

**EDUCATION FOR ALL – *FAST TRACK INITIATIVE***

**REVIEW OF THE  
GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES**

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## **Acronyms**

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
CF	Catalytic Fund
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EFA	Education for All
EPDF	Education Program Development Fund
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HLG	High Level Group meeting (for EFA)
HDN/ED	Human Development Network/Education Department (World Bank)
IATT	Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV/AIDS and Education
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning (UNESCO)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation in Development
PM	Partnership Meeting
RBM	Roll Back Malaria
SC	Steering Committee
SPA	Strategic Program for Africa
TOR	Terms of Reference
TM	Technical Meeting
TTL	Technical Team Leader (World Bank)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	UN Girl's Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UK	United Kingdom
UPC	Universal Primary School Completion
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (FTI) has established itself in three and a half years as a unique partnership of developing and donor countries and agencies to accelerate progress towards the EFA goal of universal primary school completion.

The purpose of this review is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the operation of the governance structures of FTI and prepare a set of options for strengthening the structures in the context of a possible expansion as well as concerns about inclusivity and transparency. The review is based on a review of FTI documents, partnership literature, and consultations with stakeholders, but suffers from lack of consultation with stakeholders from developing countries.

### *Added-value and governance strengths*

The perception of donors is that the FTI has added significant value to EFA. In particular in providing a platform for senior technical experts to share information, spurring internal changes supportive of harmonization (and to some degree alignment), supporting the development of education sector plans that are said to represent a quantum leap as compared with earlier plans in terms of sustainability, feasibility, measurability, and ownership, and increasing the visibility of the EFA goal.

One of the FTI's strengths is the widely shared ownership by donor partners and the relative ease and openness of dialogue among that group. Almost all respondents thought that the FTI had benefited from an informal, light, and flexible governance structure. These arrangements are perceived to have served well in supporting the initial start-up of the Initiative. In particular, the flexibility enables donors to remain party to the Initiative even if they do not subscribe to all of its elements. The FTI pursues its aims in a challenging environment in which there are pressures to demonstrate quick wins while at the same time engaging in time-consuming processes of nurturing sound planning and coordination at the country level and addressing significant inertia in the development agencies as far as reform to aid modalities is concerned. The prevailing perception of FTI strengths led most respondents to conclude that a light, informal, and non-bureaucratic structure should be maintained and the creation of another 'Global Fund' avoided.

### *Challenges*

FTI is perceived by many as slow-moving, and this perception is placing it at risk among key constituencies—most notably, the countries themselves, the NGO community, and some donor partners. The FTI has not acted as a strong signaling mechanism to donors to change their investment patterns in education. It is seen as a 'feeble compact' with an imbalance between expectations on FTI countries and donors. This is likely the case because different donors hold differing opinions as to the appropriate strategy of the FTI. Differences of intent, poor communication among partners, and unilateral decisions bred mistrust and resentment which marred the FTI's inception. As a result of these differences, the Initiative has been communicated in different ways and has led to the sense of disappointment on the part of some constituencies, particularly field-level staff and potential recipient countries, who consider that the FTI has failed to deliver significant additional resources. As a result, the FTI faces reputational risks.

The loose governance structures have been successful in so far as they have enabled this unruly melange to hang together in what is described as a fragile state. Yet, the arrangements may also be responsible for shortcomings identified by some stakeholders. These include the difficulty in achieving closure on discussions where consensus is elusive (in the absence of decision rules), ambiguity of where authority lies, heightened sensitivities of including additional stakeholders in the governance

arrangements, and the failure to undertake strategic planning which has resulted in a heavy burden placed on the secretariat, co-mingling of the Secretariat and the host's (i.e. World Bank's) education work programme, and variable performance of the Working Groups.

#### *Lessons from the partnership literature*

The literature distinguishes between Independent and hosted partnerships and the benefits and costs of these models. The costs of hosted partnership include governing bodies with minimal authority, lack of partner control over the partnership and accountability of secretariat to partners, identity confusion, and co-mingling of host and secretariat programmes of work. These problems have been found to undermine partnership performance. To overcome these problems, recently established partnerships hosted by WHO, with similarities to the FTI, have negotiated exceptions to WHO rules and regulations which assist them in addressing these problems. In that there is not a huge amount of co-mingling resources in the FTI and because there is general support for the functioning and performance of the Trust Funds, it would appear that there is a limited rationale for establishing an independent entity for the FTI.

Many global partnerships convene a periodic partnership forum to increase two-way communications between the governing bodies and stakeholders who have little access to the partnership. Due to problems of high turn-over of delegates and information asymmetries, only a very few partnerships have vested considerable responsibility in these bodies. Instead, they are used for high level advocacy and to review partnership progress in the context of the strategic planning cycle.

The literature recommends that partnerships mandate a small governing body with decision-making authority over the partnership and that roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the body are agreed. It is advised that the governing body have authority to direct and oversee the programme, its policies and budget and oversight of the secretariat (through a role in selection, appointment and appraisal of its management). This structure ensures accountability of the Secretariat to the partners represented on the governing body. There is a debate over appropriate representation on the governing bodies of global partnerships between those favouring a narrow vs. a stakeholder approach (i.e. representation of all those affected by decisions). Most partnership evaluations recommend a stakeholder approach to improve fairness and performance.

Most analysts agree that wherever possible, decision-making in partnership be made by consensus as it ensures the support and commitment of all partners. Nonetheless, the failure of many partnerships to invoke a decision-rule when consensus can not be achieved has led to important decisions not being taken and differences not resolved.

Most evaluations of global health partnerships find poor specificity of partner roles and responsibilities. This can lead to failure to deliver critical inputs, misunderstandings, undermining collective working arrangements and accountability, which can thus imperil partnership performance. As a result, evaluations recommend explicit delineation of roles and responsibilities in the context of strategic planning.

The literature notes the tendency towards underestimation of the true operational costs of partnership and the consequent lack of resources dedicated to secretariat functions. Lean and mean arrangements run the risk of becoming meaningless and a false economy.

A number of partnerships rely heavily on working groups which are open to all constituencies. Good practice is thought to involve close linkages to governing bodies (i.e. to approve the work programme and receive reports) and to strategic plans.

#### *Partners Meeting*

At present, the FTI convenes an annual Partners Meeting (PM) which is held back-to-back with the UNESCO EFA High Level Group (HLG) meeting. A variety of concerns were raised, including its limited ability to fulfill its role in setting strategic policy directions for the Initiative. There was near consensus that the annual meeting be replaced with a periodic one every 2-3 years and annual regional meetings. It was suggested that the periodic PM serve advocacy, consultation and review functions – not decision-making or strategic policy-setting and that clearer criteria be established for invitations. It was considered important that strong links between the FTI Steering Committee and the EFA HLG be maintained.

#### *Technical Meetings*

There were mixed views on the Technical Meetings (TM) in terms of their purpose, appropriateness, procedures, and performance. For the majority of donors there was support for the idea of a donors-only club within the Initiative with an open, free, non-structured agenda. For some, this was *the* primary value-added of the Initiative. There was a very strong message that the TM works well and should be maintained and that any changes would likely undermine it. Some stakeholders questioned the notion of a donor-only club in an Initiative that purports to be a global compact between donors and recipients and even some donors felt that it was anachronistic and would be improved with fresh insights and perspectives. Some donors report that the TM fails to take decisions (for a variety of reasons) while others contend that decision-making is not its rationale. A variety of proposals for reform were made but it would appear that greater benefits would be achieved by addressing other structures of the FTI.

#### *Steering Committee*

The five-member Steering Committee (SC) provides overall policy guidance to the FTI, gives direction to the Secretariat between Partnership meetings, and helps ensure coordination. The SC is, therefore, the central partnership body and the subject of a great deal of attention in the governance review. There were calls to dispense with the ambiguity surrounding its stature as the governing body by providing it with a more explicit mandate to this effect. The size and composition of the governing body are controversial issues. Many stakeholders advocate increasing membership and including representatives of developing country governments and civil society organizations. A minority thought that the costs of increasing representation would not outweigh the purported advantages and that the annual regional meetings and other mechanisms can be used to improve access of these constituencies. It was argued that the efficacy of the FTI would be enhanced by formally linking membership on the SC to higher level officials who would delegate to their technical staff decision-taking authority. The majority opinion is that prevailing consensus style decision making is appropriate and should be maintained. A minority view holds that while consensus is desirable, a fall back voting system should be instituted to ensure critical decisions are made.

The FTI is co-chaired by two bilateral agencies – one of which is linked to the G8 presidency. The arrangement is viewed positively by many stakeholders who feel that increasing access to the chair increases ownership and internalizes the Initiative in the agencies. This was seen to offset the instability risk. A more contentious issue concerns the eligibility for the chair. Not only are some organizations excluded but it is felt that the chair should be filled by an individual on the basis of his/her merit or the level of commitment of the partner to the Initiative. Finally, the heavy burden falling on co-chairs was

raised and needs to be considered in light of wider consideration of the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat, Working Groups, Steering Committee and chairs.

### *Trust Funds*

The Strategy Committees of the two World Bank administered Trust Funds (TF) represent the most formalized component of FTI governance in that explicit decision-making processes and lines of accountability and reporting are laid out. Not all partners participate in the financing and governance of the TFs. In relation to the governance of the Catalytic Fund (CF) there is some discontent over the fact that small contributors often attempt to wield unwarranted influence and that the present working arrangements are not suited to the realities of supporting additional FTI-endorsed countries. In relation to the governance of the Education Program Development Fund, concerns were raised about the lack of involvement of financial partners in determining World Bank allocation decisions.

### *Secretariat*

The small secretariat, hosted by the World Bank, has the support of most stakeholders for its technical competence, diligence, and responsiveness. Yet views were expressed on the need for reform. An increase in the number of staff and a new staffing plan for scaling-up are required alongside more contributions, both financial and in-kind, to the secretariat. A review of the functions of the secretariat was recommended with more emphasis on reporting country level progress, supporting country-level groups, strategy development, and advocacy and resource mobilization. A heavy-hitting advocacy role would require raising the profile of the secretariat manager post which was supported by a number of stakeholders. The latter was proposed in the context of also ensuring greater and more formal oversight of the secretariat by partners and more clearly delineating between secretariat and World Bank work streams.

### *Working Groups*

Working Group (WG) performance is variable as is partner ability and willingness to contribute to them. A rational distribution of tasks across the FTI bodies within a strategic plan needs to be agreed by stakeholders – including the tasks assigned to WGs. Clear reporting mechanisms need to be established to ensure that the work is carried out and feeds into decision-making.

### *In-country donor groups*

There is widespread agreement that the focus of the partnership needs to shift from the international to the national level – articulating and demonstrably providing value-added in the variety of contexts. To do so, new guidelines and tools need to be developed to support country teams, yet these will only be as effective if donor partners back these with rewards and sanctions for their staff.

### *Summary of main options*

A view prevails among a minority of donor stakeholders that the FTI requires no reform, others concede the need for reform but urge caution due to its fragile nature, others propose further-reaching reforms, whilst the views of developing country stakeholders remain obscured from view. In light of these differences, a representative task team needs to hold further consultations and make recommendations for change.

The FTI needs a clearly designated governing body so as to improve accountability. The options appear to be either the Steering Committee or Technical Meeting. Given the desire by donors to maintain the TM in its present form and that significant authority is already vested with the SC, it would make more sense to designate the SC as governing body.

Stakeholders agree that the FTI needs to move to the country-level. One option is to represent country-level constituencies on the governing body by assigning seats to different developing country constituencies. Improving channels of communication with these constituencies is another, not mutually exclusive, alternative, as are the proposed annual regional meetings. The latter options would fail to deliver the benefit of voice to these country-level constituencies in decision-making in the wider Initiative.

