

Global PFD Meeting 21-23 March 2017
Inclusive Multi-stakeholder Partnerships
Background for session

Multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships are becoming an essential part of how we pursue development goals. Their role in establishing more efficient and effective ways to coordinate solutions and achieve common goals are even more relevant now, in the context of the worldwide 2030 Agenda. This view is also supported by the proposed new European Consensus on Development. The implementation of the SDGs, at regional, national and subnational levels, demand a more structured dialogue between different actors as well as the creation of common fronts that can deliver public goods and services geographically (big cities to rural areas in and across countries) and in different thematic areas (from health to environment).

In December 2011, the Fourth High Level Forum (HLF) in Busan put Inclusive Partnerships at the centre of the debate, underlining the importance of enriching the debate with the views and contributions of a much larger number of actors, with first-hand experience in development cooperation. The addition of “inclusive” to the term “partnership” springs from three convictions, confirmed in a series of agreements:

1. All actors involved, in their own capacity and with their own experience, have a complementary role to play in achieving development goals. While the [Accra Agenda for Action](#) (2008) acknowledged the important role of non-governmental actors – particularly CSOs, business, parliaments and LAs – the [Busan Partnership agreement](#) furthers their role to full development partners with an equal say in how to promote development.
2. Efforts must be made to ensure that benefits reach all. The importance of inclusive development is reinforced by the [United Nations’ 2013 Report of the High-Level Panel on Eminent Persons](#) on the [Post-2015 Development Agenda](#). It calls for international sustainable development goals to reach those furthest left behind first.
3. Inclusiveness entails more participation but also mutual responsibilities. The Busan commitments set out a bold agenda for engagement of different actors (e.g. civil society, LAs and national parliaments, private sector, etc.) to enable them to contribute to development while encouraging greater accountability.

The positive evolution of the term is supported by many successful stories that show the relevance of the institutionalisation of inclusive partnerships to progress towards the achievement of the MDGs in many countries and sectors.

While inclusive partnerships have become the *generic* term, **inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships** are increasingly used as a useful mechanism to bring together views around a common goal(s), set a regular meaningful and legitimate dialogue, encourage common positions and use different tools (e.g. data collection, advocacy, etc.) to obtain a certain result (in policy, regulation, funds, etc.) It is important to underline that inclusive partnerships can be multi-stakeholder, but do not have to be, and they do not necessarily have a stronger impact for including more actors. While the level of diversity in composition (multi-stakeholder) is a valuable asset, it can also complicate the attainment of goals and, in reality, multi-stakeholder partnerships take more the shape of platforms.

The [Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation](#) provides an excellent example, as it defines itself as a “multi-stakeholder platform to advance the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors, to deliver results that are long-lasting and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.” Late last year, the platform undertook a consultation that concluded in [Nairobi](#) (Kenya) at the Global Partnership’s second high level meeting with a document that brings together consensual outputs in terms of how development actors can work better together to implement the 2030 Agenda.

The PFD, due to its nature, composition and mandate, is an appropriate place to promote the debate about inclusive partnerships. This session of the Policy Forum will allow participants to share knowledge and experiences through the panel debate, the presentation of best practices and working groups.

Key points:

- Collaborative arrangements are useful for different purposes but counterproductive for others. Partnerships, inclusive partnerships and multi-stakeholder partnerships relate to different types of associations that work best at different levels and configurations.
- Despite the (legitimate) importance given to the level of inclusiveness of partnerships in development cooperation, more study is needed on the correlation between inclusive and effective partnerships. Ultimately, the effectiveness of inclusive partnerships depends exclusively on the level of integration of the players involved around a common goal.
- The level of integration is reflected in a number of interrelated factors that show the strength of the cooperation, particularly the (evolution of) the objective(s), rules, membership, governance, resources, management, and (impact of) actions.