



# OutcomeMapping

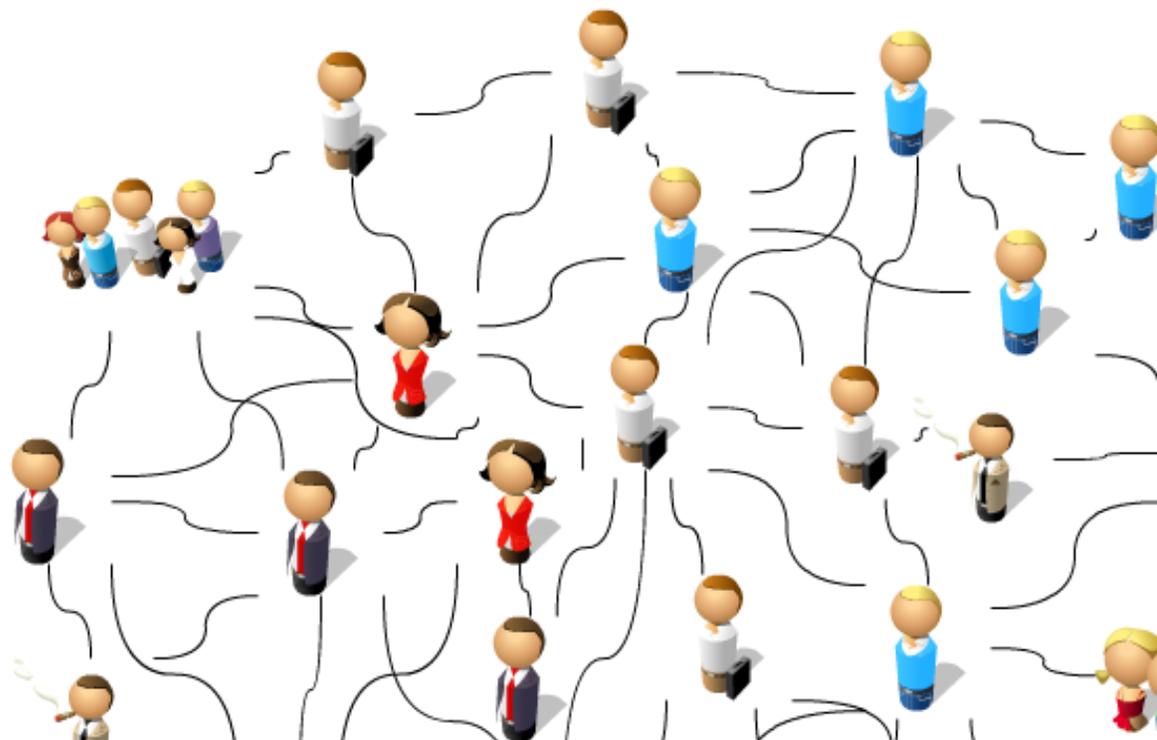
LEARNING COMMUNITY

## Policy Coherence for Development in Austria: building a policy advocacy evaluation tool

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## Disclaimer

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# 1 Executive Summary

Rich and poor countries are not linked by aid alone. Developing countries are often impacted negatively by policies on agriculture, trade, investment, security, migration, etc., effectively rolling back gains in poverty reduction. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) places aid within a broader cause-effect relationship. It aligns aid with non-aid policies with special regard to the repercussions of (in) coherent sector policies on the developing world.

The overall research objective of this small-scale study was to contribute to an evidence-based policy design through evaluation of and advocacy for PCD. The main question the study seeks to answer is: How can Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) assess efforts made by government towards greater PCD?

A more specific research aim was to develop an innovative, utilisation-oriented policy-advocacy evaluation tool for development and campaign NGOs. The Austrian development policy landscape serves as a case study and the tool is situated in this context.

Reviewing the emerging literature on PCD evaluation as well as some seminal papers from the related, but more established, field of Environmental Policy Integration, the following criteria for a PCD assessment tool are proposed:

## **Criteria for the PCD assessment tool developed in this study:**

- Utilisation oriented: The tool needs to be usable for NGOs without imposing significant extra costs, ideally it would be part of ongoing media-monitoring.
- Problematising tension between accountability and learning: We understand policy coherence as a process of learning across frames. At the same time the tool is meant to hold policy-makers to account.
- 'System constellations' approach: The tool needs to take an agentic perspective in order to account for different interests driving or hindering policy coherence. It needs to be systemic in its approach to account for less visible actors.
- Network perspective: Key actors and policy-makers are part of policy networks that are continuously renegotiated. The tool needs to identify some qualities of their relationships and the relative influence they have over the process.
- Observe policy learning manifested as behavior change: Learning alone is not enough, it needs to be manifested in changed behavior. The tool focuses on behavior changes that are easily observable.

To satisfy the criteria above an innovative mix of holistic methods comprising Outcome Mapping and Net Mapping, and a Social Network Analysis approach focusing on actor constellations, was used. The

main challenge was the relative obscurity of the PCD system, most of which is based on negotiations conducted behind closed doors.

During expert interviews the key policy-makers were mapped in relation to each other, to gauge their respective influence over the process. Drawing on a variety of stakeholders with an insider perspective, a list of progressively desirable, behaviour changes that will contribute to greater PCD were assigned to each key actor. These can be easily observed and thus enable NGOs to hold policy-makers accountable.

The final result is a simple checklist that NGOs can use to assess if their governments make progress towards greater PCD. With this, they are now in a position to enter into dialogue with government with evidence-based arguments, hopefully strengthening their position and, thus, contributing to a more coherent approach to development cooperation.

The actual application of the tool is beyond the scope of this paper. However, some observations on the status of PCD in Austria are offered at the end of the paper.

## 2 Introduction

Rich and poor countries are not linked by aid alone. Developing countries are often impacted negatively by policies on agriculture, trade, investment, security, migration, etc., effectively rolling back gains in poverty reduction. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) places aid within a broader cause-effect relationship. It aligns aid with non-aid policies with special regard to the repercussions of (in) coherent sector policies on the developing world. Picciotto (2004: 8) gives a straightforward definition of PCD: "the identification of trade-offs and synergies across policy domains towards achieving development objectives".

The overall research objective of this small-scale study was to contribute to an evidence-based policy design through evaluation of and advocacy for PCD. A more specific research aim was to develop an innovative, utilisation-oriented, policy-advocacy evaluation tool for development and campaign Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). The Austrian development, policy landscape serves as a case study and the tool is situated in this context.

