

POLICY COHERENCE IN SPANISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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The 2005-2008 Spanish Master Plan for Development Cooperation marks a major milestone in Spanish development cooperation as it represents a crucial and necessary shift, from aid policies to development policies.

This substantial change in the development cooperation policy seeks to clearly define the goals and priorities of Spanish development cooperation and to establish some criteria regarding intervention, which will be used as action guidelines.

Defining a clear final goal – an effective fight against poverty – and establishing the adequate criteria for intervention will lead to a truly efficient and consistent development policy. Some of these criteria could be the following: a policy integrated in the Common International Agenda for Development - aimed at improving aid management and allocation; devised by all parties involved in the field of cooperation in Spain; capable of obtaining maximum efficiency through association strategies with other donors; and geared at fostering coherence in development policies carried out by the different actors abroad in accordance with the Development Goals. This policy should be backed up by an increase in aid, should raise awareness and promote education within the Spanish society. This could have a multiplier effect in terms of solidarity and empathy and would highlight the importance of reaching development goals.

As contained in the Master Plan and contemplated by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, achieving policy coherence becomes key to truly fighting poverty. The Ministry seeks to make all actors and Public Administrations aware of the importance of including the internationally accepted Development Goals in their activities abroad.

The Spanish development cooperation policy believes that a change-oriented effective fight against poverty cannot only be based on the effects derived from a more or less efficient Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy. It should also take into account the various actions developed by other actors: Public Administrations, civil society, businesses and trade unions. They should jointly work towards achieving the development goals stipulated in the Spanish Master Plan for Development Cooperation, which should be progressively included in their decision-making processes. In order to attain these goals worldwide, a mechanism created by the United Nations Millennium Declaration – the World Association Strategy – has been set up. This mechanism seeks to provide global coherence to actions geared towards fighting poverty.

We shall first analyse the normative aspects of the Policy Coherence principle. Article 4 of the 23/98 International Development Cooperation Act stipulates that the state will only pursue common external actions regarding development cooperation objectives and principles: “The principles and objectives mentioned in the preceding articles (development goals) will inform about the policies applied by

Public Administrations, within the framework of their respective competences, which could affect developing countries”.

Spanish development cooperation policy is actively committed to integrating into the Common International Agenda for Development, which is key to achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 8. As stated above, MDGs seek to promote worldwide development associations geared towards obtaining coherence on aid policies and on those other policies with an impact on developing countries and related to the following areas: access to markets and capital movements; external debt; questions related to trade, investment, allocation of internal resources, and access to new technologies; or the safeguarding of global public goods such as environment, peace and security.

From the Monterrey Consensus to the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting, there has been a broad-based commitment to increase policy coherence. As a member state of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Spain has taken on a commitment in the field of cooperation in order to deliver policy coherence and establish some guidelines for poverty reduction. These actions will be subject to evaluation every two years by the OECD peer review system.

The analysis of Spain's policy coherence seems to indicate that the state believes that the intervention criterion and the state's participation in an international agenda on development are key to evolving towards an effective development policy and to fighting poverty. The coherence, coordination and complementarity principles, which are set out in the Maastricht Treaty, are key to defining the way the Commission and the member states' development policies should be when applied to vulnerable countries. These are contained in the so-called European Consensus on Development and in the Joint Statement by the Council, the Parliament and the European Commission on the European Union's Development Policy. Finland, which holds the Presidency of the European Commission, has announced its firm commitment to substantially reinforce the policy coherence principle.

After discussing the normative issues and the political commitments stipulated under the Master Plan, we shall now explain the actions being carried out by Spanish development cooperation in order to apply the intervention criterion in cooperation policy, its instruments and modalities, and in the rest of policies carried out by the state's Public Administration.

The concept of policy coherence has several meanings and can be explained from different angles. It all depends on the standpoint adopted to assess the particular effects that public policies, actions and executed instruments could have on the development objectives to be reached.

In this sense, at the first stage of the analysis we could discuss the measures taken by the Spanish development cooperation aimed at guaranteeing external or vertical coherence. This means that if all public and private policies are to have an influence on the development goals of poor countries, it should be beneficial for these countries.

When analysing policy coherence from this angle, it must be said that the Spanish development cooperation decided to assign its Cooperation Council the task of informing about whether the different bodies of the Public Administration and the Congress of Deputies itself comply with the policy coherence principle when

developing cooperation actions. The Council has also been given the task of ensuring proper compliance with the principle.

The first Report on Policy Coherence – written by a working group specially created within the Council for this purpose – will be presented before the Cooperation Council next 18 July. This group is made up of the main actors in the field of cooperation: NGOs, ministries with appropriate competences, trade unions, business organisations, and experts from the Cooperation Council, who have been conducting the work. The first Report of the working group will need to be passed in the Cooperation Council's plenary session. It will issue some recommendations to the government on specific subjects such as the role to be played in international trade and its implications for developing countries, the policies concerning external debt and development of vulnerable countries, and the links between development and those other policies aimed at achieving peace and security as global public goods.

