

Secretariat Development Partners' Consultative Forum

Draft Terms of Reference

January 2009

Background

In July 2005, the Development Partners in Lesotho have established the Development Partners' Consultative Forum (DPCF). The overarching objective of the DPCF is to increase the level and frequency of communication and to promote further transparency between the development partners and the Government. The Forum will ensure effectiveness of development assistance in support of the Government of Lesotho's National Vision 2020, as well as the development framework articulated in the PRS and the PSIRP.

The framework and context of development cooperation in Lesotho has evolved over the years. Past country cooperation activities were often carried out through various mechanisms. These included identified development projects or programmes funded by donor grants, concessionary loans or a mixture of both; occasional direct budget support grants; and, agreed projects which were directly executed by the resident development partner agencies. Over the years, these development assistance modalities tended to saddle and overtax the capacities of government departments devoted to negotiating, monitoring and reporting on the performance of these projects.

By the turn of the last century, there was growing consensus within the development community towards the design of broad, comprehensive national development frameworks, with the collaborative involvement of all development partners, towards the implementation of which all parties, governments and development partners alike, would contribute their resources (human, technical, financial) for the realization of agreed goals and outcomes. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) framework became one such modality for a more coherent, comprehensive and broadly consultative mechanism for focusing development cooperation resources, in order to achieve maximum impact. During the late 1990s, many developing countries began shifting from traditional medium-term National Development Planning mechanisms to the design of Interim PRSPs (I-PRSPs).

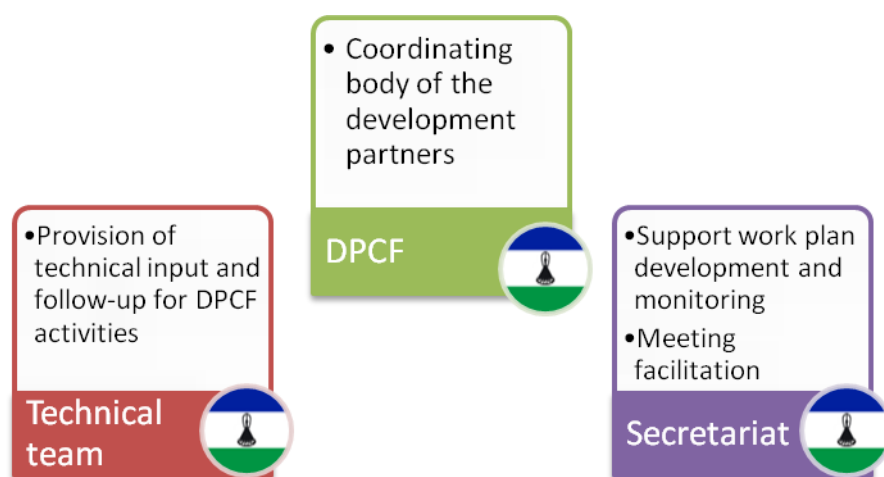
In Lesotho, subsequent to the drafting of an I-PRSP, it became necessary to develop a long-term National Vision 2020, which would set the longer-term perspective, to guide the series of medium-term planning frameworks for pursuing the goals of that Vision. The National Vision 2020 was completed in 2004, alongside the design of the first full-fledged PRSP 2004/05-2006/07. The implementation of this very comprehensive Poverty Strategy was fraught with several difficulties, among them the poor coordination of the rather insufficient and unpredictable donor resource support for the Strategy. For instance, a related policy dialogue and resource mobilization Donor Round Table Conference was held only in November 2006, towards the end of the implementation of that 3-year Poverty Strategy.

An Annual Progress Review (APR) in August/September 2007 documented some of the achievements of the PRS 2004/05-2006/07, but also noted several of the challenges that constrained implementation performance, particularly the lack of direct link between the output-based PRS goals and the national annual budgetary provisions (which are line-item based). Currently, a successor medium-term planning framework is being designed, which the Lesotho Government hopes will avoid some of the shortcomings of the PRS, and towards the implementation of which it intends to seek resource support, within the framework of a

strengthened environment for aid effectiveness. The latter would be based on adapting and implementing provisions of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

Against this background, the Development Partners in Lesotho are committed to supporting the Government in the development and implementation of a country-based action plan that sets out time-bound and monitorable proposals to implement the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

These efforts will have to be accompanied by an evolution of the role of the DPCF which in turn requires much more rigorous support through both the establishment of a technical working group including government counterparts of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the formalisation of a dedicated secretariat to the DPCF. To date, the secretariat functions have been provided in-kind through existing UNDP resources. However, given the increased importance of aid coordination and the role that the DPCF plays in this, it is felt that these functions require dedicated staff time. As such, the current Terms of Reference have been developed.



DPCF Secretariat Functions

It is proposed that the secretariat would act in a supportive and facilitative role to enable the DPCF to fulfil its mandate, by focusing on the following key functions:

1. In close collaboration with the technical team, contribute to the preparation of the annual work plans for the DPCF, monitor progress towards achievement of the plan, and regularly report back to the DPCF on that progress;
2. Facilitate meetings and intersessional work of the DPCF: organizing and preparing DPCF meetings, providing translation services, preparing agendas for meetings, preparation and distribution of relevant documents, writing up the minutes of meetings and distributing these to participants including non-resident partners;
3. Provide managerial and logistic support including, coordination of missions, studies and reviews, and prepare reports as instructed, from time to time, by the DPCF;
4. Follow-up support to recommendations from DPCF meetings, missions related to DPCF work etc to ensure that progress is made on the agreed actions (e.g. implementation of recommendations from missions etc);

5. Collate, coordinate and share information relevant to the achievement of the DPCF's overall objective including regular flow of information between members of DPCF, particularly co-chairs and concerned stakeholders, and the Aid effectiveness community at large;
6. Assist the DPCF to facilitate harmonization between the government's development efforts and those of the development partners including coordination of responses to Government- and Parliament- requests for information from the development partners;
7. Assist the DPCF in its function as a forum and networking mechanism on development issues in Lesotho, promoting the exchange of relevant (technical) information and including facilitation of access to information and expertise in support of specific initiatives;
8. Facilitate the work of the technical team by ensuring that their activities are well coordinated and aligned with the overall DPCF agenda; and
9. Carry out any other duties as requested by the DPCF consistent with its overall objective.

DPCF Secretariat Composition, Location and costing

In support to the chairs of the DPCF and in line with previous arrangements, the Secretariat will be based in the UN House hosted by the UN Resident Coordinator Office. Based on the required functions outlined above, the proposed initial staffing would comprise of a Secretary supported by an assistant.

For costing purposes, the suggested staffing above is juxtaposed with the pro-forma costs for UNDP national staff. The estimated level of the Secretary is National Officer level A (starting level), while the Assistant can be estimated at General Service Staff level 5 (mid level). In addition to salary costs, the standard formula for General Operation Expenses (utilities, equipment etc excluding rent) is used to calculate the total cost of running the secretariat (see table below). Funds will have to be raised to cover these operating costs of the Secretariat.

Item	Description	Cost (\$)
1	Secretary – National Officer level A (gross)	25,225
2	Assistant – General Service Staff level 5 (gross)	14,328
3	General Operation Expenses (20%)	7,911
	Total estimated cost for secretariat	47,464

UN operational exchange 9.43 as of Jan 2009