The main question the study seeks to answer is: How can NGOs assess efforts made by government towards greater PCD? To this end, an innovative mix of holistic methods comprising Outcome Mapping and Net Mapping, and a Social Network Analysis approach focusing on actor constellations, was used. The final result is a simple checklist that NGOs can use to assess progress towards greater PCD made by different key actors.

### 2.1 Overview and purpose

The paper lays the methodological foundations for building an evaluation tool for NGOs to assess PCD in order to inform knowledge-based governance for sustainable development.

The paper firstly introduces the concept of PCD and argues its relevance. It then reviews the emerging debate on evaluating PCD (Picciotto, 2004; OECD, 2005; CEPS, 2006; ECDPM, 2005; ECDPM et al. 2006, 2007), identifying some gaps. In order to develop a set of criteria that the tool needs to fulfill, the paper draws on literature on Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) and theory-based evaluation. The criteria are then applied to choose a mix of methods – Outcome Mapping combined with social network analysis.

The paper is informed by an extensive literature review of predominantly cross-country studies of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission (EC) and different research institutes. It also builds on previous work where we developed policy recommendations for short-, mid- and long-term PCD measures to be undertaken by the Austrian Parliament (Hack and Schuster, 2008).

The study's results can be divided into three categories:

1. The central agents in Austria's PCD network that were identified by mapping the social network;

2. The observable behavior changes - corresponding to progress markers in Outcome Mapping terminology - they would have to affect to drive PCD forward;
3. The final product: the policy-advocacy evaluation tool presented in the form of a checklist.

The study did not aim to apply the tool. However, the paper concludes with some observations on the state of PCD and some challenges faced and lessons learned during the application of the mixed methodology.

The results were presented to Global Responsibility, the umbrella organization of Austrian Development NGOs and the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for their consideration and further action.

## **2.2 Policy Coherence for Development**

Policies other than aid have a strong impact on developing countries. If, for example, agricultural, trade and development policies are not aligned, serious implications for the food sovereignty of developing economies can follow, as evidenced by last year's food riots all over the world.

Aid can contribute positively to global development, but other sectors such as trade, migration, investment, agriculture, finance have a much greater impact on developing country economies, often reversing positive development outcomes. Moreover, common-pool resource problems such as climate change, food and water scarcity, deforestation, overfishing have gained sustained political weight over the last decade and it is widely acknowledged that they have a largely negative impact on the 'Bottom Billion' (Collier, 2007).

PCD looks beyond aid and aims to build synergies with other policies while minimising their negative effects on developing countries in order to achieve internationally agreed development objectives. The main drivers behind the PCD agenda are the EC and the OECD. They are encouraging their member states to actively promote and implement PCD.

The latest Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Summit, held in September 2010, emphasised that coherence with other agendas (e.g. sustainable development, financing for development) should be sought and that a holistic and comprehensive approach should be followed. PCD was also an important issue at the Second UN ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum, held in June 2010. There, the need to make PCD a higher priority on the political agenda was clearly identified. The last OECD PCD Focal Point Meeting underlined that 'PCD relies on a virtuous cycle: strong political commitment leads to increased focus on evidence-based PCD and evidence-based PCD is also critical to foster political support' (OECD, 2010).

Despite this consensus there is no Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework with high credibility and reliability conceptualised for PCD (EC, 2007). No ready tools are available and PCD evaluation remains largely unexplored territory. Even in countries such as Sweden where PCD is the concern of the 'whole of government' (Picciotto, 2004; OECD/DAC, 2006), assessment of actual coherence is limited to an annual report to parliament.

Establishing an assessment system of a country's coherence is proving difficult. This can be explained with the fact that PCD is inherently political and coherence outcomes are strongly determined by the political economy of the country. In addition, monitoring and evaluating the impact of (in) coherent policies on the prospects of developing countries proves methodologically challenging (Schuster, 2009).

Achieving greater policy coherence demands sustained efforts to improve the integration of sectoral policies across all government levels, and to ensure consistency in the choices made by the various stakeholders (OECD, 2002). NGOs play a key role in driving the debate forward by holding policy-makers accountable and to follow up on coherence concerns when governments change. They also need to take part in dialogue, working towards consensus by presenting evidence-based arguments.

### **3 Methodology: Assembling the tool**

The debate surrounding the evaluation of PCD is still young and consistent approaches are only just emerging (Schuster, 2009). If the literature on monitoring and evaluating PCD is still relatively poor when it comes to suggesting concrete assessment frameworks, it is rich in pointing out problems and challenges for the evaluation of PCD.

#### **3.1 Criteria for the PCD evaluation tool**

A survey of European PCD mechanisms conducted in 2007 found that there is a lack of clear goals as well as a lack of clarity in mandates (ECDPM et. al., 2007). Furthermore, there is no agreement on what would actually constitute impact of more coherent policies and how to measure it. There is no common view among stakeholders as to what impact was being sought and opinions on this issue varied widely among practitioners, ranging from changed policies in other sectors and improved reporting on PCD, to simply increased levels of awareness.

'In the absence of a clearly stated view of what type and level of impact it is realistic to seek to achieve, it will be hard to formulate clear result-oriented action plans and progress will continue to be hard to measure'(ECDPM et. al., 2007: 104).

At this point it might be opportune to briefly look across disciplines beyond the still young debate on monitoring and evaluating PCD and see what solutions have been proposed for similar problems. Environmental policy analysts have been wrestling with the problem of evaluating policy integration for well over a decade now. Hertin and Berkhout (2003) define Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) as a process of administrative change. Their seminal paper focuses on policy processes and outputs and stands for a shift from a segregated to an integrated model of environmental policy. They propose an evaluative framework for EPI based on four functions: sectoral agenda setting, horizontal communication, capacity building and policy learning. They also reconfirm the well-recognized attribution problem that the link between policy measures or processes and policy outcome is extremely difficult to establish.

At the same time Nilsson and Persson (2003) define EPI as learning. The mechanism of policy change is social learning in the wider sense as change in the worldviews, norms and values. Learning can be single-loop (within frames) or double-loop (across frames). This type of learning could in theory be measured by analysing discourses, rhetoric and debates. Their M&E framework emphasises policy networks, actor perspectives and the importance of institutions. Also they conclude that linking institutional variables to outcomes is likely to generate unstable theories (Scharpf, 1989).