Some of these recommendations will allow the government to comply with the Development Goals in those fields that go beyond development cooperation policies such as stability of capital flows in developing countries (foreign direct investment, volatility of financial markets, remittances), and the safeguarding of global public goods, etc.

A Royal Decree assigned the Cooperation Council the task of writing an annual report on policy coherence. This Decree could also allow the Council to issue an opinion on two different aspects: a) on the policies concerning the Development Goals and the external or vertical debt to be adopted by the different Administrations and b) on how to analyse/inform about coherent use of specific instruments in development cooperation policies, that is, debt relief, creation of business capacities, balanced integration into the international economy, development aid funds, etc., which we could call internal or horizontal policy coherence in development. This analysis is contemplated in the Council's working group on Policy Coherence. Consequently, the government will be duly informed on the degree of policy coherence.

In order to guarantee the principle of coherence – not only to be used by consultative bodies but also to be integrated into the Spanish development cooperation policy – a new integrated cycle of intervention has been created. This cycle starts with the definition of development cooperation policy, as contained in the Master Plan. This will set the basic guidelines, priorities and criteria of Spanish development cooperation in political terms. Once defined the Spanish development cooperation policy, the next step is to give it a strategic planning at sectoral level, defining the strategies for all those sectors that Spanish development cooperation regards as priority.

Sectoral strategies will be the result of an overall consultation process with experts, corresponding Public Administrations, civil society and other actors involved. As far as sectoral intervention criteria are concerned, this would provide some coherence for all the actors developing their activities in the field of cooperation. Spanish development cooperation will, therefore, set the guidelines for intervention in different areas such as co-development, health, education, cooperation with indigenous peoples, creation of economic capacities and business networks, environment, peacebuilding, etc.

Also, strategy documents will be elaborated for each partner state of the Spanish development cooperation. This means that the priorities under the Master Plan will be adapted to the different geographical contexts. These strategies will select the

most long term guidelines to be applied according to a previous analysis on the appropriateness and efficiency of Spanish development cooperation policy. They will also determine which actors, instruments and association strategies with partner countries and donors will need to be included in order to achieve maximum efficiency. The actions carried out in each sector, which are contained in the sectoral strategies, will shape the specific action strategies in each country. These geographical strategies are the result of a participation and a consensus process involving all the actors in the Spanish development cooperation. They are also a source of dialogue with other donors and partner states, which guarantees efficiency and internal coherence between all the actors involved in their elaboration (ministries, Autonomous Communities, NGOs, companies, etc.).

Once the political scenarios and the intervention strategies have been defined, there should be a follow-up and an assessment process as well as a practical implementation, execution and analysis of results. Consequently, the lessons learned out of these processes will be very useful for the following planning cycle.

The criteria to be used for evaluation will include policy coherence indicators, actors and instruments, which will guarantee horizontal or internal coherence in the implementation of all Spanish development cooperation actions. A very good indicator of the importance of the coherence principle in Spanish development cooperation policy is the exercise of providing a long term foreseeable scenario, with a constantly improving integrated cycle, subject to constant evaluation at all levels, and with political and strategic actions, which are the result of consensus and participation of all actors involved in cooperation. It must be said that coherence is, in this sense, understood as coherence in all actions carried out by the different actors without coming into conflict or endangering common interests in development – internal or horizontal coherence.

As explained above, when talking about coherence with other international actors, one criterion for intervention in Spanish development cooperation is the search for an optimal association with other donors in terms of efficiency with the partner country. By doing so, when defining geographical strategies, the main priorities would be the following: to encourage the partner country to adopt our action lines, to align with the partner country's policies and to try to adopt harmonisation initiatives with other donors in accordance with the Paris Declaration principles. Also, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation currently participates in different DAC and OECD working groups. It also participates in EU working groups, whose main goal is to achieve harmonisation of procedures and intervention guidelines so that there is international coherence in the fields of development and poverty reduction.

To give an example, Spain has recently submitted a document on migration and development to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which highlights the importance of remittances as private currency flows to development objectives.

Foroaod – Spanish Development Aid

FRIDE organised the project “Spanish Development Aid - Mid-term Review and a Proposal for a Participative Consultation” between June 2006 and April 2007. This project aims to develop a consultation process about the current Spanish government’s development cooperation policy. We have created a forum for participation and debate, in order to assess the Spanish development cooperation reform agenda and to identify the main achievements and shortcomings in operationalising the initiatives based on the principle of “More Aid, Better Aid”. A set of recommendation guidelines were developed, through participative methods, with the objective of putting into practice the aspirations of the Spanish development cooperation policy.

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