



Introduction

Parliaments play a key role in development through their mandate to enact laws, represent the people, and hold the government to account. But how can Parliamentarians be assured that the policies and programs they have endorsed are strong, implemented correctly by the government, and improve the lives of the people? Could policies and programmes be improved?

Evidence from evaluation and the critical thinking it fosters can help Parliamentarians play more active roles in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that bring about better, fairer, and more sustainable development results.

The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, combined with a sound understanding of development interventions, can help Parliamentarians to ask the relevant questions during Parliamentary debates and portfolio committee meetings to ultimately ensure the maximum benefits for citizens.

Coherence

OECD/DAC defines Coherence as the degree to which the intervention fits?

The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution.

The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention and vice versa. This includes internal coherence and external coherence. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

Parliamentarians, are you interested in becoming more effective representatives for citizens?

Are you interested in maximising the country's development by raising the relevant questions in parliamentary debates on behalf of your constituents?

Read this series of short brochures on the OECD DAC Criteria

RELEVANCE
is the intervention doing the right things?

EFFECTIVENESS
is the intervention achieving its objectives?

IMPACT
what difference does the intervention make?



COHERENCE
how well does the intervention fit?

EFFICIENCY
how well are resources being used?

SUSTAINABILITY
will the benefits last?

How parliamentarians can use the coherence criteria

Parliamentarians make important contributions to policy by participating in parliamentary committees. Their contribution can be greatly enhanced by a sound understanding of development in the country, by ensuring coherence between sectors, coordination between stakeholders and through taking advantage of complementarity between development interventions.

For example, poverty alleviation programmes are linked to various other sectoral interventions such as economic development, health, education, vocational training and so on.

These may be implemented as separate initiatives and managed by various ministries and departments. However, coordination between implementing ministries and synergy amongst interventions is important to achieve the optimum result of the poverty alleviation programme.

Strong coherence between programmes can generate improved development results for the country by avoiding overlap, duplication, and unnecessary competition and instead build on potential for collaboration and learning. Parliamentarians have a direct link to constituents together with an overview of development at a national level; they are therefore in a unique position to identify incoherence between programmes. By asking pertinent questions about coherence they can ensure that necessary synergies between ministries and programmes are created, and ultimately that improved results are reported to Parliament.

Possible questions parliamentarians can ask to ensure coherence

The following are examples of questions that Parliamentarians might ask about the coherence of a public intervention, program, or policy. It's important however, to be creative when asking questions and to take into account the country context, the nature of the intervention or policy, and the needs of the debate and policy decision-making process.

A: Has the intervention's design considered other interventions addressing the same issue?

B: To what extent do the intervention's results complement results from other interventions addressing the same problem, internally and externally?

C: What level of coordination exists between stakeholders of interventions in this sector?

D: Is the intervention consistent with the norms and standards that the institution is committed to?

Source: De Silva, S. (2021). Theory of Change For Development Success: Workbook. Colombo, Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka Evaluation Association

Resources to learn more about coherence

OECD evaluation criteria, retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/2p9835a6>



OECD (2022) Understanding the six criteria: Definitions, elements for analysis and key challenges. retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/bddefx8>



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