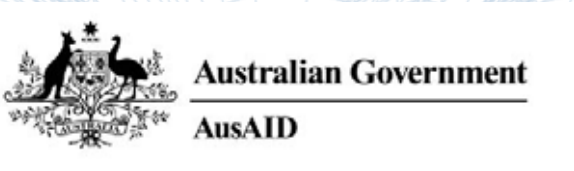
Joint Evaluation Study of Provision of Technical Assistance Personnel

What can we learn from promising experiences?

Synthesis Report

Tony Land



A synthesis report prepared for the Study on Promising Approaches to Technical Assistance

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The ECDPM research team: Tony Land, Heather Baser, Volker Hauck, David Watson, Julia Zinke and Anje Kruiter-Jooya

Acronyms

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CD	capacity development
CEMA	State Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs
CIEM	Central Institute for Economic Management
CIM	German organisation (a subsidiary of GTZ) that identifies and mobilises 'integrated experts' in developing countries.
Comsec	Commonwealth Secretariat
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU
CV	curriculum vitae
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of OECD
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development [UK]
EC	European Commission
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
FA	financial assistance
FASE	Education Sector Pool Fund (Mozambique)
GBS	general and sector budget support
GDP	gross domestic product
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation Agency
HCS	Hanoi Core Statement on Aid Effectiveness
HDI	Human Development Index
HQ	headquarters
HR	human resources
HRD	human resources development
HRM	human resources management
IDC	interdepartmental committee
IDO	International Development Organisation
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MDTF	Multi Development partner Trust Fund for Public Financial Management Reform (Vietnam)
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFI	Ministry of Fisheries
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NTP	national target programme
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PAAT	performance-assessment advisory team
PAP	Programme Assistance Partners
PBAs	programme-based approaches
PFM	public finance management
PIUs	programme-implementation units
PMU	programme-management unit
PROAGRI	Agriculture Sector Reform Programme (Mozambique)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
R&D	research and development
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RGSF	RAMSI Governance Support Facility
RWSS	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (Vietnam)
SBV	State Bank of Vietnam
SIG	Solomon Islands Government

SISTAFE	State Financial Administration System
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SPCG	Strategic Policy Coordination Group
SWAps	sector-wide approaches
TA	technical assistance
TC	technical cooperation
TORs	terms of reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States
UTRESP	Technical Unit for Public Sector Reform (Mozambique)
VAMESP II	Vietnamese Australia Monitoring and Evaluation Strengthening Project Phase II
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
WoG	whole-of-government
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Executive Summary

Background

- This study was commissioned to contribute to the current discussions on aid effectiveness and capacity development by learning about what works in relation to the deployment of technical-assistance (TA) personnel, and to see what initiatives/reforms are being taken to improve practice.

- The report draws on the findings of three country studies conducted in Mozambique, Solomon Islands and Vietnam, a workshop held in Maastricht in May 2007, as well as a review of the wider literature, earlier summarised in the study's inception report.

- It is important to underline this study's focus on TA *personnel*, and to make it clear that this focus is distinguished from a more comprehensive understanding of technical assistance, elsewhere referred to as 'technical cooperation'.

Key Conclusions and Implications for Development Partners and Partner Countries

- A key determinant of TA effectiveness is *country management of TA personnel*. Decisions about recruitment and deployment should ideally be a country responsibility, negotiated openly with development partners and based on full access to information (including the costs of alternative TA inputs). Once deployed, TA personnel should be unambiguously accountable to the host organisations they serve.

- The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness provides a framework for monitoring the reform of TA management. In some countries, such as Vietnam, the prospect for country-managed TA is good. For countries such as Mozambique, the goal is already established but it will take several years to realise and progress will be uneven across sectors and regions. In such contexts, pooling TA personnel offers potential for progressively shifting the responsibility for TA management towards country partners, provided the process is country driven. In Solomon Islands, where the preconditions for successful management of TA personnel are largely absent, interim actions are needed to help empower country partners, based on greater accountability of TA personnel to host-country supervisors.

- The other key determinant of TA effectiveness is *a more informed understanding of how TA can support capacity development and change*. Capacity development is a complex phenomenon, and the success of TA personnel as necessary and sufficient ingredients for supporting it should not be assumed. Having an explicit theory of action with an understanding of how different models of change can contribute to capacity development should increase the chances of success.

- The study highlights the importance of a good design, including proper diagnosis of needs (at all levels of government, not just at the centre); determining the appropriate mix of 'direct' and 'indirect' approaches and knowing when to shift from one to the other; the benefits of flexible and iterative programme approaches and the value of M&E systems that address accountability and learning, and which provide the right incentives. The study also highlights the need to deploy appropriate personnel with both substantive expertise and process skills, but cautions that there are limits to what any external intervention can achieve, especially in complex and politically sensitive environments. There is a need for a more open debate on the role of TA personnel in supporting the process of capacity development.

- Overall, there is a strong argument for development partners to *let go* of TA management in order to empower country partners to assume full and legitimate responsibility for TA

personnel. There needs to be a gradual and managed transition from an approach that is led more by development partners to one that gives increasing responsibility to partner countries, while taking account of their capacity. In many situations, interim measures, including increasing the accountability link between TA personnel and partner country supervisors, can be a step in the right direction. A gradual approach should not, however, be an excuse for non-action, and measures need to be in place to continuously monitor progress. There is an equally strong imperative for development partners to remain engaged at the field level and to invest in and support capacity development as an area of specialised knowledge and practice.

- For partner countries**,** there is an urgency to come to grips with human resources planning and management within their public services and to think more strategically about the use of TA personnel as an instrument for sustainable capacity development. It is also important to recognise that TA provision can never be a substitute for fundamental reform of public service. Unless this is addressed, the sustainability of TA interventions will always be in doubt.

Demand for TA

- Demand for TA personnel is complicated in the context of aid because the normal relationship between patron and client is distorted by the presence of the development partner. For development partners, TA can be a strategic resource for assuring efficient and effective implementation of their cooperation objectives. Partner country demand for TA personnel is less well defined but, on the evidence of the three case studies, remains strong. There tend not to be formal policies or strategies on TA, nor is there necessarily a focal point for channelling demand. The issue does not feature prominently in strategic thinking and planning processes, and is usually addressed at an operational level, programme by programme.

- Countries that exercise strong leadership, have well-defined development strategies, or are serious about improving the performance of public services are better placed to articulate needs**,** and can engage more easily on the topic. National and sector development plans can offer a more solid base upon which to consider TA; yet, in practice, the deployment of TA remains ad hoc and poorly coordinated.

- Assessing the demand for TA personnel is complicated because it is viewed by partner countries as a ‘free’ good. This discourages critical appraisal of potential costs and benefits. The absence of transparency on the part of development partners regarding TA costs, and the lack of opportunity for host governments to compare alternatives, constrains informed decision-making on the part of the host country. None of the three countries in this study have systems in place to allow for effective human resources planning and management, including specification of TA needs.

- Demands for TA personnel are extremely varied and situation specific. For development partners, they are perceived as a flexible instrument that can address a number of objectives and perform a variety of functions. For partner countries, TA can help perform functions and provide services that cannot be provided by the local labour market. This includes gap filling, advice giving, capacity development and project management.

- Patterns of demand differ, particularly at the sub-national level where capacity challenges may call for a different use of TA. There is also increasing interest in sourcing expertise locally and regionally, rather than relying on international experts. Not only are there clear advantages in doing this, but more generally, the Vietnam and Mozambique studies noted the value of complementary inputs from these various sources.

- The implications of global security and of safeguarding global public goods, such as the environment, have created a new imperative for more direct engagement by development partners in fragile states in order to ensure at least a minimum level of functionality. In middle-income countries, a more focused and selective pattern of demand is emerging.

Management of TA

- Management of TA in the case studies remains de facto a mainly development partner responsibility, albeit with increased and sometimes significant levels of country participation, which can result in forms of joint management. The extent to which one or the other party assumes the burden of responsibility varies considerably.

- Countries are less concerned about taking over actual procurement and often welcome the assistance of development partner partners in this aspect of the process. However, they expect to be given more voice, and choice, in decision-making on the selection and recruitment of TA personnel. Once deployed, countries expect TA personnel to be directly accountable to *them*, although often this is still not the case – the influence of the development partner, as 'paymaster', may remain strong. In practice, there are various examples of joint or hybrid mechanisms that balance competing demands for accountability.

- While the literature, as well as practitioners, recognises that the proper induction of TA personnel is an essential step in the process of managing TA, this is an area that does not yet receive the attention it deserves.

- *Pooling* is becoming an increasingly popular mechanism for managing TA personnel. It offers a number of potential benefits for increasing country participation by aligning development partner support around national processes, providing a framework to discuss and diagnose capacity needs, and encouraging greater financial transparency. But pooling is not without its risks and there are no guarantees that its potential benefits can be fully realised in all countries. Its effectiveness depends on the process being country driven as part and parcel of efforts to facilitate countries' taking leadership in the development agenda.

- Where pooling is neither practical nor desirable, other mechanisms can be used to increase country participation. AusAID's *facilities* can offer a way of doing so where it is important to increase country engagement in the management process but where local capacity remains weak.

- The research raises the question of whether procurement through the market place is always the best way to match supply and demand for TA, especially where capacity development services are required. It is often difficult to specify the services needed and to cost them appropriately. The weight often put on cost in awarding contracts can be a disincentive to capacity development work. Part of the answer lies in strengthening procurement capacity in partner countries. For their part, development partners could work more through negotiated agreements and partnerships in cases where the outcomes of capacity development are paramount.

Effectiveness of TA

- Effectiveness is a relative concept. Criteria for measuring effectiveness need to be tailored to the different purposes TA personnel serve and to take account of the interests of the different stakeholders involved. Two questions seem fundamental: effective for what and effective for whom? There are formidable methodological challenges associated with assessing the effectiveness of TA personnel, particularly when capacity development is the main objective.

- Various terms are used to classify TA personnel, but these are rarely used consistently. Roles and functions often overlap and are not always well defined. It is helpful to distinguish between TA personnel who develop capacity or provide advice, and those who perform tasks in lieu of locally available personnel. A separate category of TA personnel who manage or supervise budgets and/or perform more general project-management functions could also be considered. A possible additional category of TA is the sector expert working for a development partner or technical agency.

- It is rare for TA to cover only one function. Most TA personnel who are in an advisory position spend some time 'doing the work'. And, most TA personnel who are posted in-line to fill a gap are likely to be called upon to build capacity or to provide advice. Combining functions can be advantageous provided this is understood and agreed upon by the parties concerned. But it can also be a source of confusion and discontent, and mixing a capacity development role with controlling/managing functions can undermine effectiveness, and should be avoided.

- Critical determinants of the effectiveness of TA personnel include:
  - the extent to which the host organisation exercises leadership, is clear on what it wants to achieve and can make full use of TA inputs
  - clearly defined genuine demand, not pressured by conditions imposed by the development partner (e.g., as a prerequisite of financial assistance)
  - the quality of programme design: appreciation of the external context (sector dynamics, reform readiness), avoiding over-design and adopting flexible approaches, a clear definition of the roles of the respective parties in capacity development, and being realistic about the time needed for capacity development to take place, as well as the limitations of TA personnel in influencing this
  - the quality of personnel deployed: country respondents consistently underlined the importance of the substantive skills and knowledge that TA personnel bring. Process skills are regarded as important, particularly where TA is expected to play a role as change agent or process facilitator

- Other dimensions of the effectiveness of TA:
  - There are both advantages and disadvantages to TA personnel recruited individually or through a company. Country partners in the study felt that either arrangement can be valid
  - There are clearly situations where national TA personnel are preferable to international, but in others, a combination of the two adds considerable value
  - Having access to networks of expertise (peer exchange and professional contacts) and information resources is increasingly important

- Development partners need to be better equipped to support capacity development and to ensure effective use of TA personnel, particularly in complex areas involving change and institutional reform, as well as politically volatile and unstable environments.

- Monitoring and evaluation systems can have a significant influence on how TA personnel perform. If TA personnel are to focus on capacity development, then appropriate performance indicators that recognise and incentivise process dimensions are required. Methodologies that focus on learning rather than just on accountability can help derive lessons on how change happens and how TA personnel can contribute. These approaches have been shown to motivate stakeholders towards more productive co-operation, and to yield better mutual understanding.

Key Recommendations

Demand for TA

- ***Engage in Strategic Dialogue –*** *The issue of TA personnel should be discussed in high-level forums between country stakeholders and external partners. It should be treated as a strategic issue integral to the discussion on aid effectiveness, capacity development and public-service reform, and as an item for mutual accountability.*

- ***Link TA Personnel to Development Planning and Human Resources Management –*** *Host governments should use strategic and operational plans at the national, sector and sub-sector level as a basis for assessing capacities and for determining the potential contribution of TA personnel.*

- ***Be Transparent about Options, Costs and Motives –*** *To ensure that countries are in a position to make informed decisions about TA personnel, development partners should be fully transparent about the alternatives available. A menu setting out strengths and weaknesses of the different TA options as well as the cost implications would be a step in the right direction.*

- ***Clarify TA Terminology –*** *To help clarify the many different roles and functions that TA personnel can perform and to provide a common basis on which to discuss strategies and needs between partner countries and external agencies, a glossary of terms should be produced. This should, in particular, explain the various roles that TA personnel can perform in relation to capacity development.*

Management of TA

- ***Strengthen the Human Resources Function –*** *Host governments need to strengthen their capacity for workforce planning and human resources management (including the procurement function) as a critical area of public-service management. External partners have a role to play in supporting such efforts.*

- ***Follow the Paris Declaration –*** *Development partners and partner countries should encourage the conditions for developing countries to take responsibility for TA management in line with the spirit of the Paris Declaration and in terms of what is understood as the 'procurement' approach. This will require pragmatism in adapting management arrangements to realities on the ground. It will also require a gradual approach.*

- ***Experiment with Pooling –*** *Pooling arrangements should be considered as a means of shifting the balance of TA management towards country partners. Pooling can encourage different actors to discuss options together and to negotiate the most appropriate use of TA personnel. It can also help country partners to think more strategically about TA.*

- ***Improve Selection and Recruitment under Country Leadership –*** *Country partners should, as a matter of principle, chair review/selection panels and be involved in the development of criteria for selection and performance appraisal. More relevant and effective ways to interview personnel should also be explored, including more involvement of host personnel in providing inputs for exercises or questions used to pre-select candidates.*

Effectiveness of TA

- ***Link TA Discussions to Public-Service Reform –*** *The sustainability of TA contributions to capacity development is contingent on a wider discussion of the underlying factors (e.g., recruitment, productive use and retention of appropriately skilled and motivated staff in the*

public sector, globalisation of the labour market) that encourage or impede public-sector performance.

- ***Develop a Common Understanding of Capacity and Change –*** *Development partners, suppliers of TA personnel and country partners need to develop a shared understanding about capacity and change as a basis for diagnosing needs, considering the role that TA personnel can play in supporting country-driven processes, and establishing well-conceptualised interventions. Development partners should also share their respective understanding of 'effectiveness' as a basis for developing a common framework of analysis.*

- ***Name It –*** *Development partners and country partners should be clearer about the actual purpose of TA, in particular whether a role is genuinely advisory or in-line. In the case of the latter, the nomenclature should not be 'adviser' as this obscures the actual role and the extent of capacity gaps. Being clear about the purpose enables more accurate terms of reference to be drafted, ensures a better match of potential candidates to the job, and helps establish more transparent performance expectations.*

- ***Adopt More Flexible and Iterative Approaches –*** *Development partners and country partners should identify ways to build greater flexibility into programme operations in order to accommodate emergent needs and changing demands. This is especially important in complex and politically sensitive environments where the momentum and direction of reform can quickly change.*

- ***Determine the Right Mix of 'Direct' and 'Indirect' Approaches –*** *Equally, approaches need to take account of different capacities on the ground. Where capacities are stronger, more indirect approaches may be warranted, but where capacities are weaker, direct approaches can be more appropriate. Often, a mix of direct and indirect approaches works best. The appropriateness of approaches used needs to be monitored over time and assessments made to determine when to shift from one to another.*

- ***Develop an Agreed-upon Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) –*** *Partners need to develop an appropriate M&E framework for TA personnel that sets realistic performance indicators, reflecting the roles and functions ascribed to TA personnel, and avoiding perverse incentives that might encourage TA personnel to focus on tangible results at the expense of less tangible and measurable processes of capacity development. An appropriate M&E framework also needs to balance demands for accountability with the value of learning. The opportunity should be created to explore and test alternative evaluation methodologies for understanding how change happens.*

- ***Improve the Capacity of Development Partners*** *– Development partner agencies need to assess their own capabilities for supporting capacity and processes of change in the field and for ensuring the effective use of TA personnel. This might involve deployment of more specialised staff to the field to support programme design and implementation as well as to engage in processes of policy dialogue. Development partners should also ensure that the professional performance criteria of their staff provide incentives for consistent application of their policies on TA, not just being 'au fait' with their content.*

Executive Summary in Portuguese

Sumário Executivo

Enquadramento

- Este estudo pretende contribuir para os actuais debates sobre a eficácia da ajuda e o desenvolvimento de capacidades, através de um maior conhecimento sobre o que melhor resulta em matéria de recursos humanos de assistência técnica (AT) e de uma análise das iniciativas/reformas em curso para melhorar as práticas existentes.

- O relatório baseia-se nas conclusões de três estudos-de-caso (Moçambique, Ilhas Salomão e Vietname), num seminário realizado em Maastricht em Maio de 2007 e ainda na vasta literatura existente nesta matéria, previamente resumida num primeiro relatório do estudo.

- É importante salientar que o estudo se centraliza nos *recursos humanos* de AT e clarificar a diferença relativamente a uma compreensão mais abrangente da assistência técnica, a qual é referida noutras partes do estudo como cooperação técnica.

Principais Conclusões e Implicações para os Doadores e Países Parceiros

- Um dos factores determinantes da eficácia da AT é a *gestão nacional dos técnicos de AT*. Idealmente, as decisões sobre o recrutamento e envio de técnicos devem ser da responsabilidade do país, negociada abertamente com os parceiros doadores e mediante o pleno acesso à informação (incluindo os custos de AT alternativa). Uma vez no terreno, deve ser claro que os técnicos respondem perante as organizações que os acolhem e às quais prestam serviço.

- A Declaração de Paris sobre a Eficácia da Ajuda estabelece uma base para monitorizar a reforma da gestão da AT. Em alguns países, como no Vietname, existem perspectivas promissoras de uma AT gerida pelo próprio país. Para países como Moçambique, este objectivo já se encontra estabelecido, mas demorará alguns anos a concretizar, para além de que a evolução será desigual entre sectores e entre regiões. Nestes contextos, reunir os recursos humanos de AT que os diferentes doadores estão dispostos a contribuir num mesmo fundo comum ("*pooling*") é uma forma de transferir gradualmente a responsabilidade da gestão da AT para os países parceiros.

- Em países onde não existem as pré-condições necessárias – como nas Ilhas Salomão -, são precisas acções intermédias que contribuam para o reforço da capacidade de decisão e controlo dos parceiros nacionais, baseadas numa maior responsabilização (*accountability*) dos técnicos de AT perante os seus supervisores nacionais. A implementação das disposições da Declaração de Paris será inevitavelmente um processo gradual em todos os países signatários e necessita de ser adaptada às circunstâncias de cada país.

- O outro factor determinante da eficácia da AT é a existência de um melhor entendimento sobre como a AT pode ser utilizada para apoiar a capacitação e a mudança. O desenvolvimento de capacidades é um fenómeno complexo; o sucesso do pessoal de AT enquanto instrumento de apoio a esse desenvolvimento não pode ser assumido como um elemento necessário e suficiente. As hipóteses de sucesso são normalmente maiores quando se tem uma estratégia de acção explícita, em que há um entendimento sobre a contribuição dos diferentes modelos de mudança.

- O estudo sublinha a importância de uma boa concepção, incluindo um diagnóstico apropriado das necessidades (em todos os níveis relevantes de governo e não apenas a nível central); a identificação de uma combinação adequada de abordagens "directas" e "indirectas" e dos momentos adequados para mudar de umas para outras; os benefícios de abordagens programáticas flexíveis e interactivas; e a utilidade de sistemas de Monitorização e Avaliação (M&A) que combinem responsabilização, aprendizagem e os incentivos adequados. O estudo salienta igualmente a necessidade de destacar pessoal com fortes competências técnicas e entendimento do processo, mas alerta para o facto de existirem limites em todas as intervenções externas, especialmente em contextos politicamente sensíveis e complexos. Existe, por isso, a necessidade de um debate mais aberto sobre o significado do desenvolvimento de capacidades e do papel da AT nesse processo.

- De um modo geral, há uma forte argumentação que defende que os doadores não devem fazer a gestão da AT de modo a habilitar os países parceiros a assumirem plena e legitimamente a responsabilidade pelo pessoal de AT. Este processo deve ser gradual e gerido de acordo com as capacidades do país. Em muitas situações, a adopção de medidas intermédias que incluam uma maior interligação e transparência entre os técnicos e os supervisores do país parceiro pode ser um passo positivo. A necessidade de uma abordagem gradual não deve, porém, ser uma desculpa para a inacção; devem ser implementadas medidas para monitorizar a evolução de forma contínua. É imperativo que os doadores permaneçam envolvidos no terreno, apoiem e invistam no desenvolvimento de capacidades, enquanto área de prática e conhecimento especializados.

- Para os países parceiros, é urgente apostar no planeamento e gestão dos recursos humanos na administração pública e de pensar estrategicamente a utilização dos técnicos de AT enquanto instrumento de um desenvolvimento de capacidades sustentável. É igualmente importante reconhecer que o fornecimento de AT nunca pode ser um substituto de reformas fundamentais na administração pública. Se isto não for tomado em linha de conta, a sustentabilidade das intervenções de AT será sempre questionável.

A Procura de AT

- No contexto da ajuda internacional, a solicitação de recursos humanos de AT torna-se complicada, uma vez que a relação normal fornecedor-cliente é distorcida pela presença do doador. Para os doadores, a AT pode ser um recurso estratégico para assegurar uma implementação mais efectiva e eficaz dos seus objectivos de cooperação. A solicitação de técnicos de AT por parte do país parceiro está menos bem definida, mas continua a ser significativa, como atestam os três estudos-de-caso realizados. Tendencialmente não existem estratégias ou políticas formais de AT, nem existe necessariamente um ponto focal que canalize a procura. A AT não é um elemento proeminente no pensamento estratégico e nos processos de planeamento, sendo normalmente tratada ao nível operacional, em cada programa.

- Países com uma forte liderança, que possuem estratégias de desenvolvimento bem definidas ou que estão determinados em melhorar o desempenho da administração pública, estão mais bem colocados para articular as necessidades existentes e podem empenhar-se mais facilmente nesta questão. Os planos nacionais e sectoriais podem fornecer uma base mais sólida para equacionar a AT, embora na prática o envio de AT continue a ser *ad-hoc* e com fraca coordenação.

- A avaliação da procura de técnicos de AT é complicada pelo facto de ser encarada pelos países parceiros como um "bem grátis". Isto desencoraja uma análise crítica dos potenciais custos e benefícios. A falta de transparência relativamente aos custos da AT por parte dos doadores e as poucas oportunidades que os governos de acolhimento têm para comparar alternativas, acaba por limitar uma tomada de decisões devidamente informada. Nenhum

dos três países analisados possui sistemas que permitam um planeamento e gestão efectivos dos recursos humanos e que incluam uma especificação das necessidades de AT.

- As solicitações para técnicos de AT são extremamente variadas e dirigidas a situações específicas. Os doadores encaram a AT como um instrumento flexível que contribui para uma série de objectivos e desempenha várias funções. Para os países parceiros, a AT pode ajudar a desempenhar funções e fornecer serviços que não são cobertos pelo mercado da mão-de-obra interna. Isto inclui o preenchimento de funções não ocupadas, o fornecimento de aconselhamento, o desenvolvimento de capacidades e a gestão de projectos.

- Os padrões da procura diferem particularmente ao nível sub-nacional, onde os desafios colocados pelos problemas de capacidade podem levar a uma utilização diferente da AT. É também cada vez maior o interesse em aproveitar recursos humanos existentes ao nível local e regional, em vez de peritos internacionais. Para além das vantagens serem óbvias, os exemplos do Vietnam e de Moçambique salientam a complementaridade de inputs que resulta da utilização destas diferentes fontes de recursos humanos.

- As implicações da segurança global e da necessidade de salvaguardar os bens públicos globais, tais como o ambiente, vieram criar um novo imperativo de envolvimento dos doadores em Estados frágeis, de forma a assegurarem um nível mínino de funcionalidade. Nos países de rendimento médio, está a emergir um modelo diferente de procura de AT, mais focalizado e selectivo.

A Gestão da AT

- A gestão da AT nos países analizados continua a ser, em grande medida, da responsabilidade dos doadores, embora com níveis de participação crescentes (e em alguns casos significativos) por parte do país parceiro, podendo originar formas de gestão conjunta. O grau de responsabilidade que uma ou outra parte assumem varia consideravelmente de caso para caso.

- A expectativa dos países parceiros é que lhes seja conferida uma maior voz e opção na tomada de decisão sobre a selecção e recrutamento de técnicos de AT. Não pretendem tanto assumir a liderança nos concursos e normalmente apreciam a assistência dos doadores nesta parte do processo. Uma vez destacados para o terreno, os países esperam que os técnicos respondam directamente perante as instituições locais, embora muitas vezes isso não se verifique, uma vez que a influência dos doadores (pelo facto de serem financiadores) pode continuar a ser muito forte. Na prática, encontram-se vários exempos de mecanismos de prestação de contas conjuntos ou “híbridos” que pretendem contrabalançar e responder às diferentes exigências em termos de controlo e responsabilização (*accountability*).

- Tanto a literatura existente sobre este tema como a experiência prática reconhecem que uma preparação e condução adequadas dos técnicos de AT é um passo essencial no processo de gestão da AT, embora seja um factor que não recebe ainda a devida atenção.

- A reunião de diferentes contribuições de AT num fundo comum – “*pooling*” – está a tornar-se num mecanismo cada vez mais popular para gerir os recursos humanos de AT. Tem uma série de benefícios em termos do aumento da participação do país parceiro, de alinhamento do apoio dos doadores com os processos nacionais e fornece um quadro para debate e diagnóstico das necessidades de capacitação, encorajando igualmente uma maior transparência dos custos. Este instrumento possui alguns riscos e não existem garantias que os seus potenciais benefícios possam ser totalmente concretizados em todos os países.

- Nos casos em que um sistema de "*pooling*" não seja factível nem desejável, podem ser utilizados outros mecanismos para aumentar a participação do país. As Facilidades da cooperação australiana - AusAIDs Facilities – são uma forma inovadora de atingir esse objectivo quando as capacidades locais são fracas, mas onde é importante assegurar a flexibilidade ao mesmo tempo que se aumenta o envolvimento do país parceiro no processo de gestão.

- Os estudos existentes questionam se os concursos através do mercado serão sempre a forma mais adequada de fazer corresponder a oferta à procura, particularmente quando se pretendem serviços de desenvolvimento de capacidades. Muitas vezes é difícil especificar com precisão os serviços que se pretendem e custeá-los de forma apropriada. O peso do custo de adjudicação de contratos pode ser um desincentivo ao trabalho de capacitação. Parte da solução está em reforçar a capacidade dos países parceiros para abrirem e gerirem concursos. Os doadores podem também trabalhar mais através de parcerias e acordos negociados em casos onde se pretende essencialmente resultados em matéria de desenvolvimento de capacidades.

A eficácia da AT

- A eficácia é um conceito relativo. É necessário elaborar critérios para os diferentes objectivos prosseguidos pelos técnicos de AT e tomar em consideração os interesses dos vários actores envolvidos nestas acções. Duas questões são fundamentais: eficaz para quê e eficaz para quem? Os desafios metodológicos para avaliar a eficácia dos técnicos de AT são enormes, particularmente quando o desenvolvimento de capacidades é o objectivo principal.