Hertin and Berkhout's (2003) emphasis on process and a holistic demand to focus on integration is an important hint here. Nilsson and Persson's (2003) understanding of policy change as learning to be judged from an actor's perspective is important, too. While both papers contribute significantly to the PCD debate, they also find it challenging to firmly grasp policy outcomes.

A further challenge is constituted by the fact that the tool we developed in this study is meant to be used by civil society actors to assess advances in the debate on PCD and efforts to implement it. This means building a tool that is easy to use and low cost (additional labor costs), e.g. an easy-to-update checklist that extra-parliamentarian players with little resources can use on a regular basis to demonstrate evidence-based judgment. In other words, the tool needs to be utilisation-oriented.

The traditional role of CSOs is to hold government officials accountable. However, understanding policy coherence as a process of social learning that involves change in the worldviews, norms and values of policy-makers (Nilsson and Persson, 2003) and holding officials to account, surfaces yet another classic problem in evaluation – the tension between accountability and learning.

'Only evidence-based analysis of the benefits of policy coherence efforts will help development agencies make the case for policy changes within government, parliament and the electorate' (OECD, 2005: 145).

An adequate evaluative tool that is able to judge efforts towards PCD will have to live up to the following criteria: the tool needs to be utilisation oriented (Patton, 2008) and has to deal with the tension between accountability and learning. It also needs to emphasise the importance of a 'system constellations' approach and network analysis to understand the relationships between key players and their influence on the policy process. Finally, it needs to be able to observe learning manifested as behaviour change of policy-makers.

**Criteria for the PCD assessment tool developed in this study:**

- Utilisation oriented
- Problematize tension between accountability and learning
- System constellation approach
- Network perspective
- Observe policy learning manifested as behaviour change

In order to fulfil these criteria the assessment tool seeks to combine Social Network Analysis and Outcome Mapping. The tool can be used by NGOs to assess efforts made by key stakeholders towards PCD.

## 3.2 Outcome Mapping

In practice this means PCD assessment cannot focus on one government department alone, but needs to understand the formal and informal networks of officials that exercise influence over the policy process. Furthermore, policy change will come as a result of those officials learning from each other in the process of negotiating each other's priorities. However, learning alone is not enough, and there is a need to see this learning manifesting itself in behaviour change. Hence a focus on behaviour change which demonstrates learning over time is most opportune to evaluate progress made towards more PCD. A tool designed to do just that is Outcome Mapping (OM).

We assumed that the main audience of this study would be OM practitioners better versed in OM than we are and hence do not attempt to summarise the methodology here. For those wishing to read a quick introduction to OM, we would like to recommend a summary written by Terry Smutylo (2001), one of the authors of the approach ([http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26968-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26968-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)).

Before we could ascribe desirable behaviour changes to key actors exercising influence over the policy process, we first needed to identify them. For this end we used a simple social network analysis tool, Eva Schiffer's Net Map (2007).

## 3.3 Net Mapping

A recent addition to the toolkit of theory-based evaluations has been 'system constellations', a tool that comes out of systemic consultation practice. It starts from the assumption that wanting to gain a holistic understanding of a program, one needs to also consider the orientation and motivation of involved actors. 'System constellations' can be used as a heuristic tool to rapidly give insight into formal and informal networks of actors. Program actor constellations include actor perspectives that allow for a more agentive understanding of program theories and for more accurate statements about intended and unintended effects. The approach can be used as a basis for evaluation designs and as a creative research and communication tool (Galla et al., 2008).

Net mapping is a participatory approach to visualise networks and can be ascribed to participatory research methods. Initially, Net Mapping was popularised by Eva Schiffer (2009) but there are several similar approaches in use. A tool called Influence Network Mapping, developed by Douthwaite (2002) for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), also inspired this paper.

Net-Map is an interview-based mapping tool that helps people understand, visualise, discuss, and improve situations in which many different actors influence outcomes. By creating Influence Network Maps, individuals and groups can clarify their own observation of a situation, encourage discussion, and develop a strategic approach to their networking activities. More specifically, Net-Map helps players to determine: What actors are involved in a given network, How they are linked, How influential are they, What are their goals? (Schiffer, 2009).

A first step is to identify the actors that have most influence over the successful outcome of a project, program or process. Then linkages between the actors are established, e.g. flows of information, lines of command, flows of funding, etc. Visualising the network also helps to define levels of influence of the

various actors and factors that might enable or impede learning such as: access to information, commanding respect and authority to make truth-claims, willingness to learn (Douthwaite, 2002).

### **3.4 Expert Interviews**

PCD as a concept is abstract and hard to convey. The actual process of policy coherence is, if anything, even more obscure because it is deeply embedded in the day-to-day business conducted within bureaucratic structures of government ministries. As such it is observable only by participants within this process. Thus, a first step is to identify potential interview partners who could serve as resource personnel. Extensive informal consultation with colleagues and networking was essential to draft a list of potential expert interviewees.

We conducted seven semi-structured, open-ended interviews. We asked experts to identify the actors on the Net-Map – presented to them at the beginning of the interview – which they considered the most influential in bringing about a more effective implementation of PCD in Austria.

Rather than getting through the complete questionnaire we sought to have conversations with them that eventually yielded whom they thought were the powerful players, and how those players should change their behaviour to integrate development policy more effectively. The answers of these experts were parsed into meaningful categories weighing, both, how coherent their answers were with those of others and how their specific expertise qualified singular claims that were not necessarily backed up by information from other interviews.

## **4 Results of Austrian case study on PCD**

The results of our small-scale study can be divided into three parts: a) central actors in the PCD network identified by Austrian experts on the basis of a Net-Map, b) progress markers defined as desired changes of behaviour of central actors that manifest policy learning and finally c) the utilisation-oriented policy-advocacy evaluation tool to be applied by Austrian NGOs in the form of a checklist. In this checklist, seven key actors are shown and short-term, mid-term-, and long-term progress markers, that are readily observable, are allocated to them.

### **4.1 Central actors**

The actors that were identified most often by the experts with the help of the Net-Map were considered the most central to bringing about a more effective PCD implementation in Austria. Influence in this context is not necessarily the same as degree centrality within the network, i.e. the more connections a player has the more powerful they are. Players that are formally not identified as key agents or are external to the network of agents working on a directed policy outcome can nevertheless exercise influence over the policy process by stalling or diverting it.

