

OECD/DAC Donor-Developing Country Dialogues on Strategies for Sustainable Development

REPORT OF THE FINAL WORKSHOP, BOLIVIA Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 12-16 February 2001

The final workshop of the OECD/DAC Donor-Developing Country Dialogues on Strategies for Sustainable Development was convened by the DAC Task Force on nssds, with support from IIED. It was held at the Centro Iberoamericano de Formacion in Santa Cruz, Bolivia and brought together participants from each of the dialogue countries (Bolivia, Nepal, Thailand, Burkina Faso and Tanzania), parallel learning countries (Ghana and Pakistan)¹, donor agencies (DFID, EC, AECI, GTZ, SDC, NEDA), representatives of the OECD, UNDP Capacity 21 and the UN Division for Sustainable Development, and resource persons (see Appendix 1 for list of participants)

The five day workshop was the third and final international workshop of the dialogue project. Its main aims were to:

- Share lessons from the country dialogues
- Review the draft policy guidance on strategies for donors; and
- Consider the scope and content of the proposed source book

1. Introduction to the workshop

The workshop was opened by Manuel Vitturo, Spanish Ambassador to Bolivia, and Ronald Maclean, Bolivia's Minister for Sustainable Development and Planning. On behalf of the DAC Task Force on Strategies for Sustainable Development, Adrian Davis (Head of DFID's Environment Policy Department, and co-chair of the DAC Task Force) also welcomed participants, stressing the need to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the policy guidance on strategies in the run up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002.

The objectives and outputs of the dialogue project were presented by DFID and IIED. The project has sought to address three basic questions:

- What are the principles underlying strategies for sustainable development?
- What form might effective strategies take in practice?
- How should development cooperation agencies best support their development and implementation?

The main outputs of the project will be policy guidance for development cooperation agencies on strategies for sustainable development and a more detailed technical 'sourcebook' on strategies. The policy guidance will be submitted to the DAC High Level meeting in April 2001 for ministerial approval. There is a need to ensure that the guidance will be applied in practice, and to discuss how this can be achieved.

The source book will pull together case material and lessons from the country dialogues and other experiences. It will be drafted by IIED, with inputs from others, between March and December 2001. Its development will essentially be a technical exercise with less emphasis on process.

The final workshop provided the last significant opportunity for dialogue and parallel country partners to influence the contents of the guidance. Following the workshop, a final draft text

¹ Namibia was not able to attend.

would be prepared and submitted to the OECD Secretariat on 23 February – and at the same time circulated to all project participants for any final comments of a fundamental nature (only). The final draft would be considered by the DAC Working Party on Development Cooperation and the Environment at its meeting in Paris on 8th/9th March 2001. Any agreed amendments would then be incorporated into a final text to be submitted by 16th March for consideration and approval by aid ministers at the meeting of High Level DAC on 25/2 April 2001.

2. Presentation of the policy guidance

A draft framework for the guidance was agreed at the mid-term review workshop in Phuket, Thailand, in October 2000. Based on this, IIED prepared a first draft of the guidance which was circulated to participating countries for comment in December 2000. The draft was revised to incorporate comments and a second draft was circulated two weeks prior to the final workshop.

The guidance examines why a strategic approach to sustainable development is required (chapter 1), presents principles for strategies (chapter 2), reviews current practice (chapter 3) and draws lessons from applying existing country strategies (chapter 4). Chapter 5 presents illustrative steps for establishing and operating a coordination system to support a sustainable development strategy, whilst chapter 6 focuses on the role of development cooperation agencies in supporting strategies and monitoring their adherence to the guidance. Finally, chapter 7 deals with monitoring progress towards meeting the International Development Target on strategies.

The guidance offers the following definition of a strategy for sustainable development: *“a coordinated set of participatory and continuously improving processes of analysis, debate, capacity-strengthening, planning and investment, which seeks to balance economic, social and environmental objectives of society”*. Here ‘investment’ is used in its broadest sense, not just financial investment, but also in terms of human resources, time etc.