- Os termos utilizados para classificar os técnicos de AT são variados, mas raramente utilizados de forma consistente. Os papéis e funções sobrepõem-se frequentemente e nem sempre estão bem definidos. É útil fazer uma distinção entre os técnicos de AT que desenvolvem capacidades ou fornecem aconselhamento e aqueles que desempenham tarefas em substituição do pessoal local disponível. Pode também considerar-se a existência de uma categoria separada de AT que gere ou supervisiona os orçamentos e/ou desempenha funções de gestão mais geral dos projectos. Uma possivel categoria adicional da AT são os técnicos sectoriais que trabalham para um doador ou agência técnica.

- É muito raro a AT desempenhar apenas uma função. Muitos técnicos que estão em posições de aconselhamento passam algum tempo a realizarem eles próprios o trabalho; enquanto outros técnicos que estão colocados para suprir lacunas são normalmente chamados para desenvolvimento de capacidades ou para fornecer aconselhamento. A combinação de funções pode ser vantajosa, desde que devidamente compreendida e acordada entre as partes envolvidas. Mas pode igualmente ser uma fonte de confusão e descontentamento. Misturar o papel de capacitação com funções de gestão/controlo pode prejudicar a eficácia e deverá, portanto, ser evitado.

- Os principais factores que determinam a eficácia dos técnicos de AT incluem:
  - O grau de liderança efectivamente exercido pela instituição de acolhimento, de clareza no que pretende atingir e de capacidade de utilizar os inputs da AT.
  - Uma procura efectiva e claramente definida, que não seja fruto da pressão de condicionalidades impostas pelos doadores (por exemplo, como pré-requisito para o apoio financeiro).
  - A qualidade da concepção dos programas, incluindo a apreciação do contexto externo (a dinâmica do sector, o grau de preparação para a reforma, etc); a adopção de abordagens flexíveis; uma definição clara dos papéis de cada parte no desenvolvimento de capacidades; e um sentido de realismo sobre o tempo que é

necessário para que haja uma capacitação efectiva e sobre os limites da influência dos técnicos de AT nesta área.
  - A qualidade dos técnicos destacados. Os entrevistados sublinharam constantemente a importância das capacidades e conhecimentos trazidos pelos técnicos de AT. A existência de capacidades na área de sistemas é importante, especialmente quando se espera que os técnicos desempenhem a função de agentes de mudança ou de facilitação de processos.

- Outras dimensões da eficácia da AT podem ser salientadas:
  - Existem vantagens e desvantagens tanto no recrutamento dos técnicos individualmente, como através de empresas. Os países parceiros que fizeram parte do estudo manifestaram que qualquer destas modalidades pode ser válida.
  - Existem situações em que os técnicos nacionais são claramente preferíveis aos internacionais, mas noutras situações, a combinação dos dois tipos pode trazer mais-valias.
  - É cada vez mais importante ter acesso a redes de peritos (troca de experiências e contactos profissionais) e a recursos na área da informação.

- Os doadores têm de estar mais bem equipados para apoiarem o desenvolvimento de capacidades e para assegurarem uma utilização efectiva dos técnicos de AT, particularmente em áreas complexas que envolvam mudanças e reformas institucionais, bem como o trabalho em contextos instáveis e politicamente voláteis.

- Os sistemas de monitorização e avaliação podem ter uma influência significativa no desempenho dos técnicos de AT. Se os técnicos estão focalizados no desenvolvimento de capacidades, é necessário aplicar indicadores de desempenho que reconheçam e incentivem processos de evolução. As metodologias que se centram na aprendizagem, mais do que na mera prestação de contas, podem ajudar a extraír lições sobre as condições em que a mudança acontece (e como a AT pode contribuir para essa mudança). Estas abordagens têm contribuído para uma cooperação mais produtiva e um maior entendimento mútuo entre os vários actores interessados.

Principais Recomendações

A Procura de AT

- ***Envolver-se no diálogo estratégico*** *– A AT deve ser debatida entre os actores nacionais e os parceiros externos em fóruns de alto nível. Deve ser tratada como uma questão estratégica, que é parte integrante do debate sobre a eficácia da ajuda, o desenvolvimento de capacidades e a reforma da administração pública, para além de ser um item de responsabilização ("accountability") mútua.*

- ***Ligar os técnicos de AT ao planeamento do desenvolvimento e à gestão de recursos humanos –*** *Os governos de acolhimento devem utilizar os planos estratégicos e operacionais existentes ao nível nacional, sectorial e sub-sectorial, como base para avaliarem capacidades e identificarem a potencial contribuição dos técnicos de AT.*

- ***Ser transparente sobre as opções, os custos e as motivações*** *– Os doadores devem ser totalmente transparentes sobre as alternativas disponíveis, de forma a assegurarem que os países estão em posição de tomarem decisões devidamente informadas sobre os recursos humanos de AT. Um possível passo positivo pode ser a elaboração de uma lista que inclua os pontos fortes e fracos das diferentes opções de AT.*

- ***Clarificar a terminologia da AT –*** *Deverá ser elaborado um glossário, de forma a promover a clarificação dos variados papéis e funções que a AT pode desempenhar, bem*

como fornecer uma base comum para debater estratégias e necessidades entre os países parceiros e as agências externas.

A Gestão da AT

- ***Reforçar a Função de Recursos Humanos –*** *Os governos de acolhimento devem reforçar as suas capacidades de planeamento da força laboral e de gestão dos recursos humanos (incluindo a realização de concursos), enquanto área fundamental da gestão da administração pública. Os parceiros externos têm um papel a desempenhar no apoio a estes esforços.*

- ***Cumprir a Declaração de Paris –*** *Os doadores e os países parceiros devem trabalhar em conjunto no sentido de transferirem a responsabilidade de gestão da AT, de acordo com o espírito da Declaração de Paris e nos termos em que é entendida a abordagem de "procurement". Neste processo, torna-se necessário adoptar uma abordagem gradual e ser pragmático ao adaptar as regras de gestão às realidades do terreno.*

- ***Experimentar mecanismos como "pooling" -*** *A reunião de diferentes contribuições num fundo comum deve ser considerada como uma forma de reforçar o papel dos países parceiros na gestão da AT. Este instrumento pode encorajar diversos actores a debaterem conjuntamente as várias opções e a negociarem uma utilização adequada dos recursos humanos de AT. Pode igualmente ajudar os países parceiros a pensarem a AT de forma mais estratégica.*

- ***Melhorar a Selecção e Recrutamento sob liderança do país parceiro*** *– Enquanto questão de princípio, os países parceiros devem presidir aos painés de análise/selecção e estar envolvidos no desenvolvimento de critérios de selecção e de avaliação do desempenho. Devem ser exploradas formas mais eficazes de entrevistar os técnicos, nomeadamente através de um maior envolvimento de recursos humanos locais na formulação de exercícios ou questões utilizadas para pré-seleccionar candidatos.*

A Eficácia da AT

- ***Interligar o debate sobre AT com a Reforma da Administração Pública –*** *A sustentabilidade da contribuição da AT para o desenvolvimento de capacidadades depende de um conjunto mais alargado de factores subjacentes (p.ex. o recrutamento, a utilização produtiva dos técnicos, a retenção de funcionários devidamente capacitados e motivados na função pública, a globalização do mercado de trabalho, etc), os quais favorecem ou prejudicam o desempenho da administração pública.*

- ***Desenvolver um entendimento comum sobre capacidade e mudança –*** *Os doadores, os fornecedores de técnicos de AT e os países parceiros necessitam de desenvolver um entendimento comum, que permita diagnosticar as necessidades (considerando o papel que os técnicos de AT podem desempenhar no apoio a processos conduzidos pelos países) e constituir uma base para o estabelecimento de intervenções bem elaboradas. Os doadores devem igualmente trocar ideias com os países parceiros sobre o que cada um entende por "eficácia", por forma a desenvolverem um quadro comum de análise.*

- ***Utilizar nomenclatura apropriada*** *- Os doadores e os países parceiros devem ser claros sobre os verdadeiros propósitos da AT, em particular sobre quais as suas funções específicas. No caso de técnicos que realizam trabalho directo, a nomenclatura não deverá ser de "conselheiro", uma vez que isto não ilustra o seu verdadeiro papel ou a extensão das lacunas de capacidade existentes. A clareza de objectivos permite estabelecer termos de referência mais precisos, uma melhor escolha dos potenciais candidatos de acordo com a função a desempenhar e ajuda a criar expectativas de desempenho mais transparentes.*

- ***Adoptar abordagens mais flexíveis e interactivas*** *– Os doadores e os países parceiros devem identificar formas de introduzir maior flexibilidade nas acções dos programas, de maneira a poderem responder a necessidades urgentes e solicitações diferentes. Isto é particularmente importante em contextos politicamente sensíveis, nos quais os momentos de oportunidade e a direcção das reformas pode alterar-se rapidamente.*

- ***Identificar a combinação correcta de abordagens directas e indirectas*** *– As abordagens devem tomar em consideração as diferentes capacidades existentes no terreno. Enquanto as abordagens indirectas são mais adequadas onde as capacidades são maiores, as abordagens directas resultam melhor onde as capacidades são mais fracas. Frequentemente, o mais apropriado será uma combinação de abordagens directas e indirectas. É necessário monitorizar a adequação das abordagens utilizadas e avaliar quando deve ser efectuada a transição de uma abordagem para outra.*

- ***Desenvolver um quadro acordado de Monitorização e Avaliação –*** *Os parceiros devem desenvolver um quadro apropriado de M&A para os recursos humanos de AT que inclua indicadores de desempenho realistas; que reflicta os papéis e funções atribuídos aos técnicos; e que evite incentivos perversos que encorajem os técnicos a concentrarem-se na obtenção de resultados mais evidentes, em detrimento de processos de capacitação que são menos tangíveis ou mensuráveis. Um quadro adequado de M&A deve também contrabalançar as exigências de "accountability" e o valor do processo de aprendizagem. Devem ser criadas oportunidades para explorar e testar metodologias alternativas de avaliação que permitam entender como se processa a mudança.*

- ***Melhorar a Capacidade dos Doadores*** *– As agências doadoras devem avaliar as suas próprias capacidades para apoiarem processos de mudança e de capacitação no terreno e para assegurarem uma utilização efectiva dos recursos humanos de AT. Isto pode envolver o destacamento de técnicos mais especializados para apoio à concepção e implementação de programas, bem como a processos de diálogo sobre políticas. Os doadores devem igualmente assegurar que os critérios de desempenho profissional dos seus técnicos incluem incentivos para uma aplicação consistente das políticas dos doadores na área de AT (e não apenas um mero conhecimento do seu conteúdo ou aplicação pontual).*

Executive Summary in Vietnamese

Tóm tắt Tổng quan

Bối cảnh

- Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm đóng góp vào những thảo luận hiện đang diễn ra về hiệu quả viện trợ và phát triển năng lực, thông qua việc tìm hiểu về những kinh nghiệm chuyên gia/tư vấn Hỗ trợ Kỹ thuật (HTKT) có hiệu quả, và những sáng kiến/cải tổ đang được thực hiện để cải thiện tình hình.

- Báo cáo này tổng hợp những phát hiện qua nghiên cứu ba quốc gia điển hình là Mozambique, Quần đảo Solomon và Việt Nam, qua một hội thảo được tổ chức tại Maastricht vào tháng 5 năm 2007, cũng như tham khảo nhiều tài liệu đã được tóm tắt trong Báo cáo Khởi điểm.

- Cần phải nhấn mạnh rằng báo cáo này tập trung vào vấn đề *chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT*, và phân biệt rõ trọng tâm này với một phạm trù rộng hơn – đó là Hỗ trợ Kỹ thuật nói chung – hay đôi khi còn được gọi là Hợp tác Kỹ thuật.

Những Kết luận chính và Hệ quả đối với các Nhà tài trợ và Nước chủ nhà

- Một yếu tố quyết định hiệu quả của HTKT là *sự quản lý của nước chủ nhà đối với chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT*. Tốt nhất là các quyết định tuyển dụng và sử dụng HTKT nên do nươc chủ nhà chịu trách nhiêm, dựa trên đàm phán cởi mở với các nhà tài trợ và dựa trên thông tin đầy đủ (bao gồm cả thông tin về chi phí của các phương án HTKT khác nhau). Khi đã được tuyển dụng, các chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT dứt khoát chỉ chịu trách nhiệm trước tổ chức mà họ phục vụ.

- Tuyên bố Paris về Hiệu quả Viện trợ là một khuôn khổ theo dõi những cải cách trong lĩnh vực quản lý HTKT. Ở một số nước, chẳng hạn như Việt Nam, triển vọng Chính phủ quản lý HTKT là khá sáng sủa. Đối với những nước như Mozambique, mục tiêu đã được đặt ra, song sẽ phải mất vài năm để thực hiện và tiến bộ sẽ không đồng đều trong tất cả các ngành và các vùng khác nhau. Với những bối cảnh như vậy, thì việc các nhà tài trợ cùng kết hợp cung cấp chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT có thể là một cách để dần dần chuyển giao trách nhiệm quản lý HTKT sang nước chủ nhà.

- Ở Quần đảo Solomon, nơi mà các điều kiện tiên quyết hầu như không có, thì cần phải có những hành động tạm thời giúp tăng năng lực cho các đối tác , song các chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT phải chịu trách nhiệm nhiều hơn trước những người cấp trên của họ ở nước chủ nhà. Việc thực hiện các điều khoản của Tuyên bố Paris chắc chắn sẽ là một quá trình tiệm tiến đối với tất cả các nước tham gia Tuyên bố này, và cần phù hợp với hoàn cảnh của từng nước.

- Một yếu tố then chốt khác quyết định hiệu quả HTKT là *sự hiểu biết dựa trên thông tin đầy đủ hơn về cách sử dụng HTKT phục vụ cho hỗ trợ năng lực và thay đổi*. Phát triển năng lực là một vấn đề phức tạp, và không nên cho rằng chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT nhất thiết phải thành công như một phương tiện hỗ trợ phát triển năng lực, và chỉ cần HTKT là đủ. Muốn tăng khả năng thành công của phát triển năng lực, thông thường cần có một lý thuyết hành động thật rõ ràng , và hiểu được những mô hình thay đổi khác nhau có thể đóng góp vào sự phát triển này như thế nào.

- Nghiên cứu này nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng phải thiết kế HTKT thật tốt, bao gồm cả việc chuẩn đoán chính xác về nhu cầu HTKT (ở tất cả mọi cấp chính quyền, chứ không chỉ ở cấp trung ương), xác định cơ cấu hợp lý giữa HTKT “trực tiếp” và “gián tiếp”, và biết khi

nào cần chuyển từ hình thức này sang hình thức kia, những lợi ích của cách tiếp cận chương trình linh hoạt và có tính lặp lại, và giá trị của các hệ thống Theo dõi và Đánh giá kết hợp được các yếu tố trách nhiệm, học hỏi và khuyến khích thích hợp. Nghiên cứu này cũng nhấn mạnh sự cần thiết phải có những chuyên gia/tư vấn phù hợp, vừa có chuyên môn cao vừa có những kỹ năng xử lý. Đồng thời Nghiên cứu này cũng cảnh báo rằng bất cứ sự can thiệp nào từ bên ngoài cũng đều có giới hạn, đặc biệt là trong những môi trường phức tạp và nhạy cảm về chính trị. Vì thế cần có sự thảo luận cởi mở hơn về ý nghĩa của phát triển năng lực và vai trò của chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT trong quá trình này.

- Nhìn chung, có nhiều lý lẽ thuyết phục để cho rằng các nhà tài trợ cần chuyển giao việc quản lý HTKT cho nước chủ nhà, để họ có khả năng chịu trách nhiệm hoàn toàn và chính đáng về chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT. Quá trình này cần được quản lý và diễn ra từ từ , phù hợp với năng lực của nước chủ nhà. Trong nhiều trường hợp, những biện pháp tạm thời, bao gồm việc tăng cường mối quan hệ chịu trách nhiệm giữa chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT với bên đối tác của nước chủ nhà, có thể là một bước đi đúng hướng. Tuy nhiên, cách tiếp cận tiệm tiến không phải là để biện minh cho việc không hành động, và cần có những biện pháp để liên tục theo dõi các tiến triển. Một việc cần thiết không kém là các nhà tài trợ vẫn cần quan tâm tới hiện trường, và cần đầu tư và hỗ trợ cho phát triển năng lực, coi đây là một lĩnh vực chuyên sâu về kiến thức và thực hành.

- Đối với các nước chủ nhà, cần khẩn thiết xử lý vấn đề hoạch định và quản lý nhân sự trong các dịch vụ công,và cần suy nghĩ một cách chiến lược hơn về việc sử dụng chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT như một phương tiện phát triển năng lực một cách bền vững. Cũng cần nhận thức được rằng HTKT không bao giờ có thể thay thế cho việc cải tổ một cách cơ bản hệ thống dịch vụ công. Nếu không giải quyết vấn đề này, thì những đóng góp của HTKT chắc chắn sẽ không thể bền vững.

Nhu cầu HTKT

- Trong lĩnh vực viện trợ, thì vấn đề nhu cầu về chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT là khá phức tạp, vì quan hệ giữa chủ và người làm thuê bị méo mó bởi sự hiện diện của nhà tài trợ. Đối với các nhà tài trợ, thì HTKT có thể là một nguồn lực chiến lược để đảm bảo thực hiện hiệu quả các mục tiêu hợp tác của mình. Nhu cầu nươc chủ nhà về chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT ít được xác định rõ ràng hơn, nhưng theo những bằng chứng từ ba trường hợp nghiên cứu điển hình thì nhu cầu này vẫn khá mạnh. Dường như không có xu hướng đưa ra những chính sách và chiến lược chính thức về HTKT, và cũng chưa thực sự có một đầu mối để tập trung mọi yêu cầu về HTKT. Vấn đề này chưa nổi lên rõ nét trong tư duy chiến lược và cac quá trình hoạch định chiến lược, và thường được sử lý ở cấp độ tác nghiệp, theo từng chương trình, dự án riêng lẻ.

- Những nước có lãnh đạo mạnh, có những chiến lược phát triển rõ ràng, hoặc nghiêm túc trong việc cải thiện dịch vụ công, thì có thể dễ dàng xác định nhu cầu HTKT hơn, và có thể tham gia vào chủ đề này hơn. Các kế hoạch phát triển ngành và quốc gia có thể xem như cơ sở vững vàng cho việc cân nhắc về HTKT. Tuy nhiên trên thực tế, việc sử dụng HTKT vẫn mang tính tuỳ tiện và kém phối hợp.

- Đánh giá về nhu cầu chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT là khá phức tạp vì các nước đối tác thường coi đây là “hàng miễn phí”. Quan điểm đó cản trở việc thẩm định chặt chẽ về chi phí và lợi ích. Việc các nhà tài trợ thiếu minh bạch về các chi phí cho HTKT, và chính phủ nước chủ nhà không có cơ hội so sánh các phương án HTKT khác nhau, đã hạn chế khả năng các chính phủ này đưa ra những quyết định dựa trên thông tin đầy đủ. Trong số ba quốc gia nghiên cứu điển hình, không có nước nào có hệ thống quy hoạch và quản lý hiệu quả nguồn nhân lực, kể cả việc xác định các nhu cầu HTKT.

- Nhu cầu về chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT là rất đa dạng va theo từng trường hợp cụ thể. Đối với các nhà tài trợ, đội ngũ này được xem như một công cụ linh hoạt để thực hiện một số mục

tiêu và chức năng khác nhau. Đối với nước chủ nhà, HTKT có thể giúp thực hiện những chức năng và dịch vụ mà thị trường lao động bản địa không đáp ứng được, bao gồm: lấp chỗ trống, tư vấn, phát triển năng lực và quản lý dự án.

- Các dạng thức nhu cầu cũng không giống nhau, đặc biệt là ở cấp địa phương, vì những khó khăn về năng lực ở cấp này có thể đòi hỏi phải sử dụng HTKT một cách khác. Ngày càng có sự quan tâm và mong muốn sử dụng chuyên gia/tư vấn bản địa hoặc khu vực, thay vì chỉ dựa vào chuyên gia quốc tế. Nguồn chuyên gia/tư vấn này không những đem lại nhiều lợi ích rõ ràng, mà nhìn rộng hơn còn được ghi nhận trong trường hợp Việt Nam và Mozambique là có những đóng góp hỗ trợ rât giá trị.

- Những hệ luỵ đối với an ninh toàn cầu và bảo vệ những lợi ích toàn cầu như môi trường, đã tạo ra môt tình huống cấp thiết mới đòi hỏi các nước tài trợ phải tham gia trực tiếp hơn vào các quốc gia "dễ đổ vỡ", nhằm đảm bảo mức độ hoạt động tối thiểu của xã hội. Ở những nước có thu nhập trung bình thi một dạng nhu cầu rất khác lai đang nổi lên, có trọng tâm hơn và có tính chọn lọc hơn.

Quản lý HTKT

- Trong các trường hợp nghiên cứu điển hình, quản lý HTKT vẫn chủ yếu và trên thực tế là trách nhiệm của nhà tài trợ, tuy là đã có sự tham gia ngày càng tăng, và đôi khi là đáng kể của nước chủ nhà mà có thể dẫn đến mô hình quản lý chung. Mức độ trách nhiệm của mỗi bên khác nhau khá nhiều.

- Các nước tiếp nhận viện trợ mong muốn có tiếng nói mạnh hơn và có quyền quyết định lựa chọn và tuyển dụng chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT. Họ ít quan tâm hơn đến việc chủ trì các thủ tục thuê mướn chuyên gia/tư vấn, và thường hoan nghênh sự trợ giúp của bên tài trợ về mặt này. Khi thủ tục thuê mướn hoàn tất, thì nước chủ nhà thường mong muốn là chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT phải chịu trách nhiệm trước họ - điều không phải lúc nào cũng thực hiện được, bởi vì nhà tài trợ với tư cách là “người giữ hầu bao” vẫn có những chi phối mạnh mẽ. Tuy nhiên trên thực tế đã có nhiều ví dụ về các cơ chế phối hợp quản lý chuyên gia hiệu quả, giúp cân bằng các đòi hỏi về vấn đề chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT phải chịu trách nhiệm trươc ai.

- Theo các tài liệu cũng như kinh nghiệm thực tiễn, thì vấn đề giới thiệu làm quen ban đầu cho chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT là một bước quan trọng trong quá trình quản lý. Tuy nhiên khâu này vẫn chưa được quan tâm xứng đáng với tầm quan trọng của nó.

- Các nhà tài trợ cùng phối hợp cung cấp chuyên gia/tư vấn đang ngày càng trở thành một cơ chế quản lý chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT được ưa thích. Mô hình này đem lại nhiều lợi ích như tăng cường sự tham gia của nước chủ nhà, hướng sự trợ giúp của các nhà tài trợ vào các chương trình quốc gia, tạo ra một khuôn khổ thảo luận và xác định nhu cầu về năng lực, và khuyến khích sự minh bạch hơn về chi phí. Tuy nhiên, cơ chế phối hợp chuyên gia không phải là không có rủi ro và cũng không thể đảm bảo rằng tất cả các nước đều có thể tranh thủ được những lợi ích tiềm tàng của mô hình này.

- Khi hoàn cảnh chưa thuận cho việc áp dụng cơ chế phối hợp này, thì có thể áp dụng một số cơ chế khác nhằm tăng cường sự tham gia của nước chủ nhà. Những cơ chế viện trợ của AusAIDs là một cách làm sáng tạo như vậy tại những nơi mà năng lực địa phương còn yếu, nhưng rất cần phải linh hoạt, trong khi tăng cường sự tham gia của nước chủ nhà vào quá trình quản lý.

- Nghiên cứu này cũng nêu lên câu hỏi: Khi cần các dịch vụ phát triển năng lực, thì liệu rằngthuê chuyên gia/tư vấn qua cơ chế thị trường lao động bao giờ cũng là cách tối ưu để đáp ứng cung và cầu về HTKT hay không. Thông thường rất khó xác định chính xác đâu là những dịch vụ thực sự cần thiết và chi phí như thế nào là thích đáng. Quá chú trọng đến

chi phí khi thoả thuận hợp đồng có thể trở thành một yếu tố cản trở việc chọn phương án hỗ trợ phát triển năng lực tốt nhất. Giải quyết vấn đề đó một phần phụ thuộc vào việc tăng cường năng lực thuê tuyển của nước chủ nhà. Về phần mình, các nhà tài trợ có thể làm được nhiều hơn thông qua đàm phán các thoả thuận và cơ chế đối tác trong những trường hợp mà việc xây dựng năng lực là tối quan trọng.

Hiệu quả của HTKT

- Hiệu quả là một khái niệm tương đối. Các tiêu chí để đánh giá phải phù hợp với những mục đích khác nhau mà HTKT đang hướng tới, và cần phải tính đến lợi ích của tất cả các bên liên quan. Có hai câu hỏi dường như là cơ bản: hiệu quả đối với cái gì? và hiệu quả với ai? Có những thách thức rất lớn về phương pháp luận khi đánh giá hiệu quả chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT, đặc biệt trong những trường hợp xây dựng năng lực là mục tiêu chủ yếu.

- Nhiều thuật ngữ khác nhau được sử dụng để phân loại chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT, nhưng những thuật ngữ này không mấy khi được sử dụng một cách nhất quán. Vai trò và chức năng thường chồng chéo lên nhau và không phải lúc nào cũng được định nghĩa rõ ràng. Cần biệt giữa chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT giúp phát triển năng lực hay cung cấp tư vấn, và những người làm các công việc thay cho nhân lực địa phương. Có lẽ cũng cần phân với nhóm chuyên gia HTKT có nhiệm vụ quản lý hoặc theo dõi ngân sách và/hoặc thực hiện các chức năng quản lý dự án nói chung. Một loại chuyên gia nữa gồm những chuyên gia ngành giúp việc cho nhà tài trợ hoặc cho một cơ quan kỹ thuật.

- Hiếm có chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT nào chỉ thực hiện một chức năng. Hầu hết các chuyên gia với vị trí là tư vấn nhiều khi cũng phải trực tiếp “làm công việc cụ thể”. Và, hầu hết các chuyên gia được thuê cho đủ bộ máy và lấp chỗ trống cũng thường phải tham gia xây dựng năng lực hoặc cung cấp tư vấn. Kết hợp các chức năng cũng có thể rất hữu ích miễn là các bên liên quan đều hiểu và thoả thuận như vậy. Tuy nhiên đây cũng có thể là nguồn gốc gây nhầm lẫn và bất hoà. Kết hợp vai trò xây dựng năng lực với vai trò kiểm soát/quản lý có thể sẽ làm giảm hiệu quả HTKT, và do đó nên tránh.

- Những yếu tố then chốt quyết định hiệu quả của chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT bao gồm:
  - Mức độ những người lãnh đạo cơ quan chủ quản thực hiện vai trò lãnh đạo của mình, và hiểu rõ mình muốn đạt mục tiêu gìvà có khả năng tận dụng tối đa những đóng góp của HTKT.
  - Nhu cầu thực sự về HTKT được xác định rõ ràng, không bị sức ép từ các nhà tài trợ như những điều kiện tiên quyết (ví dụ coi đó là điều kiện trước khi cung cấp hỗ trợ tài chính),
  - Chất lượng thiết kế chương trình, trong đó có tính đến môi trường ngoại cảnh (ví dụ như tính biến động của ngành, sự sẵn sàng cho cải tổ...), tránh thiêt kế quá cứng, quá chi tiết,mà phải có cách tiếp cận linh hoạt, xác định một cách rõ ràng vai trò của từng bên trong việc phát triển năng lực, có quan điểm thực tế về khoảng thời gian cần thiết cho phát triển năng lực, và về những giới hạn tác động của chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT trong lĩnh vực này.
  - Chất lượng của chuyên gia/tư vấn được tuyển dụng. Những người được phỏng vấn ở các nước nghiên cứu điển hình đều luôn luôn nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của những kỹ năng và kiến thức thực chất mà chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT mang lại. Những kỹ năng xử lý rất được xem trọng, đặc biệt trong những trường hợp HTKT được kỳ vọng là một tác nhân tạo thay đổi, hoặc tạo thuận lợi cho một quá trình.

- Những khía cạnh khác về hiệu quả HTKT bao gồm:
  - Việc tuyển dụng chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT trên cơ sở cá nhân hoặc thông qua các công ty có cả thuận lợi lẫn bất lợi. Các đối tác nước chủ nhà đều cho rằng có thể chấp nhận cả hai cách đó.

