



EU Joint Programming Guidance Pack

5. JOINT RESPONSE MENU

A Joint Response replies to the partner country's national development plan and sets out the overall rationale and direction for the DP's support. It also coordinates which sectors/areas each of them will work in, what the overall objectives for these sectors are, and gives provisional figures for their financing over the strategy period. The individual projects and programmes that each EU development partner will carry out in order to implement their contribution to the joint response are however detailed in their own in-house plans, given that the joint strategy itself will not go down to this level of detail. The Joint Response is developed at the **partner country level** by EU Delegation and EU Member State staff¹ to ensure that it provides the best possible response to the situation on the ground. This also allows close cooperation with the government as well as civil society, private sector and other stakeholders.

The joint response, together with the joint analysis, composes the joint EU strategy. This joint strategy should **serve as a strategic umbrella to the participating DPs'** bilateral programming and implementation plans. Where agreed by the relevant DP, it could substitute the bilateral programming plans as far as possible, so as to decrease administrative procedures and costs at field and HQ². However, this means it would need to meet the in-house quality/legal requirements of each participating DP for programming plans. Capitals will therefore need to verify in time that this is the case.

The response constitutes the main part of the joint strategy. It will be endorsed locally prior to submission to HQ for approval of hierarchy (if needed). Approval of the joint strategy, including the joint analysis and the joint response, will follow internal rules of the participating DPs. After approval, DPs will sign the joint strategy. DPs can also ask the partner country to sign the joint strategy if they desire, after taking into account any implications this might have for the content of the joint strategy³.

The joint response should build on the findings of the joint analysis that has already been carried out and should include the following core elements:

- An **overall** vision for participating DPs' support to the country, setting out objectives for each sector to be covered.
- A commitment to **synchronise** DPs' planning cycles to the national cycle.

¹ In some cases, the European Investment Bank and/or like-minded non EU-donors may wish to join and work together within the existing JP Framework

² Joint Programming documents can replace Multi-annual Indicative Programmes/National Indicative Programmes/Single Support Frameworks or other programming documents if their quality meets the standards for bilateral programming documents (see also the related regulations on EU instruments). In JP countries the EU MIP/NIP/SFF reviews will be synchronised with partner country planning cycles.

³ For example in case of synergies with the CSO Roadmaps process, the opportunity of a government endorsement/signature of a Joint Programming document should be carefully considered. It is also possible to exclude sensitive parts (i.e. analytical part) from the version to be shared/signed by the government. See also <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/public-governance-civilsociety/minisite/eu-country-roadmaps-engagement-civil-society>



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- A clear division of labour that shows which EU DP will work in which sectors, including a clear definition of sectors of intervention⁴.
- Indicative multi-annual **financial allocations** from each EU DP to each sector.

Beyond these core elements, the document can be shaped as local Heads of Mission and Heads of Cooperation see fit. The inclusion of a partner-country results framework for each sector on outcome/impact level⁵, and of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Joint Programming process itself are highly recommended. Details of DP's sectoral/thematic objectives, individual projects, programmes and delivery modalities will usually be left to each DP's bilateral programming and implementation plans, which can be set out as they see fit. Such plans lay down how DPs will implement their respective contribution to the Joint Strategy, in line with its timing and coherent/coordinated amongst themselves.

A **menu of ideas** is provided below, both on content for the core elements of the joint response and on content for other additional sections that the participating DPs might want to include. This is based on the documents that have been agreed around the world to date. It is **highly recommended to split drafting responsibilities between participating DPs**.

1. Executive Summary

A short summary of the main points of the Strategy.

2. Overview / Introduction

This section could include:

- A **background** for the rationale for joint programming, its assessed or envisaged benefits locally and what has been agreed on the subject in-country and by capitals.
- The **strategic objectives** of joint programming in the country with clear reference to the national development plan.
- An overall picture of **EU presence** in the country, including a list of participating DPs. Existing examples of joint implementation by EU DPs could also be shortly referred to.
- A summary of the **past and present cooperation** of all DPs and lessons learned.
- The distinctly **European values** and principles that DPs will aim to promote and adhere to - their "brand" of cooperation - referencing agreements made at both the headquarters and local levels.

