0. Executive Summary

1. The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) has been working on issues of policy coherence for development for over a decade at the EU and EU member-state level, and submits this comparative experience as ‘food for thought’ for the IDC’s consideration.

2. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is fundamentally a matter of politics. The key dilemma for PCD is how to develop and sustain the level of political interest in and support for PCD. Although the potential benefits of effective PCD remain unquestioned, the study shows that political leadership, sponsorship and focus have waned in recent years in the countries studied, even if many of these are considered global leaders in PCD.

3. While there is no foolproof way to sustain high-level political interest, will and support for PCD, the concept could be better branded and communicated across government and to the broader public. Champions of PCD should be proactive and tactical in focusing on windows of opportunity in specific policy processes with favourable national political and public resonance.

4. For PCD commitments at the national level to be meaningful, strategically selected priority policy areas, specific objectives and measurable progress indicators, as well as clear implementation guidelines can ensure better mainstreaming of responsibilities throughout the concerned line-ministries. The configuration and dynamics of PCD systems and mechanisms vary greatly, depending on a country’s governance and administrative culture and on the existing arrangement of government. In general, however, ownership and mainstreaming of PCD engagements across the whole of government remains problematic.

5. The investments made to bring PCD commitments into the day-to-day practice of governance continue to fall short of the effort and resources necessary to ensure adequate capacity and skills of components and actors in institutional PCD mechanisms. Cross-country analysis further confirms that having one single unit or department mandated to promote PCD is insufficient to make sustainable progress on PCD.

6. Although all concerned countries included explicit references to enhanced promotion of PCD at the EU level in their national PCD policy commitment, most have few to no linkages in place between the existing institutional arrangement for EU coordination and the PCD mechanisms. Putting PCD on the agenda of existing EU policy coordination mechanisms and involving PCD-mandated bodies in the national positioning processes toward EU policy dossiers remains a challenge.

7. Whereas knowledge inputs and assessment mechanisms can demonstrate the value and impact of PCD by rendering an otherwise abstract concept more concrete and tangible, the knowledge factor is still by far the least developed aspect of the PCD systems covered in this study. Without investment in evidence-driven research on the (potential) impact of national and EU policies on developing countries, commitments and institutional arrangements for PCD will continue to lack the necessary traction and evidence base.

8. The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) is a non-partisan, strategic “think and do tank” with the status of an independent foundation. ECDPM produced public goods in relation to development policy and has had policy coherence for development an issue of direct relevance to this enquiry as a key focus of its work.

9. Reasons for submitting:
- ECDPM as a knowledge broker and with significant experience on policy coherence for development – an issue directly related to the nature of IDC enquiry.
- In line with focus on missing issues from the MDGs: economic growth, governance, rule of law, tackling corruption, peace and stability, and putting women and girls first.
- This evidence related to the coherence of policies which affect development (including aid, security, prosperity, and climate)
- UK and IDC would do well to be aware of challenges other countries have had to advance policy coherence for development that may prove insightful for the United Kingdom.

1. Key dilemmas for advancing PCD

1. The below sections present an overview of the broad trends on the recent developments in the promotion of PCD for six country cases (Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Germany, Netherlands & Sweden) undertaken in 2013. From these broad trends, key dilemmas and challenges for advancing PCD are derived and laid alongside possible or employed responses to address them.

1.1. Commitment to PCD – conflicting interests or seeking synergies

2. All countries concerned have in recent years made, restated or refined policy commitments to PCD, which vary to a great degree in their nature (specificity, priorities noted, implementation). Critical drivers for such commitments were political leadership, pressure from civil society and international commitments. For commitment to PCD to be sustained, long-term and sufficiently high-level political support is required in order to anchor this commitment across government. The key dilemma for countries is how to develop and sustain the level of political interest in and support for PCD, firstly to put a commitment to PCD on the agenda, and secondly to make those commitments meaningful for promoting PCD at both the national and the EU level.

