



A D I N

Africa Development Interchange Network

Organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council since 2011

GPEDC

Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

CSOPartnership 
for Development Effectiveness



THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ON EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (GPEDC) MONITORING ROUND 2 (2015-2016)

THE CASE OF CAMEROON

August 2016

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1- Introduction

Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN) was the CSO National Focal Point designated both by the Government of Cameroon and through the CSO Platform for Development Effectiveness (CPDE)'s global selection process, for the monitoring exercise of the second Monitoring Round (MR2) of the Busan commitments in the framework of the Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation conducted from November 2015 thru March 2016, in the perspective of the Second High Level Meeting (HLM2) scheduled to take place in November 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya.

This brief, gives an overview on the data collection process in Cameroon, as conducted by the Civil Society, the organizational approach, the results and the related perspectives.

2- Methodology of the GPEDC monitoring round 2 on indicator 2 & 3 in Cameroon

The CSO data collection process in Cameroon, on indicator 2 (CSO enabling environment) and indicator 3 (Engagement and contribution of the private sector to development)", was based on an inclusive approach involving a wide and diverse range of non-state constituencies. The objective was "to effectively engage CSOs in a collective, inclusive and factually supported data collection process. The monitoring process went through five (5) main steps in the 10 Regions of Cameroon:

(1) Information and knowledge sharing

It was based on the dissemination of the Nairobi Focal Points training workshop and the consultation of existing specific non-state dialogue platforms as well as engagement in traditional meetings of CSO networks. The Central Africa Capacity Building Workshop on Effective Development from 15-17 February 2016, in Yaoundé, was another communication opportunity.

(2) Data collection in the 10 regions

30 thematic and geographic "Relay organizations" administered the contextualized data collection tools in their respective constituencies, under the supervision of the National CSO Focal Point. Before that crucial field research operation, special workshops were held, for questionnaire testing, with 3 CSO Networks. Update working sessions were held with the National Coordinator, the Ministry of the Economy Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT). The CPDE Strategic Group which traditionally assists Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN) in its capacity as Cameroon CPDE Focal Point, progressively consolidated the data collected in the regions into preliminary results .

(3) The Civil Society validation workshop

The event provided for an inclusive opportunity for non-State actors to endorse the results of the data collection process. The objective was to make sure that it reflected citizens' general perception at all levels, including the grassroots. The up to 50 participants came from the Civil Society and from both the public and the Private Sector, as well as from the UN System in Cameroon. The two key Ministries generally involved in global issues and international co-operation were represented: the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT) and the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX).

The National Focal Point for the providers in the GPEDC monitoring process attended the meeting as an observer to share the CSO experience. The Media were part of the event both for coverage and as participants, through the Association of Journalists for Water and Environment issues. Data collection in the Regions and in thematic areas was complemented during the workshop by an "on-the-spot" group administration of the questionnaires, before validation of the overall results.

Actually, participants were given the opportunity to fill their individual questionnaire if they had not done so before, and participated in an exercise aiming at filling a consensual questionnaire in work groups, where they also reflected on possible recommendations with regard to "CSO enabling environment" and Private sector participation to ensure economic growth". It was agreed upon for interpretation of the results, that the response trend with the simple majority is the consensual answer for each question of the questionnaire. The validated data then informed subsequent submission to the National Coordinator, to feed into the national general report through the national coordinator.

(4) Civil Society contribution to the national validation

The national validation workshop took place in Cameroon with some delay with regard to the global calendar, after the National Coordinator had submitted a provisional report. CSO participation in the national validation was ensured through attendance by the CSO Focal Point of a meeting organized within the national Multi Partner Committee that traditionally regroups all Development Cooperation Providers. The National Coordinator engaged in an information sharing process on the outcome of the monitoring with different Focal Points, allowing them to comment the substance in the national monitoring results spread-sheet. Eventually the CSO monitoring outcome was fully considered despite some reluctance about indicator 3.

(5) Reporting on the GPEDC monitoring process

It involved all CSO “Relay Organizations” from the region and was as participative as the data collection. Regular reporting notes were shared between the CSO Focal Point and all the thematic and regional “Relay Organizations” weekly and the related material was progressively consolidated into the CSO report.

3- The level of mobilization for indicator 2 & 3 monitoring in Cameroon

Effort was made to involve the greatest number of CSOs as possible in the data collection process. The role of the geographic and thematic “Relay Organizations” was to assist the CSO National Focal Point in consulting relevant CSOs and administering the data collection tool. Ten (10) regional relays (1 per region) plus ten (10) thematic relays were expected to contact 10-100 in their respective region or thematic area. The original objective was to get feedback from 200-2000 organizations on the questionnaires for indicator 2 and indicator 3, referring both to their case and cases that they may in general be aware of. Eventually, four hundred (400) organizations at all levels including the grassroots responded through thirty-seven (37) networks on indicator 2.