- Rõ ràng có những trường hợp các chuyên gia/tư vấn bản địa được ưa thích hơn là chuyên gia/tư vấn quốc tế, song trong nhiều trường hợp khác, việc kết hợp cả hai hình thức này sẽ tăng thêm rất nhiều giá trị của HTKT.
- Việc tiếp cận được với các mạng lưới chuyên gia (trao đổi giữa những người cùng ngành và các mối liên hệ chuyên môn) và các nguồn thông tin ngày càng trở nên quan trọng hơn.

- Các nhà tài trợ cần phải được trang bị tốt hơn để hỗ trợ phát triển năng lực và đảm bảo việc sử dụng có hiệu quả chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT, đặc biệt trong những lĩnh vực phức tạp đang có thay đổi và cải cách thể chế, hoặc trong những môi trường chính trị biến động và không ổn định.

- Các hệ thống Theo dõi và Đánh giá có thể tác động đáng kể đến hiệu quả hoạt động của chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT. Nếu muốnchuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT tập trung vào việc phát triển năng lực, thì cần có những chỉ số đánh giá phù hợp ghi nhận và khuyến khích những đóng góp về mặt quá trình. Những phương pháp tập trung vàokhía cạnh học hỏi chứ không chỉ là việc chịu trách nhiệm sẽ có thể giúp rút ra những bài học về quá trình thay đổi diễn ra như thế nào, và chuyên gia/tư vấn có thể đóng góp vào quá trình đó ra sao. Những cách tiếp cận này đã khích lệ các bên liên quan đi đến hợp tác hiệu quả hơn, và đạt được sự hiểu biết lẫn nhau hơn.

Những khuyến nghị chính

Nhu cầu HTKT

- ***Tham gia vào Đối thoại Chiến lược*** *- Vấn đề chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT cần được thảo luận ở những diễn đàn cấp cao giữa các cơ quan liên quan của nước chủ nhà với các đối tác bên ngoài. Cần coi đây là một vấn đề chiến lược không thể tách rời trong các cuộc thảo luận về hiệu quả viện trợ, xây dựng năng lực và cải cách dịch vụ công, và coi đó như một mục trong vân đề trách nhiệm chung của cả các bên.*

- ***Gắn vấn đề chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT với lập kế hoạch phát triển và quản lý nguồn nhân lực –*** *Các chính phủ nước chủ nhà cần sử dụng các kế hoạch chiến lược và kế hoạch hành động cấp quốc gia, ngành và tiểu ngành như một cơ sở để đánh giá năng lực và xác định sự đóng góp mà chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT có thể mang lại.*

- ***Minh bạch về các Phương án, Chi phí và Động cơ*** *- Để đảm bảo rằng nước chủ nhà có thể đưa ra những quyết định dựa trên thông tin đầy đủ về chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT, các nhà tài trợ cần thực sự minh bạch về mọi phương án HTKT có thể có. Đưa ra một danh sách những điểm mạnh và yếu của các phương án HTKT khác nhau, với chi phí tương ứng, có thể là một cách làm đúng hướng.*

- ***Làm rõ các thuật ngữ về HTKT*** *– Cần tạo lập một danh mục thuật ngữ về HTKT để giúp làm rõ những vai trò và chức năng khác nhau của HTKT và tạo một cơ sở chung để nước chủ nhà và các cơ quan viện trợ bên ngoài thảo luận về các chiến lược và nhu cầu HTKT. Danh mục này cần giải thích rõ ràng về những vai trò khác nhau của chuyên gia/tư vấn liên quan đến xây dựng năng lực.*

Quản lý HTKT

- ***Tăng cường chức năng Nhân sự*** *- Chính phủ nước chủ nhà cần tăng cường năng lực của mình trong việc hoạch định và quản lý nguồn nhân lực (trong đó có cả chức năng thuê tuyển nhân sự), coi đây là một mảng quan trọng trong quản lý dịch vụ công. Các đối tác bên ngoài đóng vai trò hỗ trợ những nỗ lực này.*

- ***Thực hiện Tuyên bố Paris*** *– Các nhà tài trợ và nước chủ nhà cần phối hợp với nhau trong việc chuyển giao trách nhiệm quản lý HTKT theo tinh thần của Tuyên bố Paris và chiểu theo cái được hiểu là cách tiếp cận "mua sắm". Để làm được điêu này cần phải rất thực dụng trong việc điều chỉnh các cơ chế quản lý cho phù hợp với thực tiễn đang diễn ra, và theo cách tiếp cận dần dần.*

- ***Thử nghiệm mô hình góp chung chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT*** *- Cần xem mô hình này như một phương tiện để chuyển dần việc quản lý HTKT sang các đối tác nước chủ nhà. Góp chung chuyên gia/tư vấn có thể khuyến khích các bên cùng thảo luận các phương án HTKT khác nhau, và đàm phán về cách sử dụng chuyên gia/tư vấn phù hợp nhất. Mô hình này cũng có thể giúp các đối tác nươc chủ nhà suy nghĩ một cách chiến lược hơn về HTKT.*

- ***Cải thiện việc Lựa chọn và Tuyển dụng với sự chủ trì của nươc chủ nhà*** *– Về mặt nguyên tắc, nươc chủ nhà phải chủ trì các ban xét tuyển/lựa chọn và phải tham gia vào quá trình xây dựng các tiêu chí thẩm định năng lực và tiêu chuẩn lựa chọn chuyên gia/tư vấn. Cũng cần phải tìm ra những phương pháp thích hợp và hiệu quả hơn để phỏng vấn các ứng cử viên, bao gồm cả việc tăng cường hơn nữa sự tham gia của cán bộ cơ quan chủ nhà trong việc lưa chọn các câu hỏi hay bài tập để sơ tuyển các ứng cử viên.*

Hiệu quả HTKT

- ***Gắn thảo luận về HTKT với Cải cách Dịch vụ Công*** *- Những đóng góp của chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT cho phát triển năng lực có bền vững hay không còn phụ thuộc vào nhiều yếu tố liên quan mà có thể hoăc khuyến khích hoặc cản trở hoạt động hiệu quả của khu vưc nhà nước (như: tuyển dụng, sử dụng một cách hiệu quả và giữ được những nhân viên có năng lực và tích cực làm việc trong khu vực công, toàn cầu hoá thị trường lao động,...).*

- ***Xây dựng sự hiểu biết chung về năng lực và thay đổi*** *– Các nhà tài trợ, nhà cung cấp chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT và các đối tác nươc chủ nhà cần xây dựng một sự hiểu biết chung về vấn để năng lực và thay đổi, để làm cơ sở xác định các nhu cầu, cân nhắc vai trò mà chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT có thể hỗ trợ những quá trình do nước chủ nhà phát động, và lấy đó làm nền tảng xây dựng lên những phương án can thiệp được khái quát kỹ càng. Các nhà tài trợ cũng cần trao đổi với đôi tác nước chủ nhà cách hiểu về khái niệm "hiệu quả", nhằm xây dựng một khuôn khổ phân tích chung.*

- ***Gọi đúng tên*** *– Các nhà tài trợ và nước chủ nhàcần rõ ràng hơn về mục đích thực sự của chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT, đặc biệt là trường hợp nào thì đóng vai trò cố vấn thực sự, hay vai trò lấp trống vị trí. Và nếu là lấp trống vị trí thì không nên gọi họ là "cố vấn", vì như vậy sẽ làm mập mờ vai trò thực sự và mức độ thiếu năng lực. Việc xác định mục đích rõ ràng sẽ giúp có được điều khoản tham chiếu chính xác hơn, tìm được những ứng cử viên phù hợp cho vai trò nêu ra hơn, và giúp xác lập những kỳ vọng rõ ràng về hiệu quả làm việc của các nhân sự này.*

- ***Sử dụng các cách tiếp cận linh hoạt hơn và có tính lặp lại*** *– Các nhà tài trợ và các đối tác nước chủ nhà cần tìm mọi cách tăng cường tính linh hoạt hơn nữa trong các hoạt động chương trình nhằm đáp ứng những nhu cầu mới và đang thay đổi. Điều này đặc biệt quan trọng trong những môi trường phưc tạp và nhạy cảm về chính trị, nơi mà những động lực và định hướng cải cách có thể nhanh chóng thay đổi.*

- ***Kết hợp tốt cách tiếp cận trực tiếp và gián tiếp*** *– Cũng tương tự như vậy, các cách tiếp cận về HTKT cần tính đến mưc độ năng lực rất khác nhau trên thực tế. Nơi nào có năng lực mạnh, thì có thể cho phép áp dụng cách tiêp cận gián tiếp, nhưng ở những nơi năng lực yếu, có lẽ cách tiêp cận trực tiếp sẽ phù hợp hơn. Thông thường, kết hợp cả trực tiếp và gián tiếp là tốt nhất. Cần theo dõi liên tục cách tiếp cận đươc sử dụng nhằm đánh giá khi nào cần phải chuyển từ hình thức tiếp cận này sang hình thức kia.*

- ***Xây dựng Khuôn khổ Theo dõi và Đánh giá được các bên nhất trí*** *– Các đối tác nước chủ nhà cần xây dựng một khuôn khổ phù hợp để Theo dõi và Đánh giá chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT, trong đó đặt ra những chỉ số đánh giá hiệu quả làm việc có tính thực tế, phản ánh vai trò và chức năng đã được giao cho các chuyên gia/tư vấn này, và tránh những gì có thể khuyến khích chuyên gia/tư vấn tập trung vào những kết quả cụ thể dễ thấy (hữu hình) mà quên đi những kết quả khó thấy hơn và khó đo đếm hơn về quá trình phát triển năng lực. Một khuôn khổ Theo dõi & Đánh giá phù hợp cũng cần phải cân bằng nhu cầu về chịu trách nhiệm và nhu cầu về học hỏi. Cần tạo ra cơ hội nhằm phát hiện và thử nghiệm những phương pháp đánh giá khác nhau để hiểu được quá trình thay đổi diễn ra như thế nào.*

- ***Cải thiện năng lực Nhà tài trợ*** *- Các cơ quan tài trợ cần đánh giá khả năng của mình trong việc hỗ trợ năng lực và các quá trình thay đổi trên thực địa, và đảm bảo sử dụng hiệu quả chuyên gia/tư vấn HTKT. Như vậy có thể phải cần cử những cán bộ chuyên ngành hơn đến các nước nhận viện trợ để hỗ trợ thiết kế và thực thi chương trình, cũng như tham gia vào các quá trình đối thoại chính sách. Các nhà tài trợ cũng cần đảm bảo rằng những tiêu chí đánh giá hiệu quả công việc của cán bộ/nhân viên của mình sẽ khuyến khích họ áp dụng nhất quán các chính sách của nhà tài trợ về HTKT, chứ không chỉ là quen thuộc với những chính sách này.*

1 Introduction

1.1 This Report

This is the synthesis report on the Study on *The Provision of Technical Assistance Personnel: What can we learn from promising experiences?*

The report draws primarily on the findings of three country studies conducted in Mozambique, Solomon Islands and Vietnam, as well as on the workshop held in Maastricht in May 2007, which brought together the study team, country representatives and the study steering committee to review draft findings and conclusions. The report also incorporates lessons and experiences drawn from recent literature on technical assistance that was earlier summarised in an inception report.

While the report has been written in a way that assumes the reader's familiarity with the individual country studies,[1] as many examples as possible from the country studies have been drawn into this document. The very different contexts reflected in the three country studies, as well as the different ways that issues relating to the use of TA personnel are addressed has made the task of comparative analysis more challenging than had been anticipated. However, some important findings have emerged that, against the background of the wider discussion on TA effectiveness, have been used to draw more generalised implications (see section 1.4. below on Overview of Findings and Implications) and to propose recommendations.

The report is structured as follows:

Following this *introductory* chapter,
Chapter 2 presents findings on Demand for TA Personnel
Chapter 3 presents findings on Management of TA Personnel
Chapter 4 presents findings on Effectiveness of TA Personnel
Chapter 5 presents Recommendations

1.2 Background and Positioning of the Study

Recent years have witnessed important changes in development cooperation policy, culminating in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This declaration defines capacity development as the primary responsibility of developing countries, with development partners playing a supportive role. It sees developing countries as leading the process by formulating their own strategies and setting specific objectives in their development plans. Development partner strategies and activities would then be aligned with the development frameworks of partner countries, and harmonisation and coordination would be enhanced between development partners and partner countries in the South.

The attention to aid effectiveness coincides with the global undertaking to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and the commitment of the development partner community to significantly increase aid. This renewed commitment to reducing global poverty, however, has to contend with the growing phenomenon of global insecurity and the recognition of an increasing number of so-called *fragile* environments where some of the underlying principles of engagement, as enshrined in the Paris Declaration, are less easy to implement.

For the last half century, technical assistance (TA), particularly long-term personnel, has been one of the most recognisable features of development cooperation, and for some development partners, particularly the bilaterals, it has represented a key part of their programmes. However,

[1] These have been published separately. See Bibiliography for full citation.

the mechanism has attracted a lot of criticism, with the provision of long-term expatriate personnel being the most controversial.[2] From about 1970 to the mid-1990s, TA, particularly in the form of long-term expatriate personnel, often helped to create 'islands of success' out of isolated projects that were unsustainable once handed over to national authorities. Expatriate personnel sometimes took management positions that nationals could have occupied, while their comparatively high salaries and perks often engendered resentment among the nationals around them, or contributed to further unsustainable employment of local project consultants or managers.

Such reflection has, in turn, led the international development community to look at more programme-based approaches, such as sector and budget support, aimed at stimulating national ownership of development processes. It has also engendered a renewed interest in the understanding of capacity development and the role of external partners in the process. A number of reviews and initiatives have been undertaken by the international community, culminating in the preparation of reports, guidelines and good-practice papers. Many of the conclusions regarding development partner engagement in capacity development carry clear messages for the deployment of TA personnel. In this context, the role of TA personnel has begun to change, but for many observers, the pace of change has been too slow and there is concern that the sector is unwilling to make the kinds of changes that are really needed.

While most of the criticisms of technical assistance have general validity, TA and the personnel associated with it have nonetheless made significant contributions in many countries. These contributions are often not well documented and are hence less visible.

In light of this, this study was commissioned to contribute to the current discussions on aid effectiveness and capacity development by learning about what works in relation to the use of TA personnel, and by seeing what initiatives or reforms are being taken by agencies and their partners in the field to improve practice.

It is important to underline this study's focus on TA *personnel*, and to make clear that this focus should be distinguished from a more comprehensive understanding of technical assistance, itself (referred to elsewhere as 'technical cooperation' [TC]). In this regard, it is also important to stress that this report does not engage in a general discussion of capacity development and the role of external development partners. Of course, TA personnel do not function in a vacuum and are normally deployed as parts of larger packages of resources, including other forms of technical assistance as well as financial assistance. The focus of this study, therefore, is the personnel element of TA/TC, but the analysis inevitably takes account of these broader dimensions.

The study has also focused primarily on TA personnel deployed to support project/programme implementation as opposed to those employed to design and evaluate programmes or to provide short-term inputs. It has also focused mainly on TA personnel deployed within the public-service departments of partner countries.

According to the study's terms of reference (TORS), the overall objective was to

> *. . . gain a better understanding of the future demand for technical assistance, to relate that to past experience and to recommend how TA personnel can best be mobilised, used and managed in the future to strengthen national capacity*.

The study has focused on four sets of questions:

a) What are the current and likely future demands for TA personnel?
b) What are the various options for managing TA personnel in different contexts?
c) What modes of providing TA personnel have worked best and why?
d) What are the implications for development organisations and partners?

[2] See, for example, Berg (1993).

Experiences from the field are drawn from three contrasting contexts:

- Vietnam – a near middle-income country characterised by strong leadership and ownership of the development agenda
- Mozambique – a highly aid-dependent country, facing many capacity challenges but committed to improving aid effectiveness in the framework of the Paris Declaration
- Solomon Islands – a fragile environment characterised by high aid-dependency, insecurity and a weak state.

Conclusions and recommendations in relation to 'what works when, where and why' combine the results of primary research conducted in the three countries (research that sought the views and experiences of different development-cooperation partners) with findings contained in the recent literature on the subject.

1.3 Inception Report and Field Work

The inception report was submitted in September 2006 and discussed in a first workshop at the end of that month, which brought together the study team and the steering committee. This confirmed the team's understanding of the terms of reference, presented key issues arising in the literature, enabled agreement on the focus of the study and set out a programme of work, including organisation of the fieldwork.

For a number of reasons (logistical, organisational, etc.), the scheduling of the country studies had to be revised and, in the end, it was not until March 2007 that the final country study could be conducted. An average of 12 days was provided for fieldwork in each country.[3] This proved inadequate to enable the level of analysis desired, particularly in terms of drawing definitive conclusions regarding effectiveness based on an in-depth and comparative analysis of sample TA experiences. However, the research teams were able to amass an incredible amount of information from a diverse set of sources and to tease out useful insights that can add value to ongoing discussions. Each of the country studies bears testimony to the hard work carried out.

Because of the very different country situations, and for reasons to do with access to information, logistics and availability of key informants, each country study modified the general methodology for fieldwork outlined in the inception report. However, to ensure some coherence between the three studies, a common conceptual framework was used. This is referred to in several places in the report, and is outlined in Box 1, below.

The conceptual framework distinguishes four categories or typologies of interventions in terms of the degree of external involvement in capacity development processes. These are by no means water-tight categories, nor should the framework be used to make normative judgements in terms of being better or worse, desirable or undesirable. In reality, a particular programme might display elements of more than one category, which might well change over time. The framework can help to identify the essential elements and positioning of interventions in relation to capacity development and in terms of orientation vis-à-vis the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

From the perspective of this study, the most significant categories are those defined as 'doing', 'direct' and 'indirect' approaches. The 'hands-off' approach sits at the extreme end of the continuum and is of less immediate relevance.

[3] It was possible to budget extra days in Mozambique.

Box 1: Continuum of Approaches

At one end of the spectrum are development partners who employ agents to ***do*** the work for themselves in order to achieve results on the ground as expeditiously as possible. This approach is mostly prevalent in emergency or reconstruction situations where local systems and procedures do not exist, or where local systems and governments are weak, skilled nationals in short supply and fiduciary systems failing or not developed at all. Activities are generally implemented through parallel project structures, and TA personnel are significant in performing a primarily capacity-substitution function.

A second approach is more participatory, to the extent that development partners engage with country partners through consultation and joint planning to implement agreed-upon activities, usually in the framework of an identifiable project located either inside or outside a local institution. In this so-called ***direct*** approach, development partners supply resources and remain by and large responsible for project management. TA personnel play a key role in implementing project activities but are expected to engage in some form of capacity development through interactions with national staff and country processes.

A third approach is the ***indirect*** approach, which very much underpins the argument of the Paris Declaration. In this approach, development partners engage with country processes and support endogenous initiatives and ideas. Local actors remain in charge of the change process, where TA personnel facilitate and accompany country participants in their learning, adaptation and self-organisation. This approach is built on a full understanding of country processes, politics and culture. Development partner control and direction is exercised with various degrees of intensity but with a view to taking a distance and putting country partners in charge.

A the far end of the spectrum, is the ***hands-off*** approach where development partners limit their intervention to paying for proven, measurable or demonstrated progress on the part of country institutions. It is based primarily on reporting through an independently audited statement, which is a rather macro approach to cooperation, and one that is not necessarily associated with TA practice.

1.4 Overview of Findings and Implications Arising from the Study

1.4.1 Towards Country Management of TA within the Framework of the Paris Declaration

TA personnel remain a significant element of aid budgets and continue to play a major role in supporting activities aimed at developing country capacity. They are also a very visible component of aid, which easily attracts attention. The quality and extent of their deployment is often used as a yardstick for monitoring more general progress in reforming aid relationships and the degree of compliance with international commitments, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The study confirms that progress is being made on a number of fronts to improve the way that TA personnel are used. Sometimes this progress is not easy to see and, as the study confirms, mechanisms are not usually in place to monitor such change. Much of the change taking place is incremental, which might not be to everybody's satisfaction.

The Paris Declaration provides a useful framework for setting objectives for the reform of TA personnel practices and for monitoring their implementation. In this respect, this study concludes that the general principles of the Paris Declaration with respect to country ownership, harmonisation and alignment are as relevant to the realm of TA personnel as to any other area.

The research suggests that decisions about the mobilisation and deployment of TA personnel should be a country responsibility, negotiated openly with development partners. As such, the 'procurement' approach to TA management, characterised by direct client procurement of technical assistance, with development partners merely providing funding into a budget or pool and the personnel/service provider having a direct relationship with the client (referred to in

several recent reports on TA) stands as a legitimate goal for all to work towards.[4] It also means that developing the capacity of countries to assume fuller responsibility for TA management should be a priority.

While the country studies confirm that the effectiveness of TA is influenced by a host of different factors, many of which manifest themselves at the operational level (see below), it remains clear that it is of fundamental importance for country partners to be given the opportunity to make the right choices and to take decisions regarding the deployment of TA personnel. Equally, once deployed, TA personnel should be fully accountable to the host organisations that they serve. This can help normalise patron-client relations, and give greater space for the market to match supply and demand, as well as developing normal accountability relationships to guide TA supervision, monitoring and evaluation. This can also help mitigate the perception of TA personnel as a free good. But, as the country studies suggest, being more directly involved in decision-making does not necessarily mean shouldering the full responsibility for TA management.

In a few countries, such as Vietnam, this vision is almost a reality and will inevitably become so once the country reaches the status of a middle-income country. While TA remains significant, its use is aligned around clearly defined development priorities, and the country is well placed to formulate its demands and supervise TA implementation.

For countries such as Mozambique, this vision has been adopted but the reality is that it will take a considerable number of years to be realised and progress will be uneven across sectors and regions. The country report confirms the importance of balancing the aspirations of the Paris Declaration with the realities on the ground and the need to adopt pragmatic and tailored responses. As such, there is no place for template approaches. Various arrangements for pooling technical assistance are, for instance, providing a way to reconcile vision with reality on the ground. The report underscores the value of the Paris Declaration in terms of providing a common framework for monitoring progress and for setting agendas. With the great diversity of development challenges confronting Mozambique and its development partners, having such a framework can be extremely helpful.

Solomon Islands provides a contrasting environment of a fragile state where the conditions for implementing the Paris Declaration and observing principles of good practice for capacity development are significantly more difficult. Without a stable, functional state in place and strengthened national capacity, the prospects for country-led aid management remain remote. The challenge in such an environment is to find ways to engage that ensure as much local participation in decision-making processes as possible without overloading the system, and which guards against disempowering those who ultimately need to take charge.

In environments characterised by weak ownership and capacity, where a complete shift of responsibility to the country side remains a distant prospect, interim actions need to be taken that help empower country partners to take more control. A good start is to work on increasing accountability and transparency in the process of managing technical assistance.

1.4.2 Towards a More Informed Understanding of What Works

If, as the study suggests, increased country participation in the management of TA personnel is a key determinant of effectiveness, then so too is a more informed understanding of how to use TA to support local processes of change. All three studies confirm that capacity development is a complex phenomenon and that the success of TA personnel as instruments of change should not be taken for granted. There is a real need for a better understanding of the dynamics of change and the potential role that external TA personnel can play. The studies have highlighted

[4] In particular, see OPM (2003).

the absolute importance of good design, including an on-going review of needs.

The studies demonstrate not only the value of more flexible and iterative programme approaches that leave space for adaptation to changing circumstances, but also (and equally) the value of M&E systems that combine a triple imperative of accountability, learning and providing the right incentives for pursuing capacity development goals. The country studies also highlight the fundamental need to deploy the right kind of people – those who offer a blend of substantive expertise and soft or process skills – underscoring once more the importance of appropriate processes for selection and recruitment as well as proper induction. The country studies raise a caution on the limits of any external intervention, especially in complex and politically sensitive environments, emphasising the fact that outcomes are often influenced more by internal dynamics of change than they are by any outside intervention.

These findings underscore the importance of getting the 'how' question right. While recognising that TA personnel are not always sought for purposes of capacity development, either by country partners or development partner agencies, there is a need for a more open debate between country partners and development partners on capacity development and the role for TA personnel. Beyond that, partners need to think carefully about approaches and methods for capacity development. Having an explicit theory of action based on an understanding of how different models of change can contribute to capacity development should increase the chances of success. This includes knowing when to use direct or indirect approaches, or a mix of both, as well as being able to judge when to shift from one to the other.

The Vietnam study suggests that where basic management and technical capabilities are in place, TA personnel tend to be called upon to provide expert advice in specific areas, rather than to support more fundamental capacity building. In Mozambique, the roles of TA personnel are more diverse. A mix of approaches may be warranted, ranging from more conventional directive approaches with TA personnel playing a more hands-on role in project implementation and gap filling, to more indirect approaches characterised by country-initiated and -driven processes with TA personnel playing a more facilitative and advisory role. The Solomon Islands situation warranted, in the first instance, a more direct or even 'doing' approach, albeit under the invitation of the Solomon Islands authorities. This included a large number of TA personnel whose primary function was to contain and stabilise an insecure and volatile situation. The challenge now is to find ways to shift from this more direct approach to one that is more indirect in order to address the objectives of state building and enhancing state-society relations.

This study therefore draws two main conclusions.

For development partners, there is a clear need to let go of TA management progressively in order to empower country partners to assume full and legitimate responsibility for TA personnel, within the spirit of the Paris Declaration. This needs to be a gradual and managed process that takes account of partner-country capacity. An immediate step in this direction is to strengthen the accountability of TA personnel to the partner country while also reinforcing partner-country involvement in decision-making. A gradual approach should not, however, be an excuse for non-action, and measures need to be in place to continuously monitor progress. There is an equally strong imperative for development partners to remain engaged at the field level and to invest in and support capacity development as an area of specialised knowledge and practice.

For partner countries, there is an urgency to come to grips with human resources planning and management and to think more strategically about the use of TA personnel as an instrument to support sustainable capacity development. This is a prerequisite for taking over responsibility for the management of TA personnel. Equally, it needs to be recognised that TA can never be a substitute for fundamental reform of the public service. Unless this is addressed, the sustainability of TA interventions will remain in doubt.

Before moving to the next section, it should be noted that while this study addresses the provision of TA in the context of development cooperation, the phenomenon of international exchange of personnel/expertise is much broader.[5] It is, for example, a common feature in the private and academic sectors, where the exchange of knowledge and expertise through personnel exchanges is part of day-to-day life and makes a significant contribution to innovation, to stimulating learning and understanding, and to enhancing performance. Thus, the issues of TA demand, management and effectiveness do not stop being relevant once aid stops, as middle- and upper-income countries know very well. They remain huge consumers (and contributors) of global expertise. The particular challenges of technical assistance in the developing world is precisely its link to the wider aid relationship, where issues of capacity, ownership and accountability are so prominent and have complicated what might otherwise be a much simpler and direct relationship between those who demand and those who supply TA.

1.5 Overview of Country Studies

1.5.1. Vietnam

Vietnam has been overhauling its formerly planned economy for the past 20 years, since the 'Doi Moi' Reforms of 1986, and currently adopts a framework termed a 'market economy with socialist orientation'. The international community has supported this modernisation process for the past 15 years. Socio-economic progress has been rapid. Between 1993 and 2004, the number of people below the poverty line fell from 58% of the population to 20%. Its HDI ranking rose from 120 in 1995 to 109 in 2004. Its population is currently 84 million, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was $620 in 2005, and economic growth has been running at 7% in recent years.

Political changes have been less rapid. The Communist Party of Vietnam is the sole political authority (with its politburo as its apex). Elected members of the National Assembly and Provincial People's Councils face various constraints in the performance of their representative role. However, notwithstanding the partial subordination of lower levels of local government to the level above, devolution of resources is a reality: almost half of state budget expenditures are decided upon by sub-national levels of government. However, local governments in Vietnam face numerous capacity problems: from an inconsistent and unclear legal framework to absence of formulae for assigning expenditures to levels of government below the provinces, along with prevalent 'top-down' planning frameworks, where community participation is the exception rather than the rule.

Although there are over 50 active development partners in Vietnam, it is not an aid-dependent country (official development assistance [ODA] is 4% of GDP). There are well-established mechanisms for poverty-oriented planning (including national target programmes), development co-operation and alignment (the Vietnamese government has forged a 'Hanoi Core Statement' with its development partners, which is a modified version of the Paris Declaration of 2005), over 40 government/development partner partnership groups are active, and a new management framework for ODA has just been promulgated. A series of poverty-reduction support credits (to which 10 development partners contribute) provide a budget-support mechanism amounting to approximately 10% of ODA. Development partners in several important sectors have recently committed to budget support.