⁴ The division of labour part could explain the progress envisaged (i.e. in sector concentration, number of donors per sector, etc) as compared to the present situation

⁵ Joint programming – through division of labour – can enhance a common approach to results in that it may result in a lower number of development partners working in any particular sector. It therefore, helps to increase the possibility to work together to agree the indicators in the partner country framework which they would like to follow and support in priority.



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- **Aid effectiveness initiatives/structures** in the country (what has been done, what works, what needs working on), respective lessons learnt and specific aid effectiveness work to be taken forward over the strategy period.

3. Reference to the Joint Analysis [core element]

- The joint response will be typically based on the joint analysis, which could be referred to by a brief **summary** of the dedicated joint analysis document that has been produced as part of the joint programming process (see separate Menu). It could conclude by identifying the overall current country needs and priorities.

4. Joint Response [core element]

This section should include the main elements in the Joint Response as set out in the Council Conclusions⁶

- Overall **vision** for EU DPs' support to the country, based on the joint analysis.
- How DPs will **synchronise** their programming cycles to the national cycle.
- The **sectors / areas** that participating DPs plan to support and a justification for them, based on the vision identified above and the joint analysis.
- For each sector, a brief **overview** of the current situation followed by the overall objectives to be aimed for, an outline of the general approach to be taken and a list of which DPs will contribute. It could also be indicated where joint implementation might be considered. NB. Approaches to sectors should naturally be based on the national development plan and respective sector plans, where they exist.
- A list of ongoing and planned interventions by each DP in order to give a snapshot of the overall division of labour. A second table could show the division of labour prior to joint programming.
- Details of **common positions** on key issues to be established / taken forward, for example on human rights and governance. This could include existing joint EU work such as Civil Society Roadmaps.
- For **fragile / conflict affected states**, a special emphasis on stepping-up coordination between relief, rehabilitation and development work to build resilient societies.
- Links of joint programming process with any military/security and defence operations
- A table showing the **indicative financial allocations** (disbursements and/or commitments, possibly following partner country preferences) from **each DP to each sector** over the strategy period, including both grants and concessional loans. DPs may decide to review these indications every year.

5. Monitoring, review and evaluation

⁶ EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, 29 November – 1 December 2011) - Council Conclusions

https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126060.pdf



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This section could include details of how monitoring, review and evaluation of the results aimed for by the Joint Response will be carried out. (A separate section could deal with the overall JP process itself). It might include:

- A limited set of expected **results for each sector of intervention**, possibly on outcome/impact level and related **indicators** with which to measure progress. These should be based on the national development plan and its results framework wherever possible, though may also include international measures (possibly including where feasible any **indicators on aid effectiveness** drawn from the locally agreed framework or the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation). They may include both macro economic and social indicators as well as selected sector indicators. In line with international good practice targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).
- An acknowledgement that more objectives, individual projects and programmes might be monitored under each DP's respective **bilateral** programming and **implementation plans**.
- A commitment that progress in implementing the Strategy will be **reviewed** on a regular basis, e.g. annually, and stating what this will include, for example tracking of the agreed indicators and a presentation by each DP of a possible standardised report on the delivery of their bilateral implementation plan. There could also be a more in-depth review to examine the overall approach, division of labour and indicative financial allocations, proposing adjustments where necessary in addition to laying out or updating a roadmap for the planning of the subsequent joint strategy.
- A commitment for a review of the **effectiveness and impact** of joint programming in the country which could take the form of a **Joint Evaluation** of the Joint Response. Its findings could feed into the following joint programming process.

6. Communication & visibility

This section could set out plans to enhance EU **visibility**, transparency on results, **voice** and **impact** and include commitments to establish joint **communications products**, such as:

- Joint website (with links to individual donors' sites) showcasing European support.
- Brochure showing the EU donors' work on in the country and what they have achieved.
- Joint newsletters and press releases.

It could also include agreement on standard text to be used in bilateral communications on projects and programmes, for example *"This [name of European donor] initiative is part of the overall Joint European Strategy for [name of partner country]."*

The inclusion of non-EU donor partners in joint communication activities is to be considered on a case by case basis.