3. In this regard, the questions raised on promoting PCD over the long-term in the 2007 study still stand: “How does one, for instance, sustain political support for PCD over a period of a couple of decades? What can be done to build multi-party consensus in parliament to ensure continuing commitment to PCD when government changes? What are the implications for forward planning of work on promoting PCD? What level of impact can one hope to achieve over different shorter and longer periods of time? Can one envisage a PCD promotion strategy that evolves over time through various phases?” (ECDPM, ICIE, Particip GmbH. 2007, p.100) These are questions PCD champions must ask themselves once they set out to develop national PCD systems.

Table 1: Key dilemmas and possible responses regarding policy commitments towards PCD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key dilemmas</th>
<th>Possible responses</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1) Sustaining political interest, will and support for PCD. | • Recognise the limits of what can be achieved on PCD without political sponsorship, focus and leadership;  
• Invite and respond to sustained pressure from champions for PCD in civil society and cross-party support in parliament: this in turn implies that any |
2) Making PCD commitments at national level meaningful.

- Policy commitments towards PCD should have:
  - clearly expressed priority policy areas or objectives to achieve through PCD, preferably those which have national political resonance or enjoying political sponsorship;
  - clear indications on how the commitment should be implemented in terms of assigned responsibilities, new arrangements and mechanisms;
  - clear indications on how progress both for developing the national PCD system and whether national policies are coherent with development objectives should be measured, monitored and evaluated (see section 3.5 on knowledge inputs);
  - provisions for regular review of the commitment, in part in order to include arising policy priorities.

3) Making PCD commitments for EU policies and at EU level meaningful.

- Include commitments for PCD towards EU policies and at EU level in PCD policy statements;
- Engage in dialogue with other EU capitals in addition to the EU PCD Work Programme to build common support for priority policy areas for PCD best pursued at EU level.
- Look to promote PCD in general EU policy coherence dialogue, outside the EU PCD Work Programme.

4) Ensuring that there is a common understanding and a shared ownership of what is meant by ‘development’ and a broad knowledge of development policy objectives.

- Adopt and promote an unambiguous, all-of-government understanding of development linked to all of government policies on development with clear objectives;
- Actively consult all ministries whose mandate may affect developing countries in the policy consultation process.

5) Ensuring that there is a common understanding and a shared ownership both of the concept of PCD and the PCD policy commitments in place beyond those mandated to promote it.

- Adopt and promote joint or inter-ministerial policy commitments and strategies for the medium- to long-term that seek synergies between interlinked policy areas;
- Seek out high-level political sponsorship on specific thematic issues to create momentum for PCD;
- Integrate PCD into commitments and practices that aim to ensure policy coherence, clearly noting the distinction.

4. The impression was that the various countries have taken lessons from the EU and OECD discussions on PCD, and in response made more pragmatic commitments and efforts towards achieving PCD either by concentrating on a limited number of priority policy areas, or by making practical, procedural commitments to PCD. Nonetheless, political leadership, sponsorship and focus have waned in recent years for all countries. The reality remains that development cooperation remains lower on the political agenda than issues clearly framed as direct economic or
political interest, particularly in the recent years of financial crisis. However, the need for clear, unambiguous policy statements for PCD has not diminished, nor has the need to restate and refine such commitments over time – both require a measure of sustained political pressure.

5. As such, understanding or recognition of the concept of PCD promoted in the various policy commitments does not often extend very far beyond a small group of core PCD promoters (usually those civil servants or NGO staff actively working on the issue). Even in the case where explicit policy statements or legal commitments exist, there remains (perhaps wilful) confusion about the difference between ‘policy coherence’ and PCD. This may in part be due to the term ‘PCD’ itself, which can be perceived as an overly technical and broad concept to be concretely integrated in policy statements.

