

## **Working Together**

### **Summary SWOT<sup>1</sup> analysis of the current status of the various TWG partnerships**

Views of RGC and Development Partners drawn  
from 1-2-1 and small group discussions during the  
preliminary phase of the project

**August 2009**

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<sup>1</sup> Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

## WORKING TOGETHER: Perceived Strengths

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Points of Agreement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TWG structure provides a regular and official channel for exchange of information between the 2 groups</li> <li>2. The Secretariats are playing an effective role in networking and providing support to TWGs</li> <li>3. Overtime we have seen more effective working relationships and increased goodwill:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Greater focus on SWAP and alignment with government programme strategies</li> <li>b. Examples of donor harmonisation</li> <li>c. Increased national ownership</li> <li>d. Increase in outputs</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Contributions made to strengthening capacity</li> <li>5. MIS now in place (= foundation for managing for results)</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Government Partners also said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greater mainstreaming of some key issues</li> <li>▪ Improved mutual accountability</li> <li>▪ Moving towards management by results</li> <li>▪ Commitment to trying to improve the various mechanisms</li> <li>▪ Experienced staff: have been involved since the beginning</li> </ul>	<p><b>Development Partners also said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working to an agreed set of principles</li> <li>▪ Better understanding of people's constraints</li> <li>▪ Pooling of funds – a much better approach</li> <li>▪ Better aid flow information</li> <li>▪ Leadership and facilitation provided by CDC is good</li> <li>▪ There is more transparency</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Observations from the project team</b></p> <p>Where the TWG's are experienced as working well, there are enthusiastic reports of real progress and change. Government Partners feel more 'equal' in the relationship and value the increasing sense of mutual accountability as well as stronger relationships and increased commitment to making the TWG's work. Similarly, Development Partners appreciate greater openness and willingness to improve mechanisms as well as to adhere to shared principles and goals.</p> <p>However, these perceived strengths only apply to some of the TWGs, not all. There was a marked discrepancy between those that were seen as productive and 'on course' and those that were not.</p> <p>It was also interesting that there seemed to be a general lack of enthusiasm for sharing good practice and what was working well between TWGs.</p> <p>It was also clear that, on the whole, the cross-cutting TWGs felt far less satisfied with their achievements.</p>	

## WORKING TOGETHER: Perceived Weaknesses

Points of Agreement:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of appreciation of the investment required for TWGs to work effectively and low prioritisation of TWG activities</li> <li>2. While there has been more alignment with SWAPs and greater donor coordination: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Overall approach is still fragmented</li> <li>b. Lack of national ownership</li> <li>c. TWGs lack authority and/or skills to influence others</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Over-emphasis on process versus implementation and achieving results; multiple monitoring processes waste time and resources</li> <li>4. Incomplete and inaccurate reporting leads to lack of programmatic information</li> <li>5. Have not worked out how to manage competing priorities</li> </ol>	
Government Partners also said:	Development Partners also said:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Failing to use MIS effectively and consistently</li> <li>▪ DPs still not making decisions based on national priorities</li> <li>▪ Failing to get the cross-cutting issues properly addressed</li> <li>▪ Poor representation (in cross-cutting TWGs) from line ministries</li> <li>▪ Lack of mutual accountability</li> <li>▪ Coordinating with other ministries causes delays</li> <li>▪ Challenges in monitoring results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Little or no implementation of principles</li> <li>▪ Same (few) people do everything</li> <li>▪ Lack of champions in the ministries</li> <li>▪ This way of working is not comfortable or understood</li> <li>▪ Players can't see the potential gains</li> <li>▪ TWGs often only seen by ministries as a mechanism to leverage funding</li> <li>▪ We do not acknowledge our successes</li> <li>▪ Lack of willingness of some partners on both sides to give up their control, power and agendas</li> <li>▪ Little or no debating of issues / meeting agendas tend to be formulaic</li> <li>▪ Disconnect between those donors involved in TWG and those not</li> </ul>
Observations from the project team	
<p>The perceived weaknesses as described here are very clear – though there may be a bias to the views of those in the weaker TWGs (i.e. those from TWGs that are perceived as working well did not identify many of these weaknesses). At some level these comments seem to reflect the experience (and for some surprise) that working collaboratively in this way takes more investment of time and energy, commitment and willingness to share ownership and decision-making than had been anticipated. The issues raised here will inform the event in September, since failure to address them risks repetitive behaviour patterns and stagnation in terms of achievements and productivity.</p>	

