Whole-of-government approaches to development co-operation: insights and lessons from practice

Peer Learning Exercise

KDI-OECD Global Forum on Development Co-operation
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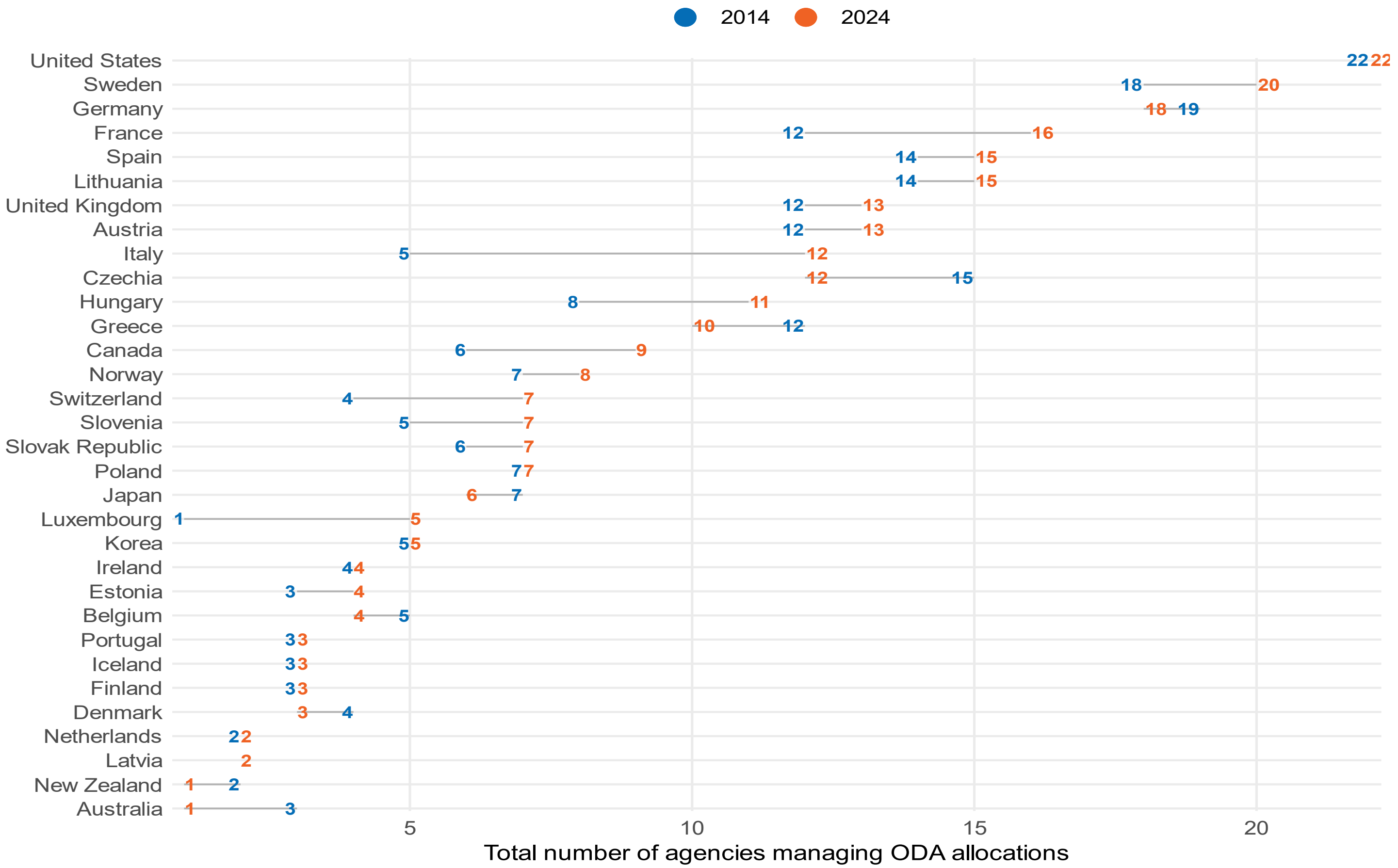
Whole-of-government approaches to development co-operation
Peer learning exercise

- Examines how governments organise and strengthen whole-of-government approaches to development co-operation
- Focuses on practical lessons for improving co-ordination, managing trade-offs and delivering more coherent development outcomes.
- Informed by an OECD-KDI collaboration, peer reviews, data analysis and country experience across DAC Members (Australia, Colombia, Italy, Korea, the Netherlands and a selection of Eastern European countries: Czechia, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia)

Effective whole-of-government co-ordination helps turn diversity into development impact



Working definition

"An integrated, cross-governmental approach where various government entities, such as ministries and agencies at both headquarters and in-country offices, work together to align their efforts, policies and resources to achieve coherent, unified goals in development co-operation."