It is suggested that the FTI suffers from a credibility problem because varying expectations have been promoted by donors who hold different views on the Initiative and because the FTI has not prompted the kind of changes in donor education spending patterns that had been envisioned. It is important that the partners agree upon what different components of the partnership aim to achieve (i.e. in relation to the interests of the different donors). This may go some way to clarifying expectations. The FTI will require more 'champions' with strong links beyond the world of technical education experts if it is to accelerate progress on the MDG goal. Two proposals entail changing the membership on the SC to higher level officials who would delegate authority to the technical representatives and/or increasing the profile of the secretariat manager.

Proposals were made to review the functions of the secretariat, particularly in light of FTI country expansion, the heavy workload of the co-chairs, and the variable performance of the Working Groups. One option is to undertake a strategic planning exercise which aims for a more explicit and comprehensive assignment of roles and responsibilities on which all parties are agreed.

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## **1.0 Review objectives, rationale and methods**

The purpose of the review is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the operation of the current governance and management structures of the Education for All (EFA) - *Fast Track Initiative* (FTI), review the strengths and weaknesses of other global partnerships, and prepare a set of options for strengthening the structures if needed (see Annex 1 for Terms of Reference).

The review was commissioned by the FTI Steering Committee which also provided guidance on process and comments on draft products.

The FTI Steering Committee considers the review timely as there is widespread recognition that there may be a need to identify adjustments that will become necessary to accommodate a maturing and expanding Initiative. In particular, the Initiative, which has been operating for approximately three years, is moving from an inception to expansion phase possibly involving an additional forty countries. Furthermore, the review responds to concerns of some stakeholders that the FTI may not be sufficiently inclusive of developing countries and civil society, sufficiently transparent in its decision-making processes, and that the FTI might be able to learn lessons from the strengths and weaknesses of other global partnership experiences in the same way that others are learning from it. Finally, in that the FTI is somewhat personality driven, there were concerns that some aspects may require greater institutionalization to enhance continuity as it matures. In other words with maturation of a partnership based to a great extent of the commitment of a core group of supporting individuals, there may be some value in institutionalizing and formalizing procedures for a new generation of participants, particularly if the Initiative is to be taken to scale.

The review is based on a review of the FTI documents (see references – Annex 2), responses to questions addressing governance and management posed in a discussion paper issued by the Initiative Co-Chairs on the future of the FTI (FTI co-chairs (2005) (Annex 3), a review of the governance structures and processes of other global partnerships (particularly independent evaluations), observation of an FTI Technical Meeting, and a self-completed mini-questionnaire completed by some stakeholders on the characteristics of FTI governance (the results are presented in Annex 4). The review was also informed by conversations with a range of stakeholders as well as semi-structured interviews with a sample of stakeholders to obtain the views of FTI clients and partners of the effectiveness of FTI in delivering its mandate, their expectations for the future, and whether and how the FTI can improve its organizational structures and impact. The interviews were guided by a Consultation Paper drafted for the purpose as well as a summary table which presented some governance issues, options and their strengths and weaknesses (Annex 5). Annex 6 enumerates the persons consulted and interviewed. It should be noted that it was not possible, despite repeated requests, to interview officials from developing country governments. Moreover, the inputs from civil society and donor country representative were limited. The results of the review will be presented by the FTI co-chairs to the full Partnership Meeting in Beijing in November 2005.

## **2.0 Overview of FTI aims, principles and value-added**

The Fast Track Initiative is an evolving global partnership of developing and donor countries and agencies to support global EFA goals by focusing on accelerating progress towards the core EFA goal of universal primary school completion (UPC) by 2015. The Initiative aims to accelerate UPC by promoting: (1) more efficient aid for primary education; (2) sustained increases in aid for primary education; (3) sound sector policies in education; (4) adequate and sustainable domestic financing for education; and (5) increased accountability for sector results. The Initiative also aims to promote mutual learning on what works to improve primary education outcomes.

The Initiative's goals, mechanisms for participation, including the endorsement process of low-income country's plans, resource mobilization, implementation arrangements, and governance structures are elaborated in the Framework document (FTI, 2004).

The Initiative brings together over thirty bilateral donors, development banks, and international agencies working together to support countries to achieve the UPC goal. It is the first global initiative to operationalise the Monterrey Consensus; it links increased donor support for primary education to recipient countries' policy performance and accountability for results. It also offers a platform to enable donors to provide increased, better coordinated, and more effective support to countries.

The FTI is guided by a number of principles, among them country ownership, performance benchmarking, support linked to performance, reduction of transaction costs, and transparency through best practice principles on aid coordination, harmonization and alignment elaborated at Monterrey and expanded at Paris in 2005 – including the use of existing mechanisms and partner agencies at country level) and transparency. The Initiative also values the principles of subsidiarity, non-bureaucratic decision-making, and stream-lined, light-touch governance and management arrangements.

### *FTI Value-added*

The FTI has achieved much since its inception in 2002. At that time, the FTI was seen as an instrument to help low-income countries close four gaps in relation to the MDG education goal: financial; policy; capacity; and data gaps. While there are some differences of opinion among stakeholders on what the value of the Initiative is and what it ought to be, the following represents general sentiments among stakeholders on its present value-added.

First, it has established a platform for donor harmonization and coordination and dialogue about good practices and policies. Improvements include intensified dialogue between donors and with governments, changes to the commitment and orientation of donors, donor-peer pressure and sharing of experience between countries.

Second, the FTI has increased funding for the 16 endorsed countries, while providing mechanisms for resource delivery to low-income countries through the Catalytic Fund (CF) (with over US\$ 45 million disbursed to seven countries and US\$ 122.5 committed to nine countries) and through the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF). These funds are increasingly attracting donor support and can provide an important additional source of support to countries.

Third, the FTI has provided technical support for improved planning and implementation in the sector, including the costing of plans. The education sector plans that have emerged from the FTI process are said to represent a quantum leap as compared with earlier plans in terms of sustainability, feasibility, measurability, and ownership. Improved costing of plans has encouraged and facilitated

external and domestic financing. The Initiative has led to progress in highlighting links between education and PRSPs. Thus it has provided value-added in terms of the policy gap.

Fourth, through its support for better tracking of progress toward the EFA goals (Primary Completion Rate, for instance), the FTI has provided clear value-added in terms of the data gaps as well.

Fifth, since its inception, the FTI has enjoyed a high level of political visibility, particularly around the G8 summit processes.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the FTI provides a platform for sector dialogue among senior technical experts at the global level. In so doing, it has managed to avoid the fragmentation of the sector through global programmes which has occurred in the health sector for example.

### 3.0 Brief overview of the governance and management structures

Governance concerns the how an organization steers itself – where it is going and how it will get there. Governance embraced the informal and formal rules and decision-making procedures which bring order and structure cooperation.

The current governance and management arrangements, established during the start-up of the FTI, are characterized by their ‘light touch’. The Initiative does not have a legal charter or a set of by-laws but its activities are guided by a Framework document which sets out its governing arrangements (FTI 2004). An annual *Partnership Meeting* provides a platform for global consultation among donors, UN agencies, recipient countries, NGO and civil society representatives, and the Secretariat. A five member *Steering Committee* provides the key partners a mechanism for ongoing consultation and guides the activities of the Secretariat. Two co-chairs, representing the G8 presidency and non-G8 donors, serve one-year rotating terms. A *Technical Meeting* of donors and UN agencies convenes twice a year to provide a platform for information sharing and coordinated decision-making on specific implementation issues. The structure is supported by the *Catalytic Fund Strategy Committee* and the *EPDF Strategy Committee* which govern these two Trust Funds. These Funds, managed by the World Bank, support some of the activities of the Initiative. Working Groups on Finance, Alignment and Harmonization, and Communications deal with specific issues identified by the Steering Committee and Partnership. A small Secretariat, hosted by the Human Development Network Education Department (HDN/ED) of the World Bank, serves the various bodies.

The governance arrangements can be characterized as having both highly formalized and vertically-accountable components as well as looser, less formalized and horizontally-accountable components. The former have been established in relation to the Trust Funds, where there are clear decision-rules and accountability through the World Bank to donors as well as with the Secretariat’s relationship to the World Bank. Less formal arrangements govern the Partnership Meeting, Technical Meeting, Steering Committee, and Working Groups. These arrangements are elaborated in section six below.

## **4.0 Lessons learned from other Global Social Sector Partnerships**

This section draws lessons from evaluation reports and the general literature on global partnerships which may be relevant to issues facing the FTI.<sup>1</sup>

### **4.1 Organizational arrangements**

McKinsey and Co developed a typology of organizational structures, based on an examination a number of global health partnership, and drew the conclusion that the critical point is ‘fit for purpose’ arrangements (McKinsey 2002). Simple and loose arrangements are better suited for information sharing, policy development, alignment and harmonization among partners whereas policy implementation and asset sharing require more independence from partners and more formalized structures with tighter accountability. The study identified other factors which ought to drive organizational arrangements including the number of partners, perceptions among partners or a natural lead organization and tolerance of single partner pre-eminence, speed of decision-making required, urgency of establishing the partnerships, and willingness of partners to pay for coordination services.

One of the important organizational distinctions among global partnerships are those which are established as legally independent entities – termed ‘independent’ (e.g., the Global Fund) – and those which establish a secretariat in a host partner organization (e.g., FTI) – termed ‘hosted’. There are, naturally, significant differences among hosted partnerships, as illustrated below. Before turning to these it is drawing attention to the benefits and costs associated with each model as a few stakeholders question the hosting arrangements of the FTI (see Annex 7) (See Buse 2004 for more detailed and empirical discussion). Although independent partnerships may be costly and time-consuming to establish, create new bureaucracies, fragment global policy spaces, and have too much independence from partners, they have significant benefits as well. These include an identifiable brand for resource mobilization and advocacy, Boards with significant authority over the partnership and secretariat, and significant independence from any one partner. Hosted partnerships are generally quicker to establish, can rely on the hosts administrative systems (e.g. legal, human resources, financial services, travel) and thereby introduce cost savings. Hosting by the UN confers additional benefits particularly for staff as well as reach to all countries. Hosting by the World Bank confers additional benefits including access to senior officials in most countries and sectors, operational instruments established to reach most low-income countries, and legitimacy. Nonetheless, hosted partnerships are often problematic in that the relationship between the host and partnership and its secretariat raise conflicts. In particular, governing bodies are not established or lack authority or mandate to take decisions as the host retains fiduciary and managerial responsibility. The secretariat often reports both to host and partnership which creates tensions. The work of the host partner and secretariat is often co-mingled which can cause confusion, resentment and identify confusion. Partners often feel that they lack voice in the partnership as it may be dominated by the host. Competition may exist between the host and the partnership (e.g. in relation to finance). Over the past years, successive partnerships hosted by WHO have negotiated progressively exceptions to WHO rules which overcome a number of problems inherent in hosting arrangements.

### **4.2 Partnership Forums**

Many global partnerships establish Partnership Forums to increase two way communications between the governing bodies and stakeholders. These bodies typically meet every one, two or three years to bring together representatives from the variety of organizations which may not have formal

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<sup>1</sup> These issues are discussed in section six below. A draft version of this report situated the lessons alongside the issues described in the section six but the Steering Committee asked that these lessons be divorced from the analysis of the FTI partnership.

membership in the governing body. Such consultative bodies are typically established to ensure broad and participatory consensus building, partnership-wide endorsement (and review) of policies, strategies and plans, identify barriers and solutions, promote coordinated action, enhance stakeholder commitment to the partnership, and provide a platform for high level advocacy. The World Bank-hosted PROFISH partnership, allows members of its Forum to attend meetings of its governing body as observers (although the Chair may declare certain sections of the Steering Committee closed to observers). Some partnerships invest significant responsibilities in these bodies. For example, the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development nominates members to its Board and Scientific Advisory Committee, has the power to call special meetings of the Board, and its president serves ex-officio on the Board. A few other partnerships entrust such responsibilities to their Partnership forums, but most partnerships use Global Forums primarily to enrich plans and activities through the active exchange of information and experience – for example the Strategic Partnership for Africa (SPA) (another World Bank-hosted partnership focusing primarily on donor harmonization). From a governance perspective, few Global Partnership Forums invest in such forums significant authority or responsibility due to the high-turn over in the bodies and their unwieldy nature.