1.2. Institutional arrangements and mechanisms for PCD

6. Many of the issues affecting the potential of specific arrangements and mechanisms for promoting PCD already arise in policy statements and commitments towards PCD. Notably, most commitments made in the countries studied lack both provisions for implementation including clearly assigned responsibilities and clearly stated objectives in terms of achieving PCD. The effectiveness of such mechanisms are never constant, instead they match the ebb and flow of government and political support. Whereas there is generally a degree of compromise involved in national policy consultation and coordination processes, with different policy areas seeking to be ‘more coherent than others’, the balance of such compromise has swung towards more narrowly defined national political and economic interests in recent years. Institutional mechanisms have therefore become constrained by the lack of political support and also the lack of knowledge-inputs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key dilemmas</th>
<th>Possible responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) Ensuring that PCD is seen as the responsibility of all or various cross-cutting government departments and involved both the political and the technical layers of government (thus creating a ‘culture of coherence’). | • Involve all cross-cutting offices of government (including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Ministers Office, inter-ministerial structures and permanent geographic/thematic desks) into the PCD mechanisms;  
  • Mandate relevant units or departments to do more than awareness-raising on the concept of PCD;  
  • Integrated PCD checks into the inter-ministerial policy consultation process as well as the policy escalation process in case of disagreement. |
| 2) Integrating (new) PCD arrangements and mechanisms into existing governance arrangements, and balancing formal with informal arrangements. | • Develop and adapt PCD arrangements and mechanisms as part of existing policy formulation, consultation and coordination procedures;  
  • Promote mutually reinforcing formal and informal arrangements. |
| 3) Ensuring that components and actors in the PCD arrangements and mechanisms have the | • Curb the high turnover and rotation of staff in PCD-mandated units and departments in |
resources, capacity and skills necessary to effectively promote PCD.

| order to promote the development of capacity, technical expertise and institutional memory;  
| • Implement cross-government PCD-targeted staff exchange and training programmes to raise awareness and develop capacities;  
| • Regularly monitor and externally evaluate the effectiveness of PCD-mandated units or departments in addition to the OECD DAC Peer Reviews.  

| 4) Ensuring that PCD is an equal-status priority rather than a matter of compromise.  
| • Seek to bring together a variety of stakeholders through PCD mechanisms (both at different levels in government, across different policy areas and outside government).  

7. All country cases noted the mutually reinforcing interaction between formal and informal linkages, with policy coordination processes being driven more by one of the two with a clear role for the other. The exact ‘shape’ of the PCD systems and mechanisms studied depends on both the administrative / governance culture and on the existing arrangement of government. Regarding the latter, permanent geographic or thematic desks in the various ministries are the veins of policy coordination, but are rarely involved in PCD mechanisms.

8. The results re-confirm the finding of the 2007 study that one single institutional mechanism driving the PCD agenda is insufficient. Among the constraints is the lack of opportunities to retain and develop skills and capacities due to insufficient resources and regular staff rotation within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Continued discussion on efforts to promote PCD should thus not leave much space for governments to underestimate the effort and resources necessary to promote PCD at a national level.

1.3. Promoting PCD in EU policies – at national or at EU level

9. All countries studied have to some degree included references towards achieving PCD in EU policies and/or promoting PCD at EU level in their national policy commitments for PCD. Indeed, all countries participate in the EU’s Work Programme for PCD and have established systems for coordinating national positions on EU policies, including development policy. However, very few linkages had been put in place to link existing institutional arrangements for EU coordination with mechanisms for promoting PCD. The key dilemma is therefore how to effectively link the well-established and powerful systems for EU policy coherence at the national level with those for PCD (and vice-versa).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key dilemmas</th>
<th>Possible responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) Establishing and strengthening linkages between existing PCD arrangements and mechanisms and the national EU policy coordination mechanisms. | • Actively involve PCD-mandated structures in the EU policy coordination process;  
• Mirror PCD arrangements and mechanisms to the EU policy coordination by developing expertise on areas of EU competence (such as the CAP);  
• See to ensure EU policy coordination mechanisms have PCD “on the agenda” or relevant joint sessions with PCD mechanisms |
| 2) Ensuring capacity for relevant departments and units to promote PCD in EU policies. | • Invest in training programmes, awareness raising and priority setting for personnel involved in relevant departments;  
• Undertake staff exchanges between civil servants from the development department and those in departments coordinating EU policy dossiers (CAP, trade, fisheries etc.). |
| 3) Assuming an active role in promoting PCD at the EU level                 | • Promote dialogue on best practice in promoting PCD in EU policies at the national level;  
• Seek alternative alliances beyond official EU structures with other EU member-states (and other key promoters in the European Parliament and civil society) to push progress on PCD on thematic policy issues |