At UNCED in 1992, the need for countries to introduce a national strategy was identified. It is known that there have been problems in meeting this objective because of several key factors: the inability of institutional frameworks to enable the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives; the lack of coherence and complementarity between different strategic planning processes and between different levels (national to local); the difficulty of ensuring effective participation; and limited skills and capacity in developing and implementing strategies. A strategy for sustainable development is not a plan, but an iterative action learning process which allows countries to keep sustainable development on the agenda.

3. Reviewing the draft policy guidance

Workshop participants offered comments on all parts of the guidance, but detailed discussions focused mainly on chapters 4 and 6. Review of chapter 4 was undertaken in mixed working groups, while chapter 6 (which had been drafted largely by development cooperation agencies) was first reviewed by a plenary meeting of participants from the dialogue and parallel countries and then by a smaller task group. The workshop also considered the structure and scope of the guidance, the chapters on monitoring development cooperation agency adherence to the guidance and on monitoring the IDT on strategies, and the executive summary. The latter will, which will be of key importance for the DAC High Level Meeting.

In the working group discussions, participants considered important points that had been missed or that required correction or further explanation, and identified case material from the dialogue/parallel countries to illustrate the text. Because of the very short time-frame for

revising the draft, participants submitted all comments and additional text in writing during the workshop. IIED would then balance all contributions and suggestions as fairly as possible.

It was generally agreed that the guidance was a good document, providing specific and clear suggestions and case examples.

4. The Source book – scope and content

The sourcebook will contain a detailed exploration of the challenge of strategies for sustainable development, with lessons, case materials, and methodologies from the dialogue countries and elsewhere. It will provide technical guidance on how to develop and implement strategies for sustainable development, with examples of processes and mechanisms that have been shown to work.

It was suggested that a section on policy implications of strategy and policy coherence should be included. A possible contents list for the sourcebook was presented (Appendix 3).

It is aimed to prepare a first draft during April-June of this year and to distribute this for review and comment in early July. The draft will be specifically sent to dialogue and parallel learning countries for comment. Feedback will also be sought at relevant meetings.

The following questions were highlighted for discussion:

- Is there demand for this kind of sourcebook? who is the audience - in-country, international, the North?
- Should it take the form of a book, file, website?
- Should the format follow guidance content? principles, methods, cases?
- What essential methods for strategies should be included? for analysis of stakeholders, policy, institutions; facilitating meetings, scenario development?
- What useful sources/references should be included for further information on tools and techniques? eg. the topic guide?
- Where should the material come from? North/South?

Many participants felt that the proposed sourcebook would certainly be useful for their countries and internationally – for practitioners, institutions, development cooperation agencies, partner governments and NGOs – and for members of the proposed global partnership on strategies.

It was recommended that the sourcebook should not only provide technical guidance but also challenge existing practice, including a critical analysis of past and current practice, proposals for how to improve this and examples of what works. It should expand on the guidance to further refine the definition and characterisation of what constitutes a strategy for sustainable development, what are its key components/elements, and how to develop and implement such a strategy. It should be a ‘how to manual’, designed to suit a range of possible uses (e.g. with parts that could be used as modules for training, or adapted for use in particular countries) and should be widely translated. There should be no ownership or restrictive copyright over the sourcebook to encourage the widest possible use.

Participants stressed that the sourcebook should not seek to impose knowledge, but should foster and facilitate local diagnosis by allowing choices. It was acknowledged that there is still much to learn about strategies, but the sourcebook can present some examples and ideas, so that people can interpret strategies locally. This is a new, experimental area which links well to the idea of developing a global partnership on strategies.

It was suggested that in-country consultations might be able to improve the definition of the target group for the sourcebook to enable it to respond better to the specific needs. The website could also be used to help identify what information would be most useful. It was also suggested that, once the first draft is ready, consultations could be held in each country, to capture a broader range of views, raise awareness and generate ownership.

Another suggested option was that the sourcebook be presented in the form a 'resource' pack so that pages can easily be taken out and copied. It could also be produced as a CD-rom and placed as a special area on the project website to enable people to provide materials for possible inclusion. Subject to funding, this option could be taken further so that the sourcebook/resource book could be a continually or regularly updated and improved 'interactive' resource.