However, Vietnam has pursued administrative reform slowly. These reforms are now gathering pace, with WTO membership, but shortcomings in its administrative system are manifested in slow disbursement of committed ODA (and national) resources.

[5] Indeed TA that has a specific relationship to development cooperation is a form of global expertise.

TA operations (accounting for approximately 20% of ODA in 2004) face challenges from a conservative administrative culture, and from corruption, the elimination of which has been declared a Party priority. At the same time, the education level of key officials is comparatively favourable, and their international exposure over the last 10 years has improved their ability to select and guide TA more appropriately. Promotion at the upper echelons of the civil service is based on merit, and key posts are held by well-qualified officials.

In many respects, the Vietnamese case offers a positive 'enabling environment' for successful TA and related capacity development operations. There is evidence of a growing ability and confidence in Vietnamese partners to identify where skill and knowledge gaps exist, along with mechanisms and collaborative forums to articulate these needs and to agree jointly with development partners on what remedial action (including TA) is needed. While there is strong government ownership of declared national development priorities, some sector TA programmes are better mapped and co-ordinated than others. The capacity of host agencies for managing the implementation of TA is variable, and although the government generally acknowledges weaknesses, it appears that corrective measures (and corresponding improvements) take time. No action has been taken yet on many of the recommendations of an earlier study on TA, although many are still relevant. Several more recent reviews have commented on the absence of linkages between TA and the budget-support mechanisms, as well as poor specification of indicators for measuring the development of institutional capacity.

1.5.2. Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands is a small, fragile island state consisting of 992 islands with over 70 distinct languages and one common language (*Pijin*). The country gained its independence peacefully from Britain in 1978 but is the poorest country in the Pacific with a per capita income of US $340 (US $1814 in terms of purchasing-power parity). It is also one of the most rural and static societies in the world, with more than 75% of the population engaged in subsistence farming and fishing.

A notable feature of Solomon Islands is *wontok*, someone who speaks the same language as you and with whom you share a set of social obligations. Land ownership is reserved for Solomon Islanders and held on a *wontok* – family or village – basis. In 1998, tensions over land ownership and use between the residents of the island of Guadalcanal and migrants from the island of Malaita resulted in organised violence between rival militias and the forced removal of 20,000 Malaitans from rural Guadalcanal. Over the next five years, ethnic violence escalated into criminal behaviour, including murder, arson, rape, kidnapping, looting, assault, torture, and extra-judicial executions. Militants intimidated senior government officials, some ministers and members of Parliament were involved in corruption and illegal practices, and many police and prison wardens were perpetrators of violence. By 2003, the government was insolvent and its services were almost non-existent. Most commerce came to a halt and the provinces, which had never given much allegiance to the distant and often fractious central government, were demanding more autonomy.

After several requests for assistance from the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Australia agreed to work with the Pacific Islands Forum and 15 other states in the region to field the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The first deployment of RAMSI personnel arrived in Solomon Islands July 24, 2003.

In order to address major capacity shortages, RAMSI is largely a TA operation with about 235 police officers and 130 advisors and in-line personnel involved in three main activities: (1) improving economic governance and growth, (2) strengthening law and justice, and (3) reinforcing the machinery of government. Most of these TA personnel have a double mandate – to carry out specific tasks and to strengthen Solomon Island capacity. There are three approaches to building capacity that are evident across these activities: (1) *doing* – taking over

and getting the job done, (2) *direct* – where outsiders control and design while trying to engage country partners, and (3) *indirect* – where outsiders work with country partners to identify their interests. Despite some significant short-term successes, engagement by the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) is low and sustainability of some of the activities is fragile.

RAMSI is both a security and a state-building exercise, with the latter focusing on the effectiveness and capacity of public services, especially of the central agencies of government, all of which operate along the British model. It uses a *whole-of-government* (WoG) approach, with personnel deployed from a wide range of Australian, New Zealand and Fijian government departments performing in-line and advisory roles. RAMSI also recruits a large number of TA personnel through private contractors, primarily for advisory positions. TA personnel receive logistical and management support from facilities or special offices set up to relieve AusAID of this administrative burden, which means that AusAID staff have the time to be involved in the strategic design of activities.

1.5.3. Mozambique

Since independence in 1975, development in Mozambican can be divided into three broad periods. First, the close liaison with the socialist world lasted until the mid-1980s. The second period lasted until the early 1990s, which marked the end of the Cold War as well as the civil war in Mozambique and the shift towards a multi-party democracy. For Mozambique, this meant a painful transition from a planned to a market economy, which weakened the state. On the other hand, more than four million refugees returned after the war, which, combined with a process of liberalisation, helped rebuild the economy. During the third period, which is current today, the aid dependence of the country increased. This has been accompanied by privileged status among development partners, and Mozambique has become a model for testing new aid modalities. The government remains highly centralised despite a programme of gradual decentralisation and the existence of 33 elected municipalities. This is largely a case of deconcentrated administration rather than political devolution.

In terms of development ranking, Mozambique was number 168 on UNDP's Human Development Index in 2006. In 1999 the number of Mozambicans living in absolute poverty was 70%, but by 2004, this had been reduced to 54%, although the vast majority of the rural population still lives on less than US $1 a day. According to the OECD-DAC, Mozambique is the world's eighth most aid-dependent country. More than half of total public spending and about two-thirds of public investment depend on aid, while it has been estimated that the cost of TA is roughly half of the public-sector wage bill. Relatively high growth rates and improvements in public service are largely a result of this assistance, but it has caused severe mismanagement and corruption. The parliamentary system and civil society are unable to balance the weaknesses in governance.

Since 1998/9, Mozambique became a test case for harmonisation and alignment when five development partners started to coordinate general and sector budget support (GBS) in an attempt to reduce the burdens on government and strengthen its planning and financial management systems. Today there are 18 GBS contributors pooling some 30% to 35% of total aid into the treasury. Two thirds of Mozambique's aid stays outside the system and remains channelled directly to line ministries, provinces and districts as sector funds or under traditional projects. This is because of the development partners' own limitations as well as strong concerns about the misuse of funds due to weak public financial management (PFM) and elite capture.

The public service is seriously deficient in the number of skilled staff and in terms of human resources management. While there are several initiatives underway to address the public sector's human resources deficit, particularly in the area of PFM and decentralisation, an overarching strategy for capacity development that links civil-service needs with the education

system and private and civil providers, is missing.

The Mozambican case offers an opportunity to examine a variety of TA practices in an environment that is willing to change, that lacks the capacity to lead the development process and is overwhelmed by a large number of development partners. Initiatives on harmonisation and alignment are showing their first results and have convinced a number of partners that a gradual pooling of technical assistance is the path to follow, as long as it is handled flexibly and leaves space for strategically placed direct approaches. The latter are considered to be particularly important for rolling out central reforms to lower levels of government. In order to make TA more effective, however, there is a need for more government leadership on how to approach TA. Without that, the differences in development partner approaches to providing TA will not be addressed.

2 Demand for TA Personnel

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the demand for TA personnel provided by development partners. *Demand* lies at the heart of the discussion of TA ownership and effectiveness, yet appears to be a subject that has not been well studied. If demand for TA is not based on genuine need, is ill defined or is in any way deemed to be imposed, it is certain that the effectiveness and sustainability of any TA contribution will be in question.

In the context of development cooperation, the demand for TA personnel is complicated because the normal relationship between patron and client is obscured by the presence of the development partner, creating a three-way relationship, and by the fact that most of the costs of TA are borne by the development partner. Moreover, TA personnel are the physical manifestation of the development partner's presence in a country, and high levels of TA are associated with high levels of dependency and lack of capacity. Thus, while there might be on-going demand for external expertise, there is, at the same time, a strong desire on the part of country partners to see the levels of TA decline. A declining volume of technical assistance is thus seen as a measure of development progress.

Demand for TA also needs to be thought about in relation to capacity development. In the past, capacity development was automatically associated with the provision of TA personnel. More recently, this link has been brought into question. The provision of TA personnel is now considered as one of several alternative instruments that can be used to help develop country capacity. The globalisation of knowledge and access to the internet is also providing new ways of learning and offering alternatives to the face-to-face sharing of knowledge.

To put the discussion of demand for TA personnel into perspective, it is useful to recognise the movement of people and skills from one country or region to another as a global phenomenon that is not confined to development cooperation. It is a human activity practiced in all countries, and dating back many centuries. In the 21st century, technical assistance is an expanding and well-appreciated global phenomenon in the private sector, particularly within multinationals, where it is recognized as critical to maintaining competitiveness. Major companies in industrialised countries are large consumers of such resources, and a company that was not seeking new ideas and technology through people-to-people exchanges of some sort would be seen as stagnant.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first discusses factors that shape the demand for technical assistance. The second discusses patterns of demand.

2.2 Factors Shaping Demand for TA Personnel

The country studies suggest that the host-country demand for TA personnel provided by development partners remains strong, despite the many criticisms of TA personnel over the last 30 years. That said, trying to ascertain what the specific demand for TA is remains a challenge, and overall, the topic of TA demand is not an easy one to tackle.

Clearly, a variety of factors shape demand. Given a history where TA has been largely influenced by the interests and initiatives of external partners, this study was specifically interested in understanding how far and in what ways host-country partners participate in determining their needs for TA. At the same time, the influence of external partners is significant and cannot be disregarded. The following factors appear to shape demand:

- the respective interests of partner countries and development partners
- country ownership and leadership
- TA as an operational rather than strategic issue
- the 'free good' syndrome and 'real' demand
- limited capacity for human resources planning and management

2.2.1 A Double Imperative: The Respective Interests of the Partner Country and Its Development Partners

Patterns of demand are shaped by what are essentially two distinct 'clients': the development partner on the one side and the partner country on the other. The interests of these two clients may or may not coincide, and may result in tension. Development partners, moreover, can be considered both demanders and suppliers of TA personnel.

For development partners, TA can be an important strategic resource for assuring efficient and effective implementation of their development objectives, which can conflict with efforts to rationalise the use of and reduce the overall volume of TA, in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration. The demands of development partners are often more clearly expressed than those of partner countries, being part and parcel of their respective strategies for country and sector assistance. Several agencies also have explicit policies on TA that spell out what their roles and functions are, and how they are expected to work.

In contrast, partner-country demand for TA personnel is usually less well defined. There tend not to be formal positions such as policy statements on the subject (although in Vietnam it is touched upon in the Hanoi Core Statement), nor is there necessarily a formal focal point for channelling and expressing demand. And as noted in the Vietnam study, it is difficult to find studies and data on the subject. There are nevertheless some examples of national-level studies on capacity needs and gap assessments that are helping to create a baseline for a more systematic discussion of TA needs, perhaps the most obvious example being the TA review study commissioned by UNDP in Vietnam in 2000.[6] In many cases, a country's specific demands for TA emerge through a process of learning and assessment, with their development partner colleagues. Thus, one cycle of project/programme activity might reveal or generate needs that were not apparent beforehand. In this respect, initial 'supply-driven' activities can sometimes prime a demand that was not previously recognised, underscoring the interrelationship between supply and demand, and the value of joint monitoring and learning.

Demand depends on the perspectives of the stakeholders concerned, and the demands of politicians, senior administrators and technicians are likely to differ. Similarly, the views of central government officials might differ from those of local government and of civil society.

[6] However, the recommendations of the report have never been acted upon, which is perhaps an indication of the relative insignificance attached to formulating TA strategies.

2.2.2 Country Ownership and Leadership

Issues of demand cannot be separated from the wider discussion of ownership and leadership of development initiatives, and more generally of how the aid agenda is shaped at the country level.

Countries that exercise strong leadership, that have well-defined development strategies, or that are serious about improving public-service performance are usually better placed to articulate their needs for external assistance**,** and can engage more easily in a discussion on the value of TA personnel. Countries that have weaker administrations, poorly articulated development plans and which are heavily aid dependent are less likely to be pro-active in their discussions of TA and are more likely to accept what is proposed by development partners. The more balanced the aid relationship is, and the stronger the country partner is, the more likely it is that TA demand will be shaped by domestic priorities rather than those of development partners. In this regard, the Vietnam and Solomon Islands cases offer an interesting contrast.

Vietnam has taken bold steps to take charge of its development agenda and, together with its external partners, to ensure that external assistance is aligned around country priorities (see the Hanoi Core Statement). Vietnam officials consider ownership of TA as their right, and that they should have the last word on decisions relating to it. They object to the bundling of TA within larger programmes or its packaging as a condition for receiving financial assistance, even though this practice still continues. While there is no policy or guidelines on TA, per se, the government's strategy for ODA utilisation sets out areas of priority where TA is welcome. In addition, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) has the mandate to appraise and approve all externally funded projects, while major ministries also have international departments that play an increasingly important role in programming.

In contrast, the Solomon Islands report provides an example of a country that is described as 'more a taker rather than shaper of its external assistance'. Political instability and fragility, a poor record of success with external assistance (TA, in particular), as well as a lack of personnel to attend to policy and planning matters seem to be factors that have encouraged a lack of engagement. To outsiders, this appears to be passivity. The nature of the crisis that beset Solomon Islands, however, demanded a rapid and forthright response. Thus, the initial tendency to high levels of intervention in RAMSI largely reflected the desire to move quickly and to produce early, broadly felt and visible results: necessary conditions for building the legitimacy of the operation. There was pressure to stem quickly the violence and intimidation that had become a feature of life in some parts of the country and to stop the diversion of funds, which was bleeding the country dry. Australia felt it had no choice but to take the lead in designing the intervention and, indeed, the Solomon Islands Government expected outsiders to help do this.[7]

Mozambique presents a more nuanced and differentiated situation. Overall, the government has been taking steps to exercise greater leadership and ensure that TA responds to national priorities, but the sheer number of development partners present in the country and the magnitude of the development agenda are simply overwhelming. The country case illustrates how certain sectors and institutions are better placed to determine their needs than are others, and can therefore exercise more influence in articulating needs and defining TA inputs. The emergence of new aid modalities, such as sector-wide approaches (SWAps) and budget support, has created the opportunity for country partners to set the agenda. According to the country report, various forms of pooling[8] are being considered by an increasing number of

[7] For RAMSI, the role of TA was clear. It could fill obvious gaps, was considered a safe bet in an uncertain environment (especially where public financial management was weak), it could make in-roads on key policy and governance issues, and provided control over results in the short term. This was consistent with the new 'robust approach' that was being used to address governance and security issues in the region.

[8] Pooling is discussed further in the following chapters.

government departments and several development partners as the preferred approach because it allows greater opportunity for the Mozambique Government to shape TA demand. It also obliges suppliers of TA to engage more directly with the government to discuss needs.

2.2.3 An Operational Rather Than Strategic Issue

The country studies found that in general, the issue of demand for TA personnel does not feature prominently in strategic thinking and planning processes. It is usually addressed at a more operational level, either when programmes are being designed or when a specific demand is made for assistance to deal with a particular issue.

National development plans, including PRSPs, sector and sub-sector plans, do, however, offer a more solid base upon which to consider workforce needs and broader issues of capacity, and in that light, provide a basis for considering the contribution that TA personnel can make. Pooling of funds for TA, especially in the framework of sector programmes, likewise provides an opportunity to think about TA in relation to overall sector requirements rather than in terms of the specific needs of activities funded by development partners. Pooling also offers an entry point for dialogue on TA between country stakeholders and development partners, which can lead to different patterns of demand. The example of the FASE programme in the Mozambique study shows that better coordination can be achieved through such mechanisms.

Yet, while programme-based approaches and general budget support (GBS) offer more scope for matching TA provision to medium- and long-term strategies for human resources development, in practice, the deployment of TA remains ad hoc and un-coordinated. Several of the case studies for the recent GBS evaluation study (including the Vietnam case) note that TA is badly planned and that the link with capacity development is particularly weak.[9] This is considered by the report's authors to be the weakest element in what are otherwise strong programmes.

2.2.4 'Free Good' Syndrome and 'Real' Demand

Assessing the demand for TA personnel is complicated by the fact that it is generally viewed by partner countries as a 'free' good. This is because most TA is provided in grant form and the costs involved are often not disclosed. The question therefore arises as to what the demand would be if countries had to pay for the TA themselves or even if they knew its costs? This concern is raised in the Vietnam report and is generally valid, having been highlighted in most international studies on TA. As illustrated in the Vietnam study, the government there bears little of the cost of TA, which is usually but not always provided in grant form. The problem is compounded by the fact that development partners compete amongst themselves to provide assistance to the Vietnamese authorities through the provision of TA. Expenditure on TA has an opportunity cost, but this remains largely invisible because much TA remains off-budget, even though this is contrary to the Hanoi Core Statement.[10]

The 'free good' syndrome discourages critical appraisal of the potential costs and benefits of TA. In countries where the public-sector wage bill is capped, being able to access 'free' expertise to plug gaps can be an appealing proposition, especially when governments are faced with problems of attracting and retaining qualified and experienced personnel. However, it can draw attention away from addressing more fundamental problems associated with public-service performance.[11]

[9] IDD and Associates (2006).
[10] It remains off the Vietnamese budget. However, most development partners – including those in the study – indicate aggregate TA items in their overall aid budget 'envelopes' to Vietnam.
[11] Demand for TA could well be a consequence of staff retention and brain-drain problems.

Alternatively, where TA is accepted as a condition for accessing much-needed financial resources (grants and loans), as reportedly is sometimes the case, this might distort demand. It might better be described as 'tolerated' TA.

The absence of transparency on the part of development partners regarding the real costs of providing TA personnel (and the lack of opportunity for country partners to compare alternative forms or sources of supply) means that countries generally have incomplete information for negotiating with development partners and for making informed decisions. This is a particular concern for a country like Mozambique, where it has been estimated that the annual cost of TA approaches 50% of the public-sector wage bill.[12] Being transparent about costs would give the host country the opportunity to consider the comparative advantage of TA over other forms of support and to decide what kind of TA is most suited or that offers best value for money: local expert, expatriate advisor, development worker, etc. This is something that is being tested out generally by AusAID, and specifically in the PNG health sector, through a 'Capacity Building Service Centre'[13] that works with the partner country to determine appropriate forms of technical assistance (see also the chapter on TA management).

2.2.5 Limited Capacity for Human Resources Planning and Management

The three country studies portray a situation of comparatively weak capacity within government institutions for human resources planning and management. Indeed, this situation is typical of the human resources management function within the public services of developing countries. Ministries of public service are usually less well resourced than, for example ministries of finance and development planning and do not necessarily enjoy the same level of external support. None of the three countries were seen to have systems in place to allow for effective workforce planning and management, including specification of TA needs. Leadership, communication, performance appraisal, career counselling and coaching practices are often ill-developed. Old-fashioned hierarchical styles of people-management in public-sector institutions provide little attraction to ambitious, well-qualified young public officials. Where private sectors are growing (for example, in Vietnam), they offer a tempting alternative environment for self-development (not to mention the attractions of better pay).

In Solomon Islands, the lack of qualified personnel means that the government is unable to engage in any discussion and follow-up on an analysis of needs. However, for the first time, an inventory of TA personnel has been prepared and a list of all public servants in the country is expected to be compiled in the near future. In Mozambique, capacity assessments have now been carried out in a number of sectors. But overall, except in a few departments, the capacity to determine needs remains extremely weak. In Vietnam, the capacity of the government to make judgements about TA requirements and to compare TA providers is improving due to growing international exposure. The TA needs of some sectors and 'suppliers' have been mapped in the past, as in the case of the forestry sector. At the same time, the report remarks that officials can be reluctant to admit that TA is needed.[14] Some of the implications of low capacity in this area are further discussed in the next chapter, on TA management.

[12] We return to this issue in the chapter on implications. We suggest that it is these kinds of questions that can and should be addressed in broader reviews of TA and the public-sector workforce.
[13] This is a 'facility' type of mechanism.
[14] See the example of project P135, which began in 1998 as a programme to support infrastructure development in particularly remote provinces and the most marginalised communities, many of them ethnic minorities. Up until 2006, it was largely funded by the Government of Vietnam as a national target programme. Its TA inputs were (and still are) limited to a small UNDP team at the central level (the CEMA office). Several development partners have committed budget support to Phase II (starting this year). They anticipate much more TA being required, especially at the provincial and sub-provincial levels. However, CEMA has not approved the conclusions of the (Finnish-supported) analysis of TA management needs; instead, CEMA feels that TA is needed only in several (analytical and resource-targeting) areas. Management of TA at sub-provincial levels was not mentioned as a need in the CEMA interview during the study; the officer indicated that CEMA was inadequately involved in the TA needs analysis and did not 'own' its conclusions.

A related point is the multitude of issues, particularly related to reform, that development partners bring to the table. These can become overwhelming, particularly for weaker countries, (but the same can be true even among some of the stronger ones), who, in the end either accept what is offered (including TA personnel) passively or become resistant to reform, with downstream implications for effectiveness.

2.3 Patterns of Demand for TA Personnel

Demands for TA personnel are extremely varied and situation specific. The country studies confirm the difficulty and inappropriateness of making generalisations about patterns of demand. The needs of a fragile country will be quite different from those of a middle-income country. The former may need expertise in managing complex processes of change; the latter may be more interested in mobilising scarce skills in highly technical fields. The Mozambique study illustrates how demands can vary significantly among sectors and organisations. With this caveat in mind, the following observations are made.

2.3.1 Development partner Demands

From the point of view of development partners, TA personnel are a flexible instrument that can address a number of objectives and perform a variety of roles and functions. Six principal categories are identified:

- **Gap-filling –** by beefing up the capacity of implementing departments, particularly those that are large spenders of aid, TA personnel can help get things done where local capacity is considered inadequate.
- **Technical advice –** TA personnel can be mobilised to assist countries in tackling specific policy and operational challenges, as well as assisting the country offices of development partner agencies in supporting sector/thematic programmes.
- **Capacity development –** TA personnel can contribute to strengthening partner capacities in a variety of ways (skills, systems and procedures, policy frameworks, etc).
- **Influencing –** TA personnel can help inform and shape policy agendas and reform programmes or they can be used to support groups in society that might be voiceless.
- **Watchdog –** TA personnel can function as managers of funds/controllers of finances, ensuring accountability and efficient use of resources, where the risks of using local systems are considered too high.
- **Project management –** TA may be proposed in order to manage the complexities of development partner funding and procurement rules and regulations, as well as the requirements of planning and reporting/monitoring.

There is a tendency on the part of development partners to blend roles and functions through the use of generic titles, such as ‘expert’ or ‘advisor’. TA is also often expected to perform a combination of functions, although this may not be made clear to partner organisations (see chapter on effectiveness).

With the increasing shift to programme-based approaches and to sector and general budget support, development partners are also interested in personnel that have skills in change management and process facilitation, as well as skills in dialogue and networking. Experience in working with PBAs/GBS and involvement in development partner coordination and partner dialogue processes is also considered an asset. There is also more emphasis placed on planning, budgeting, public financial management and procurement, and monitoring, consistent with the focus on strengthening the core functions of government. Personnel with substantive expertise in institutional reform, decentralisation, governance, human rights and anti-corruption are also in greater demand.

2.3.2 Country Demands

As noted earlier, there remains a significant demand for TA supplied by development partners, even though there is a general desire for self-sufficiency and reduced dependence on external assistance. It is generally accepted that there are functions that need to be performed and services that need to be provided that cannot be catered for by the local labour market. Vietnam, for instance, recognises that there are areas of expertise related to international standards, legal or treaty implications, which are essential for the 'internationalisation' of Vietnam's development, that have to be imported. For fragile states and, in particular, for small island states, there are real skill gaps that simply will not disappear in the short run. Such states have to compete on the international market for expertise that costs more than most of them will ever be able to afford.[15]

There is a demand for TA to perform three principal roles and functions:

Gap-filling – TA personnel are often viewed as a resource that can help boost implementation capacity and bridge capacity gaps. Because the interest of politicians and decision-makers is usually to assure short-term performance as well as compliance with any development partner requirements, preference is often given to this function rather than to longer-term capacity development.[16] The most obvious need is to plug gaps in public service where there is a shortage of qualified personnel to perform line functions (either because staff are undergoing training or because of difficulties attracting and retaining staff). This is particularly important in core agencies as well as in spending ministries receiving significant levels of external financial support, and where issues of absorptive capacity arise. The demand for gap-filling could likely increase if levels of aid rise. In some countries, particularly small island states, gap-filling may in fact be a long-term requirement. While this might create a form of dependency, there may be no choice but to continue to source long-term TA. In fragile environments, characterised by instability and uncertainty, it might not be realistic to look beyond immediate needs.

Where there is pressure, particularly to get infrastructure projects that are financed by development partners moving on the ground and in situations where local capacity is insufficient, the more classic project-management function, implemented through programme-management units (PMUs), is still welcomed.[17] This was found to be the case in provinces in Mozambique where local government institutions are particularly weak. Yet in Vietnam, where there is a strong commitment to harmonisation and alignment around national systems, the feeling among officials in central government is that project-management responsibilities should fall on nationals, with TA focusing on providing technical and specialist advice.[18] That said, it is noteworthy that even in the light of the Hanoi Core Statement, there were still 440 PMUs operating in Vietnam in 2005.

Technical advice – TA personnel are valued for the advice they can provide in key strategic areas where highly specialised inputs are required to facilitate sector reform and policy, staff and organisational development. This might be over both the short and long term. In Vietnam, for instance, the provision of such advisory services was highly valued and is typical of middle-income countries, such as Brazil and India, where issues of gap-filling are less significant, but where access to international know-how is considered essential for global competitiveness. Many developing countries are also faced with the need to follow up on the implementation of international conventions and treaties, as well as to contribute to global initiatives that require the mobilisation of specialised expertise. This is particularly so with respect to global public

[15] This is discussed in more depth in relation to small island states in the study commissioned by the Comsec on strategic gap-filling.
[16] This was, however, much less so in Vietnam where there is considered to be adequate basic capacity.
[17] For particularly large and complex infrastructure projects, the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) modality is appreciated.
[18] It was not possible to get the views of sub-national stakeholders.

goods.

Capacity development – Partner countries normally expect TA personnel to build capacity as part of their assignment, and this is usually seen in relation to the transfer of skills to national counterparts. But in general, this role is poorly defined and the expected outcomes remain unclear. Because capacity development tends to be discussed and referred to in general terms, it can be difficult to judge what the demand really is. Part of the problem is the absence of a shared understanding of 'capacity development' among partners, which can result in difficulties in specifying how TA is expected to contribute to the capacity development process.

The country studies identified a general preference for TA personnel (whether performing a role in gap-filling, advice-giving or capacity development) to be de-linked from financial management responsibilities. This more easily allows for a mixing of doing, advising and capacity development functions. Some of the roles and functions identified by development partners such as 'influencing', 'project management', and 'watch-dog' were not specifically mentioned by partner countries.

2.3.3 Other Dimensions of Demand

Substantive Expertise versus Process Skills

The country studies sought the views of country stakeholders on the relative importance they attach to the skill profile of TA personnel. While this depends very much on the specific roles and functions to be performed (e.g., gap-filling versus advice), the following conclusions can be drawn.

TA personnel are valued, in the first instance, for the substantive skills and expertise that they bring. In Mozambique, for example, government officials as well as NGO representatives made the point that they want specialist assistance to help them produce tangible outputs. A similar comment was made in Vietnam, with emphasis placed on experts contributing in substantive fields. It is difficult, however, to generalise about the areas of substantive expertise that are most in demand. In all three countries, aid programmes span a broad range of sectors, while contexts vary considerably. Box 2 compares patterns across the three countries.

Box 2: Sector/Thematic Priorities at the Country Level

Vietnam has gone furthest in defining areas of priority for TA. According to the government's own framework for ODA utilisation for the period 2006-10, support will be sought in the following areas:

- agriculture and rural development
- economic and social infrastructure
- environmental and natural resources protection
- institutional, HRD, R&D and capacity building[19]

In **Mozambique,** it is more difficult to determine where priority needs lie, as few attempts have been made to produce comprehensive overviews of need. The report mentions attempts made at the sector level to produce an overview, but these have not been followed up on. Needs arise across all sorts of sectors, from social and productive sectors, to core government functions. The country report finds that at the central-government level, greater emphasis is placed on the importance of supporting core government functions related to policy, planning and budgeting; whereas, at the local level, greater

[19] The framework also identifies, within the latter category, the following areas as being of priority:

- completing legal systems linked to WTO accession
- policy formulation macro-econ mgt, banking and financial-sector reform
- decentralisation and capacity developmentat the local level
- management of public investments
- pro-poor public admin, democratic and participatory state admin
- capacity development for research institutes and universities

emphasis is given to service delivery in areas related to key social services and economic infrastructure.

