

Three-Cs.net

info brief

An information brief on evaluating the coordination, complementarity and coherence in the European Union's development coordination policies and operations

Evaluation of the EU Institutions & Member States' Mechanisms for Promoting Policy Coherence for Development

It has long been known that the development of the countries of the South cannot just rely on the aid policies of the countries of the North but depends, **first and foremost**, on the developing countries themselves. There has however been little talk of the impact, albeit major, of the other public policies of the developed countries, involving much more substantial budgets than those channelled into aid, on the developing countries and the well-being of their peoples.

The origin of PCD

Because this is such a complex and sensitive issue, awareness of the need to promote policy coherence for development (PCD) was slow to come about and it was only from the beginning of the 1990s that it became a discreet but stated aim of the international community.

Policy coherence is included in the Millennium Development Goals adopted by United Nations in September 2000 as part of the new global partnership for development (goal 8) and the OECD DAC makes it into a new and clear-cut part of the "peer reviews" of its member countries' development policies.

An important step forward was however made by Europe with the Treaty of Maastricht, signed in 1992, which set coordination, complementarity and coherence, the "3Cs", as guiding principles for European development

policy, a competence shared between the Community and the Member States.

Ten years onwards, it seemed natural to take stock of the way in which the principles of coordination, complementarity and coherence had been implemented.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PCD IS STILL OF AN EXPERIMENTAL NATURE

For this reason, the Heads of Evaluation for External Cooperation of the EU Member States and the European Commission decided in 2004 to launch a series of six joint evaluations to study the way in which the 3Cs had

been translated into practice, and with what impact.

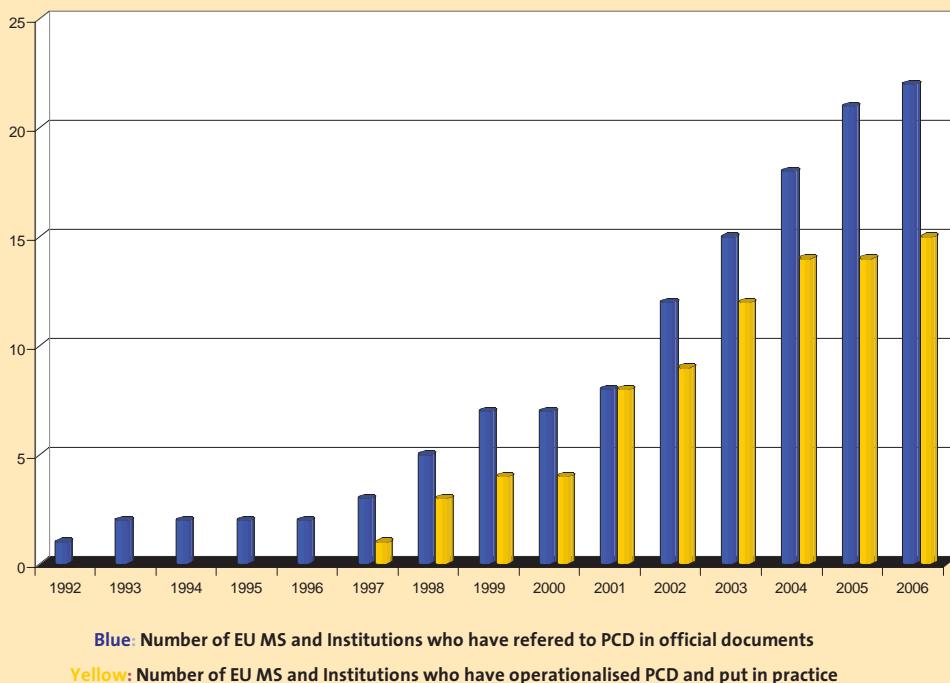
Evaluating efforts to promote coherence

This study reports on the evaluation of intra-governmental mechanisms promoting policy coherence for development in the EU Member States and Institutions. The study drew on the findings of a preparatory scoping study, completed in 2004, whose purpose was to provide an outline of the conceptual framework, identify the main mechanisms already in place throughout the EU and divide them into three main categories to prepare for further analysis:

1. mechanisms connected with general or specific policy commitments or decisions;
2. institutional and administrative mechanisms;
3. mechanisms connected with information, analysis and counselling capacity.

This study's analysis work drew on seven examples of mechanisms in one of these categories which are in use in five Member States (Germany, Spain, Finland, France and Sweden) and two European Institutions (European Commission and European Parliament). On the basis of a full review of the existing documentation, supplemented by interviews, the study endeavoured to evaluate the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of these mechanisms.

Progress made in establishing mechanisms



Main conclusions

The current study's first conclusion is that the implementation of mechanisms to promote PCD in the European Union is still of an experimental nature and that there is a need for strategic reflection and a long-term vision if tangible results are to be achieved.

The second conclusion concerns the difficulty of measuring how politically committed Member States and EU Institutions really are to PCD; the study confirms that this commitment is crucial if progress is to be made. The study notes in particular that some Member States tend to hide behind the Community competency for some policies, overlooking the fact that only an active national commitment is likely to bring about change at Community level.

The third conclusion is that PCD necessarily involves complex and difficult negotiations and interactions between a whole range of actors and stakeholders. It would be unrealistic not to accept that some gaps in coherence are unintentional, while other incoherencies respond to legitimate interests, in some cases shared by the aid donor and beneficiary countries. The complexity of this issue suggests that combining the three types of mechanisms in a systematic way is necessary to progress.

Sustaining a systemic approach

The systemic approach that is recommended by the study has so far proved inadequate and the evaluation stresses, moreover, that a strong and broad political will, supported over time, is needed to go beyond the present experimental stage and operationalise the original commitment of the Maastricht Treaty, as taken up in the context of the European consensus on development adopted by the Council in 2005, but that this is far from being the case.

Policy coherence for development is undoubtedly the most sensitive component of the '3Cs' and the most delicate one to translate into practice. The decision to produce a two-yearly report on progress with PCD in the Union from a questionnaire completed by each of the Member States and by the Commission - the first of which is scheduled for publication this October - is a step in the right direction.

It is to be hoped that this study helps to improve understanding of the importance of the interactions between the various policies affecting the developing countries and their impact, paves the way for thinking about the operational resources needed to strengthen policy coherence for development and ensures that this issue is included more systematically in the evaluation of our development strategies, policies, programmes and projects.

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This series of info briefs is published in English with an accompanying website (www.three-cs.net). Each issue focuses on a specific theme relating to the 3Cs initiative of the Heads of Evaluation for External Cooperation of the EU Member States and the European Commission.

The info brief 'Three-Cs.net' is available free of charge for policy makers, specialists and staff from the EU and developing countries.

To access it online, please visit www.three-cs.net

3Cs Initiative

This initiative was launched by the Heads of Evaluation of the EU Member States and the European Commission.

Comments, suggestions

Comments, suggestions and requests should be addressed to Niels Keijzer, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

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This initiative is facilitated by

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