#### *4.3.1 Governing bodies – roles and responsibilities*

Many global partnerships, even those that have no legal juridical personality (i.e. are hosted), have a designated governing body. These may be called a Board or Steering Committee, among other things. Prevailing wisdom suggests that these should be kept small (McKinsey & Co., 2002).

The roles and responsibilities of governing bodies vary. A number of evaluations of global health partnerships stress the importance of governing bodies focusing on strategic issues as opposed to operational control of the Secretariat and other aspects of the partnership. The McKinsey report (2002) recommended that Alliances develop a decision-making roadmap to facilitate effective decision-making at a high or strategic level. This would prioritise the ten to fifteen most important decisions (per year) (e.g., approval of annual plan and budget, programme expansion) and identify who would be involved (director, senior management team, Board, technical committee, partner organisation) and what their role(s) would be (e.g., review, decide, vote). A major evaluation by World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department's (OED) of Global Partnerships recommended that there should be clarity on the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of a partnership's governing body (OED 2004). The evaluators also stressed that the governing body be provided authority to direct and oversee the programme, its policies and budget as well as its evaluation and audit functions (as opposed to vesting these responsibilities with the programme management).

The governing bodies of many hosted global partnerships take an active role in the oversight of the Secretariat, as recommended by the OED above. This can involve a role in the selection and appointment of the head of the secretariat as well as a role in appraising his/her performance. Nonetheless, these functions are inherent difficult to discharge in hosted partnerships due to the bifurcation of responsibility of the secretariat to the partnership governing body and to the host organization. Reforms within the World Health Organization (WHO) have allowed the Executive Directors of a number of WHO-hosted partnerships (e.g. Roll Back Malaria, Stop TB, and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health) to report functionally to the partnership governing bodies and administratively up the chain of command in WHO. World Bank legal counsel suggested that this might be problematic in the Bank. Yet, in one Bank-hosted partnership, the Consultative Group for the Poor, the Consultative Group (e.g., governing body) confirms the appointment of its Executive Director.

#### *4.3.2 Governing bodies – composition and representation*

In relation to composition of the governing bodies of global partnerships, there are essentially two schools of thought: (1) restrict representation to donors and those who make specific (often technical) contributions; and (2) adopt a stakeholder approach (i.e. all groups affected by decisions of the partnership ought to be represented). It would appear that the stakeholder approach is gaining popularity. For example, increasing number of global health partnership's governing bodies include seats for representatives of Southern constituencies – more typically governments than civil society organizations. This is the case as evaluations stress the need for more inclusion and better representation to facilitate relevance, buy-in and commitment, and ultimately partnership effectiveness (Caines et al 2004). Although no rigorous study has attempted to draw conclusions as to whether wider representation leads better performance, a review of global health partnership effectiveness concluded that “Partnerships lacking formal methods to involve endemic country governments in governance structures tended to be less successful at generating country ownership” (Druce and Harmer, 2004). The World Bank's OED evaluation observed that in those global partnerships with representation of developing country governments, that ‘such representation has generally had a positive impact on the relevance and ownership of global program activities from the point of view of developing countries’ (OED 2004: pg 30). Its report noted the need for the voice of the Bank's client countries on the governing bodies of global partnerships and suggested the development of guidelines for the role of NGOs in these bodies. It is worth noting that the governing bodies of a number of successful World Bank-hosted partnerships include representation of client countries (e.g., Global Environment Facility (GEF), SPA) and civil society (and as observers at the GEF Council – although the present arrangements may not be performing optimally according to a recent external review). PROFISH, a World Bank-hosted partnership, has provisions for inclusion of both regional organizations representing developing countries as well as non-government stakeholder organizations, who meet certain conditions, to be nominated by ‘core members’ of the Steering Committee to become representatives of the Steering Committee. It is similarly worth noting that an evaluation of one World Bank-hosted partnership, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, concluded that without the active participation of developing country governments and non-governmental micro finance initiatives, it is questionable whether the partnership's objectives can be achieved (OED 2004:31).

#### *4.3.3 Governing bodies – decision-making*

In relation to the style of decision-making in governing bodies of alliances and partnerships most analysts would agree that wherever possible, decision-making by consensus is preferable as it ensures the support and commitment of all partners. At the decision-point, the chair should ensure that the decision appears transparent before closing a discussion. Consensus may not always be possible and, as a result, in the independent partnerships (e.g. Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and TB) formal voting systems have been established with voting and non-voting members and clear decision-making rules (e.g. no objection or simple majority) although, in practice, consensus decision-making prevails to the extent possible. In hosted partnerships the picture is more mixed. For example, although wherever possible decisions will be made by consensus, there are provisions for voting in Roll Back Malaria (RBM 2004), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI 2005) and Stop TB (Stop TB 2005) as well as within the Bank-hosted PROFISH.

A number of respondents suggested that because the FTI shares some similarities with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), that its ‘structured informality’ might be an appropriate model for the FTI. Structured informality refers to decision by consensus. A draft report of an evaluation of the ADEA found that its stakeholders valued the consensual approach as it promotes collegiality (Universalia 2005). Yet, respondents acknowledged that this approach to

decision-making ‘slowed down the responsiveness’ of the governing body, that ‘more sensitive issues then to be avoided,’ and ‘some key organizational issues’ have been deferred (e.g. hosting arrangements, location of Secretariat). While respondents felt that structured informality was appropriate, they acknowledged its limitations. The evaluators drew attention to its impact on effectiveness and efficiency. As a result of the decision-making style as well as the unwieldy size of the governing body, the evaluators recommended ‘the establishment of an executive sub-committee, (based perhaps on a more traditional board model) that would take a lead role in making executive decisions’ but notably stopped short of suggesting the introduction of decision-making by vote when required.

#### *4.3.4 Governing bodies – chairing arrangements*

Global partnerships approach the chairing arrangements in different ways. Few have a tenure that is as short as one year; a more usual term is that of two years. The criteria for eligibility for the chair differ from partnership to partnership. Some, like the FTI have been strategic. The chair in GAVI, for example, rotates between the two principal agencies, namely WHO and UNICEF. In some partnerships, the criteria is that a government from the south must sit in the chair. In other hosted partnerships, the chair is provided by the host (e.g., the Bank-hosted SPA). In many partnerships, however, the chair is drawn from any of the governing body’s members by a selection process which often involves a vote. A dual chair arrangement is unusual; most partnerships share the responsibility by appointing a chair and one or two vice-chair(s).

#### **4.4 Partner roles and responsibilities**

Most evaluations of global health partnerships indicate poor specificity of roles and responsibilities of partners. Lack of role clarity was found in reviews of Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (Bockarie et al., 2002), the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, GAVI (Mercer 2002), Global Drug Facility (McKinsey 2003), the Global Alliance to Eliminate Leprosy (Skolnik et al 2003) and Roll Back Malaria (RBM) (Feachem et al 2002). The evaluation of Roll Back Malaria exemplifies the problem and is directly relevant to FTI in that it’s stated purpose is to provide a global coordinated effort to fight malaria. It assists partners to work together to scale up efforts at country level and to coordinate activities to avoid duplication and fragmentation. The evaluation revealed that ‘Core partners are not defined and their roles and responsibilities are not clear... it allows partners to avoid responsibility and to put the blame on others...The result of the loose Partnership has been that Partners yield responsibility to WHO [as host] and then blame the organisation when things go wrong. The Partnership is more akin to a ‘WHO Programme with friends’ rather than a partnership of equals, all of whom are committed to specific roles and responsibilities.’ As a result ‘partners go it alone’. The evaluation stressed that explicit roles and responsibilities optimize partnership performance. Poor specificity can lead to failure to deliver critical inputs as well as misunderstandings – both of which undermine collective working arrangements and accountability.

#### **4.5 Strategic planning**

A number of evaluations of global partnerships have called for improved strategic planning and pointed to the dangers of failure to do so. The external evaluation of ADEA, for example, argued that lack of strategic planning in the Association resulted in undue stress for staff as the number of activities was continually increased and prioritization not performed (Universalia 2005). A GAVI review called for a formal results-based management approach to monitoring progress against the global plan, with a mid-term review and evaluation for each five-year cycle (Caines et al 2003).

#### **4.6 Secretariat**

Partnership involves consultation and coordination and the collection and analysis of data for decision-making, all of which are expensive and time-consuming activities. There is a tendency for partnership designers to overlook the true operational costs of partnerships, particularly if they fail to develop consolidated plans setting out the contribution of all partners to all aspects of the partnerships activities, including the various working groups and so on. McKinsey & Co. observed that the operating budgets of global health partnerships that they examined ‘obscured the true costs of the alliance’ (2002). Instead, partnership designers have proposed ‘lean’, ‘business-like’ and often ‘virtual’ secretariats in an attempt to woo financiers. The McKinsey study argued that keeping the costs of convening, communication and staff costs down was a false economy which severely limits the effectiveness of alliances.

The McKinsey review (2002) found that the ‘best’ alliances recruit leaders with the skills, contacts and personality to making things happen – singling out Tore Godal of GAVI and Seth Berkeley of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (they would likely have included Richard Feachem of the Global Fund had the report been written later).

#### **4.7 Working Groups**

It was repeatedly suggested that the FTI governance review might benefit from consideration of another Bank hosted partnership – the Strategic Partnership for Africa (SPA). The FTI is said to be modeled on the SPA. Reflecting the Bank’s central and leading technical and operational role on aid modalities (the focus on the SPA), the Bank provides a Secretariat, and convenes SPA plenary meetings involving a large group of donors and other agencies, chaired by the Africa Region Vice Presidency. The SPA promotes donor coordination around an agreed policy agenda – and hence focuses on policy alignment. Funding flows to the countries mainly through regular bilateral channels in a decentralized fashion, and the donor group promotes additionality through these same channels as opposed to establishment of a separate financing instrument (unlike the FTI which has established FTI specific Trust Funds). A technical and coordinating secretariat is based in the Bank and reports to the Bank’s management. In the SPA, the Secretariat serves merely a logistical role whereas all the substantive work is done by two working groups and then discussed during the Plenary. A key question that this review was not able to answer is why the SPA Working Groups are highly productive – but it may be the result of the deliberate decision to severely restrict the size and functions of the secretariat.

GAVI differs from the FTI in important respects, particularly in that it has adopted a ‘foundation approach’ to its funding activities. Nonetheless, one finding of a GAVI Board review of its task forces may be relevant to FTI WGs (GAVI 2003). The review found that the task forces had served very effectively as a forum to engage multiple partners in GAVI activities. In particular, since GAVI provides limited opportunities for partner participation outside of the Board, the task forces allow partners to have a voice in GAVI - which was found to be highly beneficial. Although the review commended the TFs for the important products they have produced, one criticism was levelled: “As task forces are currently overseen by the Secretariat, much of the work of the task forces is not visible to the Board. This has been a source of frustration for some task forces.” The Review recommended “a mechanism of timely oversight and feedback to and by the Board should be clearly established, to avoid confusion about the remit of the task force, to provide guidance on work and to establish accountability for completing work plans.”

RBM shares a number of similarities with the FTI. One difference relates to its working groups which are open to all constituencies and their members. An evaluation of the Stop TB Partnership, found its working groups, the primary means for coordinating activities mandated by Board, the pillars of the

partnership. It recommended that these groups be limited to the term of each 5-year global plan with an automatic sunset clause, subject to review of relevance and efficacy for the following plan (Caines et al. 2003).

