	MAURITANIA					YEMEN	
	MYANMAR						

30.4%

40.5%

61.7%

% OF ORIGINAL MIP (2014-2020) ALLOCATIONS

77.9%

81.5%

84.3%

95.7%

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.



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