CONCLUSIONS: WHERE NEXT IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION?

INTRODUCTION

The third aid-for-trade monitoring exercise has generated a vast amount of unique information from a wide range of sources about what works in aid for trade, what does not work and where improvements are needed. The bulk of this information has been generated through 269 case stories and 140 self-assessments submitted by partner countries, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, providers of South-South cooperation and regional economic communities. Together with the aid-for-trade data extracted from the OECD/DAC CRS aid activities database and findings from evaluations and econometric studies, these assessments provide a mostly positive picture of the results of the Aid-for-Trade Initiative. In particular, the analysis shows that:

- Aid for trade remains a priority for many partner countries and donors who are connecting their trade-related strategies to the broader development agenda. In general, partner countries focus more on short-term objectives, such as export expansion and diversification, while donors expect aid for trade to foster economic growth and contribute to poverty reduction. Changes in objectives and priorities are mainly driven by national factors.
- Despite the impact of the economic crisis, aid-for-trade flows continued to grow in 2009 reaching approximately USD 40 billion; an increase of 60% in real terms since the 2002-2005 baseline period. Growth rates are likely to diminish, but the outlook remains stable. Increasingly, aid is tackling binding trade-related constraints in economic infrastructure and private-sector development in low-income countries, while the richer developing countries receive low concessional financing for programmes and projects in these areas.
- The delivery of aid for trade is guided by the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the trends are positive, with partner countries demonstrating a greater sense of ownership and donors harmonising their procedures and aligning their support. However, both note that more remains to be done.
- The case stories clearly demonstrate that aid for trade is becoming central to development strategies and that substantial initiatives are taking root across a wide spectrum of developing countries. Furthermore, these programmes and projects result in improved trade capacity which is bettering the lives of many men and women in developing countries.
- The essential conditions for successful aid-for-trade programmes are: ownership at the highest political level built upon the active engagement of all stakeholders; adequate and reliable funding; leveraging partnerships (including with providers of South–South cooperation); and combining public and private investment with technical assistance. Furthermore, complementary policies - especially stable fiscal and monetary policies - and flexible labour market policies, together with good governance, can greatly enhance the chances of success.

Despite the overall positive assessment of the results of aid for trade, partner countries and donors suggest that more remains to be done. For instance, the self-assessments and case stories show that putting aid effectiveness principles into practice requires continued attention and efforts (Chapter 3). This applies especially to the need to strengthen the dialogue between partner countries and donor agencies. The dialogue also needs to be expanded to include more regular discussions with the private sector and civil society organisations so as to generate broader support for the trade reform process. Discussions about the role of complementary policies to improve the success rate of these reforms and of aid-for-trade programmes are also called for (Chapter 4). However, most stakeholders note that the challenges in delivering aid for trade more effectively are not unique to this Initiative, but are, in fact, part and parcel of the broader aid effectiveness agenda. A conclusion which is supported by the emerging results from the forthcoming independent evaluation of the Paris Declaration.

Another area for further work concerns strengthening local capacities to monitor aid-for-trade flows (Chapter 2). Although progress is being made through various local aid management platforms, much remains to be done to expand the coverage both among countries and within countries. Furthermore, more clarity is needed about the purpose of monitoring global aid-for-trade flows to assess additionality and predictability and locally tracking concessional financing for implementing national development strategies (including aid for trade). Again, this is an area where the Initiative would benefit from general progress on transparency and accountability, which are both central to the aid effectiveness agenda.

The most pressing question in aid for trade is how to show results. This is particularly urgent in light of the significant additional resources that have been directed toward trade-related activities in recent years (see Chapter 2). More and more donors are putting in place general management frameworks to ensure that their efforts achieve the desired objectives and targets. However, implementing a genuine performance culture in aid for trade is difficult. For most DAC donors, attributing trade outcomes and impacts to aid-for-trade programmes and projects presents the biggest challenge, while providers of South-South cooperation highlight the complexity of setting quantifiable objectives and developing reliable performance indicators.

In a less favourable environment for continued growth of development assistance, taking steps to better measuring results at the outcome level is essential for showing that progress is being made towards the short- and long-term goals of the Aid-for-Trade Initiative. Consequently, the way forward in monitoring and evaluating aid for trade is a sustained focus on showing that aid-for-trade programmes and projects provide worthwhile contributions to sustainable economic growth and development. Better assessing the outcomes and impacts of aid for trade will help to justify continued support to the Initiative.

