



IDA 16 AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

SUPPORTING ISSUE BRIEF ONE Increasing Country Ownership

What is Country Ownership?

Country ownership is the first principle of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The term refers to the concept that a partner country's development priorities and programs should be defined and led by the country itself, in effect, that they 'belong' to the developing country, regardless of the funding source supporting such programs. This is a departure from the approach to international development throughout the 1970s, 80s and into the early 90s, which often saw donor countries and agencies exercising a high degree of control and ownership over development programs in countries to which they channeled aid.

Why is it important?

In committing to country ownership, Paris Declaration signatories agree to strengthen partner countries' capacities to exercise this ownership. This includes building-up in-country technical knowledge to ensure that partner countries are not reliant on expensive, external, time-bound expertise, and developing sustainability plans to ensure that successful poverty reduction programs will continue once external budget support draws to a close. Country ownership helps to increase development sustainability and ensure that progress is not lost.

How can it be strengthened?

Country ownership can be strengthened in a wide variety of ways, and every development cooperation actor can play its part. PNoWB and AWEPA have called on the World Bank specifically to use its Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) process – during which the Bank defines how it will contribute to a country's development strategy– to focus on capacity building in, and skills transfer to, local institutions including national, regional and local levels of government, public-private partnerships and civil society organizations.

How can parliamentarians be involved?

When working with the World Bank, the CAS process is a natural entry point to strengthen country ownership and country-level aid effectiveness. Involving law makers early in the CAS process increases the likelihood that their concerns and observations will be addressed; both the Bank and a country's parliament, or individual parliamentarians, can initiate the dialogue. More generally, parliamentarians can help to strengthen country ownership of development policies, strategies and programs by exercising their oversight function to the fullest extent, and by recommending that capacity building programs – including specialized higher education institutions and programs to reduce "brain drain" and the loss of qualified professionals – are prioritized.

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