## 5.0 Perceptions of general strengths and weakness of FTI governance

### *The strengths*

One of the strengths is the widely shared ownership of the FTI by donor partners and the relative ease and openness of dialogue among that group. Almost all respondents thought that the FTI had benefited from an informal, light, and flexible structure. These arrangements are perceived by most respondents to have served well in supporting the initial start up of the Initiative. Some stakeholders were of the opinion that the flexibility had served to allow some Partners to join the Initiative that might have been reluctant to do so if a more restrictive structure were in place and to keep some partners at the FTI table when differences arose over the purpose and direction of the Initiative. In short, donors can remain party to the Initiative even if they do not subscribe to all of the elements of the FTI. The informality of the Initiative, in contrast to other bureaucratic, formulaic and more pro-forma platforms for information exchange (e.g., within UN bodies), was repeatedly stressed as a great strength. Other stakeholders pointed to the contrast with other sectors, such as health, noting how the EFA FTI partnership has provided a single platform for dialogue and action and had thus managed to avoid fragmentation by a plethora of global partnerships. Indeed, the FTI is considered by some to be ‘the only game in town’ and the only Initiative which has been successful in raising the political profile of the relevant MDG and providing a pragmatic approach to attempting to achieve it. Moreover, the FTI is doing this in a challenging environment in which there are pressures to demonstrate quick wins while at the same time engaging in time consuming processes of nurturing sound planning and coordination at the country level and addressing significant inertia in the development agencies as far as operationalizing the Paris agenda is concerned.

The prevailing perception of these strengths led most respondents to conclude that a light, informal, and non-bureaucratic structure should be maintained and that great care should be taken in not creating another ‘Global Fund’.

### *The challenges*

The FTI has racked up a number of important achievements that have raised the profile of EFA efforts worldwide (see section two above). Nevertheless, these achievements are tempered by a sense that much more can and must be done to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Rightly or wrongly, FTI is perceived by many as slow-moving, not fast, and this perception is placing it at risk among key constituencies—most notably, the countries themselves, the NGO community, and some donor partners.

### *Credibility and reputation problems arising from donor differences*

Within the donor community there is generally good support for FTI. However, with a few notable exceptions, this support has not yet been translated into substantive increases in financing for primary education in FTI countries, nor has it led individual donors to become involved in countries where they had previously been absent. This lack of financing constitutes a serious reputational risk for FTI, which can be seen as having significant transaction costs, both for donors and countries.

Part of the problem, it would appear, is that the FTI has not acted as a strong signaling mechanism to donors to change their investment patterns in education. Some referred to it as a ‘feeble compact’ – with an imbalance between expectations on FTI countries and donors. This may be, in part, due to differences among partners about what the FTI ought to be doing. Certainly, there appear to be differences among Partners as to the appropriate balance between filling the four gaps mentioned above. For some, the strength of the FTI lies in its provision of a platform for donor harmonization, for others its ability to channel funds outside of existing bilateral channels, others argue that responding to

capacity gaps by providing immediate support to endorsed countries would go a long way to answering questions about value-added at the country level. This would create additional momentum behind FTI, both among donors and client countries, and would move FTI away from the dangers of slipping into a wait-and-see mode toward a proactive, truly fast-track approach well-positioned to accelerate as donor funding is increased.

As a result of these differences, there is a perception by some that the donor stakeholders to the FTI fall into two camps. The ‘enlargement’ group favours channelling more funds through Trust Funds as they face constraints in disbursing more funds through existing bilateral channels and have reservations about using the IDA for this purposes (as it is not sufficiently targeted to the EFA goal). This group of donors is probably fairly small. The second group has been characterized as the ‘safety valve’ group. This group thinks FTI is useful as it is presently constituted. These donors can point to their participation in the FTI as evidence that they are involved in coordinating their assistance and can blame the wider effort when it appears that things not going quickly or well enough.

Irrespective of whether or not these characterizations are correct, it is certainly the case that differences have existed between donors since the inception of the partnership on the strategy that should be adopted to pursue the FTI goals. A number of stakeholders described the early history of the Initiative, which there is insufficient space to recount, and how inadequate communication and real differences of intent between the donor agencies led to unilateral decisions which breed mistrust and resentment. As a result, there have been tensions within the donor group which, it was argued by a number of respondents, have never been openly discussed or resolved and persist to this day.

Moreover, as a result of these differences among donors, the Initiative has been communicated in different ways and has led, as described above, to the sense of disappointment on the part of some constituencies, particularly field-level staff and potential recipient countries, who consider that the FTI has failed to deliver significant additional resources. Other respondents reported that as a result of the differences, the Initiative’s purposes have ‘flipped’ and ‘flopped’ back and forth a number of times since its inception depending on which camp dominated.

#### *Differing donor interests and strategies for the FTI pose challenges to establishing appropriate governance structures*

The goals of the FTI are clearly spelled out in the Framework document which was endorsed by the Technical (i.e. not Partnership) Meeting in 2004. Nonetheless, there remains some ambiguity among some Partners as to where the emphasis of the Initiative lies or ought to lie (see the results of the mini-survey in Annex 4) as well as the scope of the Initiative. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that the Initiative has not undertaken an exercise to establish explicit measurable and verifiable objectives, targets and milestones against which progress can be tracked. The results of the mini-survey of stakeholders revealed differing opinions as to the nature of existing objectives as well as what the FTI’s objectives ought to be. On the one hand, developing a strategic or business plan for the partnership might force some resolution of the matter. On the other hand, many stakeholders appear comfortable with the present arrangement as it allows different donors to emphasise different aspects of the FTI – a ‘live and let live’ approach. Indeed, a number of respondents urged that the governance review proceed with caution as the FTI is a ‘fragile’ initiative which is fraught with unresolved tensions and that any bold steps should be resisted as the Initiative could unravel.

Nonetheless, the different aims of the donors for the FTI have some relevance from the governance perspective in that the organizational arrangements need to be fit to purpose. As a result, arriving at a

common strategy for the FTI is called for before final decisions about the most appropriate governance structures ought to be made.

#### *The drawback of informality*

There is no legally-mandated oversight body for FTI, but rather a set of very loose and informal reporting arrangements. This may have implications for a range of issues. For example, where consensus is not easily achieved there are problems of achieving closure on the issue. Another example concerns the impact on the Secretariat which may be subject to different sets of competing demands.

#### *Insufficiently inclusive and transparent*

A number of donors and other stakeholders identified the lack of inclusion and transparency as general weaknesses. Beneficiary countries have not been well represented and there are other gaps including the regional development banks and NGOs. These issues are addressed below in the discussion of the various FTI bodies.

#### *Other perceived weaknesses*

Depending on the perspective and interests of the donor and other respondents, different general weaknesses of the FTI were enumerated. These included perceptions that the FTI:

- is insufficiently engaged with ministries of finance and development cooperation and the wider development cooperation debate in donor capitals (including OECD-DAC);
- is insufficiently engaged with ministry of finance at the country-level;
- needs to focus more on advocacy and fund raising (as the model of ‘we will build it, let them come’ has had limited success);
- lacks emphasis on country level donor coordination and division of labour issues;
- is too strongly tied to the World Bank, requires a greater ability from World Bank to act as a facilitator, ensure that at the regional level the Bank dominates less and that country level donor groups be constituted in such a way as to empower other donors;
- place greater emphasis on reporting progress on a country-by-country basis;
- attempt to prioritize countries and activities and in this context institute more business-like planning procedures;

## **6.0 Description, presentation of perceived strengths & weaknesses and options for reform of FTI governance & management structures**

### **6.1 Partnership Meeting**

The FTI Framework document outlines that the Partnership Meeting (PM) sets the strategic policy direction for the FTI and reviews and addresses systematic issues affecting progress towards UPC. Further, it is to provide an advocacy function in relation to the commitment of resources to the FTI and identify issues related to support of specific countries, global support for the FTI, and projected country financial gaps that require the attention of FTI partners. It is also tasked with identifying new mechanisms and modalities for increased resource mobilization. Amendments to the Framework are to be formalized at Partnership Meetings (FTI 2004). The Steering Committee TOR specify a further role for the PM in confirming decisions as to the revision of the composition of the Steering Committee. No further Terms of Reference or operating procedures are available for the PM (for example on selection and invitation of participants, agenda setting and approval, minute writing and approval, distribution of report, etc.).

The partnership has convened its stakeholders annually for a two-day meeting since the FTI was launched in Washington in June 2002 with subsequent meetings held in Oslo (November 2003) and Brasilia (November 2004). Participation is by invitation-only; issued by the Secretariat on the advice of the Steering Committee. For the first meetings, only FTI-endorsed countries were invited. For the forthcoming meeting in Beijing (November 2005), the Steering Committee decided to invite 10 endorsed countries and five 'potential FTI' countries as well as proposed a number of criteria for their selection (SC June 2005 minutes).<sup>2</sup> Donors are invited including, since 2004, some representatives from the field. Certain NGOs have also been invited, specifically the Global Campaign for Education and, as was agreed at the Steering Committee meeting in July 2005, those NGOs working at the country level which are invited to the UNESCO High Level Group meeting. More than 100 individuals typically attend the PM. The Oslo meeting proposed that the PM follow directly after the High Level Group on EFA led by UNESCO to reduce transaction costs and to ensure synergies.

The Partnership Meeting receives status reports on the FTI presented by the Secretariat and the Working Groups. Panels have been organized to present perspectives from developing country governments (of endorsed countries), civil society, and donors. A draft summary of the meeting, prepared by the co-chairs, is presented, reviewed and discussed for approval in the final session of the meeting. The meeting minutes or summary are posted on the FTI website hosted by the World Bank. From the minutes it appears the primary function of the meeting is to share information, to raise and discuss challenges and successes, and to reaffirm priorities and direction. Fundamental decisions, such as the endorsement of the Framework document or review and approval of strategic plans, do not appear to be undertaken by this group.

#### *Consultation*

The consultation process revealed that there was little, albeit some, support for the annual Partnership Meeting and that there was, therefore, little interest in thinking about how it could function better than it is currently constituted. There was a view that the meeting does not provide a platform for setting strategic policy direction. Moreover, the meeting was characterized as 'wooly', 'lacking in teeth' and 'not a place where business is done or commitments made' (i.e. not a decision-making body). It was

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<sup>2</sup> Ensure a regional balance (however, include a larger number of African Countries); identify countries which have a variety of contexts and lessons to share; Catalytic Fund and EPDF recipients.

reported that it is not clear if the meeting is to serve global or country level needs and concerns. Many respondents commented that it was attended by insufficiently senior delegates and that, because some delegates are not party to the SC and TM, the discussions often were ‘expanded technical meetings.’ These respondents indicated that it is, therefore, difficult to interest senior managers and ministers in attending the meetings. As a result, the PM does not provide sufficient linkages to donor ministers responsible for development cooperation or finance ministers in low-income countries nor provide a mechanism for high level advocacy.

Many, although not all, respondents, felt that the benefits of linking the PM to the UNESCO HLG meeting did not correspond with the perceived costs of doing so. In particular, respondents reported that the agendas are not well integrated, EFA priority countries not invited to HLG meeting, and since the HLG meeting does not feed into other decision-making meetings neither does the PM, particularly on finance. A minority view suggested that the back-to-back meetings of HLG and FTI be maintained for two reasons. First, they are in an experimental phase and are being reviewed and refined. Second, the FTI annual partnership meeting can take a global perspective and advantage of the presence of Ministers from both developing and developed countries, senior officials from bilateral/multilateral agencies and civil society for the specific FTI agenda.

Particular concerns were raised in relation to disproportionate effort spent by the Secretariat in preparing for meeting which produces few outcomes.

There was some questioning of the principle of and basis for the participation by invitation policy adopted by the FTI in relation to the PM. There appeared support for recent efforts to include yet-to-be-endorsed countries.

