



The same but different?

Donor approaches towards food security PPPs

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Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become a promising approach for donor agencies to address pressing development challenges, such as food security. But what do donor approaches towards PPPs for food security actually look like and to what extent do these approaches differ from each other?

A student research project identified that donor PPP approaches towards food security are similar in terms of aims, definitions and the domains of food security that are addressed, however they show major differences when it comes towards the organization and management of PPP programmes. In addition, approaches need to be understood within the institutional context where they emerge; they follow a certain tradition of the donor and reflect donor's organizational key characteristics

Mapping donor PPP approaches

By mapping the PPP approaches of three key food security related international organizations (**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, **World Food Programme (WFP)** and **International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)**), we were interested in the definitions used for PPPs in the donor programmes; the motivations of the donor organization for setting up PPPs; how food security is addressed by the PPPs; which partners are involved in the PPPs; the roles of donors within their PPPs; how donors manage and organize their PPPs (e.g. how they initiate PPPs). The analysis was mainly based on key policy reports and other documents online available on donor's PPP programmes between 2012 and 2017 and enriched by interviews where possible.

The analysis showed that approaches of the UN organizations are diverse:

- **FAO** works together with a broad range of private partners under the supervision of FAO's Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development. Partnerships are a means towards an end and the key objective is to assist governments in enhancing coordination and collaboration with the private sector for achieving food security and international governance of agriculture, and actively engage the private sector in FAO's work. FAO's partnerships need to follow a set of general guiding principles (e.g. mutual benefit; effectiveness-orientation) developed by FAO for all different types of collaborations, and further principles apply for partnerships with the private sector such as alignment with UN guidelines, common objective, non-exclusivity and accountability.

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- **WFP** promotes a partnering approach that is based on mutuality (in contrast to a transactional relationship) with the aim to generate creativity and innovation to emergency food relief but also individual benefits for WFP and its private sector partner. Partnerships can have different forms (bilateral, multi-stakeholder or open and networked) but all have to follow three principles: they must be strategic to WFP's objective, not detrimental to WFP's reputation, status or operating principles and establish the rules of good practice for partnering (such as equality, transparency, result-orientation, complementarity and responsibility).
- **IFAD** has developed the public-private-producer partnership or 4P approach, where the producing small-scale farmers are explicitly a partner in the partnership. The 4P approach supports IFAD's vision of an inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. Working with private partners enhances IFAD's own impact but also is targeted towards scale and long-lasting impact. Following a flexible PPP approach allows IFAD to avoid bureaucracy but provide guidance on the practice of good partnerships.

Same but different

Despite the fact that the FAO, WFP and IFAD use similar definitions, state similar aims why to partner and which issues around food security should be addressed by PPPs, the approaches developed by the donors are not similar. Differences between programmes were mainly identified when it comes towards their motivations to partner with what type of private sector actor and what roles the donors take on in their PPPs.

The most striking differences were revealed in terms of how PPPs are actually managed and organized within the donor agency. For instance, in terms of initiation of PPPs, WFP's PPPs have been initiated at the chief executive level, whereas FAO promotes a proactive approach and starting collaborations at the field level. Such differences in the management and organization of PPPs by donors have possible implications for potential partners to adapt their PPP strategy to the donor's individual approach. Such differences may also result in a wide range of diverse types and forms of partnerships and prevent possible competition between donor approaches.

Organizational characteristics matter

Are these approaches for food PPPs unique for UN organizations? The research suggests that this is not the case. By including the **Facility for Sustainable Food and Entrepreneurship (FDOV)** of the Dutch government, it showed that no major differences were identified based on a bilateral or multilateral character of the donor, except that Dutch government is interested in facilitating the success of Dutch companies abroad. The Dutch FDOV programme is based on the Dutch Diamond Approach where partnerships between business, government, civil society organisations and knowledge institutes are forged to combine key competencies and pool resources, thereby sharing risks and responsibilities for achieving better development results.

Similar to the Dutch approach of having a double role of funder and partner in FDOV, IFAD's hybrid nature as finance and development institute is also reflected in the combination of its three roles in PPPs: funder, knowledge broker and facilitator. In contrast, the FAO explicitly mentions its neutral and impartial role in its projects, which can be seen in its PPP approach. Therefore, it is proposed that it is rather the unique characteristics of an organization that can explain a donor's approach towards food PPPs

Path-dependency

In fact, the PPP approaches of the investigated organizations seemed to have evolved over the years. For instance, FAO's motivations to partner have changed significantly over the years. In 2012 and 2013, FAO mentioned institutional issues such as enhancing the impact for beneficiaries and increasing the efficiency of their work as reasons for collaborating. In 2016, FAO's PPP focus shifted towards improving the capacity of their public and private partners. However, the past decisions of a certain chosen approach towards PPPs is still visible in current PPP programmes of the donors, even when donors seem to have further developed their programmes based on lessons learned from their own programmes and from international comparison. The evolution of the Dutch FDOV provides here an example: the trend of Dutch development policies to link aid and trade through actively engage the private sector in development cooperation is reflected in the design of the second PPP call in 2014.

What to keep in mind?

The key take away from this study is twofold: first, donor PPP approaches towards food security are similar in terms of aims, definitions and the domains of food security that are addressed, however they show major differences when it comes towards the organization and management of PPP programmes. Second, PPP approaches need to be understood within the institutional context where they emerge. They follow a certain tradition of the donor and reflect donor's organizational key characteristics.

The insights from this student project provides an interesting addition to the PPPLab work on the role and approaches of donors and public actors in PPPs. The PPPLab will further explore similarities and differences of donor PPP approaches in order to develop more understanding on whether such differences in the policy and approaches of donor PPP programmes are actually reflected in the outcomes and impacts of PPPs projects.

Selected readings:

FAO:

Public-private partnerships for agribusiness development: A review of international experiences.

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5699e.pdf>

FAO strategy for partnerships with the private sector. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3444e/i3444e.pdf>

IFAD:

How to do: Public-Private-Producer Partnerships (4Ps) in Agricultural Value Chains.

<https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/998af683-200b-4f34-a5cd-fd7ffb999133>

IFAD and public-private partnerships: Selected project experiences.

<https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/451226eb-1fc6-4474-b39d-f3cafed5164a>

WFP:

WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017). <https://www.wfp.org/content/wfp-corporate-partnership-strategy-2014-2017>

WFP's Private Sector Partnership and Fundraising Strategy: An Evaluation. <https://www.wfp.org/content/private-sector-fundraising-and-partnershipstrategy-policy-evaluation-terms-reference>

Dutch FDOV:

Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV). <http://english.rvo.nl/subsidies-programmes/facility-sustainable-entrepreneurship-and-food-security-fdov>

Mid-Term Review of the Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV).

<http://www.ppplab.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MTR-FDOV-Final-Report-20161125.pdf>