This chapter discusses the way forward in showing aid-for-trade results. It is structured as follows: The next section looks for evidence in past evaluations that are closely related to the aid-for-trade objectives. This is followed by a section discussing the challenges stakeholders identified in showing aid-for-trade related results. The final section suggests three mutually supportive approaches for the way forward in showing results:

- Country-based work to select a menu of performance indicators which partner countries and donors can use to measure progress towards country-owned trade capacity building targets.
- Laying the foundation for more robust evaluations of trade-related projects.
- Deepening the analysis of the case stories and disseminating good practices through a community of practitioners.

LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE

The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action commit development partners to manage and implement aid in a way that focuses on development outcomes and impacts (rather than on process), and to use performance information to improve decision-making. While getting the process right is important, best practice in process does not guarantee tangible and meaningful results on the ground. Increasingly the development community is focussing on accountability for the use of development resources. Accountability is widely considered as an effective way to establish incentives that can help to strengthen country ownership and achieve results. This growing attention to development results has made "managing for results" a central focus for the entire aid-effectiveness agenda. Managing for development results (MfDR) provides a performance-based management framework for achieving developments goals. It puts the emphasis on reviewing progress towards results, modifying implementation if required, and learning from others.

Despite this momentum and apparently widespread acceptance, introducing a genuine performance culture that is based on results remains challenging, not only for partner-country governments, but also for donor agencies. Many case stories also highlight the difficulties faced by partner countries and donors alike in undertaking monitoring and evaluation. The 2008 Monitoring Survey of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration indicates that the number of countries establishing sound results-based monitoring frameworks has grown, but the pace of progress is still too slow.[1] In addition, there is a need to raise awareness even more about the importance of monitoring results.

Few quantitative results in the case stories…

The case stories were characterised by a relative absence of quantitative benchmark indicators of performance in either the number of outputs or in outcomes measured against baselines (see Chapter 5). This lack of quantitative benchmarks and indicators reflects the reality on the ground. Among those particularly deficient were programmes at the global level, projects that emphasised narrow technical assistance and training, and those aimed at improving policy. Nearly half of the case stories did contain some quantitative indicators on outputs. That is, a capacity building project might indicate the number of people that were trained, or a project on compliancy with product standard might enumerate the products covered. Still, drawing a causal link from these kinds of interventions to trade, economic growth, poverty reduction, gender or environment is problematic. Far fewer of the case stories in the building productive capacity and improving the trade policy environment claimed that the activity produced specific quantitative outcomes attributable to that activity.

The link between investments in capacity building, on the one hand, and results in trade performance, reductions in poverty and gender inequality, on the other, appears intrinsically complex. These difficulties are particularly acute when trying to link projects that purport to enhance inter-ministerial coordination or donor coordination to improved trade performance. Even though they may ultimately be important, it is rarely possible for this type of aid for trade to trace direct results to productive outcomes. Similarly, global programmes may well lead to new insights that motivate policy makers and private actors, and these may in turn lead to new policies, greater trade, rising incomes, improved gender equality and a better environment. The case stories generally refrain from making these kinds of sweeping claims. That said, developing a more quantitative and less impressionistic results framework – based on greater investments in gathering baseline data – is a necessary objective.

…or in past evaluations...

Evaluation provides tools to look beyond the implementation process (*i.e.* whether activities were implemented in a timely manner and outputs were obtained) to cover the extent to which activities and outputs contribute to reaching the desired outcomes and impacts (including relevance, attribution, cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and unintended results). It provides means for learning about why and how those results were achieved. It also serves to validate the findings of progress monitoring and self-assessment reports, enabling project/programme managers to make timely changes to improve performance if things are off track.

A recent meta-evaluation[2] of 162 trade-related evaluations provides an overview of and a perspective on the way DAC donors and international agencies have implemented aid-for-trade programmes and projects, and conducted evaluations in terms of both the methods applied and topics covered (OECD, 2011). The meta-evaluation demonstrates that evaluations of aid-for-trade programmes and projects have usually not had much to say about trade. Not only was the trade impact of programmes and projects clearly not the main focus of evaluations, but in a number of cases it was not even addressed. Moreover, the evaluations usually did not clarify the policy linkages which matter most to the aid-for-trade community. For example, potential positive or negative impacts of trade reforms or the stance of complementary policies on programmes and projects were not assessed or examined. Nor was there any evaluation of potential linkages with behind-the-border measures such as regulatory reforms or private sector policies.