Perspectives on TA needs in **Solomon Islands** are much influenced by the current crisis and the character of the RAMSI response. While government officials recognise the need for TA support across a wide range of areas, the RAMSI programme itself has taken the lead in defining priorities. These coincide with RAMSI's three programme pillars: (1) the judicial and police sectors related to security and rule of law, where police, lawyers and judges are in demand, (2) economic governance and (3) the machinery of government. Here, expertise in a variety of fields, including public financial management (auditors, economists) and public management have been identified.

While emphasising substantive skills, country respondents also emphasised attributes related to how TA personnel work and relate to local colleagues in the workplace. There is a demand for individuals with inter-cultural awareness, good communication skills and knowledge of how to support individual and organisational learning. Vietnamese and Solomon Island respondents underscored the importance of personal attributes that can help ensure the acceptance and effectiveness of TA personnel, such as capacity to listen, to work in a team, to remain humble and to be culturally sensitive. It was pointed out that process skills on their own are insufficient, and should be part and parcel of a mix of competencies.

Patterns of Demand at the Sub-National Level

The Mozambique and Vietnam studies underline the fact that patterns of demand can differ at the sub-national level, where capacity challenges and development priorities may call for another approach to TA. The Mozambique report suggests a high demand for TA personnel at provincial and district levels to perform more direct implementation roles. The Vietnam report hints at a similar situation, pointing out that demands at the local level are significant but often hidden because the opportunity to express demands is not always there. Yet, according to the Government's 2007 Strategic Framework, communes are identified as a priority for support for capacity development.[20]

The growing focus on bolstering the core functions of central government in the context of sector programmes and general budget support risks diverting attention from the needs of provincial/local-level administrations and of non-state actors. This is indeed a concern voiced by a number of those interviewed in Mozambique; interviewees in Solomon Islands also mentioned needs at the provincial level.

National or International TA

There is increasing interest (and often political pressure) to source expertise locally and regionally, rather than to rely on an international (expatriate) expert. The presence of large numbers of expatriate personnel can indeed fuel resentment and raise concerns among the public at large and among opinion leaders. In considering the deployment of TA personnel, there is a need to be sensitive to local views and feelings.

In some situations, there are clearly perceived advantages in recruiting locally or regionally, but in other situations, an international perspective on an issue is important. The Vietnam case illustrates both situations, along with the value of combining international with local expertise. In Vietnam, international TA personnel are valued for the perspectives and innovations they bring to the table, particularly in terms of offering a window on comparative international practice in areas related to access to and participation in the global economy. Local/regional TA personnel are valued, inter alia, for their more intimate knowledge of the local context and their ability to adapt international good practice to the Vietnam situation.[21] The value of using national TA personnel is discussed further in the chapter on effectiveness.

[20] For further discussion of the potential demand for (but also limitations of) TA to support decentralised structures in Vietnam, see section 3.5.3 and Box 1 in the Vietnam report.

[21] For a more complete discussion on this point, particularly of the challenges of assuring a supply of national TA personnel to meet the demand, see the Vietnam report (section 3.5.4. pages 17-18).

Fragile States and Global Public Goods

The case of Solomon Islands draws attention to global security and global public goods that carry implications for development-cooperation policy and practice. As a result of the fragility associated with weak states and post-conflict situations, development partners are increasingly seeing a need for more direct engagement to ensure a minimum level of functionality. Such direct approaches can quickly result in new demands for TA, characterised by high levels of expatriate presence with a focus on gap-filling. This, in turn, can undermine other efforts in capacity development and can challenge ownership, both of which tend to evolve more effectively when processes are locally driven and development partners use a facilitative approach.

Interventions in countries like Solomon Islands, East Timor and Iraq have tended to focus on core functions of government, such as security and political and financial reform, that are not necessarily seen by the population as directly associated with poverty reduction. But the immediate causes of strife in such fragile environments are often income disparities among different groups and regions. There is a danger of such interventions losing their credibility if they (or parallel aid programmes) do not address the more immediate needs of health, education and infrastructure services.

Middle-Income Countries Generating Targeted Demands

At the other end of the development spectrum, in what are termed middle-income countries, a different pattern of demand is emerging. Here, demands tend to be much more focused and selective, and in so far as development partner agencies continue to be present, more targeted demands for TA inputs can be expected – demands that are not necessarily part of formal development programmes. In such situations, development partner/TA agencies can find themselves in direct competition with an emerging local consultancy industry to provide specialist expertise.

3 TA Management

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the ways TA personnel are managed. It has been of particular interest to find out how different management arrangements influence the way in which needs for TA personnel are identified, (including articulation of demand), the way personnel are procured, how personnel are managed and supervised (accountability), and how performance is monitored. The study also looked at the impact of different approaches to the management of TA personnel on overall TA effectiveness.

The findings focus mainly on TA personnel who have been mobilised either by a development partner or technical-cooperation agency or through a managing contractor. More limited reference is made to TA personnel procured directly through the open market (albeit with development partner financing). While recognising their importance, the study has not looked at TA personnel mobilised through volunteer programmes and twinning programmes, nor through secondments (other than in RAMSI) and exchanges, all of which carry their own management implications.

The analysis is set against the wider discussion on aid management, particularly the provisions of the Paris Declaration that encourage country management of the development process and development partner harmonisation and alignment around national priorities and systems. With specific reference to technical assistance, indicator 4 calls for increased coordination of

technical cooperation supported by development partners. While this addresses more than TA, it remains an important point of reference for this discussion in terms of its call for more coordinated approaches among development partners.

The analysis also takes note of a number of recent reports that recommend that partner countries assume fuller responsibility for the management of TA personnel in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. They propose a shift towards a procurement approach to TA, characterised by direct client procurement of TA with development partners merely providing funding into a budget or pool and the personnel/service provider having a direct relationship with the client.[22] The procurement approach is considered to provide a much more efficient way to match supply and demand, to increase accountability and to overcome other distortions created by the aid relationship.

This chapter is divided into three sections:

1. TA Personnel Management – A Shared Responsibility
2. What Countries Consider Important
3. Management Issues Arising

3.2 TA Personnel Management – A Shared Responsibility

Within the three case countries, there was little evidence of the procurement approach being fully practiced.[23] Even with the increase in sector and general budget support, management of TA remains largely in the hands of development partners, albeit with increased and sometimes significant levels of country participation, constituting forms of co-management.[24]

The extent to which one or another party assumes the principal burden of responsibility varies considerably. Lack of capacity on the part of partner organisations, particularly in the realm of human resources management but also in procurement, is a major reason given for development partners retaining a high level of management responsibility. It also reflects the degree to which countries exercise leadership in managing the aid relationship. But even where a country has sufficient capacity, host agencies do not necessarily insist on assuming full responsibility, and often, as in Vietnam, there is a preference for shared arrangements.

3.3 What Countries Consider Important

While governments generally aspire to assume fuller management responsibility for TA, as envisaged in the Paris Declaration, there are a number of steps in the management process where partner-country participation is considered crucial. These are reviewed below.

3.3.1 Identification of Needs and Options

Partner countries expect to be fully involved in any proposal to recruit TA personnel as an essential element of programme design (whether in terms of projects, programmes or free-standing deployment) and emphasise the importance of development partners being more

[22] 'See OPM (2003) A Vision for the Future of Technical Assistance in the International Development System. See also the ActionAid (2006) report on Real Aid, which focuses on technical assistance.
[23] For some examples of experiences of working with the procurement approach in other partner countries, see DFID (2006: p9).
[24] While there is increased use of programme-based approaches in Vietnam, TA is often delivered through conventional project-management arrangements, with the burden of responsibility falling on development partners or their agents. Very clear rules and guidelines have, however, been set out in the framework of the Hanoi Core Statement regarding procedures for the management of TA.

transparent about the range of TA options available and the associated costs (as discussed in the previous chapter). This is seen as being of absolute importance for making informed choices about TA and can help mitigate the 'free good' syndrome. Nevertheless, various studies (for example by the IMF and ADB) argue that development partner agencies still tend to take the lead in the identification of needs, with country partners being more passive/reactive.

3.3.2 Preparation of Tender Documents and/or Terms of Reference

Country partners do participate in preparing tender documents and terms of reference (TORs) as a matter of routine but their participation tends to take the form of commenting on and modifying drafts prepared by the development partner. The studies suggest that particular attention is needed to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the proposed roles and functions of TA and that these should be properly reflected in TORs. The Vietnam report cautions that although the specifications of TORs are usually developed as a joint process, the client agency needs careful advisory and coaching inputs to enable it to take charge of this process, and to draft its own TORs for TA. Failure to supply this support at this stage can lead to difficulties later on.

The country reports note that where the host organisation lacks sufficient information about the market, they often seek assistance from development partner agencies to identify potential suppliers or to short-list candidates. This was the case in Mozambique, where the Ministry of Agriculture looked to the European Commission Delegation for advice on companies that could assist with the implementation of their new financial management system. In many situations, procurement does not involve competitive bidding, taking the form instead of a negotiated process, or being part of an already agreed-upon framework of cooperation, such as twinning. In these circumstances, a government department might approach a development partner agency or partner directly with a request for personnel. This practice is quite common in Vietnam where the government has identified the comparative strengths of different development partner agencies and will approach one or the other depending on the kind of TA personnel required.

3.3.3 Participation in and Responsibility for the Selection of Candidates and/or Appraisal of Bids Submitted in Response to Tenders

Countries expect to be given more voice – and choice – in decision-making on the selection and recruitment of TA personnel. In Vietnam, it is considered a right, and officials expect to be able to exercise their power of veto over short-listed candidates. While this has become normal practice, countries question the adequacy of selecting personnel solely on the basis of CVs and would obviously prefer face-to-face interviews. The selection processes should, in fact, be as rigorous and individualised as it would be for the appointment of permanent staff. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Danida itself employs the services of a professional recruitment agency to recruit personnel.

While face-to-face interviews are considered most appropriate, these are not always feasible or affordable, although the high cost can be justified for senior and critical posts. Video conferencing is an alternative, but while welcomed in some situations as improving decision-making (in Mozambique, for instance), in others, such as Vietnam, it is not considered satisfactory.[25]

[25] Despite the positive aspect of being involved in the interview process, government respondents in Vietnam were not enthusiastic about this technology, and even doubted the efficacy of such interviews as a means of testing key facets of experience, technical knowledge and (crucially) personal attributes of candidates.

3.3.4 Procurement and Contract Management

It is noteworthy that, given the complexities involved and their limited resources, respondents in the countries studied did not insist on taking over the responsibility of procurement and contract management of TA personnel. They appreciate it when TA providers function as a recruitment agency that can do the search, leave decisions to national partners and manage contractual matters thereafter. In fact, they often welcome the intervention of development-partner agencies, who then function *de facto* as handling agents. This can be the case even in countries with comparatively developed capacities such as Vietnam, but similar findings have been reported in India and South Africa, where country partners have, on occasion, elected to use development partner systems because of the greater flexibility and responsiveness they offer (DFID, undated).

This is even more the case in situations where local capacity is weak, qualified staff are in short supply, and development partner agencies are better placed to deal with international mobilisation. Where managing contractors are involved, this function is expected to be carried out by the contractor. This is the case, for instance, with the 'facilities' in Solomon Islands that are responsible for the mobilisation of advisors across the three programme pillars (see below).

However, drawing on the services of development partners for procurement should not delay efforts to strengthen the overall capacity of host organisations for procurement and contract management, which will need to be in place as sector and budget support becomes more commonplace.

3.3.5 Accountability – Supervision and Monitoring the Performance of TA Personnel

The case studies underline the importance of the accountability of TA personnel to the host organisation for assuring a productive working relationship between host organisation and expert as well as ownership of the products and services delivered. It is an element of the management process where partner countries expect to be in charge. This is normally the case for day-to-day activities and the results they should produce. Work plans usually form the basis upon which performance is reviewed. TA personnel might also be expected to prepare periodic reports to the company/funding agency/contracting party. It is interesting to note that in the Solomon Islands, deployees who hold in-line posts are directly accountable to their principals, something that is appreciated by government officials.

In many situations, however, formal lines of accountability run back to the development partner as the contracting and appointing authority, which can be a cause of misgiving for host organisations, and can even result in their disempowerment.11 However, the Mozambique report suggests that under such circumstances, while not a solution, a good working relationship based on trust, openness and professionalism can overcome such problems.

Insisting on accountability to the host organisation does not mean that accountability to the development partner is overlooked, and the study has identified various examples of joint or hybrid mechanisms for accountability. This is in fact quite common practice and a sensible response to the realities of competing demands for accountability. Examples include Danida's performance contracts, which are being used in Mozambique (see box below), and the use of steering committees in the Vietnamese context.22 Several of the case study projects had steering committees in place to supervise implementation. These appear to meet regularly and to work generally as planned. Particularly keen oversight is conducted on German Forestry programme counterparts: who have to defend their (jointly-produced) work-plans in front of the steering committee. While in Mozambique and Vietnam, where GTZ's TA personnel remain largely responsible and accountable to their country offices, steps are being taken to increase accountability to the recipient side. For instance, GTZ is working to clarify accountability relationships in the following way. Where a project is partly financed by the national partner,

GTZ will account for its contribution to BMZ but will ensure that this information is also provided to the national partner. In addition, GTZ will assist the national partner to account for its own input/contribution to its own national authorities. This constitutes what, in itself, is an exercise in capacity development.

Box 3: Performance Contracts: Mozambique

Danida's *performance contracts* are highlighted as one way to share responsibility for the management of TA personnel and of assuring stronger accountability towards the host organisation. This is considered a practical way to begin shifting responsibilities towards the host side while recognising the continued responsibility of the funder to shoulder part of the management responsibility through an arms-length relationship.

Such contracts are co-signed by the national partner, TA personnel and the embassy, and supplement any formal job description by spelling out a number of performance objectives to be achieved over an agreed-upon period of time. The embassy normally takes a low profile and only intervenes in case of an emergency or on the specific demand of the partner. This kind of contract has been looked on favourably in terms of strengthening lines of accountability towards the partner organisation while, at the same time, providing a basis for dialogue, exchange and learning among partners on TA performance, as well as on related institutional issues and the need for change. In some cases, this tool has facilitated discussions on refocusing the assignment. At the same time, care is needed to avoid such performance contracts becoming too rigid and focusing exclusively on tangible outputs that might distract attention from less easily measurable capacity development objectives.

3.3.6 Induction

The literature, as well as the practitioners interviewed, recognises that the proper induction of TA personnel is an essential step in the process of managing TA; yet, it does not receive the attention it deserves. Countries tend to see this as the responsibility of the partner organisation. TA personnel note that it would be helpful if receiving organisations were better prepared for their arrival, and they make the case that induction is as important for counterparts as it is for prospective TA personnel. Organisations, such as SNV, VSO, DED and UNV, that send out development workers are well known for preparing personnel, as are Danida and GTZ. However, many TA personnel are expected to get on with the job as soon as they arrive in the country and may receive only scant orientation from either the development partner or, indeed, the host organization.

Box 4: Country Insights on Induction

- The Mozambique study argues that there is a need for newly arriving advisers to Mozambique to get fully introduced to developments in international aid and how this is translated into sector policies and strategies, as well as what the implications are for the adviser's expected role and functioning. Some development agencies provide highly appreciated debriefing sessions to some NGOs on the changing aid relationships in Mozambique. Another innovation in Mozambique has been the organisation of field visits for embassy staff dealing with development matters to enhance their knowledge about realities on the ground outside Maputo. These familiarisation visits are highly appreciated.

- The Solomon Islands study notes that overall, a significant effort has been made to ensure that TA personnel are properly inducted before going to the field, although the level and quality of training and induction varies considerably across the RAMSI programme. AusAID has also initiated a two-module, five-day course called *Making a Difference: Tools and Approaches for Capacity Building*. It is offered to both advisers and counterparts. It has run very successfully in PNG and Solomon Islands.

- In Vietnam, short-term specialists are usually helped by 'back-stoppers', chief technical advisers or experienced national staff or consultants familiar with the context and personalities involved.

3.4 Management Issues Arising

As discussed above, partner countries are anxious to take on greater responsibility for the management of TA personnel but continue to value the support provided by development partners. Taking charge of TA management is recognised as a way to enhance ownership and strengthen effectiveness, but its costs are equally apparent.

Interestingly, in a country like Vietnam that already exhibits strong leadership and ownership of the development agenda, the management function may not be very important as an instrument for promoting ownership. The Vietnam case illustrates that who manages is not necessarily critical to the issue of ownership. Ownership derives – amongst other factors – from the clarity of the host organisation's objectives in obtaining TA. If these objectives are to promote technical capacity, rather than managerial capacity (as has often been the case in Vietnam), pressures for host management are minimal.

The Mozambique case illustrates how management arrangements need to be tailored to contextual realities. A wide range of hybrid arrangements can be found that distribute responsibilities between development partner and country partner to different degrees. Of particular note in the Mozambique study is the use of pooling arrangements, discussed below.

3.4.1 Pooling: A Potential Way to Empower Country Partners?

Pooling is becoming an increasingly popular mechanism for managing TA personnel but is by no means a panacea. While several countries with clearer policies on TA management, such as Tanzania and Zambia, are today pushing for fuller pooling arrangements across all sectors, some, like Uganda, are taking a more selective approach, using it in sectors or sub-sectors where it seems to work best. Other countries remain less convinced. And while some external agencies are more supportive of this type of arrangement, others remain cautious or, for legal and administrative reasons, are unable to participate in pooling arrangements. In the country studies, various forms of pooling were widely practiced in Mozambique, while in Vietnam, trust funds, which are often based on pooled funding arrangements (but are not referred to as such) are a common vehicle for mobilising TA.

Box 5: What is Pooling?

Pooling is a form of basket funding that enables development partners to contribute resources to a common fund that can be drawn upon by a country or joint country-development partner to recruit TA personnel. There are also broader funding baskets that have a certain portion of funds set aside for TA recruitment, constituting a type of earmarking. Some agencies prefer to provide TA personnel in-kind, albeit within the framework of a pool, rather than to contribute actual funds. In other situations, there is no earmarking and either development partners, partners together, or the recipient on its own determine what portion of funding to use on TA. As reported elsewhere, there are various versions of pooling (see below) that are practiced in different countries and sectors, ranging from loose to full pooling. The fund is usually linked to a sector or sub-sector programme such as a SWAp.

The following framework builds on earlier ECDPM work on pooling of TA[26] and is presented in the Mozambique country study report.[27] It distinguishes five principal categories of TA pooling:

- *Full TA pooling:* resources and control are transferred to the greatest extent to the national partners, who both contract and direct TA personnel.
- *Advanced TA pooling:* national authorities manage the TA personnel on a daily basis and strategically, but the contracting is done by one of the international development organisations providing financing. Country procurement and contracting is sometimes done through procurement agencies instead of IDOs.

[26] See Baser and Morgan (2002).
[27] Hauck (2007): p74).

- *Loose TA pooling:* the strategic direction of TA personnel is shared between the government and IDOs. Personnel are normally contracted individually by one or more IDOs, often on a tied basis.

- *Emerging TA pooling:* the strategic direction of TA personnel is principally done by IDOs in the absence of country capacity to manage strategically. Day-to-day management and supervision is done by government. Personnel are normally contracted individually by one or more IDOs, often on a tied basis.

- *No TA pooling:* TA is unilaterally contracted, deployed and directed by IDOs without government involvement. This often occurs in emergency and rehabilitation situations.

Pooling offers a number of potential benefits for the management of TA personnel and can serve as a vehicle for strengthening country ownership and management of TA and for aligning development partner support around national processes:

- It offers a way to redress the balance of responsibilities for the overall management of TA and to encourage country ownership.
- It encourages harmonisation and alignment of development partner inputs around a common programme, thereby avoiding fragmentation.[28]
- It provides a framework around which to discuss and diagnose capacity needs at a sector or sub-sector level, to consider the potential contribution of TA personnel and to identify appropriate sources of TA. And as funding is not necessarily tied to any one provider, it provides greater flexibility to source TA and consider alternatives.
- It can be used to encourage country partners to assume leadership and to increasingly utilise national systems and procedures for procurement or, alternatively, to request that development partners provide TA in-kind or to assist with the procurement process.
- It provides a framework to monitor, learn and adapt to emerging needs.
- It encourages greater transparency of costs, thereby enabling country partners to make informed decisions.

Box 6: Insights from Vietnam

Trust funds are used for management of financial as well as technical assistance. However, experience with these appears to vary, so it is not possible to draw any generalised conclusions. Trust funds provide a potentially positive option for productive, responsive, demand-driven TA, but they are liable to opportunistic exploitation if not closely monitored. In other words, if they are perceived as a convenient slush fund, available for a range of diverse but ill-directed activities, there is a risk that they will not fulfil their objectives.

Potential advantages of trust funds are that they can create space for dialogue and interaction between host-agency officials and TA. The Vietnam report cites and describes the case of the Multi-Development Partner Trust Fund for Public Financial Management Reform, which encouraged staff of the World Bank (fund administrator) and the Ministry of Finance to interact constructively (to their mutual benefit) in developing possible trust-fund initiatives. It also permitted flexibility in adapting to emerging ideas in a rapidly changing field where many activities could not be planned or foreseen in advance. It thus helped build a more mutually agreed-upon programme of activities, thereby building greater trust on issues related to reform.

Recruitment of TA personnel by one development partner on behalf of a pooled fund for financial or technical assistance is a new practice in Vietnam. This was adopted as the preferred approach to identifying and mobilising international TA recruits for the 2nd phase of the national target programme for rural water supply and sanitation (NTP II RWSS), where Danida has used its agent Mercuri Urvall in this capacity. AusAID will recruit all national consultants once their disposition and profiles are agreed upon, after expatriate TA personnel have been mobilised. The NTP II RWSS recruitment approach is directly

[28] For example, where TA personnel are provided by a bilateral agency in-kind within the framework of a pooled arrangement, the TA expert will be guided by the overall objectives of the pooled initiative and will also be accountable to the pool members, rather than to the bilateral partner alone.

related to a new aid modality for sector budget support by Danida, AusAID and the Netherlands. It is also expected that TA recruitment for programme P135, supported by multi-development partners, will probably also be coordinated by one development partner, Finland, once the formula for future TA support has been agreed upon.

Pooling is not without its risks, and there are no guarantees that potential benefits will be fully realised. There are concerns that transaction costs are high, decision-making can become too time-consuming, the entire process can place additional demands on already weak country administrations[29] and some of the flexibility and responsiveness enjoyed in bilateral arrangements may be lost in the process. It is also noted that pooling might not necessarily liberate procurement from the influence of a particular development partner, and the entire arrangement might not be acceptable to agencies that are prohibited from pooling resources. Concerns have also been raised that in the effort to harmonise and align, there is the risk that innovation and experimentation might be lost, with activities being brought down to the lowest common denominator in order to get agreement and to reduce risk. In the same light, pooling could quite easily encourage a dynamic of short-term gap-filling unless appropriate incentives and safeguards are in place to focus on capacity development.[30]

The advantages of pooling in terms of promoting ownership and commitment may also be less evident in environments like Vietnam where country partners have a much clearer idea of what they want and can more easily pick and choose the kind of assistance they require.

3.4.2 Facilities: Helping to Engage Partners and Offer Choices

Where pooling is neither practical nor desirable, other mechanisms can be used to increase the engagement of country partners, particularly in the selection and recruitment of TA personnel. AusAID's *facilities*, which in their simplest form are mechanisms to provide logistical and other services to support the implementation of projects and programmes, are an example of this.

Facilities are being used increasingly by AusAID across its various country programmes as a means of improving the flexibility and responsiveness of its programmes, including programming and management of TA. The exact form and remit of a facility varies from situation to situation, and those in Solomon Islands are not necessarily representative of all. The facilities are generally managed by a managing contractor, recruited competitively, and accountable to AusAID.

Facilities can be an innovative way to identify personnel needs on an ongoing basis and to manage TA personnel in situations where local capacity remains weak but where it is important to increase the engagement of country partners in the identification and management process. Although it is not appropriate to generalise about the functions of facilities, they do offer the potential to engage with the partner government on identifying and recruiting TA personnel. Advantages include the fact that facilities:

- work in a more open-ended and iterative manner, with the flexibility to determine priorities and allocate resources on an on-going basis
- can be used to offer a menu of TA options and associated costs, thereby enabling partners to make more informed choices about what they want[31]
- allow co-responsibility for the supervision and reporting of TA personnel while continuing to shoulder the responsibility for procurement and contract management

[29] While pooling can encourage greater harmonisation and alignment of development partner inputs around country strategies, in some situations where a sector is over-populated with development partners, additional steps might need to be taken to limit the total number of development partners active in any particular sector.

[30] While it does not necessarily stimulate the development of individual and organisational capacity, it can create incentives for systemic capacity development (see, for example, the effect of SISTAFE on wider systemic change, e.g., improving curricula at Maputo University.

[31] Although to date, experience remains limited.

The RAMSI facilities provide a forum for discussions with Solomon Island counterparts about TA priorities and the kinds of tasks that need to be carried out. They open the door for Solomon Islanders to participate in programme design, the identification of needs and the selection and recruitment process, although the degree to which the door is used is uneven across the facilities.[32]

The Working Group on Capacity Building (which brings permanent secretaries from key ministries together with several senior RAMSI managers to discuss capacity issues within the mission) recently agreed on a matrix defining the respective roles for SIG and RAMSI in the recruitment of personnel. The country report argues that if applied across the board, this would bring greater SIG involvement in some activities, particularly in the pillars that have been quite supply led. This will take some time to materialise.

3.4.3 Is Procurement through Competitive Bidding Always Appropriate?

The research has raised the question whether procurement through the market place is always the best way to match supply and demand for TA personnel, especially where capacity development is concerned. While competitive bidding might create efficiencies from a cost point of view, it is less certain whether it assures effectiveness. This is especially so where the client's capacity to articulate needs, develop appropriate terms of reference and cost activities is weak. It should be noted, however, that these are difficult tasks for developed countries as well.

The weight put on cost in awarding contracts can be a disincentive to capacity development work. (NB: Cost is only one criterion, but it can make a big difference.) Process approaches are more difficult to design and budget, and it can be difficult to prepare appropriate TORs and evaluation criteria that fully reflect the nature of capacity development work. Part of the answer lies in strengthening the partner countries' procurement capacity so that in the end, it is possible to make a real choice, as illustrated by the case of INDE in Mozambique.[33] A case can also be made for working through negotiated agreements and partnerships when capacity development outcomes are paramount.

It is interesting that in Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, in Mozambique, there are examples of government departments knowing precisely what they want and engaging directly with an agency in the country (whom they respect) to identify TA personnel.

3.4.4 Concluding Remarks

Full responsibility for TA management is a long way away for most countries, but redressing accountability may be a realistic interim step in many countries. While pooling may not yet be fully accepted, it offers to be a useful way forward for exploring options and is helping to create some momentum and dialogue around greater harmonisation and alignment of TA inputs into country strategies and systems.

As the Mozambique report argues, TA personnel are generally more effective in the context of full ownership, where the expert is accountable to the national partner or steering committee under national leadership. International experts who have worked under traditional projects and

[32] In consultation with its own field personnel, and RAMSI programmes, the Brisbane headquarters of the managing contractor for all three Solomon Islands facilities does much of the background work for recruitment (e.g., ensuring that adequate terms of reference are available, advertising, and setting up interviews).

[33] In the beginning INDE did not have the capacity to identify the right TA inputs, but it is now in a position to procure the expertise required, based on the knowledge what is out there and the known track records of organisations it has worked with.

now under local leadership underline the qualitative difference in terms of ownership when TA personnel are recruited out of pooled or harmonised arrangements. However, when local capacity is inadequate, mixed forms of accountability can be a step towards increased local responsibility.

4 Effectiveness of TA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we look at the different ways TA personnel function in the field, identify the factors that appear to influence effectiveness, and highlight approaches to the use of TA personnel that interviewees from the country studies considered promising.