## WORKING TOGETHER: Perceived Opportunities

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Points of Agreement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Potential for CDC to focus on more cross-cutting issues</li> <li>2. To strengthen learning and linkages between TWGs</li> <li>3. To enhance capacity to make these partnerships more effective and build leadership strength</li> <li>4. To mobilise support from and engage different civil society actors, the private sector and 'new' donors</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Government Partners also said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improving the collection and analysis of data to help measure and monitor achievements</li> <li>▪ Systematic approaches to reviewing TWGs and improving where necessary</li> <li>▪ As public administration and D&amp;D reform happens the TWG work will become easier</li> <li>▪ Building on the growing political stability and development of human resources</li> <li>▪ Involving academia in these processes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Development partners also said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further develop basket funding</li> <li>▪ Develop sub-groups to: air issues before meetings; make decisions</li> <li>▪ Develop a 'whole system' approach to partnership capacity building</li> <li>▪ Build further political will to support a holistic approach</li> <li>▪ Get all those involved in TWG to better agree division of labour</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Observations from the project team</b></p> <p>There was a notable focus on capacity-building so as to be able to partner more productively and efficiently and on being more systematic in approach (reviews, division of labour, monitoring etc). Leadership and 'political will' are both potentially key issues for the September event.</p> <p>These responses also raise interesting suggestions about CDC's role and its potential to act as 'broker' or intermediary, for example, to help the cross-cutting TWGs to work better or to increase its role in linking the TWGs in order to share learning and experience in practical ways.</p>	

## WORKING TOGETHER: Perceived Threats

Points of Agreement	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Over-reliance on short-term external advisors and experts can undermine the TWGs</li> <li>2. New DPs are driven by a different set of drivers and are not aligning with the process</li> <li>3. Unless we can develop a mechanism to move away from ‘blame’ and talk about contentious issues, the TWGs will continue to stall</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Government partners also said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DPs and ministries continuing to pursue individual policy objectives without assessing their impacts on other programmes</li> <li>▪ Civil service and other central reforms take too much time or don’t work as hoped</li> <li>▪ Lack of trust in government systems leads to DPs developing own systems: thus perpetuating the weaknesses</li> <li>▪ Hard to convince donors that capacity development is a process that needs long-term and systematic commitment and investment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Development partners also said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of financial and fiscal controls in place</li> <li>▪ Salary supplements issue not resolved</li> <li>▪ Limited or reducing authority of CDC</li> <li>▪ DP differences of approach jeopardising partnership arrangements (e.g. Global Fund)</li> <li>▪ Lack of capacity to commit to predictable multi-year funding</li> <li>▪ Too many parallel monitoring and other processes – wastes time and resources</li> </ul>
Observations from the project team	
<p>Two significant issues that impact negatively and threaten the TWGs are to do with actual or perceived weaknesses in fiscal controls and administrative reforms taking too long.</p> <p>There is confusion and concern about the interface between the TWGs / secretariats and external advisors. There is concern that some advisors/experts are not directly relevant or responsible to the partnership. There is disappointment and frustration that some of the newer donors and development agencies do not want to work within the TWG structure. In other words, activities outside the TWG structure were seen as a serious risk to the development and impact of the TWGs.</p> <p>Other more ‘internal’ risks are to do with wastage (e.g. too many parallel systems operating) and with frustration at a tendency to avoid addressing internal challenges head on.</p>	