In Austria such a player is the Ministry of Finance (MoF). It controls 77% of total Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds, particularly the contributions paid to the International Financial Institutions and for debt relief. While direct project related funds for NGOs working on development cooperation are

heavily scrutinised and subject to ex-ante sustainability impact assessments, the funds of the MoF are largely dispersed at the discretion of the ministry, with little public oversight or other in-built accountability structures. Social, economic, and environmental screening of projects, however, is a key dimension of PCD. If the player controlling the largest part of the funds is formally not part of the PCD system, connectedness is not sufficient to determine influence.

Thus, we also asked our interview partners about potential key agents that could influence PCD results, but are not shown in the Net-Map. As the Austrian PCD network is characterised by high fragmentation, a huge variety of instruments and mechanisms, a lack of a cross-governmental development strategy, a lack of information and transparency, a PCD-unfriendly working culture and limited political support, an innovative methodological approach had to be applied. The combination of Outcome Mapping, Net Mapping and expert interviews appeared to be very useful to identify central actors, power relations in the network's sphere of influence and important 'hidden' agents not officially entrusted with PCD.

## **4.2 Table: Central actors in Austria's PCD network**

This table shows the key actors of the Austrian PCD network as identified by the interview partners with the help of the Net-Map. 1 to 7 correspond to the interviews and a cross indicates that the interview partner mentioned the actor. As for the central agents, distinguishing between different units and departments was crucial for analysing the obscure network, identifying key agents and getting a better understanding of influential relationships between actors and their mandates.

The actors that were named most consistently and have the largest influence over the PCD process are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (7 in total) and the parliament (7 in total) followed by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group Coherence (4), the chancellery (4 in total), and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) (3). As regards the MFA several agentive units were named separately: the MFA as a whole (2), the minister as an individual actor (2), the Section VII (2) with the Sub-section VII/4 (1), which is tasked with the coordination of PCD related, activities. Concerning the parliament, the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Development Cooperation and other committees relevant for PCD were identified as most influential actors.

Actors	Actors by interview partners							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Parliament (all agents)</b>								7
Parliament		x		x	x	x	x	5
Sub-committee on Development Cooperation		x						1
Parliamentary Committees, relevant for PCD					x			1
<b>MFA (all agents)</b>								7
Minister of Foreign Affairs	x						x	2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)		x		x				2
Section VII (MFA)						x	x	2
Section VII/4 (MFA)						x		1
<b>Chancellery (all agents)</b>								4
Chancellor	x							1
Chancellor's Office				x		x	x	3
Inter-Ministerial Working Group Coherence	x				x	x	x	4
Ministry of Finance (MoF)		x	x	x				3
Ministers, relevant for PCD	x					x		2
Ministry for Economy, Family & Youth				x				1
Ministries, relevant for PCD	x							1
Cabinets (steering groups at head of ministries)	x							1

### 4.3 Progress markers – changes in the behaviour of key actors

The following changes in behaviour were considered desirable for the central actors identified above. Usually OM methodology requires differentiating Progress markers (PMs) into ‘expect - like - love to see’, each category reflecting progressively more contribution to change. While OM conceptualises PMs on a continuum of complexity, we added a time dimension to the categories building on the threefold division of increasingly desirable behaviour changes. This means to translate ‘expect - like - love’ into short-term, mid-term, long-term measures and, thus, introduce a time dimension to the categories. The short-term measures are the easiest to reach with already existing mechanisms and instruments, whereas more advocacy, knowledge, sensitisation efforts and sometimes even new mechanisms and instruments to reach mid-term and particularly far more political support are required to reach long-term measures.

The reasoning behind this departure from OM orthodoxy lies in the nature of PCD, which is an extraordinarily complex process of continuous and successive approximation to global development goals in terms of minimising trade-offs and maximising synergies. In a pluralistic democratic system PCD is negotiated between actors often following competing policy goals. Consensus seeking implies that full and consistent policy coherence is impossible. However, it is fundamental to agree on a minimum consensus and to strive for a ‘coherent enough approach’ that allows to progressively enhance global development (Schuster, 2009).

The PMs are grouped into changes that would be immediately possible (short-term / 1 year / expect to see), changes that would take some time to accomplish (mid-term / 1-2 years / like to see), and changes that would take longer to implement (long term / 2-5 years / love to see). This way of grouping the PMs also builds on previous work done where we developed policy recommendations for the Austrian Parliament. We offered parliamentarians various actions they could take to drive the debate, some of which could be taken right away and others that required more coordination (Hack and Schuster, 2008).

## Parliament

Agents: president of parliament, parliamentarians, Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Development Cooperation, parliament as a whole.

### Short-term

- Interested parliamentarians connect and develop a strategy on how to further PCD in their own parties and on how to act in parliamentary committees.
- The development speakers of the parties make PCD an issue of discussion in other relevant parliamentary committees (such as agriculture, economy, environment, European Affairs, internal affairs, science etc.)
- The development speakers of the parties make press releases and keep the public informed about PCD related activities.
- The Sub-Committee on Development Cooperation launches discussion in parliament on a whole of government approach to development and PCD.
- The Sub-committee on Development Cooperation invites Development NGO representatives and PCD experts to their committee meetings and to hearings.
- PCD is discussed more intensively in the Sub-committee on Development Cooperation.
- The president of the parliament mentions PCD more frequently in speeches and statements for the press.
- The president of parliament supports the efforts of NGOs trying to raise awareness of PCD among parliamentarians.
- The information and press centre of the parliament reports more frequently about PCD.

### Mid-term

- The parliament calls on MoF and MFA to screen its portfolio for development related impacts.
- The Sub-committee on Development Cooperation calls for a White Paper on Development Policy as a cross-governmental strategy paper with an extensive chapter on PCD.

### Long-term

- The parliament makes PCD an issue in the plenary sessions and no longer delegates it to the Sub-committee on Development Cooperation.
- The Sub-committee on Development Cooperation develops expertise on PCD.

## Chancellor's office

Agents included: chancellor, chancellor's office

### Short-term

- The chancellor demonstrates political backing for the MFA on PCD agendas.
- The chancellor's office takes on PCD in the framework of general policy coherence as part of its coordinating role.

### Mid-term

- The chancellor actively works to get support in parliament for PCD.