In view of the amount of money that is spent on TA personnel, it is perhaps surprising that it is rarely the subject of much rigorous and systematic study and evaluation, nor of strategic reflection and planning. At the programme level, little attention has been given to assessing the effectiveness of TA personnel, which is often considered an operational detail or an item to be discussed under 'management and implementation' issues. This makes it difficult for partners on either side to monitor this resource and learn from experience. TA performance is often assessed through the proxy of overall programme success/failure, although there is not necessarily a direct causal relationship between the two.

The country studies confirmed the difficulties of assessing TA. It is noteworthy that few studies have been commissioned at the country level that look specifically at the effectiveness of TA personnel in any of the three countries. The Vietnam study identified a wider ranging UNDP study conducted in 2000 on TA[34] but noted that few of the recommendations had been adopted. It was also noted that the Vietnam Ministry of Finance had commissioned a study to assess the effectiveness of externally funded training programmes.[35] In Solomon Islands, there had been no study specifically on TA performance, although the general impression among respondents, particularly Solomon Islanders, is that there is little to show for the large amounts of TA received since independence in 1978. In Mozambique, the Programme Assistance Partners (PAP) have established a working group on capacity development in order to respond to the targets on technical cooperation set out in the Paris Declaration, and have begun to commission more focused studies on technical assistance. But it was acknowledged that despite the significant presence and cost of TA in the country, there was limited information on who is doing what and even less on what works and what does not.

That said, lately a number of comprehensive multi-country reviews of the track record of TA personnel have been commissioned. Examples include reviews and evaluations conducted by multi-lateral development banks and institutions (ADB, CDB, ComSec and IMF), by bilateral agencies (BTC, DFID, Danida) and by several NGOs (ActionAid, ADA/HORIZONT3000, MS and SNV). UNDP's study (*Reforming Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development*), completed in 2003, also provides a comprehensive analysis of technical cooperation in the context of capacity development.[36]

Development agencies approach the issue of the effectiveness of TA personnel differently. While some agencies, such as GTZ, JICA and AusAID (all of which have a mandate to provide TA and develop capacity), are interested in a better understanding of the contribution of TA

[34] MPI (2000).
[35] Ministry of Finance (2004).
[36] Other studies, including the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support (IDD and Associates, 2006) and ECDPM's Pooling of Technical Assistance (Baser and Morgan, 2001), also address TA effectiveness. The Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support included Vietnam and Mozambique as case studies, while the study on Pooling of Technical Assistance included a case study from Mozambique.

personnel (especially towards capacity development) and are willing to invest in understanding how change takes place, others, such as DFID (who work increasingly at the macro-level by providing support through sector and budget support), are more concerned with tracking development outcomes (such as reduced infant mortality, access to clean water, examination results, etc.) and are less focused on evaluating process details.

This chapter is organised in three parts:

1. Evaluating Effectiveness
2. TA Roles and Functions
3. Effectiveness – What Matters

4.2 Evaluating Effectiveness: Methodological and Conceptual Considerations

Effectiveness is a relative concept, and the criteria for measuring effectiveness need to be tailored to the different purposes that TA personnel serve, as well as taking the interests of stakeholders into account. Two questions about the effectiveness of TA seem fundamental: effective *for what* and effective *for whom?*

4.2.1 Effective for What?

TA personnel perform a wide range of tasks and address a variety of different objectives. Measures of effectiveness need to reflect this diversity. Effectiveness from the perspective of gap-filling will be different from effectiveness from the perspective of process facilitation, and so on. Often, TA personnel perform multiple roles, making evaluation of effectiveness even more challenging. The following list illustrates the diversity of objectives that TA personnel might address:

- providing advice and influencing policy change and/or institutional reform
- ensuring minimum functionality within a government agency to deliver essential goods and services
- substituting for scarce skills in highly technical fields through gap-filling
- promoting dialogue and exchange between societal groups, including conflict resolution
- managing fiduciary risk as a condition for financial assistance through budget support
- implementing specific projects related to infrastructure development
- developing the capacity of staff, organisations and systems

4.2.2 Effective for Whom?

The interests of development partners and country partners are not necessarily the same, and each will view effectiveness from a different perspective in relation to a given intervention. In some situations, where perhaps a development partner wishes to influence policy change, for example, what might be deemed less effective by a development partner (in terms of failure to shift policy) may be considered as effective by the partner institution (in terms of being able to move at its own pace while resisting imposed change). The essential point is to assess how far the intervention has responded to the expectations and demands raised by those stakeholders who are responsible for the development process.

Other methodological challenges associated with assessing the effectiveness of TA personnel, particularly when capacity development is the main objective,[37] include the following:

[37] In contrast, it is far easier to define what TA personnel are expected to do when they perform a gap-filling, project-

- The intended results of TA interventions are often poorly specified (including specifications in terms of reference), which is especially true where capacity development is concerned.
- TA personnel often perform multiple functions that typically combine both capacity development and 'doing the work'.
- TA personnel are often part of a larger programme intervention that might include other components, such as training or financial assistance, making it difficult and sometimes inappropriate to attribute any benefits or impact to TA personnel alone. This is especially so in large-sector programmes where TA personnel engage with a much broader institutional environment.
- Parties to a TA activity may often lack a shared understanding of capacity development and change. This makes it difficult to agree on appropriate performance indicators, e.g., whether to expect results at the individual, organisational or system level.
- It is especially difficult to measure effectiveness where the areas envisaged for results are of a more intangible or diffuse nature (see diagram, below).

PROCESS	***Intangible***	Audit of a Government Programme	Resilience of an Organisation
	Tangible	Road Construction	Law and Order
		Tangible	***Intangible***
		OUTPUTS	

- The lack of baseline data on capacity prior to an intervention also makes it difficult to determine if capacity has been developed and to judge the extent to which any change can be attributed to the contribution of TA personnel.[38]

Other constraints to assessing effectiveness in relation to capacity development and change include the long-term nature of change, the complexity of situations and the 'emergent' character of the capacity development process. (See Box 7 for an overview of the implications of systems thinking for the design of capacity development support.) The influence of broader issues related to aid effectiveness, such as coordination, coherence and complementarity, is also relevant, especially in situations, such as Mozambique, where a large number of agencies might be engaged in a single sector, resulting in a high degree of fragmentation, duplication of effort and inconsistency.

management or oversight role, or a specific technical role or task.

[38] The measurement of organisational outputs (or performance), as proposed in the ROACH methodology (Boesen, N & Therkildsen, O, 2005) that Danida and the EC are now using offers a way of doing this, but whether the measurement of output changes provides sufficient evidence of effectiveness in terms of capacity development needs further consideration.

Box 7: Systems Thinking and Capacity Development

Important elements of systems thinking include notions of cause and effect, emergence, sustainability and resilience, and formal and informal incentives.

From the perspective of systems thinking, **cause-and-effect** relationships are viewed as multiple, delayed in time and place, and non-linear. This brings into question conventional ideas of results chains and questions the appropriateness of preselecting targets when engaging in complex change processes, where many factors remain unknown.

Emergence is understood as the process whereby elements (of capacity) combine and interact over time to create a greater whole. This is a key feature of systems behaviour and raises the issue of timing. What factors go into the emergence of capacity and performance at a particular time? Are there different kinds of things that emerge? Do they emerge differently? What can external actors do to encourage emergence?

Systems thinking also draws attention to the issue of **sustainability and resilience.** What factors account for the fact that some systems lose energy (entropy) while others persevere, sometimes in difficult circumstances? Can these properties be mastered and factored into an intervention strategy? Or are they products of local system dynamics that are in themselves emergent?

This leads to a discussion of the factors that drive systems behaviour. Systems thinking recognises the importance of both **formal and informal incentives**, encouraging a look beyond formal structures to take into account the effects of informal structures and behaviour.

Systems thinking offers a different perspective on capacity and issues of capacity development, but it does not substitute for other perspectives. While useful, it cannot explain everything.

Source: ECDPM (2005).

4.3 Overview of Roles and Functions of TA Personnel

The country studies confirm the variety of roles and functions that TA personnel perform. This is not surprising given the large number of development organisations present in the field, the broad range of sectors that development partners support, the diversity of development challenges that need to be addressed, and the often very different operating environments that need to be contended with. As noted in the DFID stock-taking study on technical cooperation,[39] TA personnel are an extremely flexible resource that can be put to use in many different ways.

4.3.1 Clarifying Roles and Functions

There are various terms used to classify TA personnel, but these are rarely used consistently. Roles and functions often overlap and are not always well defined. Often, TA personnel are referred to as ‘advisors’ even when their work is not primarily advisory. TA personnel who provide technical advice, or whose function is to develop capacity, are normally not distinguished. But there is a significant difference between an ‘advisor’ whose role is to offer expertise in a particular field of competence and someone whose main role is to develop the capacity of staff or to facilitate change in an organisation. Skill profiles are very different, and these individuals will be expected to work in quite different ways.

The term ‘gap-filling’ also needs clarification. Usually it connotes capacity substitution, whereby TA personnel are recruited to perform an in-line function for which there is no local person available. This may reflect a scarce skill at middle to senior level (engineers, lawyers), but it could also reflect brain-drain, sometimes at more junior levels. It is useful to distinguish between gap-filling at senior levels of management and decision-making and gap-filling for

[39] DFID (undated).

functions at a more technical level.

'Gap-filling' can also refer to filling gaps in knowledge that call for advisory inputs. A good example is the Commonwealth Secretariat's strategic gap-filling service, which provides member countries with, normally, short-term TA inputs to address very specific technical needs. The Vietnam report provides several examples of similar advisory support being requested through development partner agencies resident in the country.

4.3.2 A Proposed Typology

It is helpful to distinguish between TA personnel whose primary function is to develop capacity or to provide advice and those whose primary function is to perform tasks in lieu of locally available skills. A separate category of TA personnel, whose main function is to manage or supervise budgets and/or (in the case of PMUs) to perform more general project-management functions, including planning, budgeting, procurement and reporting (see Table 1), could also be considered. A possible additional category of TA is the sector expert working for a development partner or technical agency to support large-sector programmes. These experts function as interlocutors between development partner agencies and partner institutions. They may participate in technical (and sometimes policy) discussions related to design, implementation and review. Indirectly, such experts often assist the partner as much as they do the development partner agency. The Mozambique report suggests that it therefore may be appropriate to consider these as another form of TA.[40]

Table 1 presents a basic typology of TA functions based on some of the main categories referred to earlier on in this report.

[40] In Vietnam, however, Danida emphasised they would not use (or allow) 'their' TAs to represent the 'voice' of Danish aid in dialogues within government.

Table 1: A Basic Typology of TA Functions

Functions	Description
Gap-filling / implementation	• To help an organisation carry out its work in lieu of locally available personnel • Typically long term • Normally in-line/established post or PMU • Often free-standing but can be part of project • Often combined with advice-giving and capacity development roles
Advisory	• To provide expert advice to client on a defined area of specialisation that is not locally available • Typically short term or intermittent but can also be long term, or based in development partner/technical agency • Normally temporary project post, PMU or consultancy • Can be free-standing or part of project • Can be combined with elements of capacity development and implementation
Capacity development	• To assist individuals, organisations and systems in developing capabilities and enhancing performance • Emphasis on on-the-job learning, change management, dialogue and facilitation • Typically long term but can be short term and intermittent • Normally temporary project post or PMU • Usually part of larger technical-cooperation programme • Can be combined with elements of advice giving and implementation
Financial control / project management	• To ensure that external resources are used efficiently and transparently and to ensure accountability • To provide interface between development partner procedures and regulations and local system to facilitate implementation • Typically long term • Normally PMU but can be project or in-line post • Always part of project or programme • Often combined with other functions, although this is not encouraged

4.3.3 Combining Functions

As the table indicates, it is rare to find TA personnel performing only one function. Most TA personnel who are in an advisory position, for example, will spend a portion of their time 'doing the work'. In the same way, most TA personnel who are posted in-line and perform a gap-filling function are likely to be called upon to build capacity or to provide advice. Sometimes, a programme will be designed that includes a team of TA personnel, each performing one of these major functions. Gap-filling of some form seems to be a function of TA in the majority of situations, although this was not the case in Vietnam.[41] It may be appropriate to make a distinction between a formal gap-filling *position* and the gap filling *activities* that TA personnel are asked to carry out, irrespective of their formal function.

Combining functions can be advantageous, provided this is understood and agreed upon by the parties concerned. Indeed, it could well be part of the intervention logic. However, it can often be a source of confusion and discontent. Experience suggests that where 'doing' and capacity development functions are in competition with one another, it is probable that the 'doing'

[41] CIM's integrated experts could be seen as a notable exception. They are recruited directly by the host partner organisation, with assistance from CIM, and work as staff members in host organisations.

function will take precedence. This then becomes a matter of concern if the main rationale of TA deployment is to develop capacity. It may also reveal that the development partner and partner organisation have different priorities or mental models regarding the expected functions (and deliverables) of TA. Respondents confirmed the common perception that mixing a capacity development role with controlling and managing functions is problematic and can undermine effectiveness, and should therefore be avoided.

Sometimes the conflation of roles results from a lack of rigour during the planning and design phase (this is discussed further below). It may equally reflect more mundane constraints, such as the requirement of an agency's own budget and contracting classifications to use certain titles.

Box 8: TA Functions in Solomon Islands under RAMSI

In **Solomon Islands**, there are four official categories of positions filled under RAMSI: in-line, supernumerary, constitutional and advisory. In effect, the first three are all in-line and can be divided roughly into three categories:

- senior decision-makers, especially those in control of finances, including the deputy commissioner of inland revenue and the accountant general
- middle level decision-makers, such as principal magistrates
- personnel involved in delivering professional services, such as lawyers and public prosecutors, as well as advisors on broadcast and print media

Because of the high number of vacancies in the public service, even the TA personnel in advisory positions often carry out many line functions.

4.3.4 The Meaning of 'Free-Standing' TA

It is also important to recognise that whereas a majority of TA personnel are recruited as part and parcel of a project or programme funded by a development partner, a growing number are directly recruited to provide services to a local organisation without having any direct association with a larger programme. This is normally referred to as 'free-standing' TA. The roles and functions of TA linked to wider projects or programmes are generally defined within the framework of the results and goals of the larger programme, and would typically represent one of several inputs or instruments. By contrast, in the case of free-standing TA, roles and functions might be defined within a simpler contractual framework such as a memorandum of understanding or terms of reference.

4.3.5 Categories of TA

The various TA functions and associated roles identified in the case studies can be performed by different categories and different combinations of TA. The cases provide examples of long- and short-term, residential and non-residential, international versus regional versus local personnel, private consultants versus deployees from the civil services of the development partner's own country (as seen in the Australian whole-of-government approach). It is impossible to generalise, and the appropriateness of any particular approach depends very much on local contextual factors that are taken into consideration during the design and, later, monitoring of the programme.

4.4 Effectiveness: What Matters

On the basis of the country studies as well as a review of the literature, the following critical determinants of the effectiveness of TA personnel in relation to capacity development have been identified. Inevitably, many of these are well known, but that does not reduce their validity

in terms of underscoring the actions that development partners need to take to improve the way they support capacity development through deployment of TA personnel. These determinants are looked at in turn. Their significance in any given situation will vary, and no attempt is made here to suggest that one is generally more important than another.

4.4.1 The Overall Country Context

It is a truism that the more a country is in a position to take leadership in defining its development agenda and in articulating its requests for external assistance (including TA), the more likely that TA will be used in a manner that is consistent with host expectations, including those related to capacity development.

We begin our analysis by considering the broader country context within which TA is engaged. The three cases offer vastly different contexts from which a number of basic observations can be made. The studies do confirm that TA is more likely to be used effectively where there is strong ownership of the development agenda and where a minimum level of capacity is already in place to make effective use of TA resources.

The Vietnam study presents a picture of an overall enabling environment for TA effectiveness. This is attributed to a combination of assertiveness on the part of the country's leadership in setting development priorities and of ensuring the alignment of development partners around a government agenda (Vietnam is considered to be at the forefront of driving the harmonisation and alignment agenda), along with the generally high quality of existing human capacity within the public service.[42] While a variety of other factors might help or hinder effectiveness, prospects for making effective use of TA are considered generally positive. As such, Vietnam combines both strong leadership and ownership of its development agenda, as well as having a basic level of capacity in place to make use of TA resources. It is also important to note that whereas some 50 development partners are present in Vietnam, official development assistance only contributes 4% of GDP.

The Mozambique study presents a picture of mixed conditions for the effectiveness of technical assistance. As in the case of Vietnam, the Mozambican Government has, over recent years, demonstrated a commitment to take control of the country's development agenda despite the extremely high degree of aid dependency and high number of development partners active in the country. It is working with development partners to implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. A growing number of development partners now work with the government to increase the level of sector and general budget support; however, a significant number continue to work through project modalities. Unlike Vietnam, capacity within the public service, particularly at the sub-national level, remains inadequate. While Mozambique shares with Vietnam an increasing level of government ownership and leadership of the development agenda, public administration remains weak. More crucially, the case demonstrates how levels of ownership and capacity can vary tremendously within the public service, between sectors and administrative units, and between central and local authorities Therefore differentiated responses are required.

The Solomon Islands case presents the least propitious context for effective TA utilisation, displaying less assertive leadership, a weakly articulated development strategy and significant capacity gaps across the public service. The recent civil strife has raised questions concerning the very viability of the state and of the need to address more fundamental questions of statehood and national identity. In the context of such an unstable environment, there are many uncertainties associated with the provision of external assistance in general and TA in particular. It has been suggested that some of the minimum requirements for TA effectiveness

[42] There are constraints, too, however. The report points to the predominant role of the ruling party, to a highly centralised and bureaucratised administration, and to the increasingly uncompetitive conditions of service in the public service.

are not in place. Solomon Islands is a fragile environment where the normal yardsticks for assessing development performance may not be appropriate. Yet, as indicated in chapter 2 on TA demand, while conditions might be less conducive for TA to contribute to long-term capacity development, the case highlights the important contribution that TA can make in restoring stability, thereby creating a more predictable environment for longer-term investments in capacity development.

4.4.2 Getting the Design Right

Where TA personnel are part of a programme intervention (i.e., not free-standing), the quality of the programme design can have a significant bearing on the effectiveness of any TA personnel deployed.[43] Even for the best personnel, opportunities to be effective will be limited if the design is flawed.[44] Like an actor in a play, if the script is defective, there is only so much the actor can do to remedy the situation. The design process should ensure that the design reflects the views and judgements of both the country partner organisations and the external partner.

It is at the design stage that issues to do with the appropriateness of TA deployment should be considered. Is TA justified at all and if so, to do what? Is a single person sufficient or is a team warranted? Is their contribution significant or marginal to the overall intervention? What roles and functions should be performed and what tactics and strategies employed? What contribution can TA personnel legitimately be expected to make, and how should responsibilities for outcomes be shared with host-organisation staff? What sorts of performance indicators are appropriate?

Understanding Context – These kinds of questions are important in any situation but they take on a special significance where the main objective is to develop capacity or to support complex processes of change. Yet, often, insufficient attention is given to a design that can lead to problems of implementation downstream.[45] The three country studies make it clear that an appreciation of the local context really matters. Situations vary among sectors and organisations and between the national and local levels. They can change rapidly in unforeseen ways. It is in that context that the appropriateness of applying more direct or indirect approaches (as defined in our conceptual model), or knowing when to make the shift from one to the other, ought to be considered.

- The Solomon Islands case presents the dilemma of a country that has never built a sense of nationhood and is now the focus of state building to reinforce core government organisations and institutions along a Western model. This model may not always be appropriate and has been criticized for contributing to the unrest of the late 1990s and early 2000s.
- The Vietnam report makes the point that whereas TA is able to provide substantive knowledge that may be unavailable locally, policy choices are determined at the highest levels of government, through processes that appear opaque to external agencies. TA personnel are expected to work at a technical level, usually with little if any access to policymakers and decision-making bodies.[46]

The concept of *design* includes carrying out preparatory work and, in particular, conducting an adequate analysis of context. Various diagnostic tools are available for assessing capacity,[47]

[43] Issues of design may be less significant where TA personnel are free-standing and directly recruited to fill specific gaps in the establishment, or where they have been appointed to provide very targetted advice**.** Of more significance here is the ability of the local organisation to make full use of the expertise provided.
[44] This significance may, however, be less where TA personnel are recruited independently of any programme framework and are free-standing.
[45] See DFID (undated: p11).
[46] However, the Chief Technical Advisor of the Macroeconomic TA programme reported no problems in accessing decision-makers nor undue delays in decsion-taking.
[47] Such assessments should focus as much on identifying strengths as on weaknesses to avoid drawing conclusions

identifying the drivers and spoilers of change, and judging political risk. As discussed below, it is important for development-partner agencies to have staff in-country who have an intimate knowledge of the country and who can make appropriate judgements about the opportunities and constraints for engaging in change. It is equally important to take account of what other development partners are doing or plan to do.

Box 9: Taking the Fragility of Post-Conflict Environments into Account

Even when strife appears to have ended, conflict analysis is important in fragile environments to avoid a 'business-as-usual' approach. An understanding of both the root and proximate causes of underlying conflict, and of the triggers for renewed conflict, helps development partners and development actors to avoid the assumption that a new nation follows a linear path of development. Incidents of violence and insecurity are not simply temporary aberrations but actually constitute a new kind of normality that must be addressed.

Source: AusAID (2007).

Avoid Over-Design – A key message from the country studies is that effective design does not imply over-design or rigid design, and in some cases, loose design can be an advantage.[48] Effective interventions are often associated with flexible and iterative approaches, such as rolling plans, that recognise change and capacity development as long-term processes that cannot be easily predicted. A recent review of TA in Timor-Leste[49] argues that the roles of TA need to be regularly updated as the balance of inputs changes over time. At the same time, it suggests that these roles, while changing, always need to be clearly defined.

The Mozambique report sites the UTRESP programme as one example where TA personnel entered an unclear setting and had to fit into an ongoing change process. This afforded an opportunity to help shape, clarify and build up the programme. The flexible approach that characterised the first phase of the programme enabled TA personnel to work side by side with Mozambican personnel in a learning and accompanying mode rather than in a strict implementation manner (although this open-ended approach was not actually part of the design and initially attracted criticism from some quarters). According to the country report, this approach was fundamental to building a constituency of support for reform among local stakeholders, and while it underperformed in terms of short-term deliverables, it set in train a longer-term process of change.
The Solomon Islands report describes RAMSI's programme pillar (the Machinery of Government), which has adopted a more incremental and learning-by-doing approach. Engagement with country partners and experimentation are emphasised, rather than the more hands-on imperative of task completion used by RAMSI's other pillars, especially during the stabilisation phase of its activities. This approach of progressive engagement builds on lessons of experience but also acknowledges the different approaches that are needed to address more fundamental capacity. Through its design, it creates a different set of conditions for TA personnel to work within and provides opportunities to perform different roles.

Clarify TA Roles in Relation to Capacity Development – TA personnel whose main task is to develop capacity often find their task poorly defined. Training of counterpart staff is often assumed to be the main vehicle for capacity development, but how TA personnel are expected to contribute to capacity at the organisational and system level is generally not well explained. Agencies such as GTZ are well placed to design interventions that position TA roles within a broader capacity development support strategy. Their mandate is to strengthen capacity at the individual, organisational and, increasingly, systems level, and by virtue of being an

about 'no' capacity.

[48] Some of the literature (especially the ECDPM Capacity Study (forthcoming)) suggest that guiding principles may be more important than detailed TA or CD intervention strategies because of the fluid and unpredictable character of change. While it is important to be clear on outcomes, the exact manner by which those outcomes are produced often cannot be fully determined in advance.

[49] AusAID (2007).

implementing agency, they have gained significant experience and operational insight into capacity development.

A lack of understanding about complex country situations, including the political economy, can also result in underestimating the challenges involved, and in overestimating what TA can achieve. In most situations, TA personnel function at the margins of the political process, as highlighted in the Vietnam case. Part of good design is being realistic about what TA personnel can do and leaving space to permit the personnel involved to adapt approaches as needed. The more politically and culturally sensitive and far-reaching an intervention is likely to be, the more fundamental this principle becomes.

The Solomon Islands case illustrates the real challenges involved in designing an intervention strategy that balances the need for results with the need to facilitate change and empower local partners. TA personnel inevitably find themselves caught in between this double role. In this respect, the RAMSI approach to building a common definition to capacity development is interesting, although it is still in its early stages. Developing a common understanding of capacity across a programme like RAMSI, with the partner government, is critical to being effective, but it must also distinguish among different approaches to capacity development.

Box 10: Developing a Common Understanding of Capacity

RAMSI has begun a process of trying to define what capacity and capacity development mean for its activities. The first step is the appointment of a capacity development expert who will build a database of information about past capacity development activities and recommendations for activities already underway, as well as assisting RAMSI in updating that baseline to include present or planned activities. This will help develop a basis for consensus within RAMSI on what works and what does not in the Solomon Islands. It will then be used for discussions with the Solomon Islands Government to develop a more general agreement about how capacity development should be approached for RAMSI as a whole. Once agreed upon, this agreement will provide a basis for TA personnel to build their individual 'theories of action' and to relate them to broader programme goals.

The three country cases underline the need for careful reflection on how change and capacity development is understood to take place. There are various perspectives that inform our thinking about capacity and change, and which in turn influence the approaches used by development partners and their country partners to support change processes. As mentioned earlier, an explanation based on systems thinking that underlines emergence and unpredictability might propose approaches to engagement that are quite different from an approach informed by models of planned change. Equally, an understanding of state and bureaucratic behaviour informed by political economy is more likely to emphasise approaches that focus on demand-side pressures and on strengthening political accountability, compared to an approach informed by organisation/management theory that might give more emphasis to strengthening such things as structures, systems and procedures. The purpose here is not to judge the value of one approach over another but rather to illustrate how different perspectives on capacity and change can result in very different approaches to engagement, with obvious implications for the role and function of TA personnel.

Other Design Considerations – The country studies identified a number of other design considerations that can impinge on the effectiveness of TA personnel. These are illustrative (and by no means exhaustive) of the range of issues that might need to be considered in designing interventions in view of the factors that can facilitate or constrain the actions of TA personnel. These are summarised below.

- **The interrelationships between micro-, meso- and macro-level interventions and the role of TA personnel in facilitating linkages –** Through the example of the GTZ-PEB support to reform of the provincial education sector, the Mozambique report observes that the effectiveness of TA personnel within a sector is increased when the projects or programmes they support are fully linked to wider reform processes (horizontally and

vertically). This is especially important where TA personnel work at a provincial or district level, where it is easy for projects to lose touch with wider processes. By making the linkages, complementarity can be achieved between budget support at the centre and technical assistance in the field. In Vietnam, Programme 135 (a crucial activity in terms of the government's policy agenda for ethnic minorities) has attracted commitments from development partners for programme budget support. The development partners see the provision of TA personnel and improvements in management at several levels of government as prerequisites for future financial support.

- **Embedding TA personnel in local institutions versus putting them into a semi-autonomous structure –** The Mozambique report notes both the advantages and disadvantages of these two approaches and concludes that decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis, taking partner priorities into account. Embedded TA personnel might risk losing impartiality and focus. Equally, there may be a perception of them getting too involved in internal matters. Too far removed, however, they risk losing opportunities for influencing local processes and building sound working relationships with local staff. This issue draws attention to the larger debate on the pros and cons of project-implementation units (PIUs) in relation to capacity development, and to indicator 6 of the Paris Declaration, which sets the goal of reducing the baseline stock of parallel PIUs by two-thirds. That discussion however is beyond the scope of this study.
- **Providing free-standing TA with access to a limited budget to facilitate capacity-development activities, especially at provincial levels –** The Mozambique report notes that free-standing TA personnel who rely wholly on budgetary transfers from central government to meet the costs of anticipated capacity development activities can find themselves unable to fully address their assignments when those transfers fail to materialise. This is particularly the case for those deployed at the provincial and district level in remoter parts of the country, and can result in TA personnel failing to play their anticipated role. A possible solution in this kind of situation is to provide such personnel with a small contingency fund to finance some activities, such as workshops, research activities and the hiring of consultants, to ensure that processes can be taken forward. However, to ensure full local ownership, and to avoid the creation of parallel processes, decisions regarding the use of such funds would need to be undertaken jointly with the client organisation.
- **Shifting approaches –** In Vietnam, several of the case-study sectors had experienced major changes in the way TA personnel had been provided over the previous seven years. In the fisheries sector, a 180-degree shift from 'classic' project mode (with TA personnel in 'doing-and-delivering' mode inside the structure of a project-management unit) to a mode of facilitating Ministry of Fisheries management had been introduced in one step. The pattern of TA personnel for the NTP II in RWSS reflects the lesson from Mozambique: TA personnel will be based centrally and in the provinces, with an integral logic of learning lessons at the centre from local government experience.