In contrast to the near absence of trade-related issues, the reviewed evaluations referred extensively to broad, development-related concepts such as gender or poverty reduction, but without clearly defining these concepts. Moreover, evaluations have often lacked an adequate or a realistic timeframe for measuring results, rarely distinguishing between what is achievable in the short and longer terms. Consequently, their conclusions give little insight into whether aid for trade works or why. These findings, however, need to be put into perspective. The failure of evaluations to refer to specific trade results can be explained, at least in part, by the absence of trade-related objectives in the initial mandate of programmes and projects being evaluated.

Table 1 Aid-for-trade evaluations

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*	2015*
AfDF	○	■	○	○		
Australia	○	■	■	○		
Austria		○		○		
Canada		○	○	○		
Chinese Taipei		■				
FAO				■		
Finland	○	■	○	○		
France			✱			
IADB				■		
IsDB	■	■	■	■		
ITC	○	○	○	○		
Japan	■	○	■	○		
Korea		○	✱			
Netherlands		○				
Norway		✱				
UNCTAD			■			
UNIDO	○	○	○	○		
UNECE	○	○	○	○		
Singapore	○	■	■	■		
United Kingdom			○	○		
South-South partners						
Brazil		○	○	○	○	○
Ecuador				○		
India				○		
Indonesia					○	
Mexico			○			

*Notes: */ Years only applicable to South-South partners;*
○/ Programmes and projects; ✱/ Overall strategy; ■/ Both

…but more evaluation are planned.

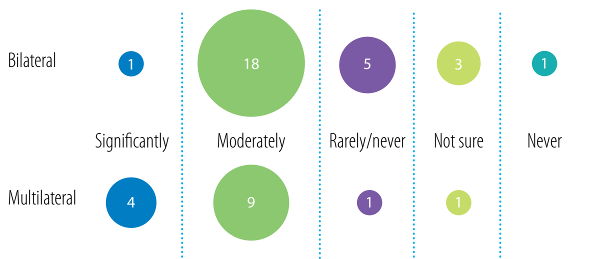
Many donors have evaluated their aid-for-trade programmes and projects, but only few their strategies, partly because not all of them have aid-for-trade strategies. Among the ten South-South development partners, only three (Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico) have evaluated their trade-related cooperation programmes. Indonesia reports that it is still in the process of improving its monitoring mechanism. Planned aid-for-trade evaluations over the coming years by donors and providers of South-South cooperation are presented in table 1.

Multilateral agencies appear to be more systematic with respect to evaluation, although some bilateral donors also evaluate annually their aid-for-trade interventions. Smaller aid-for-trade donors in volume terms, such as Norway and New Zealand, channel significant shares of their funds through multilateral agencies (Chapter 2). Thus, they rely more heavily on the monitoring frameworks of these agencies.

STAKEHOLDER'S ASSESSMENTS

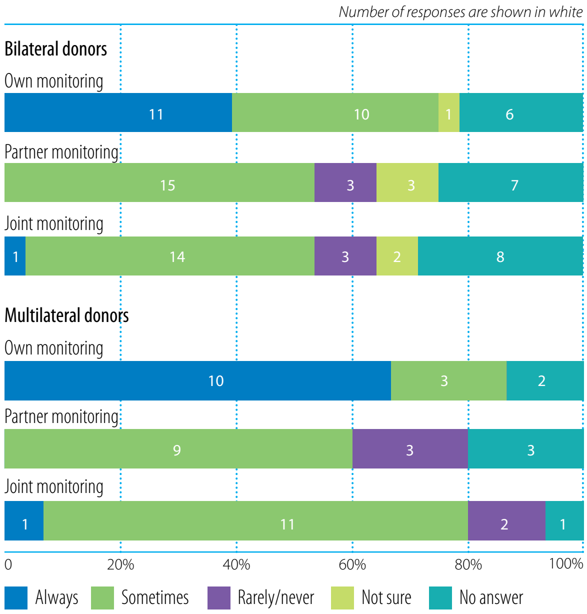
According to the 2011 survey, progress has been made in the monitoring and evaluation of aid for trade both by donors and partner countries since 2008.[3] For almost two-thirds of the donors, these improvements have been moderate, although five (Finland, AfDB, UNECA, UNECE and IADB) report a significant improvement (Figure 1). Most of the reported improvements are associated with their own monitoring systems, while those of partner countries are not always used and joint arrangements are only used sometimes (Figure 2). Finland, for example, uses local monitoring processes in some partner countries (*e.g.* the private sector programme in Zambia), conducts joint monitoring for sector-wide programmes or other joint programmes, and employs its own system to monitor and evaluate its bilateral activities. Denmark too reports using partner countries' systems to the extent possible (though significant weaknesses are noted), joint monitoring for joint initiatives, and own monitoring for a number of distinct bilateral activities.