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Institutional design shapes how whole-of-government co-ordination functions

Policy authority

1. Centralised single entity
2. Shared policy authority
3. Multi-actor policy

Budget control

1. Single budget holder
2. Central envelope with dedicated sub-budgets
3. Multiple primary budget holders

Implementation responsibility

1. Single integrated implementer
2. Embassy/agency-led implementation
3. Line ministry implementer

Typology of whole-of-government institutional set ups

Centralised single ministry

- Policy, funding and oversight led by one ministry.
- Other ministries provide technical input only.
- Embassies implement under close central oversight.

Delegated implementation

- Policy led by a central ministry, sometimes shared.
- Central budget with delegated funding arrangements.
- Agencies and embassies lead implementation; line ministries contribute selectively.

Dual institutional anchor

- Policy authority shared across two core institutions.
- Budgets managed by multiple lead actors.
- Delivery shared between a central agency and line ministries.

Managed pluralism

- Multiple ministries pursue development objectives.
- Funding distributed across autonomous budgets.
- Implementation led by agencies, embassies and line ministries.

Cross-government co-ordination mechanisms shape development priorities across ministries

Whole-of-government strategic direction

Top-level political and strategic deliberation across all national priorities, including but not limited to development

Development-specific strategy and policy coherence

High-level development co-ordination bodies shaping development strategy, ODA priorities, coherence, and cross-government alignment

Operational ODA co-ordination and cross-sector alignment

Senior-official level bodies co-ordinating ODA portfolios, plans, budgets and cross-ministry programmes

Information exchange, visibility and procedural coherence

Bodies focused on transparency, cross-ministry visibility, PCSD monitoring, and procedural co-ordination

Project-level screening and approval

Technical bodies ensuring alignment, avoiding duplication, and approving major initiatives

The effectiveness of co-ordination mechanisms depends on their influence, incentives and connectivity

Influence policy and decisions

- Shape priorities trade-offs before decisions are finalised

Regular exchange and incentives

- Communication channels, clarity over mandates and accountability arrangements

Linking development co-operation with policy coherence mechanisms

- Improved alignment and consideration of transboundary impacts

Enable crisis response

- Established frameworks support faster responses and overcome institutional silos

Political leadership and clear mandates create conditions for effective co-ordination

Political commitment

- Legal frameworks and high-level signalling facilitate sustained collaboration across governments

Clear roles

- Involvement of the centre of government can strengthen co-ordination and requires management of complexity
- Empowered lead ministry and defined roles for contributing institutions

Inclusive policymaking

- Whole-of-government owned policies and strategies require visibility of the roles of different departments and an inclusive process

Capacity, quality assurance and learning systems are enablers for co-ordination

Expertise and capacity

- Dedicated resources for co-ordination
- Investing in development expertise of line ministries and sectoral expertise in lead ministry
- Training and staff mobility

Knowledge, systems and tools

- Organisational culture and incentives
- Knowledge management policies and systems
- Digital technologies

Learning and accountability

- Shared goals and results frameworks
- Cross-government and joint evaluations
- Integration of collection, reporting and dissemination mechanism

Whole-of-government approaches need to deliver for partner countries

Country level

- Developing whole-of-government objectives and country strategies for priority countries
- Joined-up embassies and country offices
- Activities mapping

Thematic priorities

- Alignment between bilateral and multilateral programming
- Shared, cross-cutting policy priorities
- Thematic co-ordination structures

Fit for purpose whole-of-government approaches in today's development co-operation landscape

- Co-ordination **for development impact.**
- Development co-operation **extends beyond ODA.**
- A coherent and agile approach helps **maintain trusted partnerships**.

Thank you!