  The VAMESP project has used very different approaches for installation of a government M&E system in ODA-financed projects from its first to its second phase. The first was technocratic, complex, and essentially never 'owned' (nor was its rationale understood) by its clients – line-implementing ministries. The second phase commenced with a protracted exercise of persuasion and explanation to sell the benefits of practical monitoring systems for better project management, in light of higher political priority being given to effective management and more stringent oversight of PMUs after a widely publicised and notorious PMU corruption case.

4.4.3 Capacity of Host Organisations

It is generally understood that capacity development needs to be locally driven if it is to be sustainable. External inputs can support local processes, and can even contribute to stimulating ownership for change, as some of the cases have demonstrated, but they cannot substitute for them. This applies especially to the part played by TA personnel.

Good design is no substitute for an enabling environment for change, whether viewed from the perspective of a single organisation or a larger system. TA personnel are most likely to be effective and are more likely to contribute to sustainable results where local stakeholders fully support the initiatives and where there is decisive leadership to guide the process.

While TA personnel can provide technical advice, facilitate dialogue and create space for experimentation, they clearly cannot set the reform agenda nor substitute for weak political or organisational leadership. Where the change process has been locally defined, it is more likely that local stakeholders will have taken steps to implement complementary actions to ensure the sustainability of efforts to develop capacity beyond what any TA intervention on its own can do. Strong leadership and ownership are less significant (though still important) where either transactional changes or more routine activities (rather than transformational changes) are to be implemented by TA personnel.

The kinds of host organisations that are associated with effective use of technical assistance display some or all of the following characteristics:

- They have a clear vision and mandate, along with confidence about what they seek to achieve, and they demonstrate some form of initiative, investment (including financial) and drive in these directions.
- They have participated actively in defining their needs and determining how TA personnel can support their own agenda for change, and have the experience and capacity to manage TA.[50]
- They have the space, authority and legitimacy to direct their own process of change and are able to exercise leadership and motivate personnel.
- They have already developed some momentum and are willing to take risks.
- They have the basic capacity in place.

It is not usual to find these characteristics within the ministries and departments of the public services where most TA personnel are normally located. This then raises the question as to whether TA personnel can really make a difference when the more fundamental challenges of public-service capacity (such as pay) as well as broader issues of accountability and transparency have not first been addressed. Even in more buoyant environments, such as Vietnam, the risk of brain-drain from the public to the private sector brings into question the sustainability of externally supported capacity development. In Solomon Islands, sustainability is a real issue, particularly because of the heavy reliance on TA personnel performing in-line functions and the relatively poor prospects of recruiting and retaining qualified and dedicated local personnel in the short to medium term. This has necessitated the adoption of a more 'doing' role for TA personnel in the absence of sufficient local personnel. In the Mozambique report, the very different situations in central, provincial and local government are highlighted, showing that while it has been possible to adopt more indirect approaches in a number of central-government agencies (with stronger leadership and core capabilities), at local levels, a more direct, hands-on approach has been warranted in view of serious weaknesses in the capacity of management as well as technical skills.

There are, of course, many examples where TA personnel have been able to make a positive contribution to developing public-service capacity. A useful example of this is the Rwanda Revenue Authority, which illustrates the combination of well-designed TA support with strong leadership and ownership (see Box 11).[51]

[50] This includes being aware of the TA 'market' or being able to access good information on it.
[51] This was one of the case studies in the ECDPM Study on Capacity, Change and Performance (full text available via www.ecdpm.org/capacity).

Box 11: The Rwanda Revenue Authority: Success Factors

A locally driven transformation process
By all accounts the Rwanda Revenue Authority's (RRA) transformation has been a locally driven process, underwritten and sustained by strong ownership, and driven by decisive leadership. These have been present both at a political level, through the active support of the President and the government, and at the organisational level, through the efforts of board members and the senior management team.

Rather than being engineered by an external party, ownership and leadership have been a given. They have been omnipresent and have, to a large extent, made up for deficiencies in capacity. Might this be a reflection of a wider change in Rwandan attitudes toward development, arising from the trauma of genocide? The end of the crisis seems to have led to a burst of idealism and selfless behaviour augmented by the return of skilled exiles who genuinely want to work on behalf of the country.

A pragmatic and incremental process of change
The RRA has avoided large-scale, comprehensive and predetermined reform processes, but it has adopted a pragmatic and incremental approach characterised by adaptation to emerging needs and priorities and progression on the basis of short- to medium-term time frames. Working incrementally has not, however, meant lacking in strategy. The process has also been driven by a thirst for learning and recognition of the need to continuously compare capacity and performance. This iterative process approach has enabled managers to learn from experience and to advance the capacity development process according to lessons learned – at a pace appropriate to the organisation's capacity to absorb change. It has also helped ensure internal ownership and appreciation of the change process and has avoided the risk of proposals being introduced from the outside that are not relevant to local conditions. In so doing, it has been possible to build an internal constituency for change (*ownership*) and an ability to identify capacity needs. Overall, management seems to have got the sequencing and evolution of capacity and performance issues right.

A mature partnership between the RRA and DFID
A programme of external support has accompanied the entire process of capacity development. This support has been critical not only in terms of offering valuable technical knowledge and financial assistance, but also in providing moral support and confidence to local stakeholders.

Over the years, the RRA and DFID have developed a mature relationship based on frank exchange, team spirit and shared accountability for results. This has allowed external technical and financial assistance to accompany the local change process, adapting to the local tempo of change and to emerging priorities. This was made possible on the one hand by the strong level of ownership and commitment of Rwandan stakeholders, and on the other, by DFID's willingness to work from the background, offering strategic and policy guidance as well as technical and financial support to a range of organisational-development and training initiatives. This has also been facilitated by the strong relationship between the UK and Rwanda and the emergence of DFID as Rwanda's most important bilateral partner. The nature of external assistance has adapted over time as organisational capacity has grown and needs have changed. RRA management has become more confident, playing a more significant part in identifying needs and setting priorities, and gradually its dependence on DFID has decreased.

The Solomon Islands case also raises the importance of organisational capacity and identity. Here, the example of the Central Bank is cited as an illustration of resilience and effective performance. The report goes on to identify characteristics of resilient organisations in that country that need to be understood before thinking about how TA personnel might be able to assist in developing capacity.

Box 12: Characteristics of Resilient Organizations in Solomon Islands

The study identified several characteristics common to organizations that have managed to survive in Solomon Islands:

- strong commitment from stakeholders as a result of long engagement, often through difficult conditions, such as those faced by the Central Bank during the civil strife
- well-defined goals and purposes, which are known to their stakeholders
- values and activities that are important to stakeholders, such as the emphasis on family in the churches

- strong, engaged leadership that provides a coherent vision, sets an example and motivates staff, which has been an important factor in both the courts and in the Central Bank
- activities funded by outsiders build on what is there – the intervention is scaled to the reality not to the dream; for example, the Central Bank carefully controlled the TORs for TA

4.4.4 Appropriateness of TA Personnel

A third determinant of effectiveness is the quality of the personnel deployed. Picking the right person for the job is essential and can make a material difference to outcomes. This may be self-evident but the point is worth repeating, as placement of inappropriate personnel remains a commonly cited problem. Readers are reminded of the importance attached by respondents (as reported in the previous chapter) to their participation in the selection and recruitment process and to ensuring that proper induction of personnel takes place.

Although it is difficult to generalise about the right profile, since no two assignments are quite alike, country respondents consistently underlined the importance of the substantive skills and knowledge that TA personnel bring, a good case in point being the financial advisors appointed to the Mozambique Ministry of Education under the FASE programme.

Respondents also emphasised the significance of the approach and the attitude of TA personnel. This was made very clear in the Vietnam study where sensitivity to cultural norms was underscored and where the following factors were found to be crucial:

- familiarity with local context and government culture
- the overall attitude of expatriates and approaches that are non-didactic and not dictatorial
- the ability to listen, learn, reflect and adapt previous experience and show humility

Process skills are regarded as important, particularly where TA is expected to play a role as change agent or to facilitate the process. In complex and politically sensitive environments typical of post-conflict situations, where TA personnel might find themselves in policy-making positions, being politically astute is vital. In this respect, it is crucial for TA personnel to fit into the organisational environment to which they are attached and for them to be able to build up relationships of trust and respect.[52] The Mozambique study argues that in the context of PBAs and budget support, process skills related to dialogue and to facilitating change are very significant today – the range of skills TA personnel need are not those that have been associated with TA in the past.

A common challenge is finding personnel who combine substantive *and* process skills. The studies (particularly the Solomon Islands case but also the earlier cited report on Timor-Leste[53]) noted this, with the latter concluding that a 'good' TA person is a rare commodity. In Timor-Leste, some personnel had the technical expertise but no previous experience of capacity development, so they either did not attempt to build capacity or struggled with the role. Others had no experience working in developing countries and ended up bringing in systems and procedures that were too complex and required resources that were not available to sustain them. The report concludes that the most successful advisers *combine* the three areas of technical expertise, staff development skills and positive personal attributes.

The Solomon Islands case discusses deployees (officials from the Australian, New Zealand or other regional public services assigned to the Solomon Islands public service as part of the whole-of-government approach) and their comparative advantage vis-à-vis privately contracted consultants. A deliberate choice was made to use different sources of TA personnel to perform different functions. While deployees have been valued for their substantive expertise and their

[52] In this regard, the article on the Human Dimensions of Aid (DAC, 2005) referred to in the Inception report is worth noting and discusses the importance of dignity and reciprocity in relationships.
[53] AusAID (2007).

familiarity with public-service norms and procedures, this strength can often be compromised by their lack of exposure to, and understanding of, development work. There is also concern that their period of tenure is simply too short, resulting in a conflict between the agenda of long-term capacity development and the need to focus on tangible short-term results, often supporting the interests of their home departments.

Table 2 (drawn from the Solomon Islands case) further elaborates the perceived strengths and weaknesses of using whole-of-government deployees.

Table 2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Deployees to Fill TA Positions

Advantages of deployees	Disadvantages of deployees
Good understanding of how government works, with relevant up-to-date experience as a practicing public servant (e.g., preparing budgets and managing debt), which is often valued by partners	Are normally not development specialists and may not have an understanding of capacity issues or of sustainability
Can draw on expertise and support from home departments, strengthening linkages between the developed and the partner countries*	May be under such pressure to show home departments results that they neglect the capacity development side of their mandate
Are imbued with a well-regarded government code of conduct	May try to recreate the policies, systems and procedures of their home agencies, even when not suitable
Experience as practicing public servants is seen as more in keeping with the approaches needed by the partner country	80% have no previous international experience
Are not looking for a job and not aspiring to continued employment in deployed post; understand concept of making a contribution and leaving	May be less experienced than consultants and may see development role as temporary/short term on their total career horizon
Understand principle of 'good-enough' governance	Usually only available for shorter-term assignments, giving rise to issues of continuity, turnover and reduced opportunities to build deeper levels of trust and relationship
Can be given looser TORs than contractors, which allows greater flexibility to adapt to changing environments	Risk of resistance to local management structures and policies because of continued allegiance to home department
Have specific technical focus, especially in areas such as finance	Risk of unsuitable candidates because some departments may not be able to attract enough applicants in a context of increasing demands

* An example under RAMSI is the linkage between the SIG Inland Revenue Department and New Zealand Inland Revenue.

To further ensure adequate preparation of personnel and to assure that the right kinds of persons are selected in the first place, the report argues for professional support and more consistent processes across agencies. In addition, some generic selection criteria focusing on the ability 'to cope and to perform effectively in challenging political and security environments' would be helpful. Even more important may be an understanding of capacity issues, what has worked in other countries and what is possible in an environment like Solomon Islands.

Direct versus company-recruited TA[54] – Stakeholders in Vietnam and Mozambique saw both advantages and disadvantages in using personnel hired either directly by aid agencies or engaged through companies. Some of the same issues recurred in the Solomon Islands case where the distinction was between personnel supplied by whole-of-government departments

[54] This issue had been raised by one of the study's sponsoring agencies who wanted to know whether there was an advantage in direct recruitment in situations where senior advisory positions were sought in politically sensitive areas such as public-service reform. This discussion should be distinguished from that of PIUs, as company-supplied TA can function well within national structures rather than within the framework of PIUs.

and those hired from the general market. (See Table 3 for the Vietnam and Mozambique situation.)

The Mozambique study includes a separate annex on this issue but concludes that there is no evidence, based on the cases reviewed, to suggest that companies are less well positioned to supply TA personnel to support complex processes of change and policy reform. In the UTRESP case, for example, a company had been able to adopt a flexible and iterative process towards engagement and had progressively built a trusted relationship with the client. At the same time, it was critical for Danida to create space for the contractor to work in this manner. It is noteworthy that in a new phase (managed through a pooled fund) the services of the company have been retained by the government.

The Vietnam report also provides a comparison of the relative advantages of the two options, based on experiences in that country. The points are incorporated in the table below. The report suggests that there is no clear evidence of which is 'better'. Overall, the position of country partners is that either approach can work and that, in the end, what counts from their perspective is the effectiveness of a particular arrangement. Thus, from a partner perspective, either arrangement can be valid.

Table 3: Contractors versus Advisors

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Danida advisors	• Contractual flexibility: TA personnel can be transferred to other posts if problems arise ('within the house'); company can insist on fulfilling contract • Greater scrutiny in recruitment process; personalities are better assessed • Easier to recruit for work in Eastern Africa, due to availability of country advisors • If both Danida and host agency are involved in joint monitoring of TA performance, this can help build their mutual relationship, and understanding • Any changes in TORs or disposition of TA can be quickly agreed to: no recourse needed to company HQ or for contract revision/renegotiation	• Lesser pay, as compared to some companies • Administrative cost to Danida (national embassy or in terms of corporate/HQ costs of recruitment agency) • No career development and planning for Danida advisers (they are permitted no professional development activity during their contract period) • Ownership: recruitment decision is more with embassy • Accountability lines not always clear, particularly with regard to financial oversight • Danida culture does not 'permit' early termination of contracts ('I have never seen a Danida advisor being fired.')
Company advisors	• Companies have standard admin and management systems, compatible with development partner requirements: advisers therefore do not have to establish office systems and can concentrate on technical tasks and relationship-building • Greater flexibility: companies are generally bigger, or work in consortia: can accommodate upcoming demands from clients more easily, can mobilise a wide network of expertise • Greater distance from embassy: recruitment decisions shared more among partners, supports building ownership • Less administrative burden for Danish embassies	• Extra financial cost (to the development partner client) for management overhead and fees, built into company billing rates • Company needs to run its business and often re-uses consultants • Company advisors have fewer ties with the embassy, are sometimes more isolated

	• Better able to recruit and work in Western Africa • Sometimes better pay • Companies can be held accountable for personnel they provide • Overall, lines of accountability are better defined • Easier to dismiss an unsuitable/non-performing individual employed by a company than in the case of Danida advisers (less embarrassment and loss of face) • A company group can build a 'safe' environment where experimentation can be encouraged by minimal threat or risks of failure to counterparts (i.e., if it goes awry, the company can be blamed, not individuals) • Greater ability to mobilise a range of short-term specialists and use 'back-stoppers' when companies involved	

National TA – The Mozambique and Vietnam cases shed light on the nature and significance of the roles of national consultants. In the former case, nationals have been deployed mainly in gap-filling roles (most recently at the provincial and sub-provincial level) in supernumerary or established posts in local governments, paid for by development partners (or through a special funding mechanism that will lapse when development partners end their support).

The Mozambique study notes that although there is a growing pool of national experts, it remains a relatively young and inexperienced market where quality is a concern, particularly as far as consulting and process-facilitation skills are concerned. The study provides examples of the effective use of national TA personnel, for example in supporting the SISTAFE programme and, through the World Bank, the PROAGRI programme. In contrast, experiences from the provinces are more mixed. While UTRESP has now found an effective formula for deploying young experts to support processes of local reform in local government, officials have voiced their frustration with the deployment of what are perceived as young, inexperienced individuals coming to tell them what to do (and receiving substantially higher salaries than those paid to counterparts for doing so).

The Vietnam study discusses in more depth the potential use of national TA personnel. It suggests that demand for national TA personnel is increasing and that a significant pool of competent professionals has been developing in the private sector since liberalisation and through the return of the diaspora.[55] It makes the point that national TA personnel often play a strategically important role, complementary to international TA, by helping to meld together external experiences and local contextual considerations in what is an opaque and challenging political, institutional, cultural and linguistic environment. At the same time, there is some concern about the well-known risks of brain-drain from the public sector as the brightest migrate to the better-paying private sector only to sell their services back to the public service.

In both countries, there are clearly situations where national TA personnel are preferable to international, but in many other situations, a combination of the two adds considerable value. National TA personnel are likely to be more culturally aware, having greater experience with local organisations and language. But compared to highly experienced international TA personnel, they might lack substantive experience, as well as the independence and political

[55] The UNDP-sponsored review of TA, conducted in 2000, recommended a concerted effort to support the emergence of a high-quality local consulting industry to compete internationally.

neutrality that might be desirable in certain situations.[56]

Given the likelihood that national TA could lead to a reduction in development partner funding once the country reaches middle-income status (as in the Vietnamese context), the importance of creating appropriate incentives for national TA to develop and play a part in the further development of the economy is emphasised. A challenge common to both Mozambique and Vietnam is also ensuring adequate regulation of the sector to assure quality control and professionalism.

The Mozambique report also raises the question of the sustainability of national TA. In the case of SISTAFE, the deployment of national TA personnel has depended on their being offered a competitive remuneration package above normal public-service pay levels. This has been affordable because of the availability of pooled development partner funds, but it is unlikely to be sustainable if it has to be paid from domestic sources. This would suggest that the effectiveness of deploying national TA personnel needs to be examined within the wider framework of public-service pay reform.

Access to networks of expertise and information resources – Having access to information resources and networks of expertise (peer exchange and professional contacts) is increasingly important for TA personnel. It is seldom the case that an individual has all the answers, and access to knowledge resources can be a significant asset. In an environment where partners are becoming more confident and capable of identifying the types of information, expertise, experience and comparative systems they wish to explore and understand, the provision of access to information is a crucial function, which development partners, agencies that provide TA and their TA contractors should be in a position to perform. Vietnamese informants especially appreciated this 'service'.

4.4.5 Development partner Capacity for Supporting TA and Capacity Development

The country studies suggest that development partner agencies need to be better equipped to support capacity development and to ensure effective use of TA personnel, particularly in complex areas involving change and institutional reform. This is also true for politically volatile and unstable environments. Capabilities are required in the following areas:

- assessing baseline capacities, ownership and probable commitment in organisations and sectors
- identifying needs and determining response strategies (both of which should imply *joint* approaches of needs assessment and identification, *with* prospective counterparts)
- sourcing appropriate expertise and providing relevant and adequate induction programmes
- supporting TA personnel during the period of their assignment, not only administratively, but also in terms of guidance related to knowledge about relevant sector policies as well as capacity development and change
- complementing the inputs of TA personnel by offering host organisations assistance with access to international networks and comparative experience

This implies bringing on board relevant expertise in institutional development and change in order to complement sector and governance expertise that already exists. There are certainly better prospects if development partners attempt to ensure that all their sector professionals have some awareness of the possible challenges, pitfalls and red herrings involved in capacity development. It is also helpful if TA personnel have the career incentives to gain more knowledge in this field and to apply it. This implies developing and using a variety of diagnostic and assessment tools that can assist in more systematic context analysis and in determining appropriate support as part of programme design.

[56] This observation is also applicable in the Solomon Islands.

The wider literature points to various constraints and opportunities that confront development partners attempting to improve their management of TA personnel. An example of this is the influence of the policies and procedures that govern the way in which agencies can respond to the challenges of TA management. The ways development partners distribute responsibilities for TA management across different agencies (identification, formulation, implementation) can also have a bearing on this. The efforts of some agencies to deconcentrate or decentralize management responsibilities to country offices can help to increase the capacity of agencies to effectively determine needs and engage with partners. In this regard, the efforts by AusAID to improve its corporate knowledge of development issues by placing its staff in aid positions is noteworthy, as it creates opportunities for its staff to get a better grasp of how partners think and to engage in dialogue with them.

In the context of RAMSI and the whole-of-government approach, specific management challenges have arisen. The Solomon Islands report draws two conclusions regarding the capacity to adequately support an intervention strategy as ambitious as RAMSI:

- Implementing a strategy focusing on capacity development requires the outside interveners – the Australian source departments and agencies – to have capacity themselves in terms of intercultural skills, analytical capabilities, sectoral knowledge and field experience.
- Outside interveners also need to think about capacity and the role that TA can play in supporting its development. AusAID has taken an important step in this direction by establishing a Capacity Development Panel to provide technical advisory support to both headquarters and country posts, and RAMSI has hired a capacity development specialist to create a shared set of approaches across the programme. The areas of economic governance and of law and justice have also engaged personnel specifically to support capacity development.

4.4.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation systems can have a significant influence on how TA personnel perform. Although there is tendency to use the terms interchangeably, monitoring and evaluation are quite distinct functions. Monitoring should be part of the country process of learning and, as such, should feed into reflection, rethinking and future adaptation. When monitoring becomes a device for accountability (i.e., checking how effectively development partners' resources are being used), it tends to become a one-sided activity, and thus loses its value for capacity development. Evaluation has a legitimate role as an accountability mechanism, but can also serve learning objectives.

A strict focus on results-based management that overlooks some of the critical dimensions of process and capacity development can result in TA personnel focusing on tangible dimensions alone. This may be necessary but not sufficient. If TA personnel are to focus on capacity development and to be judged in terms of their contribution to CD outcomes, then an appropriate set of performance indicators that recognise and reward process dimensions is required. Part of the problem is the challenge involved in finding appropriate ways to monitor and evaluate development processes and intangible outcomes like the growth of the 'legitimacy' of counterpart organisations.[57]

As this study revealed, there is a dearth of information about what works and how TA personnel can influence local capacity development processes. Methodologies that focus on learning rather than on accountability alone can help extract lessons on how change happens and how TA has contributed. Management systems can encourage learning and provide flexibility in

[57] The ECDPM Capacity Study concluded that this was a key dimension of organisations whose capacity has been developed. See also the Discussion Paper by Derick Brinkerhoff on the subject (Brinkerhoff, 2005).

shaping programme designs around learning from experience and responding to emerging needs. Such systems can also provide a framework that is a more conducive to succeeding in capacity development. The ECDPM capacity study reviewed a number of innovative approaches to learning, some of which could be usefully shared with selected host-country counterparts.[58]

In principle, programme-based approaches and mechanisms, such as pooling and facilities offer greater space, as well as incentives, for an iterative approach, but this often needs to be accompanied by a change of attitudes about how performance and results are understood, as well as a change of rules and procedures within aid-management systems.

The building blocks for an appropriate M&E system for TA personnel might include the following:

- determining the primary purpose of M&E (i.e., accountability to the development partner, accountability to the country partner, learning, input into management decisions, etc.)
- determining the roles of TA personnel
- for capacity development, ensuring a common understanding of what is meant by 'capacity development' and how it should be approached
- assessing the effectiveness of each role, including the use of various strategies for change (with the assessments carried out by both partners)

5. Recommendations

This synthesis of the study's findings has raised a variety of issues concerning demand, management and effectiveness of TA in terms of what works, when and why and in terms of promising approaches. In this section, we present recommendations that emerged from the issues discussed above.

5.1 Demand for TA

- **Engage in Strategic Dialogue**
  *The issue of TA personnel should be discussed **in high-level forums** between country stakeholders and development partners. It should be treated as a **strategic issue**, integral to discussions on aid effectiveness, capacity development and reform of public service, and as an **item of mutual accountability**.*

- **Stand Back and Reflect**
  *Development partners can and should help partner countries to 'stand back' and reflect on what has been going on, and what makes sense for the future. They can help **stimulate dialogue** by bringing in (positive) international peer experiences as **case studies**. The current study on TA could conceivably provide a platform to catalyse such discussions and strategic dialogue*.

- **Link TA Personnel to Development Planning and Human Resources Management**
  *Host governments should **use strategic and operational plans** at the national, sector and sub-sector level as a basis **for assessing capacity** and for **determining the potential contribution of TA personnel**. Programme-based approaches, including SWAps, also provide a basis for conducting capacity assessments and for entering into dialogue with development partners.*

[58] See ECDPM Discussion Paper No 58B (Watson, 2006).