The main data collection target for indicator 3 was made up of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME). Working with a national association for SME, “Entreprises du Cameroun (ECAM)”, around 70-80 SME were surveyed through Leads from seven (7) different business clusters. In addition ten (10) private sector operators out of ECAM were surveyed.

4- Results of the GPEDC monitoring on indicator 2 & 3 in Cameroon

The outcome of the CSOs GPEDC monitoring in Cameroon provides a sense of the level of the state of enabling environment for CSOs and Private Sector participation in growth and development.

Space for multi-stakeholder dialogue on national development policies

CSOs are consulted by the government in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies. However, the involvement of CSOs is not done systematically, in a precise framework with a pre-defined and shared schedule. Access to information is guaranteed by law, but in practice, it is not easy for CSOs to obtain information on request.

There are a few mechanisms to facilitate coordination of programming between CSOs and other development actors or collaboration to maximize impact and avoid duplication of effort, but CSOs communicate very little about their funding, except exceptionally for some government funded activities.

Official development cooperation with CSOs

Most Cameroon Development Partners do involve CSOs in defining policies and programs they support, through workshops and awareness raising. These consultation processes are institutionalized, inclusive and accessible, but there is no feedback mechanism on how contributions from different stakeholders have been taken into account. In general, external partners encourage the Cameroonian government to ensure CSOs inclusion in cooperation process and sometimes require this as a precondition. They often remind of the need to enforce ratified regional and international agreements and legal instruments.

Legal and regulatory environment

The legal and regulatory environment enables the creation, registration and operation of CSOs¹. In fact, freedom of association is recognized and respected in the Constitution and other laws and regulations.

Private Sector participation in growth and development

The private sector is ready to interact and communicate with the government and vice versa, but the level of that communication is still low, because public agents do not provide the private sector with enough information. The working together is thus not yet effective because there is no permanent constructive and mutual dialogue. The private sector is considered as legitimate by its actors. It has the capacity to coordinate and harmonise its different components. It also has a certain level of influencing power on public actors and is ready to invest time and money in the related collaboration.

The private sector is motivated in the conduct of public-private projects. Most of national the economic strategy is however generally inspired and carried out according to government's sole perspective. There are public sector bodies in charge of dialogue with the private sector and the government has the capacity to effectively monitor public-private projects. The Cameroon Business Forum (CBF) constitutes a space for exchanges between the government and the private sector on how to allow a conducive business environment, but CBF's recommendations are not always implementation and enforcement.

Financing and capacity building instruments to support the public-private dialogue is not enough. These instruments exists but are rarely used. Their effectiveness is not yet

¹ Law 90/053 on freedom of association, 1992 law on cooperatives and Common Initiatives Groups (CIG) and Law 99/014 governing Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

really noticeable due to operational difficulties. There is not a program or quality mechanism for the private sector development. However there are specific sectoral instruments that meet the strategic needs of the private sector, but the level of bureaucracy that characterizes access to these instruments is important. It is not certain that stakeholders have the capacity to support innovative projects that could be used later as a case of success.

5- Conclusion, Recommendations and perspectives

About the CSO capacities on policy engagement and monitoring in Cameroon

The CSO landscape in Cameroon is diverse and the overall engagement in development policies and monitoring development practices still faces a lot of challenges. There is an active CSO participation in the monitoring and follow-up of public policies, but this in general is done on a self-sustained basis with a number of hindrances linked to the state of bureaucracy and none-enforcement of existing legislation on Civil Society activities. The engagement in official multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms with government and other stakeholders has been in progress over the years, as a result of personal efforts and insistence on the part of CSOs, but yet to be meaningful as would allow a better political will accompanied with concrete allocation of public resources.

However, country-level CSO monitoring mechanisms on government performance with regard to development goals would also to be improved on if CSOs adjust their internal practices toward more effectiveness, accountability, transparency, communication as well as vertical and horizontal collaboration among themselves. Internal CSO capacity building will do a lot in upgrading the civil society leverage over major policy decisions at the local or national level.

General Conclusion on the GPEDC round 2 monitoring process

In general, it appears from the data collection process that even though answers collected with the questionnaires show some level of diversity, depending on the level of information of CSOs and on their area of operation (rural or urban), there is a common trend that there are legal and institutional achievement in Cameroon with regard to CSO on the one hand. But on the other hand, a lot is still and needs to be done in terms factual application, implementation or law and regulation enforcement, information sharing and capacity building or financial support for CSOs, to ensure an enabling environment.