### Long-term

- The chancellor's office gives a mandate to the MFA to coordinate PCD across ministries and to develop adequate mechanisms and instruments in order to implement PCD.
- The chancellor creates a PCD unit/department, possibly within the MFA or the chancellor's office, for which additional human and financial resources are mobilised.
- The chancellor publicly demands a whole of government approach to development and PCD.
- The chancellor calls for a position on PCD in the next government programme.

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Agents included: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Section VII, Section VII/4, ministry as a whole.

### Short-term

- On the occasion of the second EC Progress Report on PCD the minister promotes PCD in the cabinet and in the council of ministers. The most efficient way could be by highlighting a severe incoherence of Austrian or European policies.
- The minister makes statements about PCD and mentions it in interviews about development and ODA.
- The minister puts PCD on the agenda in EU and international conferences, meetings and negotiations.
- The minister looks actively for partners in other ministries to support PCD.
- The speaker of the MFA mentions PCD and Austria's obligation to be more coherent, and actively discusses cases of incoherencies.
- The section VII prepares the IMWG by sending out documents to other ministries well in advance and requests other ministries to prepare a policy position for the meeting.
- The MFA encourages other ministries to send senior staff (head of departments) to participate in IMWG. In order to guarantee continuity of PCD work, the participants should preferably not alter.
- The MFA mandates the ÖFSE to carry out research on PCD taking aspects of political economy into account.
- The MFA cooperates with other organizations/institutions (i.e. OECD, EC, ECDPM, ODI, International Development Studies at the University of Vienna) in order to share knowledge, particularly regarding impact assessments.
- The MFA undertakes measures with MoF to harmonize the ODA budget.

- The section VII negotiates significantly more space for PCD in the coming Three-year Programme (2010-13).

#### Mid-term

- The minister demands a whole of government approach to development and PCD.
- The section VII works on follow up of IMWG meetings.
- The section VII provides information about the issues discussed and decisions made in the IMWG meetings to the demand side (parliament, development NGOs).
- The section VII calls for a biannual meeting of the IMWG.
- Within the IMWG new sub-working groups are being created and staff of section VII has an active voice safeguarding the interests of developing countries.
- Each sub-working group develops guiding principles that take development goals and PCD on board.
- Each ministry participating in the IMWG nominates a focal point for development policy and PCD.

#### Long-term

- The minister pushes for an adaptation of the Three-year-Programme to become a White Paper outlining a whole of government approach to development and PCD.
- The ministry actively engages in arbitration within the sub-working groups of the IMWG offering proposals for solutions and mediating when other sector strategies/policies are conflicting with development goals.
- The ministry takes the main responsibility for the elaboration of a White Paper but all PCD-relevant ministries are involved and give input in order to follow a whole of government approach.
- The ministry demands the inclusion of the establishment of an M&E system and of defining mandates and responsibilities for all actors in the White Paper.
- The section VII manages to get included in drawing up trade policy and other policies that can support or undermine development goals.

### **Ministry of Finance**

#### Short-term

- The MoF screens its portfolio for development impacts drawing on development and PCD experts.

#### Mid-term

- The MoF undertakes steps to harmonize ODA budget together with MFA.

#### Long-term

- The MoF allocates an adequate budget to the implementation of the White Paper, the establishment of an effective PCD system, and to the harmonisation of the ODA budget.

### **Non-governmental organizations, research institutes**

Agents included: Austrian Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid 'Global Responsibility', Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE)

#### Short-term

- Both agents raise the issue regularly in their meetings with the MFA.
- The platform makes press releases on PCD.
- The platform raises public awareness using illustrative and media-effective examples of incoherencies.
- The platform organizes events/seminars/workshops in order to increase awareness about PCD.
- The platform sets up a website on PCD.
- ÖFSE continues to conduct research on PCD and to develop its expertise further.

#### Mid-term

- The platform builds networks with international actors such as the EU Coherence Programme of the Evert Vermeer Foundation and Concord.

#### Long-term

- Development NGOs draw on their partners in developing countries to showcase incoherent policies, in cooperation with other European NGOs and research institutes.

### **4.4 Checklist to assess progress towards PCD in Austria**

The central objective of this study was to develop a simple utilisation-oriented policy-advocacy evaluation tool that civil-society actors can utilize to provide evidence-based judgment about advances in the debate on PCD and progress made with implementation mechanisms. In theory all of the PMs above are valid and potentially useful for a comprehensive assessment. In practice Austrian NGOs are just beginning to feel the funding crisis and are stretched as it is. Therefore a workable tool cannot command too much time and must be simple in its application.

The selection criteria for the checklist applied to the long list of PMs above are consistency and pragmatism. Firstly, choosing consistent PMs means choosing those that are most consistent with the original aim: observing behaviour that manifests policy learning. Secondly, a pragmatic selection means choosing workable PMs; those that are readily observable without too much investigation. Following these criteria, a number of PMs for seven key actors within the Austrian PCD system were identified and partly reformulated in the checklist.

## 4.5 The policy-advocacy evaluation tool in form of a checklist

Actor	Short-term	Mid-term	Long-term
Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development speakers of the parties make PCD an issue of discussion in other relevant parliamentary committees.</li> <li>• The Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Development Cooperation launches discussion in parliament on a whole-of-government approach.</li> <li>• Interested parliamentarians connect and develop a strategy on how to further PCD in their own parties.</li> <li>• The president of parliament supports awareness raising efforts of NGOs among parliamentarians.</li> <li>• The parliamentary press centre reports more frequently about PCD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sub-committee on Development Cooperation calls for a White Paper on Development Policy as a cross-governmental strategy paper with an extensive chapter on PCD.</li> <li>• The parliament calls on MoF and MFA to screen its portfolio for development related impacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parliament makes PCD an issue in the plenary sessions and no longer delegates it to the Sub-committee on Development Cooperation.</li> <li>• The Sub-committee on Development Cooperation develops expertise on PCD.</li> </ul>
Chancellor's office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chancellor demonstrates political backing for the MFA on PCD agendas.</li> <li>• The chancellor's office takes on PCD in the framework of general policy coherence as part of its coordinating role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chancellor actively works to get support in parliament for PCD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chancellor creates a PCD unit/department and mobilises additional financial and human resources.</li> <li>• The chancellor publicly demands a whole-of-government approach to development and PCD.</li> </ul>
Minister of Foreign Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minister promotes PCD in the cabinet and in the council of ministers by highlighting cases of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minister demands a whole-of-government approach to development and PCD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minister pushes for an adaptation of the Three-year Programme to become a White</li> </ul>