- **Build on Local Priorities**
  *Development partners are encouraged to engage with country partners to understand their needs and to **build on their existing knowledge and ideas**, rather than prescribing their own agendas and priorities. This is especially important in environments where host demand is weak or poorly articulated.*

- **Be Transparent about Options, Costs and Motives**
  *To ensure that countries are in a position to **make informed decisions** about TA personnel, development partners should be **fully transparent about the alternatives available**. A menu setting out the strengths and weaknesses of the different TA options **as well as the cost implications** would be a step in the right direction and could help redress the perception of TA as a tied commodity but essentially a free good. Development partners should also be transparent about their own motives in supplying TA personnel (for instance, in placing TA personnel in strategic positions to manage fiduciary risk).*

- **Share Costs**
  *To test local commitment to the deployment of proposed TA personnel and to further mitigate the 'free good' syndrome, **country partners** should be encouraged to **contribute an agreed-upon portion of overall TA costs** from their own resources in the form of a counterpart contribution.*

- **Clarify TA Terminology**
  *To help clarify the many different roles and functions that TA personnel can perform and to provide a common basis on which to discuss strategies and needs between partner countries and external agencies, **a glossary of terms should be produced**. This should specifically explain the various roles that TA personnel can perform in relation to capacity development and could be linked to the on-going work of the DAC Network on Governance for improving TA statistics.*

5.2 Management of TA

- **Strengthen the Human Resources Function**
  *Host governments need to strengthen their capacity for workforce planning and human resources management (including procurement) as **a critical area of public-service management**. Development partners have a role to play in supporting such efforts. Supporting governments in their management of their human resources should receive the kind of attention that is already given to economic and financial management. Strengthening skills and practices that affect how individuals are managed day to day (induction, leadership, communication, performance appraisal, career counselling, etc.) should be prioritised, since these actions affect the retention of young talent as much as other more material conditions of service.*

- **Follow the Paris Declaration**
  *Development partners and partner countries should work together to ensure that, from the very start of activities, **country partners have clearly defined responsibilities for TA management** in the spirit of the Paris Declaration and in line with what has been referred to as the 'procurement' approach to TA management. In doing this, there is a **need for pragmatism and a need to adapt management arrangements gradually** to realities on the ground. Yet the overall goal of ensuring that the country partner takes progressive responsibility for TA management should be maintained.*

- **Experiment with Pooling**
  *Pooling arrangements should be considered as **a means of shifting the balance of TA management towards country partners** and of encouraging greater harmonisation and alignment of development partner inputs around country strategies. Pooling can **encourage***

different actors to discuss options together and to negotiate the most appropriate use of TA personnel*. It can also help country partners to think more strategically about TA, to exercise leadership and to avoid ad hoc decision-making and reactive behaviour.*

- **Consider Shared Management as an Interim Arrangement**
  In situations where capacity is insufficient and where the full transfer of responsibility is not yet practical, management arrangements that ***encourage a sharing of responsibility for TA selection and management,*** *that* ***offer a choice to host countries,*** *and that* ***strengthen accountability*** *to country partners should be identified and encouraged as an interim solution. But this should not be an excuse for not investing in strengthening the capacity of country partners to manage TA.*

- **Improve Selection and Recruitment under Country Leadership**
  As a matter of principle, country partners should ***chair review and selection panels*** *and be involved in the development of criteria for selection and performance appraisal. More relevant and effective ways to interview personnel should also be explored, including greater involvement of host personnel in providing inputs into the exercises or questions used to pre-select candidates. Recruitment processes need to* ***include aptitude tests that adequately address the process dimensions of the future role of TA personnel****.*

- **Improve Induction**
  More attention should be given to appropriate induction of TA personnel and to the preparation of country partners. This should ***focus particularly on the importance of process skills****. There is also merit in mobilising country partners in the induction process as informants and co-subjects.*

5.3 Effectiveness of TA

- **Link TA Discussions to Public-Service Reform**
  The sustainability of TA contributions to capacity development is contingent on ***a wider discussion of the underlying factors that encourage or impede public-sector performance*** *(e.g., recruitment, productive utilisation and retention of appropriately skilled and motivated staff in the public sector, globalisation of the labour market). Moreover, the controls put on public services in developing countries as part of the conditions for assistance from institutions such as the IMF can sometimes have the perverse effect of encouraging these governments to use international TA personnel to support programmes funded by development partners rather than implementing the programmes themselves. Bilateral development organisations should work with international financial institutions to* ***ensure coherence of policies and to avoid perverse incentives****.*

- **Develop a Common Understanding of Capacity and Change**
  Development partners, suppliers of TA personnel and country partners need to develop a shared understanding about capacity and change as a basis ***for diagnosing needs****,* ***considering the role that TA personnel can play*** *in supporting country-driven processes, and* ***as a basis for establishing well-conceptualised interventions****. Development and country partners should also exchange their respective understanding of 'effectiveness' in order to develop a common framework of analysis and as a basis* ***for agreeing on appropriate performance indicators****.*

- **Draw up Lessons of Experience**
  Development partners should assist countries in drawing up lessons of experience on the use of TA personnel as a basis ***for understanding what works and why****. This is especially important in relation to the contribution of TA to capacity development and will help countries better determine future needs.*

- **Support the Emergence of Professional National Consulting Industries**
  The case studies illustrate the contribution of national TA personnel (working in conjunction with expatriates) in supporting capacity development in public-sector organisations. The cases also illustrate problems in accessing professional national consultants with the necessary skills. Thus, there may well be scope in some countries for joint (development partner-government-industry) ***assessments of issues facing the national consulting industry*** *and for* ***subsequent development partner support*** *for the emergence of national consulting industries through the* ***provision of appropriate incentives*** *(for example, in procurement practices that include billing-rate norms) and* ***direct technical support****.*

- **Adopt More Flexible and Iterative Approaches**
  Development partners and country partners should identify ways ***to build greater flexibility*** *into programme operations in order* ***to accommodate emergent needs and changing demands****. This is especially important in complex and politically sensitive environments where the momentum and direction of reform can quickly change. This should be* ***informed by a fuller understanding of the different approaches to supporting capacity development,*** *particularly the potential points of entry at the individual, organisational and system levels.*

- **Determine the Right Mix of Direct and Indirect Approaches**
  The design of TA interventions needs to ***take account of different capacities*** *on the ground. Where capacity is stronger, more indirect approaches may be warranted, but where capacity is weaker, direct approaches may be more suitable. Often, a mix of direct and indirect approaches works best. The appropriateness of the approaches used needs to be monitored over time and assessed to determine when to shift from one to another. However, as a matter of principle****, indirect approaches should be considered the 'default'*** *setting as these are considered most conducive to sustainable capacity development. Direct approaches should be used only as a temporary or transitional measure.*

- **Engagement in Fragile States**
  Development partners need to think carefully about the role of TA personnel in fragile environments. A particular challenge is ***to ensure greater national engagement*** *in formulating and implementing externally funded programmes. Development partners should* ***build on the country's areas of interest and motivation,*** *and match the scale of activities to the absorptive capacity or conditions of the partner country, gradually involving the partner country in more programme decision-making. This is probably best done through* ***adopting incremental approaches*** *that allow learning and adjustments to accommodate the lessons of experience as well as changing internal and external conditions.*

- **Develop an Agreed-upon Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation**
  Country partners need to develop an appropriate M&E framework for TA personnel that sets ***realistic performance indicators****,* ***reflects the roles and functions ascribed to TA personnel*** *and* ***avoids perverse incentives*** *that might encourage TA personnel to focus on realising tangible results at the expense of contributing to less tangible CD processes that are more difficult to measure. An appropriate M&E framework should also* ***balance the demands for accountability and the value of learning****. In this respect, opportunities should be created to explore and* ***test out alternative evaluation methodologies*** *for understanding how change happens and how external interventions can contribute (e.g., methodologies derived from the principles of systems thinking).*

- **Name it**
  Development partners and country partners should ***be clearer about the actual purpose of TA****, in particular whether a role is genuinely advisory or is in-line. In the case of the latter, the nomenclature should not be 'adviser' as this obscures the actual role and the extent of*

capacity gaps. Being clear about the purpose enables more accurate terms of reference to be developed and better matching of potential candidates to the role. It also helps establish transparent expectations for performance.

- **Improve the Capacity of the Development Partner**
  *Development partners need to assess their **own capabilities for supporting capacity and processes** of **change** in the field and for ensuring effective use of TA personnel. This might involve deployment of **more specialised staff to the field** to support programme design and implementation as well as to engage in processes related to policy dialogue. It might also imply **developing and applying innovative methodologies** to identifying needs, assessing capacity and analysing and understanding context. Development partners can play a major role in facilitating the access of host counterparts to international experience or related practitioner networks. Development partners should also ensure that the professional performance criteria of their staff **provide incentives for consistent application of development partner policies on TA**, and are not just au fait with their content.*

5.4 Final Remarks

We conclude on a cautionary note. All three country reports raise concerns about performance and incentives within the public service, and the need to address fundamental issues related to public-sector accountability and to the pay, attraction and retention of staff. Issues concerning over-centralised decision-making and lack of transparency of procedures have also been noted. Although it seems obvious, it is necessary to underline the fact that the deployment of TA can in no way substitute for more fundamental reform of state systems. TA can provide a short- to medium-term solution to some of these more fundamental institutional challenges in terms of gap-filling or in terms of helping to initiate processes that can bring about more fundamental reforms, but the risk remains that inputs will not be sustainable so long as these issues are not tackled.

Furthermore, the three cases studied suggest that we may not yet be at a stage where the procurement model (as envisaged by Oxford Policy Management) is a reality for many countries, even including countries like Vietnam, with its more competent public service. The model is a valid one and sets a bold target to work towards. Getting there requires process of reform that is adapted to country realities, particularly in terms of capacity, leadership and fiduciary risk. ‘Moving gradually’ should not be an excuse for non-action, and measures need to be in place for continuous monitoring of the extent to which progress is being made in advancing towards that goal. In the meantime, more interim measures, including increasing the accountability link between TA personnel and partner-country supervisors, are a step in the right direction.

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

July 14, 2006

TERMS OF REFERENCE for

Provision of Technical Assistance Personnel:

What can we learn from promising experiences?

A Joint Evaluation Study
For AusAID, BMZ and Danida
Executed by ECDPM

1. Background

Recent years have seen an important change in development-cooperation policy, culminating in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This declaration defines capacity development as the primary responsibility of developing countries, with development partners playing a supportive role. It sees developing countries as leading the process by formulating their own strategies and setting specific objectives in their development plans, while development partner strategies and activities are aligned with the development frameworks of partner countries and enhancing harmonisation and coordination between the development partner community and partner countries in the South.

For the last half century, technical assistance (TA), and particularly long-term personnel, has been one of the most recognisable features of development cooperation and, for some development partners, particularly the bilaterals, it has represented a key part of their programmes. However, the mechanism has attracted a lot of criticism with the provision of long-term expatriate personnel being the most controversial.[59] From about 1970 to the mid 1990s, TA, particularly in the form of long-term expatriate personnel, often helped to create 'islands of success' out of isolated projects which were unsustainable once 'handed over' to national authorities. Expatriate personnel sometimes took management positions which nationals could have occupied, while their comparatively high salaries and perks often engendered resentment among the nationals around them, or furthered another unsustainable employment of local project consultants or managers. Such reflection has, in turn, led the international development community to rethink approaches to more programme-based approaches such as sector and budget support aimed at stimulating national ownership of development processes. In this context, the role of the technical assistance personnel has also changed.

While most of the criticisms of technical assistance had a generally validity, technical assistance and the personnel associated with it have nonetheless made significant contributions in many countries. The documentation of the positive results of the TA interventions, however, is less visible. There is a need to understand which is the demand for TA personnel both from international development organisations and from partner countries, what has worked over the recent years and why, and to build on that for the future, when harmonisation and alignment also in this field becomes pertinent. With the purpose of better understanding what approaches to the provision of technical assistance personnel have worked best and why and, on the basis of this analysis, to suggest recommendations for both development partners and partners for future TA planning and management the Evaluation

[59] See, for example, Berg, E. 1993. Rethinking Technical Cooperation: Reforms for Capacity-Building in Africa. New York: UNDP

Departments of Danida and BMZ and the Advisory Group of AusAID have agreed to undertake this joint Evaluation Study.

Answers to these questions are highly relevant as recent experiences and evaluations with the implementation of programme-based approaches, in particular budget support[60] and sector programmes, indicate a growing need for capacity development to make such aid modalities a success. And TA is one of the key mechanisms used to support capacity development.
In the following, *technical assistance (TA)* is understood[61] as 'the transfer, adaptation, mobilisation and utilisation of services, skills, knowledge and technology. It includes both short- and long-term personnel from both national and foreign sources, plus training, support equipment, consultancies, study visits, seminars and various forms of linkage. This broad concept of TA comprising any form of non-financial aid aimed at supporting capacity development efforts, is similar to the term technical cooperation. However, as elaborated below, this study will focus on technical assistance *personnel*

The three funding agencies of this study have provided TA in various forms for many years as an important part of their development assistance: short- and long-term experts, consultants and advisers, individually contracted advisers as well as company advisers, or personnel seconded from public organisations. In quantitative terms, the number of e.g. Danish long-term bilateral individual advisers has been reduced from nearly 400 (plus 285 volunteers, and 125 multilateral experts) at the end of 1979 to less than 200 advisers in 2005.

2. Objectives

The *overall objective* of the evaluation study is to gain a better understanding of the future demand for technical assistance, to relate that to past experience and to recommend how TA personnel can best be mobilised, used and managed in the future to strengthen national capacity.

The study will look at the demand, roles and management of TA in the context of current trends in development cooperation policy and operations. It is particularly interested in the strategic use of TA personnel from the perspectives of the different development cooperation partners; development partners, recipient governments and non-state actors[62]. The focus will be largely on TA for delivery and implementation rather than TA for preparation and design.

The study's main interest is in understanding the ways in which TA personnel (as an instrument of development cooperation and distinct from financial assistance) can contribute to addressing capacity development and institutional reform objectives, and in so doing to identify what works when, where and why. However, it has to be recognised that although capacity development is the main objective of TA, in some cases it needs to be considered in the context of other considerations such as dealing with scarce skills, attending to short-term policy/operational needs/crises as well as programme management/financial control.
In looking at TA, the study takes note of:

- The international commitment to achievement of the MDGs
- Commitments to increasing the overall level of aid
- The Paris Declaration on harmonisation, alignment and results
- Shifts towards programme based approaches and budget support
- Adherence to national poverty reduction strategies
- Recognition of the centrality of capacity development to the above[63].

[60] See Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support, DfID, May 2006.
[61] DAC: http://www.oecd.org/glossary/
[62] The principal focus, however, will be on the provision of TA personnel by official development agencies to partner governments.
[63] As e.g. expressed in DAC Network on Governance: The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working towards Good Practice, February 2006.

3. Output

The outputs of the assignment shall be:

- An Inception Report (not exceeding 20 pages, with annexes as per need) outlining the desk-studies, literature review, what is known, what the concerns seem to be and what the key issues are for further exploration; and a detailed work plan for the country case studies, the fieldwork and interviews with the development partner agencies, etc. The Inception Report will be discussed at a meeting with the Core Group.
- A Country Case Study Report for each of the selected countries (each not exceeding 30 pages, with annexes as per need), containing an overview of TA provided to the country (with specific information of the TA provided by Danida, Germany –focusing on GTZ- and AusAID), any national capacity development strategy or TA policy; and illustrations of innovative/promising approaches to TA.
- A Review of the TA Policies & Practices of the three development partner agencies according to jointly agreed parameters (not exceeding 30 pages, with annexes as per need).
- A Draft Synthesis Report (not exceeding 60 pages, with annexes as per need) to be delivered to the Core Group a minimum of two weeks before discussion at a workshop in Maastricht.
- A Final Synthesis Report (not exceeding 60 pages, with annexes, including final country case reports and development partner agency review, attached as CD-Rom) will be delivered not later than three weeks after receiving the comments to the draft report from the Core Group.
- Participation in dissemination activities, including preparation of Evaluation Study Brief[64] (not exceeding 4 pages), delivery of photos for illustration, and presentation of the study by the team leader in one meeting in Denmark (Copenhagen), up to two in Germany (Bonn and/or Eschborn) and one in Australia (Canberra).
- A post-mortem note (not exceeding three pages) of the experiences of the Evaluation Team shall be submitted to Core Group.

4. Key Evaluation Questions

The study will focus on four sets of questions:

a) What are the current and likely future demands for TA?
b) What modes of TA have worked best and why?
c) What are the various options for managing TA?
d) What are the implications for development organisations and partners?

The main focus of the study will be on b) and c) with a) providing more of a context setting for the analysis of issues under b) and c). The findings from a-c will provide the input for answering question d) which will also include a set of conclusions and recommendations

a) What are the current and likely future demands for TA?

There will be a qualitative assessment of major broad trends in development cooperation and of the implications of this for TA. It will consider how key stakeholders on both sides of the partnership perceive current and future demands for TA, including the various types of demands and arrangements needed.

The study will thus attempt to disaggregate the perceptions and views of bilaterals, multilaterals, and NGOs on the development partner side and governments and non-state actors on the partner country side.

The assessment will to the extent possible present available information on needs in different

[64] Such as in the form of an ECDPM Policy Management Brief

sectors, types of programmes, areas of intervention such as the public sector versus civil society, types of countries, and regions such as East Africa, Asia versus the Pacific. It will also look at the extent to which TA is meant to contribute to capacity development as opposed to other objectives.
Some of the questions to be asked include the ***relevance*** of the TA:

- Where is the current demand for TA personnel and how might this change over the next five to ten years?
- Where is the demand coming from – development organisations or partner countries and under what circumstances?
- How are needs identified?
- To what extent are these personnel being used as instruments of development partner policy versus tools for developing countries in need of critical human resources versus supporting the negotiation of international agreements on global public goods such as environmental protection and market access?

A sample of views from the case countries considered, and from documentation of other low income and middle income will be made, with an effort to distinguish trends in different country contexts.

Limitations: The study will *not* look at private sector needs for TA in the sense of business to business transfers nor will it inventorise the various skill or functional areas that may need supporting with TA within the public service. However, it will look at the general skills changes in the need for TA, and the demands for various types of TA like advisers, programme managers and financial controllers of the development assistance.

b) What modes of TA have worked best and why?

Technical assistance personnel have always been a key instrument in the context of project assistance. The shift towards programme-based and country-led approaches has brought them into largely new roles such as sector advisers and policy contributors. And the attention to capacity development has required different styles of work. The explicit interest here is to examine the various roles that TA personnel play, with particular emphasis on their contribution to capacity development. The question 'TA for what?' is thus important but the study will not privilege any particular mode a priori because the appropriateness of any modality will depend on the local context. These questions are mainly related to the ***effectiveness*** of the TA, including:

- Facilitating capacity development and mentoring change including accompanying nationals in these processes;
- Providing expertise and advice in a substantive professional field;
- 'Gap-filling ' or line positions – performing line functions when local expertise is not available, including development partner coordination;
- 'Buffer' or facilitating between internal and external functions, for example, in moderating between opposing parties in sensitive political environments and providing 'space' or opportunity for organisations to experiment and learn;
- 'Gatekeeper' or safeguarding the effective and efficient use of development partner money and managing administrative tasks associated with the use of development partner funds; and
- Policy dialogue with governments, sometimes in lieu of the representatives of development organisations or to supplement their activities.

The study will provide illustrations of different types of on-the-ground TA practices associated with each role and the skills and attributes required of each. It will attempt to relate the types with the various TA versions like the individually contracted bilateral adviser, the company adviser or consultant, and the seconded public organisation professional.
The effectiveness of TA in influencing change and capacity development is often low but is contingent on characteristics of the organisational and institutional environment within which it

is located. Usually, expectations of TA impact have been over-ambitious. The study will seek broadly to identify the factors that enable TA to be effective and to ensure sustainable outcomes in different settings, for example, the availability of political and bureaucratic commitments.

Examples will be drawn from two levels: a) the operational level in terms of how individual TA is utilised, and the characteristics/conditions that influence the effectiveness of TA (attributes of TA personnel and the organisational and institutional context), b) at the strategic level, in terms of the overall deployment of TA in within a particular country. It will be necessary to define sectors of focus for some or all of the countries to be covered by the cases since covering all TA personnel may be impossible.

The views of country partners with regard to the different roles that TA can play will be considered along side those of development agencies.

c) What are the practice and options to manage TA?

The management of TA has been the subject of increasing attention in recent years and a number of important reports have been prepared on the subject.

The issue of TA management cannot be separated from the consideration of TA modalities, and more generally, from the wider debate on country ownership and management of the development process. Issues of TA management thus carry implications for capacity development more generally. Issues concerning TA modalities will carry implications for the appropriateness of different management arrangements. Drawing from the country cases, the literature review and previous work done by ECDPM in the area of technical assistance, the final report will synthesise innovative practices in the management of TA, and consider the factors encouraging or constraining innovation.

Traditionally, the funding agency has managed TA personnel either directly or through a designated agency, often in the country of the development partner, or outsourced through competitive tendering to a private company. Personnel have been largely accountable to that organisation rather than to the Southern partners. Semi-autonomous PIUs (also often outsourced to private companies) have been a favoured organisational arrangement within which TA personnel have functioned. Sometimes, the acceptance of TA personnel has been a condition of other kinds of assistance.

Programme-based approaches and the emphasis on working through national structures have major implications, at least in theory, for how TA personnel should be managed and the roles of development partners by reference to partner countries. The study will explore recent examples of assistance provided through programme-based approaches and how the new agenda for TA has influenced the way in which it is identified, procured and supervised. It will also look at the ways tasks are divided among developing country partners, implementing agencies or managing contractors and development partners at different stages of the TA cycle, and what the incentives structures are within the cycle for:

- identification and demand for TA personnel (demand vs. supply driven),
- procurement, recruitment, and contracting,
- management, including outsourcing,
- supervision and performance appraisal. To whom are personnel accountable?
- initial and ongoing professional development of TA personnel,

These issues of ***efficiency*** are of particular concern to government institutions confronted with planning, mobilisation and implementation of different forms of budget support, as well as to development partner agencies supporting these aid mechanisms. How are TA personnel mobilised and managed in such exercises, how is monitoring and evaluation changing to accommodate shifting TA modalities (pooling, increasing local partner management etc) and to

what extent can there be harmonisation and alignment among the approaches of different development partners?
The study will look at different contexts such as where:

- local partners have full responsibility,
- local partners and development partner(s) share responsibility, and
- development partner(s) retain substantial responsibility,
- pooling of TA is practiced.

d) The implications for both development organisations that provide TA personnel and partner countries

The study will draw conclusions and recommendations on how to improve outcomes and sustainability of TA to support capacity development in a changing development cooperation context. These conclusions and recommendations will be based on the findings from the evaluation questions above (a-c), as explored through the country case studies, from earlier studies and evaluations on TA and capacity development, and from the answers to the following questions:

- What kind of role is there for TA in the new aid agenda?
- How can it best complement other aid modalities, in particular programme-based approaches such as sector programmes and budget support?
- What role might it play outside these frameworks?
- What can its contribution be to capacity development and longer-term incremental change processes, including moving from projects to programme-based approaches and addressing the challenges of significant increases in aid?
- How can ownership of TA be increased?
- What are the measures of success of TA? What approaches to monitoring and evaluating TA show potential?

The emphasis in this analysis will be on better understanding:

- the advantages of different roles for and types of TA personnel,
- the enabling conditions necessary to allow them to function effectively,
- the risks, and
- the conditions under which each role might be suitable.

A synthesis document will be prepared that will provide the basis for a workshop meeting with resource persons and stakeholders that will examine the findings, conclusions and recommendations of each of these three questions. On the basis of these deliberations, the Synthesis report and a brief Summary will be finalised

5. Methodology

The methodology would consist of five major activities:

1. Extracting key messages emerging from **completed or on-going ECDPM studies** including i.a. the Study on pooling of TA (2001-2002), the Review of the use of technical assistance in Botswana (2002), work with the Malian Government (2004-2007), the Evaluation of small-scale technical assistance in the Commonwealth Secretariat (2004-2005), the ECDPM study on 'Capacity, Change and Performance' (2004-2006), the Evaluation of the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), etc.

2. Reviewing **other recent publications on TA,** such as the on-going evaluation of TC personnel for economic management in Sub-Saharan Africa being done for DFID by Oxford Policy Management, the UNDP books on Reforming Technical Cooperation, a paper on TA published by the Oxford Policy Management in 2003, Peter Morgan's paper

'Correcting the precedents' and several case studies presented during the January 2004 meeting on capacity development in Tokyo.

3. Collecting information on and reviewing **TA policies and practices** from the funding development partners (Danida, BMZ/GTZ and AusAID) and from other partners like the UNDP, etc. The collection will include conducting a selected number of interviews at development partner headquarters focusing on innovative practices by these agencies.

4. Undertaking between three and five **country case studies**, selected based on relevance of TA and by region (Africa, Asia and Pacific), including **Mozambique**, **Vietnam** and **Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands**, to look at experiences in the field, including how far existing practices facilitate or constrain the effective deployment of TA for capacity development. The case studies will be carried through phone interviews with stakeholders from the North and South, in-depth field visits, and review of available documentation of all TA provision and results in the case countries, with a special emphasis of the TA provided by Denmark, Germany and Australia.

5. **Synthesizing** the findings from the draft country cases and the review of development partner policy and practices into conclusions and recommendations for discussion and validation during a workshop with stakeholders and resource persons before finalising the evaluation reports.

6. Evaluation Principles and Management

The basic DAC-evaluation principles of independence of those responsible for the design and implementation of the development intervention, and of utilisation of evaluators external to the development partners and implementing organisations will be applied.

Responsibility for the content and presentation of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation study rests with the evaluation team. The views and opinions expressed in the report will not necessarily correspond to the views of the Governments of Denmark, Germany or Australia, the Governments of the selected case countries, or the implementing organisations. The report of the evaluation study will be available to all relevant stakeholders and the public[65], and submitted to the Board of Danida, to the [DG of (Federal Government of Germany), and to the DG (of Government of Australia)].

Two sets of roles are contained in the evaluation process: the Evaluation Management and the Evaluation Study Team (the evaluators).

Role of the Evaluation Management:
The Evaluation of the TA Personnel will be undertaken as a joint evaluation study commissioned by Danida's Evaluation Department (EVAL), the Evaluation Department of BMZ, and AusAID's Advisory Group. These departments will each designate an officer and an alternate officer responsible for the evaluation. Together, the designated officers will form the Core Management Group of the evaluation. The three representatives will nominate a Chair, if necessary. More funding agencies may be adopted as members of the Core Group by mutual agreement.

The Core Management Group will:

- Coordinate their financial contribution to the Evaluation Study, and endorse the budget of the study (including the subcontracting of local/regional consultants);

[65] The evaluation reports will be published on the websites of ECDPM www.ecdpm.org , Danida's Evaluation Department www.evaluation.dk , the Evaluation Department of BMZ www.bmz.de , and the Evaluation Department of AusAID www.ausaid.gov.au .

- Approve the ToR of the evaluation, and approve the composition of the Evaluation Study Team;
- Ensure quality throughout the evaluation process;
- Comment on and approve the Inception report, the Country Case reports, the Development partner Review report, and the draft and final Evaluation reports;
- Advise their own agencies and staff on the evaluation as well as coordinate internal agency contributions;
- Provide feed-back to the Evaluation Study Team;
- Ensure local offices are aware of the evaluation and fully involved and available to contribute to the evaluation;
- Be supported or advised as a collective body, or individually, by relevant independent consultants or peer reviewers, as required;
- Chair and participate in evaluation workshops as per need;
- Contribute to the presentation of the evaluation results, and assist with necessary follow-up of the evaluation.

Role of the Evaluation Study Team (the evaluators):
The evaluation study is undertaken by commissioning the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), Maastricht, to carry out the study by a qualified team of its international staff, if needed supported by local/regional consultants of the case countries led by an Evaluation Study Team leader. The team will:

- Carry out the evaluation study as per ToR; and
- Be responsible for the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation;
- Report to the Core Management Group, be in regular contact, coordinate mission timing and key events with the Core Group and seek its advice when needed;
- The Evaluation Study Team leader is responsible for the team's reports, and for the organisation of the work of the team;
- The Team leader will participate in workshops and meetings as required.

7. Inputs and Timing

The ECDPM Evaluation Study Team will consist of Dr. Tony Land as research director, Volker Hauck as senior researcher, Julia Zinke and Anje Jooya-Kruiter as research assistants, led by Programme Coordinator, Heather Baser. Depending on the final choice of cases, it may be necessary to add another researcher or two. It is intended that the team also include a consultant from each of the case countries. The team's quality assurance will be managed by a senior person on ECDPM staff. The assignment will be divided into three phases:

Phase 1: Inception – Issue identification and Preparation: July-September 2006, concluding with draft Inception Report by 15 Sept., and Core Group meeting on 27 September in Maastricht;

Phase 2: Field data collection: October-November 2006, concluding with circulation of draft Country case reports,

Phase 3: Analysis and Synthesis: January 2007, concluding with draft Synthesis Report including the review of development partner practices circulated by 31 January, and Workshop in Maastricht by (mid-) February 2007; followed by completion of Final Evaluation Report by March 2007,

Phase 4: Dissemination in April-May 2007 followed by Evaluation Study Brief and Post-Mortem Note.

The total assignment is estimated to require 200 person-days of international ECDPM

consultants, and 120 persons-days of local/regional consultants, plus reimbursable expenditures of travel costs, accommodation, etc. for fieldwork, and workshop costs, as per approved budget. The members of the Core Group will cover their own costs of travelling, etc.

8. Documentation

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- Chauvet, L. and P. Collier. 2004. *Development effectiveness in fragile states: Spillovers and turnarounds*. Oxford: Centre for the Study of African Economies, Department of Economics, Oxford University.
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- OPM. 2003. *A vision for the future of technical assistance in the international development system*. Oxford: OPM.
- Tokyo Symposium on Capacity Development. 4–6 February 2004. Various case studies, such as the Zambia medical doctors' scheme; 'Brokering between antagonists' (Guatemala); on twinning; South-South cooperation; and others.
- UNDP. 2002. Special Issue: *Technical Cooperation. Development Policy Journal*, 2.

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) aims to improve international cooperation between Europe and countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Created in 1986 as an independent foundation, the **Centre's objectives** are:

- to enhance the capacity of public and private actors in ACP and other low-income countries; and
- to improve cooperation between development partners in Europe and the ACP Region.

The Centre focuses on **three** interconnected thematic programmes:

- Development Policy and International Relations
- Economic and Trade Cooperation
- Governance

The Centre collaborates with other organisations and has a network of contributors in the European and the ACP countries. Knowledge, insight and experience gained from process facilitation, dialogue, networking, infield research and consultations are widely shared with targeted ACP and EU audiences through international conferences, focussed briefing sessions, electronic media and key publications.

ECDPM Discussion Papers

The ECDPM Discussion Papers report on work in progress at the European Centre for Development Policy Management. They are circulated among practitioners, researchers and policy-makers who are invited to contribute to and comment on the Discussion Papers. Comments, suggestions, and requests for further copies should be sent to the address below. Opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily represent the views of ECDPM or its partners.

This study was commissioned to contribute to the current discussions on aid effectiveness and capacity development by learning about what works in relation to TA personnel, and to see what initiatives are being taken to improve practice. The report draws on a review of the wider literature and three country studies in Mozambique, Solomon Islands and Vietnam. These three represent different context in terms of donor and government engagement, stability situation, and (capacity) development levels. Key conclusions, recommendations and implications for donors and partner countries are provided on the three research areas of the study : TA demand, TA management and TA effectiveness.

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