

From Commitment to Practice: A Call to Action on Locally Led Development

The publication of the OECD Guidelines for Supporting Locally Led Development (LLD) comes at a time when there is greater pressure on Official Development Assistance (ODA) than ever before. With a changing geopolitical, humanitarian and development landscape, fewer resources and stalled progress towards many of the Sustainable Development Goals, there is a pressing need to build a fairer international and multilateral system. That system must be fit for the future, align with the plans and priorities of local actors, advance equitable partnerships and be rooted in trust, mutual accountability and respect.

The OECD Guidelines, which build on existing LLD commitments, aim to turn that ambition into practice.

- Recalling the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, which established country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, transparency and mutual accountability as the foundation of effective development co-operation.
- Recalling existing commitments to localisation, including the Grand Bargain commitments to locally led humanitarian response and more equitable partnerships and the Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development.
- Recognising the OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, which prioritises strengthening local and national leadership, capacities and ownership across humanitarian, development and peace efforts.
- Recognising the momentum generated by the efforts to “shift power” and strengthen local agency and ownership, including the OECD’s Toolkit on Shifting Power with Partners.
- Recognising that an enabling environment for civic space is a necessary precondition for effective LLD in line with the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance.
- Building on and complementing ongoing initiatives across governments, civil society, the private sector and other actors, including through the Global Partnership on Effective Development Co-operation, to strengthen more equitable and inclusive development partnerships that deliver shared benefits and are grounded in country ownership, results, accountability and transparency.
- Acknowledging that progress has been too slow, and that greater coordination, collaboration and political will is necessary to operationalise existing commitments to LLD.

We call on all development partners to integrate the OECD Guidelines for Supporting Locally Led Development into their policies, programmes, and partnerships. Specifically, we urge you to:

- 1. Be clear on your intentions and definitions for locally led development.** This includes translating commitments into clear policies and strategies, establishing a shared

understanding of locally led development across your institution and being explicit about roles, responsibilities, and power dynamics within each partnership.

2. Implement meaningful co-creation of development solutions. This means recognising local actors as co-decision-makers in setting priorities, shaping approaches, and defining success; systematically engaging diverse local actors to embed local knowledge, expertise, and lived experience in policies and programmes; and working with and through existing local networks and processes.

3. Develop equitable partnership approaches. This means setting clear expectations for equitable partnerships across different partnership types and actors, engaging in long-term partnerships to build trust, capacity, and shared ownership and ensuring intermediaries uphold equitable partnership approaches.

4. Improve human resource management. This means empowering country-level decision-making, ensuring local perspectives inform headquarters strategies, aligning staffing, incentives, and recruitment with LLD objectives, and prioritising local and regional expertise.

5. Provide quality financing to local actors. This means providing long-term, predictable and flexible financing, including core and overhead support for local partners, intermediaries and networks; combining national budget support with decentralised or subnational financing where conditions allow; and tailoring financing modalities and requirements to local contexts and capacities to ensure inclusive access.

6. Redefine roles for international intermediaries. This means setting clear expectations and requirements for intermediaries to support local leadership, redefining intermediary roles over time, shifting towards advisory, facilitation and capacity-support functions, and embedding locally led development commitments in partnership agreements with intermediaries.

7. Simplify due diligence and equitable risk sharing. This means harmonising and aligning due diligence standards to reduce duplication, using passporting for mutual recognition across funders, adopting simple, proportionate reporting requirements, and promoting risk sharing rather than risk transfer.

8. Promote locally led monitoring, evaluation and learning. This means engaging with and strengthening partners' existing Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning systems, ensuring evaluations are culturally appropriate and grounded in local leadership and expertise and including local perspectives into evaluation reporting and adaptive programming.

9. Promote and practice transparency and accountability. This means establishing transparent reporting systems to track and publish how much ODA reaches local actors directly and through intermediaries, assessing the quality of funding and partnerships established, and embedding locally led accountability commitments in partnership agreements and performance frameworks.

As committed partners in advancing locally led development, we will champion these actions through our policies, partnerships and practices, and contribute to ongoing global processes, to translate shared commitments into sustained action and results, in support of more locally led and resilient development partnerships. The Guidelines are also an invitation to other partners to help build an international development system centred on dignity, equity and justice for all.

Definitions: The following definitions are taken from the OECD Practical Guidelines for Supporting Locally Led Development

Locally led development: an ongoing development process of a country, whose diverse local actors exercise agency across policy and programme dimensions (framing, design, delivery, accountability and learning) in given local operating contexts across development, humanitarian or peace efforts (some development partners refer to “locally led action” to denote that it encompasses development, humanitarian, climate and peace efforts).

Local Actors: Local actors are individuals and entities based and operating in the local context of reference, subject to local laws, whose actions are centred on local issues. Local actors comprise governmental (national and subnational) entities, parliaments, non-governmental organisations, grassroots associations, community-based organisations, Indigenous, traditional and spiritual leaders as well as developing country-based universities, media and private sector entities.

Local actors or entities do not include: i) international civil society organisations, including their country offices in partner countries; ii) multilateral organisations; and iii) international private sector organisations

The OECD Guidelines for supporting Locally Led Development will be launched and publicly accessible as of 29th May.