Figure 1 Moderate improvements in monitoring and evaluation compared to 2008



Source: OECD/WTO questionnaire (2011) *Number of responses are shown in white*

Figure 2 Most donors are conducting joint monitoring



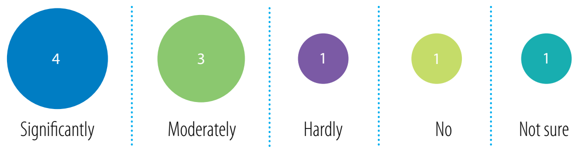
Source: OECD/WTO questionnaire (2011)

Evaluations are improving, but…

Over half of the partner countries report an improvement in monitoring and evaluation. Governments are scaling up their efforts to regularly monitor and review the implementation of aid-for-trade programmes and projects (*e.g.* Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Lebanon, Tuvalu), or have established/strenghtened institutional mechanisms to improve monitoring (*e.g.* Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Sierra Leone, St. Vincent and Grenadines). In some cases, countries have developed databases and published monitoring reports (*e.g.* Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Tonga, Uganda). Increased donor support through more intense dialogues and periodic assessments of aid for trade (*e.g.* Global Review) has also been highlighted by some partner countries (*e.g.* Grenada, DR Congo) as positive factors contributing towards improved monitoring and evaluation. Almost one-third of the partner countries (27 out of 84) do not report any notable improvement. They note, however, that this is at least partly due to a lack of institutional capacities at the national level (*e.g.* St. Kitts and Nevis) and a lack of standardised approaches across aid for trade (*e.g.* Solomon Islands).

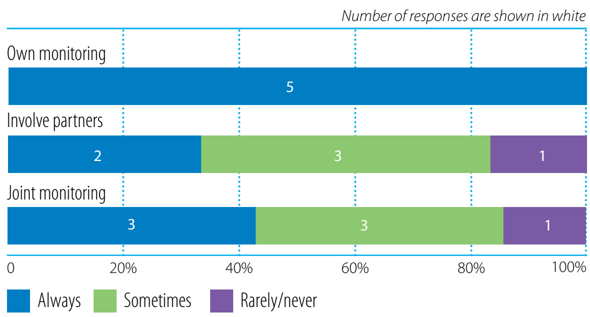
Among the ten South-South development partners, Argentina, Brazil, China and Mexico report that their monitoring and evaluation of trade-related South-South co-operation has significantly improved since 2008, while Chile, India and Oman indicate only moderate improvements (Figure 3). Of these seven countries, Brazil, China and Mexico report that they 'always' conduct joint evaluations (Figure 4). Still China and Mexico also only use their own monitoring systems. Furthermore, while China will always involve partner-country stakeholders in its monitoring, Mexico only does this sometimes in follow-up meetings and periodic evaluations. In general, Argentina, India and Oman use their own monitoring systems, with involvement of partner-country stakeholders, and sometimes conduct joint monitoring. Chile appears to be the only country which neither involves partner countries nor conducts joint monitoring.

Figure 3 Monitoring of South-South trade-related co-operation has significantly improved since 2008



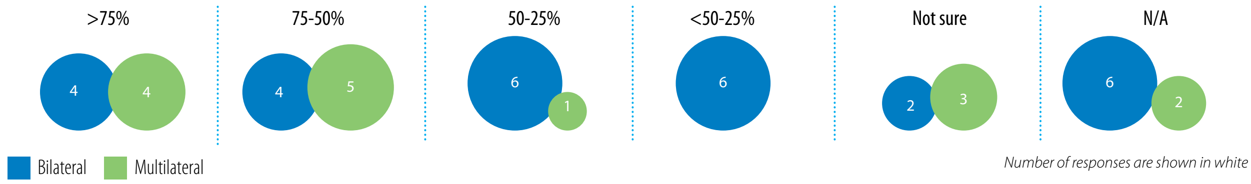
Source: OECD/WTO questionnaire (2011) *Number of responses are shown in white*

Figure 4 Most South-South providers use own monitoring systems and involve partner country stakeholders



In 2009, monitoring and evaluation of aid-for-trade programmes and projects was more common in low-income countries than in middle-income. The 2011 survey shows a continuation of this trend. About 70% of LDCs (22 out of 31) say the monitoring of their aid-for-trade programmes and projects has improved either significantly (8) or moderately (14), as compared to half or less for the other income groups (Figure 5). For six LDCs, monitoring has not improved since 2008. The relatively high number of LDCs that monitor their trade-related programmes and projects likely reflect the enhancement of the Integrated Framework (see Chapter 3).