#### *Proposed reforms for the FTI Partnership Meeting*

- **Convene PM every two to three years and establish annual regional meetings.** The consultation revealed wide-spread, although not universal, support to replace the annual Partnership Meeting with a meeting held every two to three years coupled with annual regional meetings. The periodic meeting could feed into a five year strategic planning cycle. There was widespread support for annual regional meetings – to move the FTI closer the field (to discuss particular countries) and to allow more cross-country sharing. It was proposed that these regional might coincide with existing forums (e.g. ADEA) or be purposely established for discussing individual country experiences and lessons learned. It was suggested that such regional meetings could be financed through the EPDF. The results of these meetings could feed into the periodic partnership meetings.
- **Periodic PM to serve advocacy, consultation and review functions – not decision-making or strategic policy setting.** The functions of the periodic PM would have to be rethought, in light of the functions of the UNESCO HLG meeting, the functions of the proposed annual regional meetings and the proposed responsibilities of the SC. In particular, it would be necessary to reconsider whether this or another body would set the strategic policy direction or whether this meeting would serve to review the progress of EFA. Some respondents suggested that the PM ought to have greater authority over the initiative. Others, prudently, cautioned that, because of information asymmetries among delegates to the annual or periodic PM, loading substantive responsibilities on this group would present unwarranted risks. If the PM is to become more periodic, there will be the need to look at each of the functions of the present annual meeting and decide where best to resituate them.
- **Maintain annual PM.** Not all stakeholders agreed that annual regional meetings could or should substitute for the annual Partners Meeting. A very small minority felt that since the TM and SC are

not inclusive of governments and civil society, that there remains the need to bring all stakeholders together annually – not just at the regional consultations. This problem could be addressed by making the SC more inclusive of different stakeholders. The costs of maintaining the status quo also need consideration, particularly the costs of organizing the meetings and the perception that they have limited utility.

- **Retain tight linkage with UNESCO EFA HLG meeting.** Many respondents considered it both desirable and necessary to retain strong linkages between FTI and UNESCO EFA HLG meeting yet most thought (pending the outcome of the Beijing meeting) that a divorce between the FTI Partnership Meeting and the HLG meeting was desirable. Consequently, there was strong support to maintain a link between the HLG meeting and the Secretariat and/or representatives of governing body (i.e. Steering Committee).
- **Establish criteria and more transparent process for invitation to PM.** Procedures for inviting participants and delegates to the periodic meetings need to be established (particularly with the growing number of FTI countries). Some felt that meeting should be open to all, others who saw some decision-making role for the PM thought that a system of constituency representation ought to be established. Should the annual meeting be maintained, the issue of representation needs to be reviewed – including perhaps open doors to civil society organizations.
- Improve systems for ongoing communication and interaction with stakeholders and constituencies in between meetings.

## 6.2 *Technical Meeting*

The FTI Framework encourages groups with common sets of interests to establish consultative or technical meetings as appropriate. The Technical Meetings (TM), composed of FTI donor partners and technical agencies, constitute one such group that meets once or twice a year between Partnership meetings. These are meetings among senior technical headquarter-level staff (although during 2005 country-level staff of some agencies have also been invited). The TM has no formal TORs. Minutes from the Paris 2002 Technical Meeting propose that the primary purpose of the TM is to track progress and address broader and systemic issues and constraints facing the FTI at the country-level. The group also formally ‘endorses’ countries for FTI support by non-objection (although the July 2004 Steering Committee clarified that this is intended to verify and provide information to donors concerning the involvement of their staff in the process). These and other decisions are taken by consensus. Meeting minutes or reports clearly indicate the decisions taken and the proposed follow-up actions of the Secretariat and Partners. Reports, co-chairs statements or reports and decision-notes are posted on the FTI website although others can not be found (e.g., March 2004).

### *Consultation*

There were mixed views on the Technical Meetings in terms of their purpose, appropriateness, procedures, and performance. For the majority of donors there was support for the idea of a donors-only club within the Initiative with an open, free, non-structured agenda. For some, this was *the* primary value-added of the Initiative. Participants variously praised the TM for its frank and open sharing of information, plans, strategies, actions, and constraints among different donors, as a venue to thoroughly address technical problems, as well as to improve donor coordination and harmonization. A number of respondents indicated that the TM has an impact on the agencies internally. While respondents indicated that they may not agree with other donors on their chosen approaches, it is nonetheless very useful to know what the others are thinking and doing. According to this group, the TM works well, particularly in its informality (in contrast to other UN platforms) and should be preserved. Indeed, a number of stakeholders indicated that there was the risk that the inclusion of other stakeholders would remove the only existing platform for technical donor staff to

exchange views frankly. The view was also expressed that involvement of developing countries (and civil society) may introduce the need for language translation which would undermine the dynamic and add logistical complexities and costs.

A number of stakeholders questioned the notion of having a donor-only club in an Initiative that purports to be a global compact between donors and recipients. These respondents argued that inclusion of other stakeholders (even as observers) would enrich the discussions with new perspectives (one informant thought that the discussions had become stale as the same issues were rehashed by the same people) and would reduce misunderstandings and suspicions about the FTI as other constituencies gained a better understanding of the Initiative. Some respondents indicated that for some issues there were other donor-only platforms available (e.g., DAC Working Group). Involving other stakeholders might also serve to bring the discussions closer to the problems confronting the field. For some of these respondents, the lack of inclusivity would not be such an issue if there were opportunities for other stakeholders to feed into decision-making in other ways in the FTI (e.g., the Steering Committee).

For others the problem is that the TM fails to take decisions. This is the case, it is argued, because the senior technical delegates do not speak on behalf of their governments and often cannot engage their finance and development cooperation ministers. Other opined that at times one or two donors prevent the meeting from taking decisions. A minority view held that the TM was too large for efficient discussion.

Still others felt that although many key issues are discussed and resolved yet these conclusions do not appear in meeting minutes. For those who see the principle benefit of the TM as sharing information, non decision-making is not a problem.

Others argue that the TM does make (important) decisions about the FTI (e.g. approval the Terms of Reference of the Secretariat and of the Steering Committee, approval of the Framework document) and that the process of decision-making is not sufficiently clear. They argue that this will become increasingly problematic as the membership turns over as the Initiative matures.

#### *Proposals for reform*

- **Maintain status quo.** Most respondents support, with some qualifications, maintaining the TM. The benefits of the status quo are outlined above.
- **Revise the TM agenda.** Some donors suggested that the emphasis of the agenda should be placed on monitoring and holding donors to account on their progress on alignment and harmonization agenda. In particular, that there should be country-by-country reports on progress and barriers. The body would thus serve to put peer pressure on donors who are performing poorly and to ensure that agencies are adopting the right incentives for their staff. Others suggested that the agenda should be individual country focused – those just endorsed or about to be endorsed.
- **Introduce a decision-making rule.** Some respondents suggested that there may be the need to introduce a decision-making rule with recourse to dispute resolution, more structure around recording decisions, and more systematic and proactive reporting to the wider stakeholder group.
- **Reform TM into the governing body of the FTI.** Some suggested opening the TM to other stakeholders (at least on an observer basis) and transforming it into a board type structure by shrinking its size and increasing its authority to take decisions. This option would require dismantling the Steering Committee.
- **TM as a more formal constituency mechanism for donors.** A number of respondents felt that the name of the group was a misnomer. It was suggested that it might be renamed the donor

constituency meeting – with time this meeting might elect members to sit on an expanded Steering Committee. As such the meeting, perhaps annual, would provide the platform for sharing information among donors but would also provide a vehicle for the constituency to ‘get its house in order’ so as to make the donor case at the SC. It was suggested that other stakeholder groups (e.g. civil society and developing country governments from different geographical regions) might also consider establishing constituency meetings.

### **6.3 *Steering Committee***

The Framework document establishes that a Steering Committee (SC) provides overall policy guidance to the FTI, gives direction to the Secretariat between Partnership meetings, and helps ensure coordination. The Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee (approved at the March 2004 Technical Meeting) indicate that it ‘shall provide guidance to the Secretariat regarding the implementation of recommendations made in the Development Committee (of the World Bank) and partnership and donor meetings on...’ a variety of matters including policy and organizational issues. The SC meeting in July 2004 discussed its role as either an advisory or a decision-making body and concluded that it should maintain the description in the Framework document – as an interim policy advisory group.

The five standing members of the Steering Committee are the two current co-chairs, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the most recent out-going chair for a six month period following its tenure. The SC plays an important role in ensuring a continuous link with the bilateral donors, G-8, UNESCO and the World Bank which enables the FTI to use existing mechanisms as the main aid delivery channels. The SC also assists to organize donor and partnership meetings, and the rotation of the co-chairs. The SC meets three to four times in person each year (prior to the donor and partnership meetings) as well as required by phone (up to once a week prior to the Partnership Meeting). The SC does make numerous decisions – particularly endorsements of ongoing work as well as policy decisions (e.g., on the donor indicative framework). Decisions are made by consensus – although this method of decision-making is not stipulated in the TORs. Minutes from three Steering Committee meetings are available on the FTI website.

#### *Consultation*

Fewer respondents commented on the Steering Committee suggesting perhaps that they have no concerns with the present arrangements. None of the respondents questioned the idea of the SC – although some organizations that have never had a seat conceded their lack of understanding of what takes place at meetings. The SC was welcomed in light of the large number of stakeholders in the Initiative. With majority opinion in favour of a replacing an annual Partners Meeting with one held every two or three years, the need for a stable group at the centre of the Initiative was seen as invaluable. Nonetheless, a number of possible weaknesses were identified as outlined below.

First, there appears to be ambiguity over the authority which the Steering Committee has over decision-making in the Initiative. A number of respondents felt that it ought to be the governing body of the Initiative (i.e. provided with a mandate to make decisions in relation to the FTI), which it may or may not be depending on the interpretation of the TORs. Similarly it is unclear the extent to which the SC has authority over the secretariat (with the current Secretariat head reporting informally to the SC).

The composition of the Steering Committee was raised in a number of interviews. Some argue that the composition sends a signal about the Initiative’s purpose and that at present it is clearly identified, and inappropriately, with the financing function at the expense of other functions. Some argued that there

were insufficient numbers of stakeholders represented on the Committee to encourage widespread understanding and commitment to the FTI. For others, the problem with composition is that its design precludes membership of certain organizations (e.g., UNICEF, EC, OECD-DAC) or representation of specific constituencies (e.g. developing country governments and/or civil society). Some donors argued that inclusion of these latter groups would enhance the legitimacy of the Initiative. Civil society advanced four arguments in favour of its inclusion: (1) civil society could raise the political stature of the Initiative; (2) FTI could benefit from civil society perspectives; (3) civil society could balance the views of developing country governments within FTI; and (4) civil society should be awarded a presence in recognition for its constructive contributions to the FTI. Other respondents are opposed to civil society representation on the SC as it would render frank discussions more difficult, make decision-making more complex, and would render impotent civil society's important role as an independent watch-dog (although this perspective was countered with the argument that there would still remain many external civil society groups). As a result of these concerns, some stakeholders favoured identifying alternative mechanisms for consulting with, and seeking the perspectives of, civil society on the decisions facing the FTI. Some suggested that the proposed annual regional meetings would provide one such conduit. For other respondents, the inclusion of civil society hinged around the inclusion criteria. It was argued, for example, that only those that have to live with the consequences of their positions should be included (thus, it was argued, ruling out the participating of campaign organizations). Nonetheless, the view among those nominally opposed to the inclusion of civil society on the SC appeared to be that they would not block civil society inclusion if the majority of members were in favour.

