

A Participative Consultation on Spanish Development Cooperation.

FRIDE has been conducting an online consultation process for the past three months based on thirteen topics. In this consultation process one thematic room has been dedicated to each of these topics. These thirteen virtual discussion rooms are due to close in November. Thereafter, as the next step of this project, a series of workshops proposes to capture the issues raised within the online forum, as well as come up with tangible future recommendations. The results of these workshops will be published in the forum and presented at a public event in Madrid in January.

Objectives

A. Overall project objectives:

The consultation has a number of objectives and target groups, focusing on improving the overall quality of Spanish Official Development Aid. This consultation's main objectives are as follows;

- To provide a space for the general public to learn about quality in development cooperation.
- To assess the achieved in contrast to the proclaimed in 2004. The focus is rather on looking for concrete positive examples and lessons learnt, as opposed to discuss the general political orientation.
- To link the Spanish administration with European donors, agencies and think tanks and connect the Spanish policy with approaches of like-minded donors.
- To gather data and policy recommendation that could be fed into the OECD DAC review in 2007.
- To involve both government and civil society from the South and development workers / aid agency personnel to share their experiences with the Spanish aid provision "on the ground".
- To move the Spanish NGO sector towards a more professional approach that focuses rather on citizen rights of the poor than on charity-based provision of assistance and that, therefore, shifts, in the North, from being an implementing agency for the Spanish government to being a watchdog and, in the South, from providing services to empowering the poor to mobilise and claim their rights.
- To argue for a more applied focus in development studies and argue for the self-organisation of the academic profession.

B. The project so far

The project as such has found support within the administration, namely the DGPoIDe, less so with Defence. It has not been possible to include all respective departments of Government. It has found some support within the academic community, although mainly Madrid-based. It has not been possible to anchor the project within a wide support by Spanish NGOs.

With great effort, we have been able to convince some academics, civil society members and one representative of another government to make statements ("ponencias"). It has been far more difficult with NGOs. The DGPoIDe has been supportive, in spite the fact that this project adds more tasks to the already overburdened staff.

We have been able to gather a number of up-to-date and high-quality contributions about some prominent issues of the reform of the Spanish Aid System. Members of the Spanish aid community have expressed their interest and their appreciation about the project design. However, as of mid September the participation in the forum falls below the expectations. Inscription is below 300 members and contributions answering to the background documents are only a few.

Due to our capacities and abilities to find statements, we have opted to drop two of the foreseen fifteen virtual rooms (on “absorptive capacities” and “middle-income countries”).

C. Workshop objectives

Workshops are to be carried out to ensure the main project objectives are met. The focus of the workshops is on the policies of the SECI, comprising the AECI and DGPolDe. These sessions shall be based on background data and the experiences collected from a two years reform process. Through dialogue in the work groups, reform options shall be identify for the aid administration within the central government.

Output from workgroups

- A consolidated policy document that recaptures the discussion of the backgrounders and the contributions in the virtual forum
- A video/audio documentation of some of the most burning issues in the reform of the Spanish Aid (depending on external funding)

Layout of Workshops

- The thirteen thematic rooms in the FOROAOB have been regrouped into three clusters in order to structure debate. We have considered a number of possible options, however the groupings selected allows us to tackle specific cross-cutting issues in the Spanish reform agenda.

Explanation for groupings:

Cluster 1: Quality of Aid / “Institutions”. Many of the current obstacles to improve the quality of aid are not so much situated in the lack of instruments but in their application by the administrative structures. In order to react to requirements of the new aid architecture in harmonisation and results based management a significant shift in structures is necessary. The goal of this working group is to look at the structural changes in the aid provision set-up. It takes the challenge of harmonization and humanitarian action as examples. From an institutional standpoint, it focuses on the practices of evaluation and the training, selection and formation of human resources.

Cluster 2: Aid channels / “Instruments”. A central government sees itself confronted with a range of financing channels (Bi-lateral, multi-lateral, NGOs, Global Funds, etc.). There are two questions to be asked: (1) What are the comparative advantages for each of these channels? (2) How could each of these be made more effective? The first question asks to specify the mandate, effectiveness, legitimacy and partnership relation of each channel. The second asks what actions could be taken to improve the particular character of each financing channels.

Cluster 3: governance & democratisation / “Policy”. In numerous publications, governance has been identified as a main factor for the effectiveness of aid. A new emerging consensus in development thought puts the ‘right to development’ and, accordingly, rights-based approaches as the one achievement in latest development practice. The term “empowerment” and various intents to inscribe empowering approaches into donor routines has become the pivotal point of a development concept beyond economic growth. Ultimately, democracy is not only understood as

an aim by itself but as a necessary precondition for poverty reduction. Consequently, donors are not only striving to promote democracy directly by dedicating small amounts of their budgets to targeted activities. They are also considering the overall impact of large external financial flows to the polities of recipient countries. This workgroup intends to inform specific policies – such as on governance and fragile states – as well as to assess the overall aid-approach in the light of its impact on empowerment and the inclusiveness of polities.

- The thematic rooms of “AFRICA” and “COHERENCE” will be dealt with in another context
- Participants in the workshop will be invited by FRIDE, which shall try to achieve a workable mixture of academics, practitioners, officials and non-governmental representatives. Work groups shall be made up of a small numbers of people, between six and eight seems the best number to ensure maximum productivity. Each workshop will last a morning and an afternoon, to allow for reflection i.e. morning of the 12th, afternoon of the 13th.
- Each workshop will have a moderator, a note-taker / rapporteur; we intend to invite external / international observer. The participants will be remunerated and travel costs for those from outside of Madrid will be reimbursed.
- Participants will receive workshop material that comprises of the backgrounder, statements papers, together with a questions guideline to focus areas issues for debate.

Overall project timeline

	Mar	Abr	May	Jun	Jul	Ago	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dic	Ene	Feb
Stakeholder consultation	█											
Foro Virtual				█								
dissemination in CCAA								█				
grupos de trabajo									X			
Conferencia												X
mesa redonda europea												X

Cronograma de apertura de salas, talleres y conferencia - FORO VIRTUAL

Mes semana	June		July		August				September			October			Noviembre			Diciembre											
	19	26	3	10	17	24	1	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	
X - REGISTRATION.....																													
1 armonización				X																									
2 multilateralismo				X																									
3 valor añadido de ONGDs															X														
4 coherencia					X																								
5 África														X															
6 empowerment						X																							
7 recursos humanos													X																
8 cooperación descentralizada																X													
9 evaluación											X																		
10 ayuda humanitaria										X																			
11 estados fragiles																			X										
12 países de renta media															cancelado														
13 órganos de control																	X												
14 ayuda y democracia																			X										
15 absorción															cancelado														
Cierre																													X
Taller "Instituciones"																													X
Taller "Instrumentos"																													X
Taller "Políticas"																													X
producción documentales/podcast																													X
informe																													X
conferencia																													comienzos de febrero >>>