	<p>incoherence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minister makes statements about PCD and mentions it in interviews.</li> <li>• The minister puts PCD on the agenda in EU and international conferences, meetings and negotiations.</li> </ul>		<p>Paper outlining a whole-of-government approach to development and PCD.</p>
<p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MFA encourages other ministries to send senior staff to participate in IMWG and to maintain continuity.</li> <li>• The MFA mandates the ÖFSE to carry out research on PCD taking political economy aspects into account.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MFA publicly supports the whole-of-government approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MFA takes lead elaborating a White Paper and involves all PCD-relevant ministries.</li> <li>• The MFA actively engages in arbitration within the sub-working groups of the IMWG offering proposals for solutions and mediating when other policies are conflicting with development goals.</li> <li>• The MFA supports the inclusion of the establishment of an M&amp;E system and of defining mandates and responsibilities for all actors in White Paper.</li> </ul>
<p>Section VII in MFA (PCD coordination)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Section VII negotiates significantly more space for PCD in the coming Three-year Programme (2010-13).</li> <li>• The Section VII prepares the IMWG by sending out documents to other ministries well in advance and demands from other ministries that they prepare a policy position for the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Section VII works on follow up of IMWG meetings and provides information about decisions made to the demand side.</li> <li>• The Section VII calls for a biannual meeting of the IMWG.</li> <li>• Each ministry participating in the IMWG nominates a PCD focal point.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Section VII gets included in drawing up trade policy and other policies that can support or undermine development goals.</li> </ul>

	meetings.		
Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MoF screens its portfolio for development impacts drawing on development and PCD experts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MoF undertakes steps to harmonize ODA budget together with MFA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MoF allocates an adequate budget to the implementation of the White Paper, the establishment of an effective PCD system, and to the harmonisation of the ODA budget.</li> </ul>
NGOs, research institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both agents mention PCD regularly in meetings with MFA.</li> <li>The Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid raises public awareness using illustrative and media-effective examples of incoherencies.</li> <li>The ÖFSE continues to conduct research on PCD and to develop its expertise further.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid builds networks with international actors such as the EU Coherence Programme and Concord.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development NGOs draw on their partners in developing countries to showcase incoherent policies, in cooperation with other European NGOs.</li> </ul>

## **5 Conclusions: Political constraints and methodological challenges**

This study aimed to be innovative in its approach, combining OM with other tools and as such it was a methodological experiment to a certain extent. Reflecting on the process we offer some thoughts about challenges we encountered and some lessons learned. There are two short parts to this section. The first one deals with political constraints to PCD implementation. It is specific to the Austrian experience. The second part is more generic in outlook and revisits some practical issues we encountered while using network mapping and OM techniques for policy analysis.

### **5.1 Lack of information and transparency**

One of the greatest challenges in carrying out research on policy coherence is the lack of information and transparency on policy coherence concerns. Most of the information is either not reported or not publicly available. There is no focal point or unit that collects all relevant reports or work done on PCD. Information on the intra-governmental mechanisms and organs was especially difficult to receive. Thus, networking and several informal talks were crucial for identifying all relevant stakeholders as presented in the net map and all mechanisms in place, whether working effectively or ineffectively. As a result, the semi-structured interviews with key resource personnel and policy-makers were important to gather new information on the roles, responsibilities and influence of the actors and to inquire about the effectiveness and relevance of the mechanisms. The previously conducted research on how the Austrian parliament could promote policy coherence contributed to a large extent to the preparation of this research. Although the last published OECD/DAC (2009a) Peer Review was very valuable, the role of certain actors such as the Platform Economy and Development, the Development Bank, the Committee “Sustainable Austria” etc. was not analyzed by the DAC and could be further investigated. In the interviews we focused on the most influential actors holding the mandate or being powerful enough to transform into drivers of change for PCD.

The interview partners recognized the need for further research and welcomed our study as well as another ongoing PCD study by the Austrian Research Foundation for International Development (ÖFSE). However, the DAC came to the conclusion, that ‘[...] Austria has no dedicated government unit which could conduct and commission research, analysis and reporting on policy coherence for development’ (OECD/DAC, 2009a: 34).

### **5.2 Working culture and political support**

Whereas the political commitment to development and PCD is manifested in the Austrian Constitution and in the Three-Year-Programme, political support within the government and within the MFA is low. Officials of Section VII do not make very high demands or promote development concerns persistently within and outside their ministry. They prefer to follow the line of the ministry and somehow demonstrate obedience towards the higher authority. This was also one of the major findings of the last DAC Peer Review:

‘However, unlike other DAC member countries with a similar tradition of charity, Austrian solidarity does not translate into political support for development assistance. Aid is a minor political issue and political support of aid is not deep-rooted. Moreover, there is limited debate on development in parliament,’ (OECD/DAC 2009a: 2).

Contrary to Sweden, as one of the interview partners stated, Austria would only change something if 23 countries out of 27 performed better than Austria. Sweden, on the other hand, acknowledged its implementation weaknesses due to the lack of co-ordination mechanisms and an independent monitoring and reporting system (OECD/DAC, 2009b). In order to gain more political support and to transform the positive public opinion toward development cooperation (77%) into social capital, the DAC Chair suggested to Austrian representatives to discuss the recommendations of the OECD/DAC Peer Review in public and to implement them. Otherwise Austria will lose international access (Globale Verantwortung, 2009).

### **5.3 Weak oversight role of the demand side (parliament, development NGOs)**

Most of the interview partners emphasised that parliament should become more demanding with regard to global development issues and take its oversight role more seriously. Key problems related are the lack of a standing committee on development policy and the very limited authority of the Sub-committee on Development Cooperation. The sub-committee meets only twice a year and policy coherence concerns is only a minor topic and not actively discussed.

Regarding the Austrian Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid ‘Global Responsibility’, the question should be raised how it can strengthen its oversight and monitoring role, given the fact that it depends on funding from the Austrian Development Agency. In general, the NGO landscape is under resourced and fragmented. Thus, the potential of the platform or development NGOs to influence policymaking is limited to a certain extent.