Third, the 'characteristics' of the delegates to the Steering Committee was raised by some respondents. Some interviewees argued that the present membership of the SC needs to be better engaged with the senior managerial cadre of the Partners (e.g., Senior Vice President level in the Bank or at Permanent Secretary level in DfID). This would bring wider development perspectives into the SC, internalize the FTI principles in Partner agencies, and improve the advocacy and resource mobilization reach of the FTI. According to this perspective, the senior political or managerial member would attend the SC in person (from time to time) or else delegate authority to take decisions to the senior technical delegate (in the case of some donors this practice already prevails). Other donors were concerned that this approach may undermine the technical edge of the FTI. It was proposed that in an effort to bring the Initiative closer to the field, that Partners' country-level staff represent their organizations on the SC. Such a proposal was thought by others as at odds with the need to engage higher level donor agency personnel in the FTI. At present, there are no explicit criteria for SC membership.

Fourth, the the style of decision-making was raised as well as the lack of clarity on the rules. For some stakeholders, the decision-making style that prevails is too consensual. It was argued that there is no final decision maker and no process to take decisions. These respondents complained that important decisions have not been taken due to a failure to reach consensus and that some decisions have been pushed through by the World Bank simply because a decision had to be taken. As a result, the World Bank may be perceived as dominating. Without a voting procedure, decisions can be deferred or blocked by a minority. Other respondents felt strongly about the need to retain the consensus approach both as a matter of principle and strategy. Some respondents indicated that the FTI has no mandate to make decisions which are binding on partners organizations and it is, therefore, not reasonable to have recourse to a vote which would override a minority view. Other, more pragmatic, arguments were made in favour of a consensus approach. Consensus leads to commitment and buy-in to the FTI and, hence, implementation of joint decisions. It fosters collegiality and builds trust. For some respondents, this has enabled the Steering Committee to function as well as it does. Some respondents pointed out that due to

differences among Partners on fundamental issues, some partners would no longer be party to the Initiative were decisions taken by majority vote.

#### *Proposals for reform*

- **Designate SC as governing body.** Some respondents wanted further clarification of the authority of the Steering Committee with respect to its authority over the partnership and over the Secretariat. For some respondents this implies formal designation of the Steering Committee as the governing body and further clarification of its roles and responsibilities. For some, there was a specific interest in clarification of the authority of the Steering committee over the Secretariat (and formalizing the accountability of the Secretariat manager to the Steering Committee) as well as providing it a role in the selection of the Secretariat manager.
- **Broaden composition.** A number of stakeholders suggested that seats be allocated to representatives of developing country governments, civil society (although there may have been less support for this proposition) as well as to UNICEF and the OECD-DAC. To increase the salience of country realities in the SC it was suggested that Partners appointing field officials as representatives. Some respondents suggested that the composition of the reformed SC should wait until a discussion on the issue in Beijing, while other respondents have elaborated proposals for the allocation of seats.
- **Elevate profile of members.** The proposal involves formal membership be at the level of Minister or Director General who would delegate responsibility for participation and decision-making to their technical staff.
- **Decision-making.** Many argued in favour of retaining the present consensus approach. There was a proposal to introduce a simple majority voting system. There was also a proposal to retain the consensus approach but to have agreement that on certain key issues which were deemed by the majority to be critical for Initiative to make progress, a voting system could be appealed to (on the understanding that it was to be used extremely judiciously).

#### **6.4 Chairing Arrangements**

The FTI Partnership is co-chaired by two bilateral agencies. The co-chairs provide political leadership for the Initiative during their one year tenure, and serve as co-conveners of the FTI Partnership meetings. By convention, the G8 president serves as one co-chair and a non-G8 country as the other co-chair. The rotation of the G8 co-chair is on a calendar year basis. To facilitate continuity, the non-G8 co-chair serves from July-June. By convention, the non-G8 co-chair has been selected by the non-G8 partners through an informal process of negotiation.

#### *Consultation*

The dual chair arrangement arose out of specific historical opportunities and considerations; on the one hand a strategic political opportunity for the chair to be linked to the G8 presidency presented itself and, on the other, the need to allocate a chair to a non-G8 country due to political sensitivities. Four issues arose during the consultation on the arrangement: (1) the benefits and costs of rotation; (2) the chair eligibility criteria; (3) to a lesser extent, the benefits and costs of two co-chairs; and (4), the capacity requirement for the Chair under the present arrangement.

For many respondents, the rotation of the chairs was seen as providing many benefits by increasing the number of agencies with access to the chair. Chairing, it is said, increases ownership and internalizes the Initiative in the agencies (i.e. increases appreciation of the principles of the Initiative) and provides opportunities for the chairing agency to become more involved in FTI policy and strategic issues. As a result, the rotation has served to broaden and deepen donor commitment to the

FTI – often resulting in Ministerial level interest. There are concerns that the frequency of rotation increases instability; pulling the Secretariat in different and sometimes futile directions and undermining efficiency due to lack of institutional memory in the chair.

A more contentious issue arising out of the arrangement is the eligibility for the chair. By design or default certain agencies are excluded (e.g. EC, World Bank). This was seen as flawed by some respondents in that ‘the FTI needs to be more than the G8’. Other respondents argued that the donor co-chairing arrangement is necessary to offset the influence of the World Bank in the SC. Another issue that came up frequently was continued appropriateness of the G8 presidency seat. Some questioned the extent to which the arrangement had in fact served to raise the profile of the Initiative onto the G8 agenda in any substantive manner (although the counterfactual is naturally difficult to discern). Others questioned the logic of the criteria themselves. This camp favours establishing criteria which link the chair to the level of involvement of an agency in the Initiative. From this perspective, there are risks to entrusting the chair to Russia, Germany and Japan. Concerns were also raised concerning the non-transparent procedure governing the succession of the non G8 co-chair.

The third concern, relating to dual chair arrangement, was raised by one respondent. In particular the dual arrangement undermines accountability by its failure to situate final decision making in any one individual or agency. The arrangement was thought to be symptomatic of the lack of accountability of the organizational arrangements more generally. For others, co-chairing balances different styles and interests of the agencies.

Finally, attention was drawn to the heavy workload associated with co-chairing. Some respondents indicated that their agency would need to make special arrangements to assume the role – particularly given the expectation that the co-chairs engage heavily in policy and strategic issues. Some respondents expressed the view that this work was necessary as the Secretariat is insufficiently engaged in strategic issues, perhaps a reflection of the lack of attention by the Partnership more generally to strategic planning, prioritization, and work allocation.

#### *Proposed reforms*

- **Tenure of chair.** Despite some concerns that the frequent rotation of the chairs causes instability, there were no proposals to lengthen the tenure of the chair.
- **Eligibility criteria for the chair.** Proposals include expanding the eligibility to donors which are neither G8 nor non-G8, technical agencies, and developing country governments. Change the criteria to correspond to effort and interest in the FTI. Introduce criteria and process for succession of the non-G8 chair.
- **Single chair.** A proposal was made to replace co-chairs with chair and one or two vice-chairs.
- **Workload of the chairs.** There were proposals relating to the workload associated with the chairing roles which are presented below in the Secretariat section.

### **6.5 Trust Fund Strategy Committees**

The most formalized component of the FTI concerns the Trust Funds for which there are explicit decision-making processes and lines of accountability and reporting.

#### *6.5.1 The Catalytic Trust Fund*

The Catalytic Fund (CF) was established by the donor partners in November 2003. It provides one to two, maximum three, years transitional grant financing to low-income countries with too few donors to enable them to scale up country education sector programmes. The CF transitional financing is

intended to enable FTI endorsed countries to bridge their financing gap, boost their performance, and attract additional and longer-term financing to enable them to sustain their efforts.

The CF is open to IDA eligible countries that meet the EFA-FTI criteria and that qualify as being donor ‘orphans’.<sup>3</sup> The EFA-FTI criteria are that the country has a national education sector programme, endorsed by partners at the country level, that prioritizes the achievement of the MDG for primary education; has a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in which the programme is embedded; and demonstrates reasonable and effective country effort that is tracked by common indicators (i.e. the FTI indicative framework).

The governance of the CF is laid out in the Administration Agreements signed between the contributing donors and the World Bank, the Operational Guidelines for the Catalytic Fund compiled by the FTI Secretariat, and the Framework document. The Catalytic Fund is administered by the World Bank on behalf of the FTI partnership. The FTI Secretariat manages the CF on a day-to-day basis. A Strategy Committee, consisting of a representative from each contributing donor (presently UK, Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Norway) and a representative of the World Bank, sets the policies and guidelines of the CF, decides upon the country allocations, and provides guidance to the FTI Secretariat during implementation. Decisions within the Strategy Committee are made by consensus. The Strategy Committee is chaired by the World Bank representative who is the Senior Vice President of HDN. In general, meetings of the Strategy Committee follow directly after FTI Partners’ meetings, so as to address the needs of countries for Catalytic Fund support. There was one Strategy Committee meeting in November 2003, two meetings in 2004 (in July and November), and three meetings in 2005 (March, July, September). The FTI Secretariat reports periodically to the FTI Partners on the Fund’s activities

The Strategy Committee selects the eligible countries for which assistance shall be provided and determines the amount of funds that should be allocated to each country. The World Bank then decides which type of recipient will receive funds in a given country. These recipients can be either governments of eligible countries, country-specific trust funds established to support education in an eligible country, aid agencies of governments providing assistance to eligible countries or such other eligible recipients as may be determined by the Strategy Committee.

#### *Consultation Views*

The consultation process revealed a few issues for concern relating to the way the Catalytic Fund is governed. The decision-making process within the Strategy Committee arose a couple of times. Presently the decisions are made by consensus. This is thought by some to work very well to date with the final decision resting with the World Bank as Trustee (so if there is a difference of opinion the Bank can take a final decision). Other respondents questioned the principle of consensus in the context of the different magnitude of donors’ contributions to the CF. This was described as representing an “asymmetry between contributions and influence in the Strategy Committee” and causing a “major tension [as those] which provide very little funding are provided voice.” These tensions may become more pronounced as more countries become eligible and the Strategy Committee needs to prioritize recipients. The views on how to remedy this issue however were varied. Some argued in favour of changing the voting procedures to take into account donor contribution. Others argued that the idea of linking votes to allocations was unreasonable and that more formal procedures for voting would be destructive and could even result in the withdrawal of some donors. Instead, more effort should be devoted to consensus- and trust-building and mutual respect.

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<sup>3</sup> These were defined by the Strategy Committee as being countries with the presence of four or fewer bilateral donors contributing at least US\$ 1 million to the education sector (March 2005)

Another issue was the capacity of the CF to scale up in light of the likely increase in countries planned for the following years. The Strategy Committee would need to meet more frequently than it presently does according to one partner. Additionally, some consultations pointed out that the focus of the Catalytic Fund would need to be modified. One proposal was that the Strategy Committee would need move from ‘check-writing mode’ to one consistent with ‘monitoring longer-term effectiveness of the approaches.’ A related proposal concerned enabling the Strategy Committee to not only look at countries once the plans were endorsed, but to help before by establishing a more participatory process to come to the development of the plans presented to the Strategy Committee.

#### *Proposed Reforms*

- **Decision-making in the Strategy Committee.** The proposal to change from consensus to a system linking voting rights to subscriptions to the CF would mark a radical step which may have implications for the volume of funds and number of donors participating in the CF. There is need for further consultation on the issue. Through the process of consultation, those donors who currently provide smaller amounts may come to understand that sensitivities need to be borne in mind when presenting their views on policy issues, country prioritization or resource allocation.
- **Working methods and agenda.** The views presented on the need to rethink the focus and working arrangements of the Committee are valid and require further attention.

#### *6.5.2 The Education Program Development Fund*

The multi-donor Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) was established by FTI in November 2004 to enable more low-income countries to access the FTI and accelerate progress towards universal primary education. The EPDF provides technical support and builds the capacity required to prepare a sound education plan for those countries without education plans and weak capacity and assists countries in the implementation of their education sector plans by supporting knowledge generation through better monitoring and evaluation. The EPDF also provides support to generate knowledge about areas of key constraints to achievement of the MDGs for education that can be shared within and across countries to facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity- and consensus-building at the regional and sub-regional levels.