Figure 5 Share of aid-for-trade programmes with quantifiable objectives



Source: OECD/WTO questionnaire (2011)

… showing results remains difficult…

Bilateral and multilateral donors report that they increasingly putting in place the building blocks for results based management. For example, under the multi-donor Trade Development Facility initiative in Lao PDR, considerable effort has gone into developing the results framework, and all reporting will be based around this framework with the support of the National Implementation Unit. The IADB has implemented a new development effectiveness framework, taking a two-pronged approach: one from "bottom-up" which focuses on measuring the results of each development intervention; and the other from "top-down" which measures institutional-level results. In addition, the IADB is developing specific indicators for measuring the results of its Aid for Trade Strategic Thematic Fund. UNDP monitors for results through its enhanced resource-based management system (for the financial aspect) and the results-oriented assessment (for qualitative reporting). UNIDO is taking steps in that direction through designing a model for assessing the poverty impacts of its interventions to facilitate the evaluation of technical assistance in terms of its impacts on the poor and guide the design and implementation of interventions towards the poor. In the case of the European Union, all of its aid programmes, including aid for trade, are subject to a monitoring system called the Results-Oriented Monitoring. The system, which has been around since 2000, provides external, objective and impartial feedback on the performance of aid programmes and projects planned.

…new approaches are being piloted...

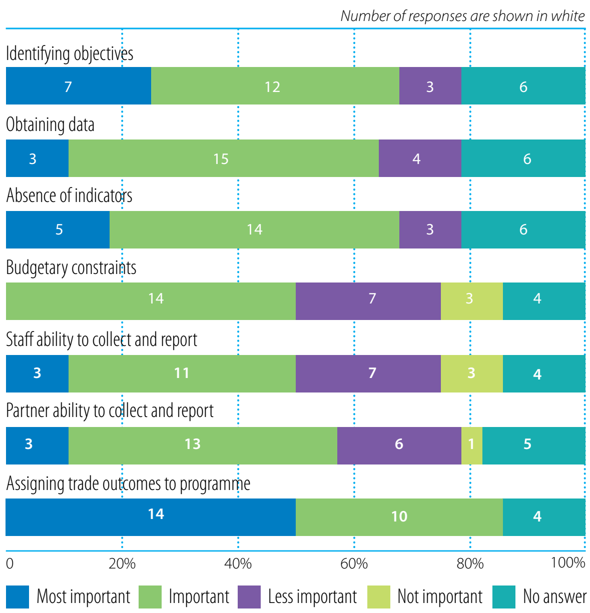
Germany is currently piloting a monitoring standard for private-sector development programmes and projects in three countries. This standard for results management is developed by the Donor Committee on Enterprise Development. It provides a common methodology – including three 'universal' impact indicators (covering income, jobs and scale) for measuring and attributing results in private-sector development in ways that are comparable. The IADB has established an aid-for-trade indicator to monitor its aid-for-trade flows more effectively, and is also developing specific indicators for measuring the results of its Aid for Trade Strategic Thematic Fund. New Zealand is placing a stronger focus on strengthening mutual accountability processes and results reporting between the New Zealand Aid Programme and its partners through, *inter alia*, formal processes for agreeing on appropriate benchmarks and targets.

…but attribution remains challenging.

A major challenge common to measuring many types of results is designing effective intervention logics or results chains that connect individual project objectives with more strategic, long-term development outcomes and impacts (OECD, 2011). This is often caused by attribution problems, significant time lapse (between the design of the intervention, its implementation and its impact), lack of credible data and difficulties in assessing often intangible capacities. In the case of aid for trade, this problem is compounded by the wide scope and multiple objectives of the Initiative (see Chapter 1), which complicates identifying clear indicators for measuring the outcome of aid-for-trade programmes and projects. In the 2009 survey, donors conceded that identifying and measuring trade-related outcomes was a real challenge (OECD/WTO, 2009). These findings are confirmed in the 2011 survey in which only 16 donors report to have quantifiable objectives in more than half of their aid-for-trade programmes and projects (Figure 5).