10. In part, the lack of integration is due to the fact that PCD-mandated departments and units do not have sufficient resources or capacity to integrate and assert themselves in the faster-paced EU policy coordination cycles. Promoting PCD in EU policies or PCD at EU level requires considerable coordination capacity and technical knowledge to coalesce in short policy coordination cycles - few countries currently effectively achieve this.

11. There is a need to ensure that pursuit of PCD in EU policies or at EU level does not imply abandoning PCD at the national level. In promoting PCD at EU level (e.g. during the term of a Rotating Presidency or in the context of the PCD Work Programme), countries are most active in those areas that have national resonance or are national priority issues for PCD. Efforts to promote PCD at EU level are hence equally, if not more effectively fulfilled by promoting PCD in the national EU policy coordination system and in bilateral relations with other EU Member States. Countries could consider the EU as a knowledge-sharing platform for best practice in development cooperation, specifically for achieving PCD at EU level through national commitments and mechanisms.

1.4. **Missing evidence and accountability drivers for promoting PCD – knowledge-inputs and -assessment**

12. Knowledge inputs and assessment are critical components that should drive both the political commitment and institutional practice for PCD by rendering an otherwise abstract concept more
concrete and tangible. Whereas knowledge inputs in particular can demonstrate the value and impact of PCD, it is still by far the least developed aspect of the PCD systems of the six countries studied.

13. While some effort has gone towards research on PCD, these are often limited to studying and promoting the concept at an abstract or policy-making level, e.g. describing what PCD is, how it could theoretically benefit developing countries, and pointing towards glaring policy incoherencies, discussions on mechanisms. These studies commonly utilise existing knowledge systems in the (national) development cooperation sphere to derive insights. Although mainstreaming PCD within these systems is to be welcomed, countries are still to seriously invest in developing and integrating methodologies and practices for gathering information at the level of developing countries on how national policies affect development outcomes.

Table 4: Key dilemmas in developing knowledge-inputs and –assessment mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key dilemmas</th>
<th>Possible responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ensuring that PCD issues are systematically assessed throughout policy coordination processes rather than treated on an ad-hoc or case-by-case basis.</td>
<td>• Integrate PCD assessment into policy consultations and existing policy impact assessment and evaluation systems, as well as knowledge management systems, used throughout the relevant ministries and departments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2) Developing evidence of national and international policies and policy incoherencies on developing countries or development objectives. | • Invest in assessing impact at the country level or on themes – joining international initiatives (such as those sponsored by the OECD);  
  • Positively respond to efforts of civil society and independent organisations to research the development impact of policies;  
  • Support critical, independent research on PCD and the impact of national policies on developing countries. |
| 3) When can it be said if development proofing / policy coherence for development has been achieved? What constitutes an appropriate amount of effort and outcome? | • Recognise that development proofing / achievement of PCD requires the three elements and is beyond merely knowledge input alone. For government’s and the EU it means having narratives that illustrate credibly how the three mechanisms have delivered change and safeguards for PCD generally and in specific cases. For civil society, media, and knowledge input mechanisms (academia / think tanks / accountability bodies) role is to interrogate how credible and effective these are generally, and in specific cases. |

14. It remains unclear, however, to what extent research presently undertaken feeds into and influences the policy and practice for PCD. Ideally, such research and evidence would feed directly into the national policy coordination and assessment process. As such, it is critical that any effort to devise clear indicators linked to PCD objectives are derived explicitly from the national development
policy framework rather than only from international guidelines in order for national ownership of the concept and practice of PCD to ultimately be increased.

