

Spring Meetings

The IMF and World Bank held their Spring Meetings on 21/22 of April. The main points of discussion were the Millennium Development Goals and the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference. The CDF/PRSP framework was seen as the common foundation for country-level partnerships between developed and developing countries, according to the World Bank's PovNet newsletter at <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/news/02apr.htm>

For more information about the Spring Meetings see <http://www.worldbank.org/springmeetings/>

Learning Events

The Synthesis Project has facilitated Learning Events for two groups within EECAD. The first, for the Russia and Ukraine team, focussed on the relevance of PRS principles for middle-income countries. The second, for the Low Income Countries team, focussed on experience so far with PRSPs and what might be relevant for that set of countries.

Upcoming Events include one for the Environment Advisers and one for IUDD.

Things to note: We can provide Learning Events for your department, tailored to your needs and attached to an existing event if desired. Copies of all presentations are available on the intranet at <http://insight/prspproject/lemenu.htm>

Berlin PRSP conference

BMZ and GTZ have hosted a conference on PRSPs in Berlin from 13-16 May. The conference has covered 5 areas:

- poverty analysis and monitoring
- pro-poor growth
- participation
- gender
- sustainable development

Results will be posted on the conference website at <http://www.gtz.de/poverty-conference/index.html>

CAS and PRSPs

As a result of the World Bank's PRSP Review, the Bank has decided to make the relationship between PRSPs and the CAS more formal, as follows:

"Bank management has advised staff that, beginning July 2002, normally a new CAS should not be presented to the Board until a country has completed its first full PRSP. After this date, for countries that have not completed their PRSP, the Bank's assistance program will be normally updated in a Progress Report to be presented to the Board, covering a period of up to 18 months and focusing on the Bank's support to the preparation of the PRSP. This should provide countries with sufficient time to complete their PRSPs. A full CAS will be prepared soon after the PRSP is completed."

Things to note: This should not be taken to mean that the Bank is imposing any kind of deadline on the creation of nationally owned PRSPs - the aim is to tie the Bank's own strategy more closely with the nationally-owned strategy rather than vice-versa. Please contact us for more details or clarification.

Joint donor training

A group of bilateral donors and the World Bank Institute have agreed to pilot a joint donor training exercise on PRSPs. This pilot will take place in June in East Africa and will involve staff from 8 donors. Contact us for more information.

Malawi PRSP Launch

The Malawian government recently launched its full PRSP. The launch was attended by the President, the Vice President, most if not all of the cabinet, and over a thousand others representing Parliament, civil society, and the private sector. Speakers were drawn from a range of interest groups, and Mike Wood (Head of DFID Malawi) gave a speech on behalf of donor agencies.

The speech addressed a wide range of issues related to the PRSP, including the commitment to greater participation, the challenges of implementation ahead, and the need for greater efforts at donor coordination. A transcript is available on request.

DFID Country Plans

Guidance is in preparation for a new DFID Country Plan. This guidance proposes that DFID Country Plans should focus on how DFID will support countries in implementing their own development strategies.

Country Plans will:

- provide an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the country's own development strategy
- recommend the scale and modalities for DFID assistance
- assess the level of risk inherent in the programme based on this analysis
- include coverage of staffing implications
- be updated annually, replacing the APPRs and PARP

CPs will also include time-bound annual targets for measuring the impact of DFID's interventions on progress towards the changes needed to achieve the goals of the country's own strategy. These targets will be directly related to DFID's Regional PSA/SDA targets.

For more information, please contact Sue Wardell on s_wardell@dfid.gov.uk.

Capacity building for PRSPs

The World Bank and IMF have recently launched a trust fund to support capacity building needs around PRSP formulation. The trust fund, supported by the Netherlands and Japan, will consider proposals from both governments and civil society organisations. The fund will in principle support any activity that is a country priority for strengthening the formulation or implementation for poverty reduction strategies.

For more information, go to <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/trustfund.htm>

How to...work with PRSPs

DFID is preparing a series of internal 'How to' notes on working with the PRSP process. If anyone believes that their experience could be used as the basis of good practice or other lesson learning, please contact Alison Scott on a-scott@dfid.gov.uk

PRSPs in transition countries and Latin America

The Synthesis Project is about to start work on briefing notes on experience with PRSPs in transition countries and Latin America. Please contact us for more information or to share experiences.

Gender in Bangladesh

In February, DFID participated in a series of donor-civil society meetings on gender in Bangladesh's PRSP. The meetings aimed to raise awareness of the PRSP among women's civil society groups, begin to look at the PRSP from a gender perspective, and organise for future action.

Points raised in the meetings included:

- the need to focus on individuals rather than households
- the need to consider women's participation in the private sector and the problem of globalisation from a gender perspective
- questions over the poverty impacts of the macroeconomic framework
- the need for the PRSP to take account of the National Action Plan for Women's Advancement
- the need to consider violence against women

Some of the core decisions taken included:

- working with the Women In Development focal points in different ministries
- engendering the PRSP steering committee
- providing the WB Sourcebook chapter on gender to relevant ministries
- assisting women media workers to write on the participatory process

It was emphasised throughout that local people would take forward these actions with donor support as necessary.

