

Evaluation of the Transition of Finnish-Vietnamese Cooperation (2008-2020)

Presentation of findings, conclusions,
lessons learned and recommendations

Public Webinar

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Introduction

Realisation:

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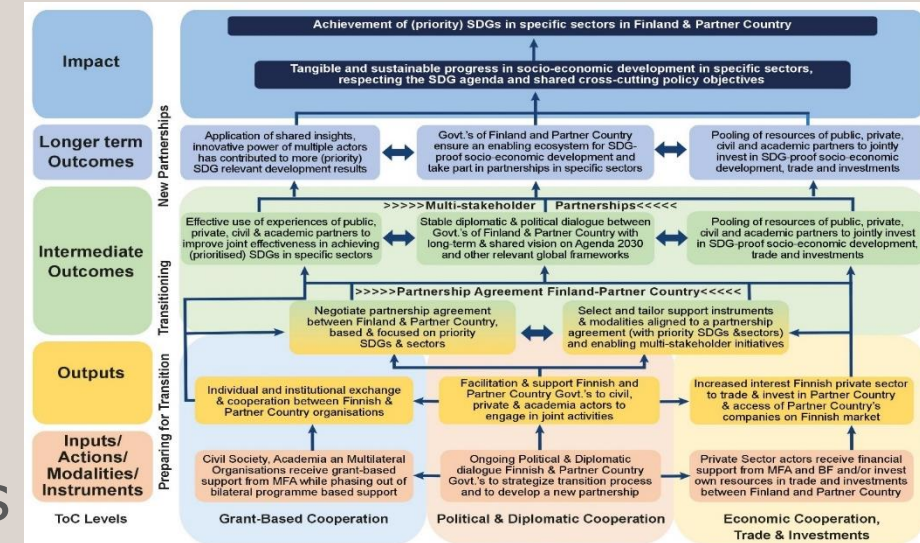
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Evaluation Management Services and Quality Assurance

Methodology

- Mixed methods (Qualitative and Quantitative)
- 100% Covid-19 proof
- 125 KII's, surveys & desk review
- Theory of Change workshops
- Stakeholder mapping
- Political economy & policy dialogue analysis
- Coherence analysis (PSI and Grant Based Instruments) & HEI-ICI
- Crosscutting Objectives Analysis
- Quantitative analysis of ODA and Trade flows
- Peer country studies (Zambia, Denmark & The Netherlands)



Key findings

- 1. Relevance:** transition of relations between countries with historical and close cooperation. Transition matched Viet Nam ambitions toward HMIC status
- 2. Effectiveness:** gradual 12 year process – scaling down ODA, preparing (in IPP for example) for more PSI support. Less central steering of process over time and limited consultation and communication
- 3. Coherence and Synergy:** sector focus supported synergy and coherence. With (demand driven) PSIs, synergy decreased, though without contradictions
- 4. Sustainability:** No framework or strategy in place beyond 2020, even though vibrant exchange in many sectors, driven by specific initiatives
- 5. CCOs:** Climate Change is very strong because it also a relevant economic sector. Other CCOs stronger in grant-based cooperation than in PSIs
- 6. Lessons from other transition experiences:** a strategic framework can help guide cooperation to achieve development impact, contributing to SDGs and CCOs

Key conclusions (1)

1. Viet Nam remains a key country of interest. Mutual dependency of Viet Nam and Finland requires in-country diplomatic and economic representations.
2. Instruments & facilities (IPP) resulted in increased presence of Finnish companies in Viet Nam and increased bilateral trade (part. VN exports to Finland).
3. Despite strategizing and planning of transitioning, the implementation of the transition process has not been fully consistent (alignment and coherence).
4. ODA provided to Viet Nam remains sizeable. Absence of a partnership agreement and strategy in cooperation relations presents a risk of scattering of instruments and institutions, resulting in more limited development impact.
5. Team Finland has been functional in providing support and guiding specific partners to the right institution and facility. Its ambitions were not fully met.
6. Stakeholders on both sides were not sufficiently involved in consultation and dialogue on transitioning. Communication was not strong and not inclusive.

Key conclusions (2)

7. Attention and support have moved to private sector. Optimism that private sector would embrace SDGs and Finnish CCOs was not always met.
8. Attention to multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve SDGs has thus far remained limited in Finnish PSIs.
9. Multilateral cooperation (UN, IFIs, EU) has increased though doesn't replace bilateral cooperation. With signing of EVFTA, EU-Viet Nam cooperation is advancing, providing opportunities for Finland to engage and work with the EU.
10. After a decade of transitioning, in 2021, relations between Finland and Viet Nam are ongoing and vibrant (trade, education, diaspora, tourism).
11. CCO on climate change was well attended to. Other CCOs (poverty reduction, social inclusion, gender equality) were addressed in grant-based instruments but much less in the PSIs. Finland's HRBA and CCOs were underemphasised in Team Finland. Dialogue on human rights has been challenging.

Recommendations on transitioning in Finnish – Vietnamese cooperation

1. Formally (ceremonially) close transition process in Viet Nam now that no new country strategy for Viet Nam is in place beyond 2020. Consider (sectoral) partnership.
2. Explore and further develop Finnish thematic and sector leadership and expertise in climate change and related sectors, such as sustainable energy, smart cities, and technological innovation.
3. Continue policy dialogue with the Vietnamese Government on human rights and democratic participation of civil society and the private sector.
4. Analyse how Finland's bilateral political and policy dialogue with the Vietnamese Government can continue to be complementary to and aligned with the EU dialogue and cooperation (instruments) with Viet Nam in the new EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EV-FTA) era.

Recommendations on transitioning in general

5. Develop an approach to transitioning and consider it a strategy and not merely a process.
6. Tailor and focus aid modalities and instruments to specific country contexts, priority SDGs and key economic sectors while ensuring coherence between the private sector instruments and remaining other development support instruments.
7. Simplify and clarify the set-up of the support structure for private sector engagement and the management of private sector instruments in collaboration with Team Finland and Business Finland.
8. Improve communication with all relevant stakeholders in transition and partnership processes by developing a targeted and phased communication plan with different stakeholder categories and groups (operational rec.).

Lessons learned (for other transition contexts)

- Entering a transition process should be done at a time and in a way that matches the specific country context;
- Developing a ToC for a transition process can be beneficial for stakeholder dialogue;
- Take sufficient time for planning and strategizing to allow for a gradual process of change (three 4-year plans);
- Coherence among modalities, instruments and support-institutions is a key to achieve more effective results and impact on the ground;
- Good, targeted and timely communication in any change process, including transition is important;
- Many different stakeholder groups should be brought together to tap into their potential and competencies in joint activities and partnerships.

Thank you !

The transition process
Evaluation Team

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