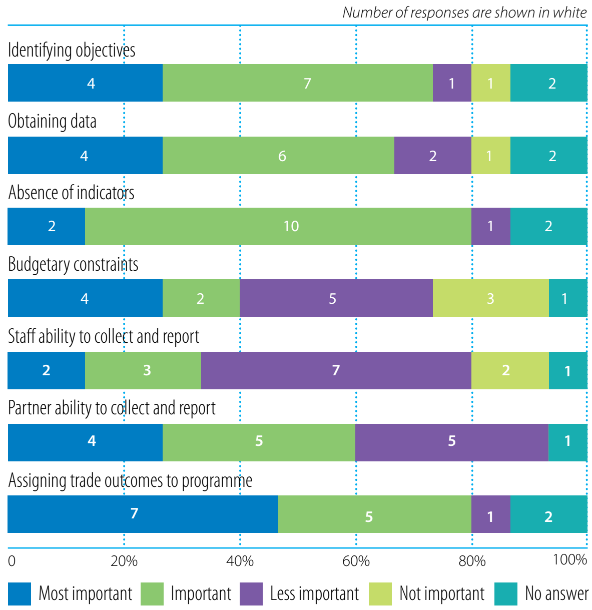
Most donors identify attributing aid-for-trade programmes and projects to trade outcomes and impact as the biggest challenge in evaluation (Figures 6 and 7). Attribution – linking aid-for-trade interventions with trade, economic and poverty related impacts – is also highlighted as a problem in many of the submitted case stories. This comes as no surprise since it is more difficult to assess the sector or economy-wide impacts of a specific project than to assess its performance in a specific context, given the complex array of extraneous variables influencing outcomes (OECD, 2011). South-South partners too report that establishing quantifiable objectives and producing reliable indicators are the main challenges, closely followed by data availability and a lack of partner country capacity to collect and report data (Figure 8). Case stories also support these findings. As noted, many of these stories do not contain quantitative performance indicators (in either number of output or in outcomes measured against baselines). The failure to refer to specific trade results can be explained at least in part by the absence of trade-related objectives in the initial mandate of the operations. Moreover, In addition to the attribution gap, the lack of built-in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the project design – to develop indicators and establish measurable baseline data – is also recognised as a failing and underlines the importance of systematically collating data as a project progresses.

Figure 6 Challenges in evaluating aid for trade by bilateral donor



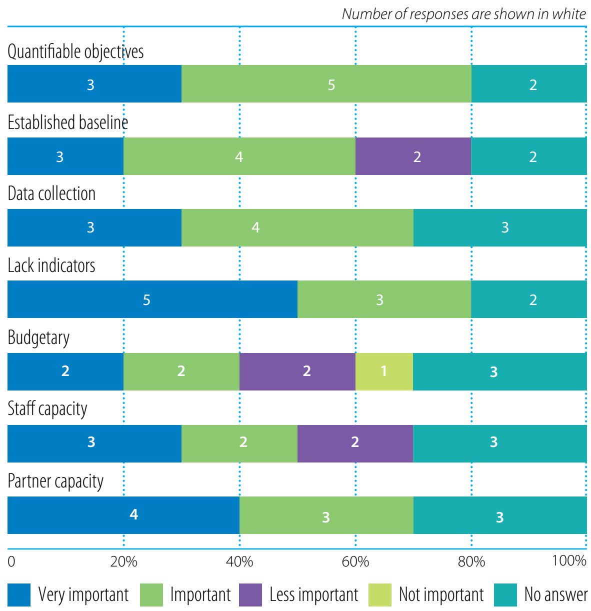
Source: OECD/WTO questionnaire (2011)

Figure 7 Challenges in evaluating aid for trade by multilateral donor



Source: OECD/WTO questionnaire (2011)

Figure 8 Challenges in evaluating trade-related co-operation by South-South providers



Source: OECD/WTO questionnaire (2011)

THE WAY FORWARD IN SHOWING RESULTS

The results of the Aid-for-Trade Initiative can be measured in three areas: *i*) greater awareness (*i.e.* trade mainstreaming → increased demand); *ii*) increased aid-for-trade resources (*i.e.* donor response → increased aid flows); and *iii*) more effective aid-for-trade interventions (*i.e.* demonstrating outcomes and impacts in terms of trade capacity). The aid-for-trade monitoring exercise has measured progress mainly on the first two dimensions of the Initiative.