Table 5: Examples of Policy Commitment(s) specifically to PCD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Legal Commitment</th>
<th>All-of-Government</th>
<th>Development Ministry / MFA</th>
<th>Non-Development/MFA Ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Included in 2013 law on development cooperation</td>
<td>Yes – legal (see 2013 law). The aim is to come to a high-level whole-of-government statement in 2013.</td>
<td>2013 Policy Note for Development Cooperation.</td>
<td>None yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No, policy statements mainly at Development Ministry level.</td>
<td>Yes, noted (ambiguously) in 2009 Coalition Agreement and 2011 BMZ concept Minds for Change.</td>
<td>No specific PCD commitments of other ministries; Joint strategies / papers (e.g. food security) exist.</td>
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2 See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (2012).
4 See Prime Minister’s Office Finland (2012).
5 See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2011).
6 See Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (2011).
7 See Department of Environment (2012).
8 See Coalition CDU, CSU and FDP (2009).
10 See Bundesministerium für Ernährung Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz and Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (2012).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year of commitment</th>
<th>Thematic Areas 14</th>
<th>Commitment made in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Debt recovery, social and ecological aspects of trade agreements, financial sector. Step-by-step involvement in five priority areas, as stipulated in EU PCD Work Programme 2010-2013.</td>
<td>2013 Policy Note for Development Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Food security, trade, tax, migration and security.</td>
<td>2012 Development Policy Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>No clearly identified focus areas for PCD at the national level. Reform of global trade system (WTO rules) and agricultural subsidies recurrently noted.</td>
<td>Coalition Agreement 2009 Minds for Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Hunger and nutrition</td>
<td>[NB: the thematic areas was proposed by the Hunger Task Force’s Report 15 subsequently endorsed by the Government].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>The 5 EU priority areas for PCD, noted as GPGs: trade and finance, climate change, food security, migration, security.</td>
<td>2011. The Development-dimension of International Public Goods (IPGs): A Practical Agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Six priority areas: Oppression, Economic exclusion, migration flows, climate change and environmental impact, conflict and fragile situations, communicable diseases and other health threats (including sub themes under each of these)</td>
<td>Government Communication, Global Challenges – our responsibility, Govt. Comm. 2007/08:89 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There has been a specific overarching EU policy commitment to policy coherence in reference to development since the Treaty of Maastricht updated in Article of the Treaty of Lisbon 2009. The EU also committed to 12 policy areas - Trade, Environment, Climate Change, Security, Agriculture, Fisheries, Social Dimension of Globalization, Employment and Decent work, Migration, Research and Innovation, Information Society, Transport and Energy in 2005. In 2009 Council conclusions the EU noted that while the 12 policy areas remained, the PCD work programme should focus on “five priority issues”, “trade and finance, climate change, food security, migration and security”. These were again endorsed along with the overall commitments to PCD in “Council conclusions” in the Foreign Affairs Council in May 2012.17

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12 See Björling (2010).
13 See Statens Offentliga utredningar (2011)
14 Countries can be expected to also have committed to the five EU PCD priority areas as per the 14 May 2012 Council Conclusions.
Table 7: Existing institutional mechanisms for promoting PCD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year instituted</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Situated</th>
<th>Mandate for PCD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Inter-ministerial network on PCD</td>
<td>Inter-ministerial, political level.</td>
<td>Awareness raising and exchange of information on PCD issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Inter-Department Committee on Development (IDCD)</td>
<td>Inter-ministerial, political level.</td>
<td>Strengthen coherence in the governments approach to development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Unit for Development Cooperation Governance (UD- USTYR)</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for Development Cooperation, technical level.</td>
<td>Coordinating government efforts towards the PGD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bibliography


http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/02/45/20/c4527821.pdf.


Size: under 3000 words excluding tables and bibliography