The governance of the EPDF is laid out in the Administration Agreements signed between donors and the World Bank. A representative of each contributing donor to the EPDF (currently Norway and the UK)<sup>4</sup> and the World Bank forms the EPDF Strategy Committee. The Committee is chaired by a senior representative of the World Bank, who is the Director of the Human Development Network (HDN). The Strategy Committee sets the criteria for the use of Fund resources and decides on regional allocations. The Strategy Committee meets annually to review progress of the previous year and decide on allocations and approve (on a non-objection basis) regional plans for the coming year. There was one Strategy Committee meeting in 2004 and three in 2005.

In contrast to the CF, the EPDF is World Bank executed. The management of Fund resources is delegated to the Bank's Regional Education/HD management teams. The Regional Managers are responsible for preparing an annual plan for the use of the funds in collaboration with their staff working at the country-level and the other country-level donors, monitoring those activities, and reporting annually on implementation progress, outcomes and Fund accounts. Annual plans are circulated to the Strategy Committee.

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<sup>4</sup> Belgium, Netherlands and Sweden are committed to join.

The FTI Secretariat serves as the Secretariat to the Strategy Committee and as the liaison with Bank operational managers. In this capacity, it organizes an annual Strategy Committee meeting and provides support to the Strategy Committee and regional managers. It posts the regional plans to facilitate coordination with other partners.<sup>5</sup>

### *Consultation*

Strong views were expressed on the governance of the EPDF in that the money was seen as being exclusively for the benefit of the World Bank. The EPDF was described as being “the World Bank’s pocket money,” “too Bank influenced” and “driven,” “good in principle but in practice, the money channels through what the World Bank is doing in the countries.” The way the EPDF operates, with the internal bank structure deciding on the allocation of the funds, was therefore strongly seen as a cause for concern. It was stressed that no one agency should have the monopoly on how to allocate these funds.

### *Proposed Reforms*

- **Strategy Committee chairing and composition.** Proposals were made to appoint a non World Bank official to chair the committee so as to reduce the influence of the World Bank and to enlarge the Strategy Committee to include other partners.
- **Wider involvement in intra-regional fund allocation decision-making.** It was argued that other donors should have a some say in the allocation of these funds at the regional level. It was also argued that UNESCO and UNICEF should have a voice due to their role in capacity building.
- **Eligible recipients.** Proposals were made for the number of eligible institutions to be expanded, in particular, to allow other organizations, which support the beneficiary country in question, to benefit from funding. It was stressed that an open and inclusive EPDF should enable UNESCO to play a more useful role in capacity building and technical assistance. It was proposed that the Strategy Committee should establish a foundation model and receive proposals from all partners
- **Improved information sharing.** More proactive sharing of information on what is being financed with the EDPF support and sharing this information with the partners.

As a result of the above-mentioned concerns, proposals for reform are being discussed among the interested partners and a proposal to establish Regional Reference Groups as advisory bodies is being negotiated. It was agreed at the September 2005 Strategy Committee meeting that the structure of Regional Reference Groups should be kept as light as possible and used as a way of involving other institutions such as ADEA. In effect, the RRGs would be advisory groups and a mechanism to capture the collaboration that is already occurring among donors at the country- level.

## **6.6 Secretariat**

The Secretariat is comprised of staff of the World Bank and staff on secondment from partner agencies and is managed by the World Bank under the direction of the FTI Steering Committee. The Secretariat is housed within the Education Unit of the HDN with the Secretariat Manager reporting to the Director, HDNED.<sup>6</sup> The Secretariat organigram is presented in Annex 8. The World Bank finances approximately two-thirds of the cost of staff, travel and overheads with the remainder financed by the Secretariat Trust Fund which is supported by the UK, Germany, and France.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www1.worldbank.org/education/efafti/epdf.asp>

<sup>6</sup> A recent initiative in HDNED saw an attempt to separate World Bank management and partner roles in the FTI – with a Senior Education Specialist tasked with ‘representing the face of the Bank to FTI’ while the Director, HND, maintains management functions over Secretariat.

The Secretariat provides technical and administrative support to the Initiative including: (1) overall development of the Initiative; (2) administration of the FTI Trust Funds; (3) supporting the development of cross-country performance measures; and (4) knowledge sharing, communications and outreach. A more detailed description is provided in the Secretariat's Terms of Reference which are presented in Annex 9.

The Secretariat's first business plan was presented to the Oslo Partners Meeting in November 2003 (covering Fiscal Year July 2003 to June 2004 to match that of the World Bank). The Secretariat now prepares an annual report based on the calendar year which it presents to the Spring Technical Meeting. This provides a Retrospective overview of the preceding year and 'Work Program Priorities' for the following year. The most recent annual report was prepared for, but not officially endorsed by, the March 2005 TM covering activities from January 2005 – June 2006 (annex 10). Attached to the report is an annex which translates priority tasks into discrete deliverables and indicates the amount of time, in staff weeks, estimated to be needed for those tasks.

### *Consultation*

A number of respondents praised the Secretariat for its technical competence, diligence, and responsiveness, noting that it produces a large volume of outputs given its human resources constraints. The dedication and competence of individual staff were highlighted. Some commentators reported that the current leadership has brought the staff together into a well functioning team.

There were, however, views expressed on perceived weaknesses related to the functions performed by the Secretariat, its profile, independence from its host, and the circumscribed role of partners in its oversight. Some respondents suggested that there may be the need for changes to the operation of the Secretariat to serve a changing FTI, but the nature and scope of the changes will depend on a wider analysis of what the Partnership wishes to achieve as it expands and how it will do so.

The volume of the workload of the Secretariat was mentioned during interviews. It is thought to be increasingly heavy. Although at least one country takes the view that the Secretariat is already too large, the majority of respondents were of the opinion that the secretariat is not adequately resourced to manage an increase in FTI countries from 3-4 per year to 3-4 per month. The view was repeatedly aired that partners are not committing sufficient resources for the operational work of the Secretariat for the present arrangements (let alone scaling up) and that their contribution of human resources to the FTI are inadequate although this varies from donor to donor. A number of Partners commented on the difficulties they face in getting approval for secondments and in identifying appropriate technical candidates in the face of severe human resource constraints. Other donors have tried to make the case internally for increased support to the Secretariat but are aware of concerns around creating another bureaucracy.

There were mixed views on whether or not the functions presently performed by the Secretariat are appropriate. A few respondents felt that, on the whole, the present portfolio is appropriate. Many respondents, however, identified the need to do more of some things and less of others and there were concerns about the distribution of tasks between the Secretariat and the FTI partners. The view was expressed, for example, that the Secretariat is not doing enough technical and analytical work (as it lacks human resources) to serve the FTI in making adequately informed decisions. And that available case studies and analysis, from Secretariat, Partners and other technical organizations, are not adequately shared through the FTI network. Others thought that the monitoring of country-level performance is inadequate. Some respondents were of the opinion that the Secretariat spends too much

effort on meeting preparations. Improved informal communications between the Secretariat and partners was raised in some consultations.

Strong, albeit diverging, views were expressed on the desirability of the Secretariat assuming heavy hitting advocacy and resource mobilization functions (the roles of ‘communication’ as opposed to advocacy and resource mobilization are presently specified in the Secretariat TOR). For some respondents, these roles ought to continue to fall on the partners because, it was argued, partner members will be more effective than a secretariat with vested interests at persuading their senior managers and ministries of cooperation. Others felt that advocacy should be left to UNESCO in the wider context of EFA. For other respondents, the FTI requires a more dedicated effort than currently prevails, both with donors and endorsed (as donors have not yet stepped up to the plate) and potential countries (to mobilize domestic resources), and that a higher stature FTI Secretariat (see below) should be designed to take this on.

Strong views were expressed by some Partners on the need for the Secretariat to engage in more strategic thinking on the FTI, including on policy issues, reflecting the views of the co-chairs issues paper (FTI Co-chairs, 2005). The strategic planning function is not presently identified in the Secretariat TOR and, as a result, some respondents feel that a heavy burden is inappropriate placed on the co-chairs to fulfil this function. The reallocation of these responsibilities from the co-chairs was not universally shared.

Views were expressed that the strategic planning function isn’t well exercised in the Initiative (the present TOR are not explicit in assigning this task to the Secretariat) and there were those that felt that strategic planning should be tasked to the Secretariat (as opposed to the Steering Committee). Although the Secretariat produces an (activity oriented) annual plan this is thought to be a substitute for a strategic plan which translates the goals of the FTI into the desired outcomes – including the definition of measurable results and the identification of performance indicators (and milestones) to track its progress. The process might also involve attempts to clarify the contributions of the Secretariat, the Working Groups, and Partners to the achievement of the milestones. It is thought that lack of strategic planning in the Initiative may have led to a focus on activities and short-term actions, some of the dispersion of activities, what some perceive as poor prioritization, disappointing performance of the Working Groups, the failure to link some of the products of the Working Groups to the broader decision-making in the Initiative, and limited success in harnessing Partners for the Initiative. The proponents of strategic planning argue that there remains the need for greater reflection within the FTI about what each partner and the Secretariat ought to do and that the Secretariat should lead in strategic planning and the distribution of roles and responsibilities. As for the seemingly simpler task of Secretariat annual plans, there are concerns that it may be difficult to prioritize and plan because of the many unpredictable tasks – yet this is something that the strategic planning process is meant to address.

A number of respondents reflected on the relationship between the Secretariat and the World Bank. The benefits of World Bank hosting may appear to be so obvious to many respondents that they did not care to comment on this issue. Others enumerated these benefits in terms of the magnitude of resources devoted by the World Bank to the management of the Secretariat; the widespread operational and policy dialogue reach of the World Bank to target countries; and the strong links to high level officials in development cooperation, finance, and education ministries.

A minority of respondents raised the costs of such close association with the World Bank. Some thought that the Bank hosting arrangement poses both a perception risk and reality that the Initiative is

a Bank programme. One respondent went as far as to suggest that given the prevailing attitudes within the World Bank toward the FTI, partners have the ‘worst of both worlds’. On the one hand, the FTI is clearly a World Bank initiative. Yet, on the other hand, the World Bank does not put its weight behind the Initiative – as evidenced by declining Bank lending for education, the lack of a high profile backer of the Initiative within the World Bank, and the disappointingly low profile of education and the Initiative at the World Bank Annual Meetings.

Concerns were expressed over the high turnover of Secretariat managers and questions were raised as to its possible structural causes. Some respondents hinting that its roots might lie in the conflict of interest inherent in the World Bank’s role as host of the FTI Secretariat on the one hand and as partner on the other. These respondents referred to the lack of independence of the Secretariat from the Bank, which results, among other things, in the co-mingling of work streams of the Bank Education Department and the FTI Secretariat. Some respondents indicated that in practice, the Secretariat has devoted considerable resources to ensure that Bank staff and management understand and support the FTI – a role which is not part of the Secretariat’s TOR. Given the hosting arrangement, it is predictable that the Bank ED may task the Secretariat with Bank education programme activities and that it would be difficult for Secretariat to refuse such requests (for reasons of performance appraisal if not others). It was brought to our attention that the FTI head’s appraisal is based upon a Bank performance report which includes Bank ED deliverables. At least one respondent commented on the imbalance in accountability of the Secretariat to the Partners and the Bank (i.e. lack of Partner oversight of the Secretariat). The relative lack of independence of the Secretariat manifest itself in reports that communication to countries in relation to FTI instruments (e.g., joining the Initiative) is conducted between the country and Bank ED as opposed to the FTI Secretariat. If this is an accurate description, it may account for perceptions of the Initiative as a Bank one and questions as to where the authority for the Initiative rests.

It would appear that most respondents conclude that the benefits of Bank hosting outweigh any costs and that in any event there does not appear to be any viable alternative to the arrangement.