For more information contact Mahmuda Rahman Khan on mr-khan@dfid.gov.uk

Participation in Latin America

The World Bank and DFID (among others) sponsored a meeting in Brazil recently on methodologies for the design and evaluation of PRSPs. Helen Appleton (DFID) gave a presentation on the principles of participation and relevant experience from other Latin American countries.

Some interesting points include:

- the poor are difficult to reach, and genuine representatives are hard to find
- some historically excluded groups (women, indigenous groups, and those of African descent) are even more difficult to reach
- within NGOs and civil society, middle-class elites can dominate
- gender and race discrimination issues are not always tackled within government and NGO/CSO organisations
- governments find concepts of participation difficult both to understand and to implement
- donors encourage participation but are not always participative themselves or prepared to practise participation techniques in order to be better co-ordinated

Contact us for a copy of the presentation or more information.

PRSPs: Value-added?

Mokoro, an Oxford-based consultancy firm, held a one-day seminar on 'PRSPs: What is the value added?' The day focused on the findings of the PRSP Review, with additional presentations on the Ethiopian PRSP and PRSPs in transition countries. For more information, contact Philip Lister of Mokoro on plister@mokoro.co.uk

London: meeting series

Two new meeting series may be of interest. Both include meetings about PRSPs.

- **Can Africa Make It? Prospects for Africa's development** (ODI, Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Africa Centre, and the Royal African Society)

- **Putting Politics Back into Development: are we getting there?** (ODI and DESTIN/LSE)

For more information, please see www.odi.org.uk/meetings.html

Rwanda: *ubudehe* for poverty reduction

The PPA process that fed into the Rwandan PRSP is now being connected with decentralisation and empowerment efforts through *ubudehe*. *Ubudehe* is based on the traditional Rwandan concept of collective action, but with an added element of participative analysis and decision-making. Communities will go through a process of communal decision-making to analyse poverty, identify and prioritise problems, and develop action plans to address them. Each community has been allocated ECU 1000 per year to implement their plans, and central government will provide support with standard information packs where relevant. It is envisaged that, over time, this process will underpin all financial allocation and planning activities in the delivery of the PRS within Rwanda's decentralisation programme. Contact us for more information.

Things to note: PPAs have been a significant element of the PRSP process in several countries. Different PPA methodologies may be appropriate to different circumstances. It may be relevant to point partner governments to the work of the Participation Unit at the World Bank as a starting point, on <http://www.worldbank.org/participation/web/webfiles/ppamethods.htm>

Evaluation of GBS

DFID's Evaluation Department are funding an evaluation of general budget support. This is the first phase of what is likely to be more detailed evaluation work conducted jointly with other donors.

The evaluation will help managers and decision makers in DFID to:

- clarify the objectives of the budget support instrument and the performance information needed to evaluate programme success
- understand how DFID behaviour has changed in those programmes that include a significant share of budget support
- see what changes to programme design, implementation and monitoring are required to help achieve programme goals

It is expected that this phase of the evaluation will identify whether further evaluation is likely to be useful and in what areas it should be focused. Future work might be focused, on specific aspects of the budgetary process, institutional outcomes, and policy ownership, among other areas. For more information contact Joanna Wilkes on j-wilkes@dfid.gov.uk

Oxfam: Influencing PRSs

Oxfam have produced a resource document for those working to influence policy in low income-countries and elsewhere.

The document, called 'Influencing Poverty Reduction Strategies: A Guide', falls into four sections:

- the increasing opportunities for civil society to participate in policy formulation and implementation
- the meaning of different levels of participation and what might be required for meaningful participation
- the policy formulation process and how the content of policies can be influenced (this includes an annex of arguments for and against typical policy reforms)
- the role of civil society in monitoring policy implementation

This document is likely to be a useful resource for a variety of stakeholders and is available at <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/prsguide/prsguide.html>

DFID Uganda: PRSC Lessons

DFID Uganda have produced the first in a series of internal 'Lessons' papers drawing on their experience. The first note focuses on experience with the Uganda PRSC.

Some key points include:

- be prepared for a bumpy ride to ownership - and ensure that institutional homes and responsibilities within Government for reforms are clear from the outset
- develop joint donor/Government guidelines early to facilitate joint working
- a realistic set of reforms should build on sector processes already in place
- sector benchmarks and prior actions should be agreed through the sector itself - not just MoF
- avoid imposing additional burdens on fragile reporting and monitoring capacity - streamline and harmonise reporting processes with existing Government frameworks

Things to note: The PRSC is a relatively new WB aid instrument and as such experience is limited. If you are looking for help, please contact us for a copy of the DFID Uganda note above. Rachel Turner is a contact point within IFID for further information. Also, draft guidance on PRSCs is available on the WB website at <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/html/eswwebsite.nsf/PRSC/Guidelines+PRSC?OpenDocument>

Water and PRSPs

DFID (IUDD) is funding research into the degree of inclusion of water supply and sanitation issues in PRSPs, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, and either Tanzania or Madagascar). In June, the project is holding a Regional Workshop with 12 countries, with an aim to share experience and identifying capacity-building requirements. Contact Peter Newborne of ODI for more information on p.newborne@odi.org.uk