### **5.4 Lack of cross-governmental development strategy and unanimity principle**

Another main finding of the DAC that was also confirmed by interview partners, is the lack of a whole-of-government approach. There is no cross-sectoral government strategy linking the development actions of eight ministries or a so-called White Paper (OECD/DAC 2009a). One of the interview partners mentioned that the Three-Year-Programme does not represent a cross-sectoral strategy, even though some officials regard it as such. It is more a listing of development actions of different institutional actors. Moreover, there is no effective Monitoring and Evaluation System for PCD.

Moreover, Austria is characterised by a highly fragmented aid structure and ODA budget. Despite the mandate of the MFA to implement the Development Co-operation Act, the MFA controls only over 10% of the total ODA budget in 2007 (3.4% for multilateral aid, 7% for the ADA budget). Conversely, the MoF manages 77% (for international financial institutions and debt relief). The Ministry of Science and Research has also a share of 5% (mainly for students costs) (OECD/DAC 2009a).

With regard to policy integration, no governmental unit/department is entrusted with arbitration in case of policy incoherencies and conflicts of interests of different ministries and other actors. The MFA is only mandated to co-ordinate internal coherence in development policies, but it does not hold designated leadership. Even the Chancellor, owing to the unanimity principle, cannot take an arbitrary decision; he/she can only try to resolve ministerial differences and negotiate a compromise. As a consequence, the level of PCD is determined by the willingness of the respective ministries (OECD/DAC 2009a).

The lack of human resources and capacities within MoFA Section VII is another critical concern highlighted by interview partners and the DAC Chair (Globale Verantwortung, 2009). But as the budgetary framework does not foresee additional financial means until 2013, the request for more resources and capacity building will not be addressed in the near future (Globale Verantwortung, 2009).

To improve the implementation of PCD in Austria the latest OECD/DAC Peer Review (2009) recommends the following measures:

- Apply a more systematic and strategic approach in order to increase political and public awareness on the impact of policy incoherence.
- Increase political commitment by publishing time-bound and prioritised action agendas.
- Establish and resourcing a focal point and building a system for analysis, monitoring and reporting.
- NGOs in the North and the South, academia and think tanks should be tasked with research on policy analysis and monitoring activities.

In order to increase effectiveness, the provision of financial and human resources with the aim of increasing analytical capacity should be among the first steps to promote PCD in Austria. Secondly, the newly engaged highly qualified staff should synthesize the outcomes of the meetings of the different governmental, non-governmental, formal and informal instruments and mechanisms. Thirdly, the mechanisms should be aligned – where reasonable and practical – for the sake of policy integration and a more effective PCD management. Finally, the Austrian Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid ‘Global Responsibility’ should develop a strategy to hold the government accountable on PCD commitments, which are manifested at the highest possible level, namely in the Federal Act on Development Cooperation.

Noteworthy, the Section VII of the MFA fully acknowledges that more progress to address PCD concerns is required. Very positive is also the attitude of government officials towards NGO cooperation with respect to PCD.

## **5.5 Methodological challenges**

This study tried to be innovative in its approach, combining OM with other tools and as such it was a methodological experiment to some extent. Reflecting on the process we offer some thoughts about challenges we encountered and maybe some lessons learned. This section revisits some practical issues we encountered while using network mapping techniques and OM techniques for policy analysis.

Net mapping and actor constellations are time consuming exercises. Identifying key players, placing them on a map, indicating their linkages and levels of influence over a policy process, and identifying

desirable behaviour changes requires considerable time. On the other hand, getting busy policy-makers to take time out of their schedule to sit down for an hour and discuss about quite obscure relations in the PCD system is already hard enough. We therefore had to reduce the Net mapping and OM process to a manageable size. This meant for example, preparing a ready map in advance and simply register add-ons or changes to the map, instead of starting from scratch each time.

Coming into the discussion with a ready-made map, however, brings up other problems. Often the network map is then understood as an organizational chart, and interviewees will imply hierarchies and vertical info-flows that were not intended, but can then frame the discussion. Therefore it is important to explain the map and the connections between the actors well before the interview starts.

We also had to sacrifice some detail in the mapping process. Time constraints did not allow for teasing out many details about actor's linkages, info flows, or motivations. The skill there was to press the individual interviewees in their area of expertise. For instance, if a certain resource person was particularly knowledgeable about a certain ministry, we would try to direct the conversation there, instead of asking all interviewees about all stakeholders.

Another challenge comes with the type of resource person one ends up interviewing when doing policy analysis. For example two of our interviewees were staff of the MFA and as such part of the diplomatic corps. They were averse to being quoted or even having their names connected to anything concrete in writing, as they cannot be seen to be speaking on behalf of the ministry. This is also true for other administration officials in other ministries and has an impact on how tightly one can define stakeholder groups. While it may be desirable to name specific individuals of the administration in the checklist, this is practically not possible and in several cases we ended up with institutions as stakeholders.

A final challenge pertains to the mapping of policy networks; perceived influence is not necessarily a function of connectedness or degree centrality. Many actors are considered powerful although (or because) they are external to the policy process in question. In other words, they would need to be included in the process for it to move on. Looking at a mapped out policy network, the impulse would be to consider the players with the most connections the most influential. And this is simply not always the case.