As for the GPEDC monitoring process in itself, there is still the huge logistical challenge to take for effectiveness by providing enough means and time to National Focal Points to do the job. Resource limitation also limits the relevance and faithfulness of the report.

The monitoring process would also gain much in having permanent features, with clear connection to the SDGs agenda implementation, before the period on consolidation. This portrays the need for a sustainable functioning monitoring, evaluation and accountability system in country.

CSOs participation in process was characterized by a clearly expressed willingness by the Government to involve the Civil Society, even though at the same time there was reluctance to accept a Focal Point for Trade Unions. The Cameroonian CSO experience was particular in that the Focal Point designated by the Government was the same as the one that the Civil Society had chosen. This may appear as an encouraging sign of convergence that may indicate some possible narrowing of collaboration distance between the government and the Civil Society.

In terms of success achieved by the Civil Society in the process, the important mobilization around the GPEDC monitoring and the related high level of participation is worth mentioning. However, the lack of financial and logistical resources has been a serious challenge. It has limited the level of participation and probably prevented from achieving a higher quality level. Technically, there were some issues with the monitoring tools, the questionnaire in particular which in some parts was not clear enough for some stakeholders.

A number of lessons could be learn from the monitoring process, particularly the fact that it could be an opportunity for a constant assessment of development services provision, beyond the traditional GPEDC monitoring agenda. In fact it has created emulation for a CSO work on an accountability framework for implementation of the “2030 agenda” on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Cameroon.

Recommendations

From the results analysis, 10 key areas of improvement to ensure an enabling environment for CSOs in Cameroon were identified for final recommendations: (1) inclusion of marginalized groups; (2) CSOs’ access to information; (3) CSOs capacity building; (4) CSOs engagement on transparency and accountabilities; (5) Facilitation and coordination of CSOs interaction; (6) CSOs related institutionalized mechanisms, accessibility and inclusion; (7) CSOs collaboration with Development Cooperation Providers; (8) CSOs funding; (9) social dialogue; (10) CSOs enabling environment in general. Thus, the CSO recommendations that transpired from the GPEDC monitoring process in general and the CSO validation process in particular are as follows:

R1:

Identify and categorize CSOs by thematic area, share the updated directory with the Government and Technical and Financial Partners (TFP), so that CSO contacts by

category and thematic areas is permanently available for any inclusive consultation, or invitation to public dialogue, and their voice to be taken into account.

R2:

Consolidate thematic networking through exchange of acquired experience between CSOs, institutionalize processes, plan consultations in advance and make documents available to relevant stakeholder before data collection.

R3:

Legislation is needed on CSO access to information, to make information available in a timely manner, and information should be updated instantly and posted on the websites of the government and other state structures.

R4:

Specifically allocate resources for a structured capacity building of stakeholders, particularly CSOs involved in Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation Support (GPEDC).

R5:

Vote the trade unions law provided for in the 1990 law on freedom of associations, create a specific framework for the management and funding of CSOs as well as formalize and harmonize a code of ethics for civil society. Encourage skills transfer and exchanges between CSOs operating in the same field of action.

R6:

Establish mechanisms that allow better public funding for CSOs, as stakeholders in effective development processes, or their direct funding by development cooperation providers, and involve the state and districts in monitoring and validation, based on specific criteria. Extend legal exemption benefits and aid to all categories of CSOs. Advocate on the implementation of all legal provisions related to CSO funding.

R7:

Systematically introduce the publication of CSOs strategic and operational plans as well as their annual balance sheets.

R8:

Prioritise the development of national laws internalizing international mechanisms or instruments ratified by Cameroon.

R9:

Increase the number of civil society representatives in dialogues with development cooperation providers and communicate on procedures to access these bodies.

R10:

In a view to improving monitoring mechanisms for Busan commitments at the country-level, allocate substantial public resources to the CSO monitoring process to also encompass the setting up of an a national sustainable and functioning monitoring, evaluation and accountability system, with an effective and inclusive framework and institutionalized multi stakeholder dialogue features.

Perspectives

The GPEDC monitoring process provides an opportunity for the future, as regards the 2030 Agenda implementation in Cameroon. Rather than having this as a one shot event on request, it should be turned into a continuous and inclusive process. It has to have laid the foundation for citizen monitoring of the development process, based on an accountability framework that emulates the CSO data collection approach used in Cameroon for the GPEDC monitoring round 2.

ANNEX

Photo report on CSO Validation Workshop (GPEDC monitoring)



Family photo



Participants at work



The National Coordinator represented



Work group reflection



Participant questioning the statistics for better understanding of the data collection outcome



A gender unbalanced group at work



Participant explaining his view in a group



A trade unionist addressing the groups



Group during the consensual response session