Monitoring the third aspect (*i.e.* reporting on results at the programme, country, regional and global level) is rather more complex. But, prrogress in showing results can be made further through *i*) continuing to strengthen management-for-results approaches in aid-for-trade programmes, *ii*) evaluating impacts of aid-for-trade programmes that are amenable to these and other quasi-impact methodologies, and *iii*) establishing a community of aid-for-trade practitioners to share knowledge.

Setting targets and performance indicators

Although attribution is clearly a problem, outcome indicators are still useful to point towards the direction of changes with which a programme or project can be associated. While the choice of indicators should be context specific, many performance indicators related to different areas of aid for trade are readily available today. These indicators can be used to design a light but effective monitoring system that is focussed on showing results.

A first step is to narrow down the indicators to those that can be related to aid-for-trade programmes and projects and say something meaningful about trade performance. The performance indicators should be used as a political tool to provide factual information about progress. The presentation of results should be based as much as possible on benchmarking to allow cross-country comparisons. The story emerging should be recognisable and conducive to a constructive dialogue focused on where further improvements are required.

Based on these criteria the OECD and the WTO designed the "aid for trade at a glance country fact sheet" (included in this publication). This tool is meant to enable rapid cross-country comparison, based on a limited number of indicators drawn from existing sources. The country fact sheet is an "evolving" tool. It has provided a starting point to help countries discuss how to make aid for trade more results-oriented. It does not provide all the answers to whether aid for trade works, nor does it claim to do so.

A plethora of indicators are being generated and used by partners and donors to assess progress towards specific aid-for-trade results. As more donors start to introduce results frameworks, agreeing on a menu of indicators to measure results would enable aggregating these results across programmes and projects and allow for cross-country comparison. Furthermore, such a menu would also further the Accra Agenda for Action, which called for efforts to arrive at internationally recognised performance indicators.

A menu of indicators would not limit development partners to only use those indicators for the performance assessment of their interventions. Such a limited approach is neither feasible, nor desirable given the differences in operational needs and strategic priorities. Micro-level indicators, for instance, will remain necessary to monitor specific programme and will vary between them. Consequently, these micro-level indicators cannot be aggregated across sectors or countries. In principle, however, all these separate trade-related programmes and projects aim to achieve the common objective of enhanced capacity to trade. The commonality of that objective could be enhanced and form the basis for reporting on results at the aggregate level.

There is considerable benefit in establishing a menu of a selective number of universal trade-related indicators across all aid-for-trade interventions. Such a menu would facilitate benchmarking progress in building trade capacity at the country level. The challenge is to select indicators broad enough to capture the wide range of aid-for-trade programmes and projects, while still specific enough to provide credible information on how aid for trade is contributing to improved trade capacity and performance.

As noted previously, several donors are moving towards the introduction of quantifiable targets and related performance indicators, including for their trade-related programmes and projects. Others are considering such an approach. This creates an opportunity for the aid-for-trade community to share experiences and work together with partner countries towards a more harmonised approach to manage and account for results. Moreover, it would avoid flooding partner countries with an unmanageable set of indicators all measuring different, but closely related results.

The idea would be to arrive at a menu of indicators that are reasonably representative of the essential characteristics of aid-for-trade categories as defined by the WTO Aid for Trade Task Force and shaped by data availability. These indicators, taken together, should provide a sense of progress at the sector and country level and contribute to the broader efforts of showing aid-for-trade results. The menu of indicators should be selected through an iterative process of country-based pilot studies led by partner countries and involving multilateral and bilateral donors and providers of South-South cooperation.

The third aid-for-trade monitoring exercise clearly shows that there is much to gain from working together to develop aligned approaches to measure aid-for-trade results. There is considerable benefit in agreeing among stakeholders on a menu of a limited set of indicators across aid-for-trade programmes and projects to assess and benchmark progress in building trade capacities. A more aligned approach to measure progress towards partner countries' aid-for-trade targets would also strengthen country ownership, the critical factor ensuring that aid-for-trade programmes and projects enhance trade capacity and promote economic growth and development.

Evaluating impacts

The growing demand for showing results in development has stimulated new thinking about how these can be demonstrated. Impact evaluations are one approach that is currently applied with considerable success to aid interventions in the social sector (health and education).[4] The approach focuses on "with and without" interventions and compares outcomes for participants in the programme with a control group. In the applying this evaluation method to aid-for-trade programmes identifying appropriate control groups can be difficult. Moreover, the application of impact evaluations to aid-for-trade programmes is hindered when targets are unclear and data scant. Without baseline data and a controlled experiment, it remains difficult to attribute success or failure exclusively to the programme, as opposed to the environment in which it operates (OECD, 2011).

