

G20 DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP  
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

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# G20 Development Working Group Accountability Framework

## INTRODUCTION

In Los Cabos in 2012, and in St Petersburg in 2013, G20 leaders highlighted the need for the G20 Development Working Group (DWG) to deepen its focus on accountability in the interest of increasing the effectiveness of its actions. In the longer term, improving the transparency of the G20's work and being upfront about lessons learned will deliver important dividends in terms of strengthened credibility among non-G20 members, particularly developing countries, and other stakeholders.

The DWG agreed in September 2014 to an accountability framework, which builds on the process led by Russia in 2013. The Framework includes an associated rationale and methodology for considering ongoing and new G20 development commitments in line with sherpas' guidance on the G20's comparative advantage. The Framework is intended to be a simple but credible mechanism for ensuring a more consistent approach to accountability in the DWG's work.

## CONTEXT, PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGY

### Context

The G20's comparative advantage lies in leveraging its considerable convening and coordinating power to boost the impact of agreed policy reforms. Its membership includes emerging economies as well as the wealthiest developed countries across all continents. This brings a diversity of perspectives to analysis, policy dialogue and G20 commitments and actions. By using these strengths the G20 can make a difference to debates and take actions leading to strong, sustainable and balanced growth.

Examples of effective G20 action include:

- ▶ **Providing G20 leadership and political support** for advancing important and innovative global and regional initiatives in other fora;
- ▶ **Encouraging domestic and external policy coherence** by G20 countries, acting individually or collectively (e.g. reducing remittance costs);
- ▶ **Encouraging more effective cooperation between international organisations** (e.g. infrastructure work across multilateral development banks); and
- ▶ **Extending knowledge and practice to non-members**, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.

### Principles and methodology

In Seoul, in 2010, leaders agreed that G20 development actions should be governed by a set of six principles to ensure alignment with the G20's mandate to drive economic coordination and systemic reforms (see [Annex 1](#)).

At its meeting in Hobart in May 2014, the DWG agreed that while the principles were a comprehensive framework for determining new G20 development action, the DWG should also agree a process for dealing with stalled or incomplete commitments.

The DWG has now agreed to criteria in order to frame new commitments and reassess and address commitments identified as stalled or as having made mixed progress. While not prescriptive, the criteria below are in line with the approach on developing new actions in the 2013 Saint Petersburg Development



Outlook – that is, that they must advance the DWG’s objectives, be realistic, evidence-based, take account of cross-cutting issues and be appropriately funded, where needed, on a voluntary basis.

The criteria are:

1. Is the commitment consistent with the G20 development principles agreed in Seoul in 2010 ([Annex 1](#))?
2. Does the commitment advance the mandate and objectives of the G20?
3. Does the commitment draw on the G20’s comparative advantage?
4. Are there other organisations or fora that are better placed than the G20 to address this issue and/or to undertake the proposed action?
5. Are there any constraints that will limit the potential of this commitment to result in substantial net benefits for non-G20 developing countries?
6. Does the commitment include a defined outcome or end date against which progress can be measured, even if ongoing action is required by others?

The DWG should consider the extent to which a proposed new commitment meets the above criteria in considering whether to agree to the commitment. This process will be helpful in relation to new proposals suggested by individual members.

For existing commitments, a similar assessment could be prepared by the relevant co-facilitators in consultation with the presidency and relevant international organisations, with a recommendation to the DWG on whether it should be confirmed, redesigned or redirected (for example, to another G20 work stream or by incorporating it into other actions). Recommendations should consider approaches that maintain the substance of existing commitments, while strengthening the commitment’s focus in order to progress implementation and support the ongoing credibility of the DWG’s agenda and commitments by leaders. Where the decision might affect commitments made by leaders, the DWG could make a recommendation to sherpas to agree to the proposed amendment.

The DWG’s decisions should then be reflected in its core accountability products (see below).

## ACCOUNTABILITY PRODUCTS

The accountability framework includes the following core and optional products:

### Comprehensive Accountability Report (core product)

In accordance with the Saint Petersburg Development Outlook mandate, the DWG will prepare a Comprehensive Accountability Report every three years. To ensure transparency and credibility of G20 development commitments, this report will be submitted through sherpas to leaders and made public through appropriate G20 presidency communication mechanisms.

This report represents a public accountability report similar to the 2013 St Petersburg Accountability Report. The report should cover the state of play for all ongoing G20 DWG commitments, including an in-depth assessment of progress in each priority area and a traffic-light report. The report should also include input and views from non-G20 members, as well as lessons learned and recommendations drawn from the accountability process (including on policy coherence across G20 tracks). The following is a recommended structure for the report, which could be adjusted at the discretion of the G20 presidency:

- ▶ Section 1: Overview of the G20 development agenda
- ▶ Section 2: Implementation of G20 development commitments



- ▶ Section 3: Outreach to non-G20 stakeholders and linkages to other G20 work streams
- ▶ Section 4: Lessons learned and conclusions
- ▶ Possible Annexes (including a snapshot of implementation to date).

### Annual Progress Report (core product)

The DWG will prepare an annual progress report on DWG commitments to be submitted to sherpas and made public through the G20 website and/or appropriate G20 communication mechanisms.