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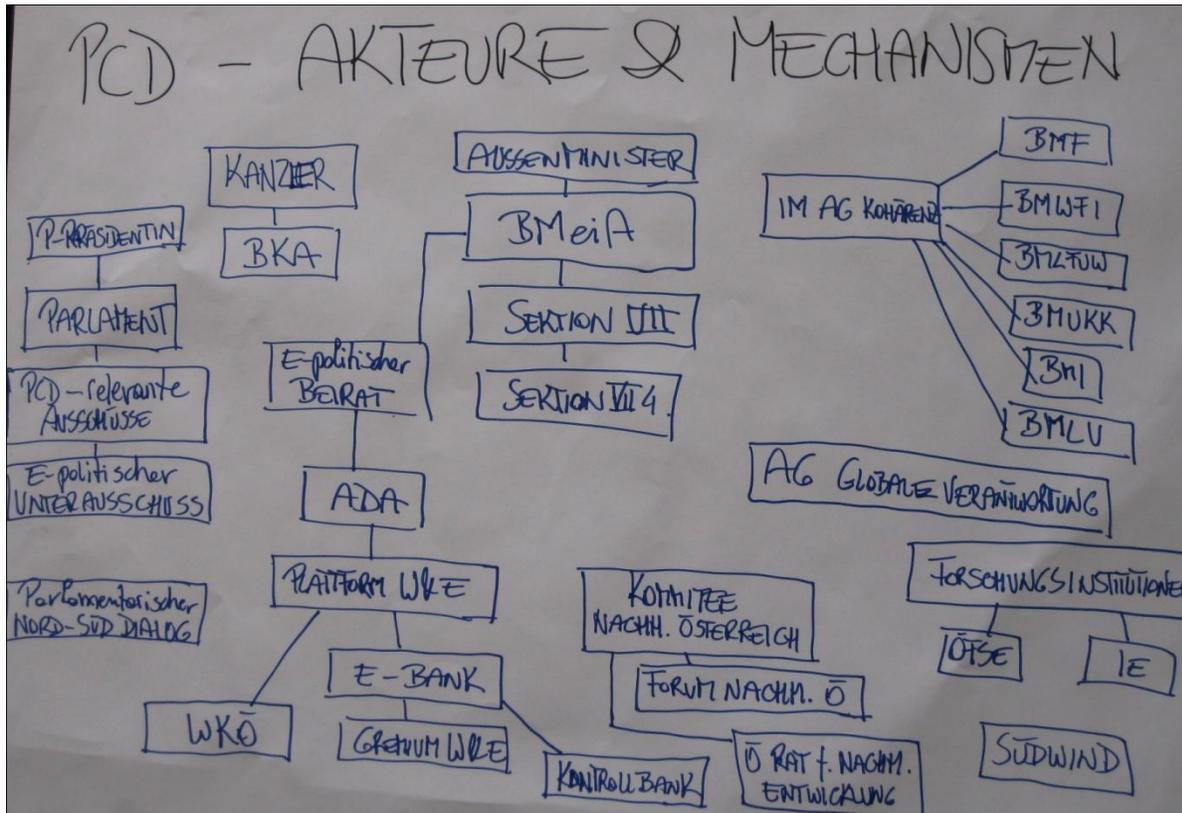
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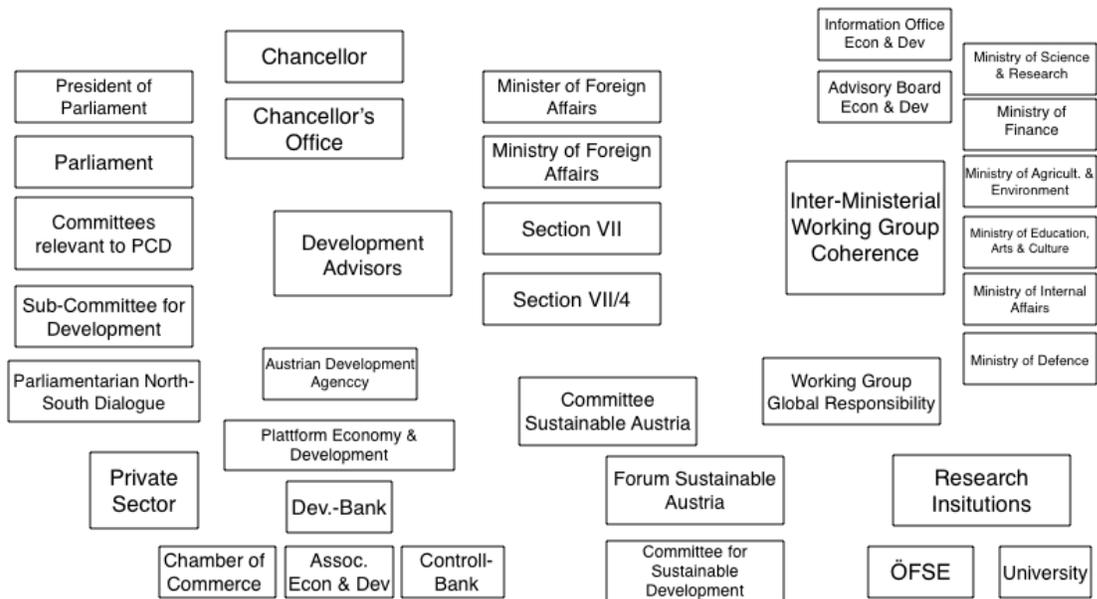
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## 7 Annex 1: Netmaps: Brainstorm and final product



### PCD Actors & Mechanisms



## 8 Annex 2: Expert interviews (translated from German)

1. We have tried to graph the system of PCD stakeholder and co-ordination mechanisms in this Net Map. In your opinion, does it reflect reality? Do you miss actors or mechanisms?

2. Who are the central actors being able to further effective PCD implementation?

Effective PCD implementation can be described as mandating a government unit with the co-ordination and decision-making being able to resolve ministerial differences and negotiate a compromise.

3. What kind of means and decision-making authority are these actors equipped with?

3.1. Who has the central co-ordination function according to you?

3.2. Who mandates co-ordination and implementation of PCD?

4. You identified the following key actors within the PCD system. How should they change their behaviour in order to facilitate an effective PCD implementation?

1)

2)

3)

4)

etc.

If the interview partner did not come up with ideas, we asked about the measures in the Catalogue below.

## Catalogue of measures

### **Whole of government approach/White paper**

The OECD recommends a whole-of-government strategy mandating all PCD- relevant ministries to take coherence concerns in their policy-making into account in order to achieve national and global development goals.

### **PCD report submitted to parliament**

What should 1), 2), etc. (identified actors) change in their behaviour so that an annual cross-governmental report to parliament becomes reality?

### **PCD unit/department, more personal and financial resources**

What should 1), 2), etc. change in their behaviour so that

- a PCD unit is institutionalised?
- more personal and financial resources are allocated?

### **Time-bound action plan with clear priorities, communication and network strategy, research/feasibility study on PCD**

What should 1), 2), etc. change in their behaviour so that

- an action plan becomes reality?
- a feasibility study on PCD becomes reality?

### **M&E system**

What should 1), 2), etc. change in their behaviour so that

- an effective PCD M&E system is institutionalised?
- an effective and transparent assessment of legislative bills' impact is provided (PCD passage in legislative proposals)?

### **Dialogue with NGOs, transparency, website, voices from the South**

What should 1, 2), etc. change in their behaviour so that

- development NGOs and civil society have access to information/relevant protocols and documents on PCD?
- NGOs and civil society in the South is informed about PCD and the impact/costs of incoherent policies?