Capacity 21 has worked in many countries to build capacity to implement Agenda 21, and plan and implement strategies for sustainable development. Penny Stock of UNDP reported that experience from the Capacity 21 programme will be captured in a series of publications on 'approaches to sustainability', containing country, thematic and regional studies which could be useful for the sourcebook.

5. Proposal for a Global Partnership on strategies

At the second workshop held in Phuket, Thailand, the developing country participants expressed the view that it would be useful to continue the dialogue process started under the OECD/DAC project beyond the final workshop, particularly in the run-up to Rio +10. Accordingly a draft concept paper with ideas for a possible network was prepared by Saleemul Huq and IIED and circulated in November 2000. Considerable positive feedback was received from developing country participants as well as other potential partners.

Based on the feedback, a revised proposal for a Global Partnership on Strategies for Sustainable Development (GPSSD) was presented by Saleemul Huq and discussed by the participants in Bolivia. Most of the developing country participants felt it was a good idea, but needed be fleshed out further, taking into account the need to:

- Ensure that such a partnership really brings added value to its members;
- Find one or two (modest) activities that the partnership can focus on;
- Seek other potential partners who are interested in joining such an effort, and identify/build on existing networks;
- Consider the development of regional networks that enable similar countries to exchange experience, as the basis for the global partnership;
- Concentrate on communications to start with;
- Seek out potential linkages with Rio+10 meetings; and
- Develop a revised proposal through consultation with the developing country partners.

The meeting decided to form an ad-hoc committee to hold an electronic discussion and develop a revised proposal by mid-March to share with the whole group. The following persons volunteered to be in the ad-hoc committee: Saleemul Huq (convenor); Seth Vordzorgbe (Ghana); Maheen Zehra (Pakistan); Nipon Poapongsakorn (Thailand); Badri Pande (Nepal); Hum Gurung (Nepal); Anibal Aguilar (Bolivia); Lucien Msambichika (Tanzania); Oussouby Toure (Senegal); Daniel Thieba (Burkina Faso); and Penny Stock (Capacity 21).

6. The future of the website

The workshop agreed that the project website is a useful resource for information-sharing and dissemination. Use of the website has doubled monthly over the last few months. It was

agreed that it every effort should be made to keep it operational beyond the dialogue project, particularly when the greatest investment has already been made in establishing the website. The website would provide an important tool for maintaining communication and networking. Ideally (funds permitting), documents placed on the website should be translated into different languages, and countries could assist with this to reduce costs.

However, running costs are considerable and will need to be covered. Current resources will be exhausted at the end of March, with the production of one more CD-rom and efforts are being made to secure an extension of funding. The network proposal could also be used to attract further funds for the website. It cannot be expected that assistance from development cooperation agencies for the website will be available over the long term – so there is a need to consider how the website can be institutionalised.

7. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

Kirsten Rohrmann (Department for Economic and Social Affairs, UN) reported that the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) – also called Rio+10 will be held in Johannesburg in mid-2002. It will include a ten year review of implementation of Agenda 21 based on national assessments. The prime source for the agenda will be the regional preparatory meetings. Regional Roundtables will take place May-June of this year and feed into five Regional PrepComs in September-November. This will feed into CSD 10 PrepCom meetings in New York, the final one being held in Indonesia in May 2002 to prepare a concise political document for the Summit.

8. Lessons from the country dialogues and next steps

A ‘share fair’ was held where dialogue and parallel countries displayed material on the dialogues, and participants discussed the lessons and conclusions of the dialogues. Each dialogue country has prepared a status review of sustainable development strategies and policy, and is completing a dialogue report examining strategy experience in more detail. Activities in parallel countries followed their own format, but reports on these have also been produced. Participating countries also prepared short country reports for the workshop. These documents will be posted on the project website [www.nssd.net].