The annual progress report documents the status of existing commitments and captures new commitments, to enable a simple, systematic and regular review of commitments.

The final draft of the report should be agreed by the whole DWG membership at the final DWG meeting under each G20 presidency and submitted to sherpas. If sherpas request changes to this report, an amendment can be made at the first DWG meeting of the next G20 presidency, or out of session by the current presidency.

When new commitments are agreed by the DWG, they will be added to the next annual progress report, with an indication of their status at that time. However, this does not preclude interim updates of the progress report being provided to the DWG at any time.

The style and structure of the report should be broadly consistent from year to year to enable annual comparison.

The report could include the following:

- ▶ the nature of the commitment (including planned start and completion dates);
- ▶ a short explanation of progress made since the last report and next steps in the implementation or management (to be captured with short, observational/descriptive comments rather than evaluative or analytical information);
- ▶ each commitment's status and a corresponding traffic light: complete (v); complete, with ongoing monitoring<sup>1</sup> (v), on track (green)<sup>2</sup>, mixed progress<sup>3</sup> (orange); stalled<sup>4</sup> (red); or redirected<sup>5</sup> (no colour), and where required, a rationale or explanation supporting the decision made regarding the status of a commitment; and
- ▶ when a commitment has been redirected or redesigned, a clear explanation of why this has been done, and how the original goals will be met through the redirected or redesigned commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> Complete, with ongoing monitoring = action complete but ongoing monitoring required to evaluate longer-term or systemic impacts.

<sup>2</sup> On track = commitment is predominantly on track according to agreed timetable and outputs.

<sup>3</sup> Mixed progress = behind timeline for completion but due to complete soon

<sup>4</sup> Stalled = progress has stalled or work has been discontinued.

<sup>5</sup> Redirected = commitment has been incorporated into another action or is to be handled by another G20 work stream

### Optional products

The proposed core accountability products should not preclude a G20 presidency from proposing additional accountability reports to review progress in a particular thematic area or cross-cutting issue. G20 presidencies will therefore have available the option to recommend additional accountability products to review progress in a particular thematic area or cross-cutting issue.

These reports:

- ▶ are to be carried out at the discretion of the presidency with the agreement of the DWG; and
- ▶ are not to be prepared in the same year as an in-depth review.

### MANAGING AND RESOURCING

This framework acknowledges that the priorities of respective G20 presidencies will vary, along with the resources available for management of accountability processes. G20 presidencies may wish to appoint a small group of members to an Accountability Steering Committee (ASC) to support the presidency to implement the DWG accountability framework. In establishing an ASC, presidencies could draw on the draft terms of reference at [Annex 2](#).



## Annex 1: G20 development principles

- ▶ **Focus on economic growth.** The G20 suggest that economic growth is closely linked with low income countries' (LICs) ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They state that measures to promote inclusive, sustainable and resilient growth should take precedence over business as usual.
- ▶ **Global development partnership.** LICs should be treated as equal partners, with national ownership for their own development. Partnerships should be transparent and accountable.
- ▶ **Global or regional systemic issues.** The G20 should prioritise regional or systemic issues where their collective action is best placed to deliver beneficial changes.
- ▶ **Private sector participation.** The G20 recognise the importance of private actors in contributing to growth and suggest that policies should be business friendly.
- ▶ **Complementarity.** The G20 will try to avoid duplicating the efforts of other global actors, focusing their efforts on areas where they have a comparative advantage.
- ▶ **Outcome orientation.** The G20 will focus on tangible practical measures to address significant problems.



## Annex 2: G20 Development Working Group Accountability Steering Committee—draft terms of reference

An Accountability Steering Committee (ASC) was appointed in December 2013 at the first Development Working Group (DWG) meeting under the Australian G20 presidency to develop options for the DWG's forward accountability process. ASC comprised Russia (as lead DWG co-chair), Canada, Mexico and Indonesia in consultation with the Australian G20 presidency

At the DWG's meeting in May 2014 the ASC presented options and recommendations on an accountability process for members' discussion and in September 2014 presented an options paper for agreement by the DWG.

The DWG agreed on a G20 DWG Accountability Framework and the 2014 Annual Progress Report for transmission to sherpas. Building on the practice introduced by the Australian G20 presidency in 2014 and following consideration of options, the DWG also agreed that subsequent G20 presidencies may wish to appoint a small group of members to an ASC to support the presidency in implementing the G20 DWG Accountability Framework. In appointing an ASC, presidencies may wish to draw on the following:

- ▶ **Appointment of committee members:** At the first DWG meeting under each G20 presidency, the presidency may wish to appoint a small group of members to an ASC for the duration of its presidency.
- ▶ **Function:** An ASC will be established to support the G20 presidency in implementing the DWG's Accountability Framework and to prepare the DWG's core accountability products:
  - an Annual Progress Report; and
  - a Comprehensive Accountability Report – every three years.
- ▶ Optional accountability products can be introduced at the discretion of the G20 presidency that may require the support of the ASC.
- ▶ The ASC is not a decision-making body. However, the ASC will take steps to operationalise the DWG accountability process, including making recommendations on ways to improve or refine the process.