### *Recommendations*

- **Increase secretariat staffing.** In response to concerns that ‘a lean and mean’ secretariat not become ‘lean and meaningless’, there are suggestions to:
- **Develop a new staffing plan** to reflect the increasing workload associated with increasing numbers of FTI countries as well as other functions that it might assume (e.g., servicing regional meetings, strategic planning, etc.);
- **Increase donor contributions** to the Secretariat (both financial and in-kind);
- **Increase use of secondments and consultants** – although risks to stability and managerial control were highlighted;
- **Designating Partners** to attend meetings on behalf of the partnership to stretch its reach.
- **Review functions in the TOR.** There were suggestions that the Secretariat focus more on the following tasks:<sup>7</sup>
  - More support for in-country donor groups to apply a more rigorous and consistent indicative framework;
  - More support to countries to monitor donor progress on harmonization and alignment agenda;

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<sup>7</sup> Many respondents stressed that it can not be the secretariat’s role to mobilize partner agencies to internalize the principles of the FTI in their agencies. Instructions and incentives from the partners agencies are required (see below on country teams).

- Getting and circulating feed-back on progress and lessons on implementation of plans;
  - Advocacy and resource mobilization;
  - Strategic policy direction setting and strategic planning (and hence work prioritization).
- **Undertake strategic planning.** Third, there were suggestions that strategic planning exercise be undertaken to arrive at a more realistic and balanced division of labour among the partners and Secretariat. The Secretariat's and the partners' contributions must more specific and transparent.
  - **Raise stature of the Secretariat.** There were suggestions that the Manager position be upgraded to a 'Director' level and that the Director report directly to the Vice President HDN. It was suggested that it would be ideal of have a technically strong leader – but one that was also an 'integrator' to work both inside and outside the Bank to facilitate communication and to advocate for education. It was suggested that the leader could be an external appointment or secondment. It was further suggested that the Director be supported by a World Bank sector manager, designated as a deputy director, who would take the lead on the operational aspects of the partnership.
  - **Increase partner oversight of the Secretariat.** One proposal is to involve the Partnership in the search and selection of Secretariat head. Another is to adopt more formalized reporting to Steering Committee on the basis of an FTI-specific, as opposed to Bank, performance appraisal report. Secretariat work plan and budget should be approved by the Steering Committee and not the World Bank or Technical Meeting, and prior to, as opposed to during, the commencement of the year.
  - **Improved delineation between the roles of the FTI Secretariat and the Bank.** It was proposed that the deliverables of the Secretariat be more distinct from those of the Education Sector programme in the Bank. Among proposals was that if the Secretariat is to perform aspects of the World Bank's ED programme, other partners will need to agree that this is an appropriate function of the Secretariat. It was also suggested that direct correspondence channels between FTI and countries be routinized and not flow through the World Bank. One respondent proposed that the entire relationship with the Bank be revised in a year, including the hosting role.

## 6.7 Working Groups

The FTI Partnership has established working groups (WGs) to carry out in-depth studies and analyses, and to develop strategies to address specific issues. Participation in the WGs is voluntary but limited to education experts from developed countries (FTI 2005).

There are presently three working groups<sup>8</sup>: the Harmonization Working Group, the Finance Working Group and the Communications Working Group. Neither generic nor WG-specific Terms of Reference (TOR) have been drafted or approved.

The Coordination and Harmonization WG, whose creation was approved in Oslo in November 2003, became operational in March 2004 at the Technical Meeting. Currently, the Group's main objectives are helping local donor coordination groups to implement the Initiative by engaging in a sector dialogue around the education sector policies and defining donors' accountability within the FTI, as a counterpart of countries' accountability, through experimentation with a 'donor indicative framework'. The WG has grown from 10 members at the beginning of April 2004 to more than 20 members at present. The WG is presently led by the Secretariat.

The Finance WG undertakes studies when needed. It has undertaken studies in four areas: accounting for budget support, how financing modalities affect education outcomes, reviewing the various methodologies applied to estimate the global financing gap, and assessing alternative education delivery mechanisms. A meeting of the FTI recently stressed that the products emanating out of this

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<sup>8</sup> A WG for the development of the EPDF Trust Fund was led by the Secretariat which concluded its work.

group need be more clearly associated with the consultants as opposed to representing the views of the FTI. The leadership of this group has been recently transferred from the United Kingdom to France.

The Communications Working Group is presently led by the Secretariat – which recruited a senior communications specialist in September 2004. The Communications WG produced a large number of products for the FTI in 2005.

#### *Consultation Views*

Respondents commented on the different levels of contribution among donor partners to the WG: from excellent to non-existent. Respondents revealed that the productivity of the Groups also varies considerably. One consultation pointed out that WGs require a disproportionate amount of work from the country that had volunteered to lead the group. In one case, although a partner organization volunteered to lead a WG, the partner was not able to sell the idea internally as the FTI was seen as ‘too Bank dominated’. The question arose as to whether the work done was fully integrated into the work of the EFA-FTI as a whole. One respondent noted that the distribution of work to the WG is not set down on paper (i.e. there is no agreement on what WG chair, members and Secretariat will do). It appears to some that FTI can not rely on WGs to do the work that they establish for themselves. Going further, another consultation revealed the view that most of the WGs “don’t work.” A view was expressed that the partners do not contribute sufficiently to the WGs and that responsibility to carry out the activities fall upon the Secretariat. In short, views were expressed that there exists a lack willingness among some partners to contribute to the WGs and a lack of capacity among many to do so.

#### *Proposals for Reform*

- **Parcel out functions and tasks.** One proposal was that WG functions be transferred to the Secretariat.
- **Augment capacity.** It was suggested that the involvement of NGOs on the Communications WG might strengthen it. In relation to the Coordination and Harmonization WG, it was suggested that the lead partner post a secondee from that agency to the Secretariat to lead the group from within the Secretariat.
- **Clarify TOR and reporting.** Provide SC or TM with a mandate to develop WG TORs. These should be linked to the proposed strategic and annual plans. The TORs would be written in such a way so as to ensure that the products delivered by the WGs feed directly into decision-making in those bodies (hence introducing harmonized procedures for reporting back to the FTI).
- **Replace WGs with ad hoc task teams.** With clear TOR and sunset clauses.
- **Merge Communications WG with partner activities.** It was suggested all donors and agencies to merge their communications strategies viz EFA.

#### **6.8 In-country Donor Groups**

The FTI Framework document describes the country-level operation. Local agencies involved in supporting the education sector nominate a Coordinating Agency (CA) to lead the FTI assessment and endorsement process and serve as the liaison with the Ministry of Education, other concerned Government agencies, and the FTI Secretariat. The CA liaises with the Ministry of Education and local agencies to organize the assessment and endorsement process, invites all relevant agencies to participate in the assessment and endorsement process, and makes available the FTI assessment guidelines and Indicative Framework to the group to conduct the assessment. When in-country donors are satisfied that key issues have been adequately addressed, the plan is considered endorsed for FTI support. The Coordinating Agency is requested to report on the conclusions of the donor review meeting to the Government and the Secretariat.

### *Consultation*

The view was almost unanimously shared that the emphasis of the FTI needs to shift from the international to the national level. Although much progress has been made in a number of countries, as described in section two, the FTI suffers from a credibility problem in many countries with both government and partner agency staff. In a variety of different country contexts, these officials ponder the value-added of the FTI (although not necessarily the principles it espouses) and are disappointed that the FTI is not the global fund that they were either led to believe or hoped that it would become.

Most respondents, with two exceptions, were pleased with the technical guidelines that had been developed to provide criteria for the endorsement of national education plans. A number of respondents noted, however, that there was considerable variation in the endorsement process as well as in the manner in which the endorsement criteria are interpreted and applied. Hence, the endorsement process, which relies on local agency representatives' judgment, is applied in a discretionary and sometimes unfair manner.

Some informants indicated that there was not sufficient information available to them on country team arrangements and progress. Many respondents were of the opinion that there is insufficient clarity on the criteria and selection procedures for the Coordinating Agency and the process for developing a donor coordination platform and engaging donors in it. Similarly the role of the country level group post-endorsement, in annual programme reviews, for example, was not clear.

The variable buy-in from donor agency country-level staff was repeatedly brought up. Buy-in varies from agency to agency and individual to individual. Yet many respondents felt that field-level staff in many agencies either were unaware, failed to understand or faced insufficient incentives or sanctions to participate. A number of examples were provided in which FTI partner field staff failed to heed emerging donor consensus and operated in a manner inconsistent with the FTI principles. The problem of failing to identify a role for UNDP, as lead of the UN Resident Coordinator system, was viewed by one informant as problematic.

### *Proposed reforms*

- **Guidelines for donor teams.** Develop generic guidelines governing the selection, roles and responsibilities of the Coordinating Agency and the country team in the endorsement and post-endorsement phases.
- **Quality assurance.** Develop and apply an annual quality assurance mechanism to ensure that country staff apply the enunciated principles.
- **Prizes for country teams.** Incentivise teams with rewards for harmonized support.
- **Country-led coordination arrangements.** Consider encouragement of government-led country coordination arrangements in post endorsed countries.
- **Agency incentives for field level staff.**
  - Identify bottom-up opportunities to mobilize donor agency staff to support the principles and operations of the FTI through, for example, regional meetings and support from the EPDF for joint analytical work, etc.
  - Identify top-down opportunities to increase donor field staff engagement in FTI processes through for example rewards and sanctions linked to FTI specific performance metrics;
- **Strengthen FTI country presence.** For example, by delegating Partner staff as FTI reps in country reviews.

## **7.0 Summary of main options**

There is widespread support for the FTI embedded in the EFA landscape. For the time-being, the World Bank is perceived to be the most appropriate host (but a more explicit delineation of work between it and the secretariat needs to be made). A view prevails among a minority of donor stakeholders that the FTI requires no reform, others concede the need for reform but urge caution due to its fragile nature, others propose further-reaching reforms, whilst the views of developing country stakeholders remain obscured from view.

The FTI needs a clearly designated governing body so as to improve accountability. The options appear to be mandating either the Steering Committee or Technical Meeting. Given the desire by the majority of donors to maintain the Technical Meeting in its present form and that significant authority is already vested with the Steering Committee, it would make more sense to designate the SC as governing body.

Stakeholders agree that the FTI needs to move to the country-level. This can be achieved in a number of ways. One option is to represent country level constituencies on the governing body by assigning seats to different developing country constituencies. Improving channels of communication with these constituencies is another, not mutually exclusive, alternative as are the proposed annual regional meetings. The latter options would fail to deliver the benefit of voice to these country-level constituencies in decision-making in the Initiative.

It is suggested that the FTI suffers from a credibility problem in part because varying and difficult to reconcile expectations have been promoted by donors who hold different views on the Initiative and in part because the FTI has not prompted the kind of changes in donor education spending patterns that had been envisioned. While it is beyond the scope of this review to attempt to resolve these differences, it is important that the partners agree upon what different components of the partnership aim to achieve. This may go some way to clarifying expectations.

If the FTI is to accelerate progress on the MDG goal, it is likely that it will require more heavy-hitting champions with strong links beyond the world of technical education experts. Two proposals are changing the membership on the Steering Committee to higher level officials who would delegate authority to the technical representatives and/or increasing the profile of the manager of the secretariat to director level.

Proposals were made to review the functions of the secretariat, particularly in light of country expansion, the heavy workload of the co-chairs, and the variable performance of the Working Groups. One option would be to undertake a strategic planning exercise which aims for a better, more explicit and comprehensive assignment of roles and responsibilities.

In that the review was not able to elicit the views of country-level stakeholders and because of differing perspectives on a number of governance issues and options, there is a need for FTI stakeholders to further consult on the issues raised in this report. One option would be to establish a small, but representative, task team on governance to develop concrete recommendations for changes to the FTI.