A number of countries reported that the dialogue process had been very useful and that some of the activities initiated would continue. Team leaders provided an indication of the planned next steps to be taken in each dialogue/parallel country following the completion of the dialogues:

a) **Bolivia** is working on developing a regional network on strategies and plans to disseminate the policy guidance amongst civil society. The Ministry for Sustainable Development is working to mobilise a National Council on Sustainable Development and to strengthen the national sustainable development agenda and prepare for WSSD.

B) **Tanzania** will hold a meeting of the dialogue Steering Committee on return from the Bolivia workshop. The team would like to propose to that the Committee is consolidated to form the National Council for Sustainable Development.

c) In **Burkina Faso**, the report of the dialogue has been presented to the Cabinet. It includes specific recommendations for the government, for civil society and for development agencies. Dependent on Cabinet approval, the key task will be to implement those recommendations. One specific immediate task is to translate the PRSP into local languages to enable greater civil society participation in its redrafting. There are also plans to engage in the WSSD process.

d) In *Nepal*, the dialogue enabled a review of community projects on sustainable development. The dialogue report will be translated into Nepalese so that it can be disseminated to those who participated in the process. Nepal aims to promote implementation of Agenda 21 and set up a task force of agencies and NGOs dealing with sustainable development to prepare for WSSD.

e) In *Thailand*, the National Economic and Social Development Board plans to initiate a campaign to improve development cooperation, and a research programme on poverty reduction. Thailand will be involved in a similar kind of dialogue initiative with the World Bank.

f) The *Ghana* team would like to hold a workshop to share its draft report with stakeholders. They plan to publish the report in-country, launch it with maximum media coverage, and involve the new Minister for Planning in these activities to encourage the new government to take the results on board.

h) In *Pakistan* there are two parallel processes on dialogues: one undertaken for the Mid-term Review of the NCS; another is the participatory poverty assessment. IUCN-Pakistan will examine how to integrate the environment in this second process so that it is included in the PRS.

i) IIED reported that, in *Namibia*, the project had contributed funds to a review of the Green Plan and first National Development Plan to assess how sustainable development had been addressed; and to capturing the learning from a stakeholder dialogue process to debate sustainable development priorities and concerns. This exercise had already influenced the development of the Second National Development Plan (currently being prepared) and enhanced integration of sustainable development issues in the new plan.

9. Next steps

a) The policy guidance would be revised immediately after the workshop and submitted to the OECD Secretariat on 23 February (and circulated to all participants at the same time) for consideration by the DAC Working Party on Development Cooperation and the Environment at its meeting in Paris on 8th/9th March.

b) Any agreed amendments would be incorporated in the following week and a final text would be submitted on 16th March for consideration of the High Level DAC meeting, scheduled to take place in Paris on 25/26 April 2001.

c) Therefore, any final comments of a fundamental nature (only) from dialogue/parallel countries or others should reach IIED by 7th March (absolute latest).

d) Dialogue and parallel country teams should submit to IIED their final status and dialogue reports, including methodologies used, by the end of March 2001.

e). IIED will prepare a first draft of the sourcebook during April-June. It is aimed to circulate this for comment in July 2001.

f). A revised proposal for a global partnership will be circulated by Saleemul Huq by mid-March.

10. Closing remarks

Barry Dalal-Clayton, project coordinator, thanked all participating countries for their cooperation, support and dedicated work throughout the initiative and looked forward to continued cooperation in preparing the sourcebook.

Paula Chalinder, Head of DFID's Sustainable Development Unit, emphasised that this is not the end of the process – there is still have a long way to go. The production of a guidance document is just one step. The DAC Task Force will take on board comments made at the

workshop, and, once the guidance is approved, the participating countries that can really make a difference by using and promoting the document. Thanks were expressed to Spanish Cooperation for providing the venue for the workshop, to Bolivia for hosting it, and to all those who participated in the dialogue project.

Dr Tay from Ghana, on behalf of the dialogue/parallel countries, noted that the dialogue process and international workshops had been very useful to enable countries to learn, share experience and get to know others working on sustainable development strategies. It is hoped that the guidance will ensure that such strategies become the framework for donor assistance.