The World Bank points towards this trend in evaluation, shifting away from conventional before-after comparisons (using for instance client surveys) towards rigorous impact evaluation techniques using either Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) or quasi-experimental methods. The use of econometric techniques combining data from surveys, customs and the national statistical institutes has made it possible to disentangle effects at the intensive (as opposed to extensive) margin[5] and long-run (as opposed to short-run).

For selected countries with promising success stories, it may be possible to examine country performance before and after the policy intervention and compare it with closely matched countries. This method was suggested by Benton and von Uexküll (2009)[6] in evaluating the impact of product-specific technical assistance for exports. This is the primary concern of Cadot *et al.* (2011)[7] who argue that some specific trade-related assistance especially industry specific pro-active policies can be evaluated more formally, provided that these evaluations are not limited to particular methodologies, such as RCTS, but also apply other quasi-experimental methods. The authors consider that the key barriers to undertaking such evaluations in trade-related assistance are less of a conceptual nature, but more related to the costs, the time frame and the burden it places on project managers. Consequently, they suggest that the impact evaluations should prioritise learning over monitoring. Showing what works in aid-for-trade processes, programmes and policies and sharing this knowledge among the wider aid-for-trade community was also the objective of the call for case stories.

A COMMUNITY OF AID-FOR-TRADE PRACTITIONERS

The sheer breadth and depth of the activity captures in the case stories and the fact that nearly 40% of the stories were submitted by developing countries underlines the salience of these programmes in the field - and the importance of making them work. Recipient governments are clearly interested in gaining access to global information and knowledge on ways to harness trade to promote growth and raise incomes. The aid-for-trade case stories were intended to be a beginning rather than an end. Many follow-up activities should be undertaken to create a better understanding of their results and of their wider applicability.

More rigorous analysis of the case studies using a common analytical framework could help clarify common determinants of success and weaknesses. For example, a sample of the case stories in three sub-areas – *e.g.* infrastructure, trade facilitation, and trade capacity building could be followed up with client surveys and interviews to better establish links to trade performance and poverty reduction, with greater attention to project attribution. This could be coupled with new cross-country analysis that would link the particular policy intervention types to country performance.

More generally, this third global monitoring exercise emphasises the need for an "one-stop-shop" knowledge platform on aid for trade. Currently, no such knowledge platform exists (website, portal or knowledge network). The joint OECD/WTO aid-for-trade website [www.aid4trade.org] provides access to all the primary information that has been collected through the three monitoring exercises. Consequently, the website contains a wealth of information on what works in aid for trade and what could work better.

The website will be developed further to offer a networking function supporting the information needs of the aid-for-trade policy makers and practitioners on how to make aid for trade more effective. Such an aid-for-trade knowledge sharing platform responds to the original recommendation of the WTO Aid for Trade Task Force, but also to the mandate of the G20 Development Framework for Shared Growth which encourages international organisations to strengthen such platforms. In addition, active knowledge sharing should also be further pursued through deepened and broadened in-country dialogue between stakeholders. These discussions should not only focus on 'bridging 'demand' and 'response', but increasingly on what approaches work best in showing that aid for trade has an impact on trade performance, economic growth and poverty reduction. ■

NOTES

1 The 'soundness' of a results-based monitoring framework is judged based on three criteria, which are: i) the quality of the information generated; ii) stakeholder access to the information; and iii) the extent to which the information is utilised within the country.

2 Meta-evaluations (evaluations of evaluations) are designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations.

3 . The questionnaires and case stories do not profile the full gamut of the important initiatives taken by other players. For example, the monitoring and evaluation system used by UNESCAP places results-based management at the centre of its evaluation work.

4 Banerjee, A. and Duflo, E. (2011), A Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of Ways to Fight Global Poverty, London: PublicAffairs.

5 Intensive margin denotes an increase in exports of existing products to existing markets, whereas extensive margin denotes an increase in the number of products exported or in the number of markets served.

6 Brenton, P. and E. von Uexkull, (2009), "Product specific technical assistance for exports – has it been effective?" *The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development: An International and Comparative Review*, 18(2), 235-254.

7 Cadot, O. *et al.,* (2011), "Impact Evaluation of Trade Assistance: Paving the Way"; in O. Cadot, A. Fernandes, J. Gourdon and A. Mattoo, eds., *Where to spend the next million: Impact evaluation of trade interventions;* London/ Washington: World Bank and CEPR, forthcoming.