FTI Reforms:
Reinvigorating the Partnership, Strengthening support for EFA Results

May 2010

BACKGROUND

The original EFA FTI model of a flexible and evolving Partnership to support countries to reach Universal Primary Completion – grounded in principles of country ownership and donor harmonization – remains as valid today as it did at the Partnership's creation in 2002. FTI's role was and continues to be *facilitator and supporter of country-led Education Sector Plan development and implementation aimed at ensuring all children in low income countries a quality primary education*. Existing in-country structures with donor and CSO presence remain FTI's main delivery mechanisms, and increased donor support for Partner countries' policy performance and accountability for results – the FTI 'Compact' – comes primarily from resources made available bi-laterally.

The FTI Partnership is the sum of all Partners' efforts and its strength is in its ability to leverage the contributions of Partners at both the global and the country level. Ultimately, the success of the FTI Compact depends on shared commitment to FTI goals and principles, and delivery of contributions towards those goals and principles according to each Partner's own comparative advantages.

Based on guidance from the FTI Board of Directors and informed by the recommendations and observations of the recent Mid-Term External Evaluation and the 2010 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, a number of key reforms are being implemented to address the challenge of leveraging all Partners to really make the FTI Compact work.

COMPONENTS OF REFORM

I. Strengthening the Country Focus of FTI: *supporting countries how and when they need it*

Why is reform needed?

There is a good deal of variation across countries in terms of the technical support to which they have access, the strength of the Local Education Group, and their progress toward Universal Primary Completion. The transaction costs of working with the FTI donors remain too high. The mid-term evaluation describes inconsistent attention to capacity development.

What is the vision?

- Far greater support for evidence-based decision-making at the country level, with countries able to call on 'sustainable' technical assistance from strong in-country institutions, from international agencies or others on an as-needed basis.
- Robust quality assurance role for the FTI Secretariat.

- Provision of technical and financial support in the context of ongoing policy dialogue rather than project cycles, with annual joint sector reviews replacing sector plan appraisals as the central feature of FTI's added value.
- Partner countries engage with FTI using a single common process regardless of where they are on the Progressive Framework spectrum (i.e. aiming for comprehensive ESP or multiple Interim Plans)

What is planned?

FTI supports a broad range of interventions aimed at getting low income countries, and countries in crisis or transition, to quality universal primary completion. Each country's needs are different in terms of capacity, finance, planning and data. Supporting Partner countries means assessing their needs in terms of capacity, finance, planning, data, and the existing in-country support mechanisms, and offering FTI interventions in a streamlined, user-friendly way. Planned actions include:

- Development of a single FTI Process which supports all FTI eligible countries, including those affected by emergency or conflict
- Development of clear operational guidelines for all countries joining or already in the FTI, including those with interim plans, which identify points of entry for application of FTI funds, and reporting requirements with respect FTI engagement (e.g. progress on ESP development, progress against ESP indicators, financial reporting on use of funds)
- Further enhancement of the FTI Secretariat's capacity to work closely with LEGs on FTI processes, including on monitoring results
- Development of transparent guidelines for External Quality Reviews in support of Board decision-making
- Facilitated 'consultative group' arrangements after ESP endorsement
- Fast, flexible access to financial and technical support by Partner countries for plan preparation and implementation, including strategic activities to build capacity

Progress to date:

- Creation of Country Focal Points team in the FTI Secretariat and launch of recruitment for additional positions
- Country Process Guide revised to accommodate Interim Plans
- Action plan for transition to a single fund arrangement developed and under implementation

II. Redefining what it means to be a Partner: *Mutual Accountability*

Why is reform needed?

The mid-term evaluation speaks of an 'imbalanced' partnership. The commitments and accountability of donors and CSOs to their developing country partners have not been sufficiently defined or monitored. The World Bank has been seen as too dominant a partner.

What is the vision?

- Partners see themselves as playing an integral role in achievement of FTI Goals.
- Roles and responsibilities for each Partner group are defined, agreed, delivered and monitored.
- Partner agencies and others increase support to Primary/Basic Education in low-income countries.

What is planned?

A Mutual Accountability matrix will be established in which roles and responsibilities of all FTI Partners are defined and performance tracked based on clear monitorable indicators. Implementation of the Mutual Accountability matrix will allow all Partners to monitor the extent to which individual Partners have fulfilled their commitments to FTI and will provide a mechanism to readjust goals and performance indicators.

Progress to date:

- A draft matrix identifying key Partnership Objectives at both the Global and Country Level has been developed and circulated to the Board for review. Further development of the matrix is planned as one deliverable of a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy – to be implemented over the period September – December 2010.
- CF allocations for Zambia (Netherlands), and Madagascar (UNICEF) supervised or implemented by entities other than the World Bank, with several more countries moving in this direction (Rwanda, Guinea). Draft transfer agreements for this purpose are in place.

III. Developing and Using a Robust Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy: *establishing the link between FTI interventions and education outcomes*

Why is reform needed?

It is difficult to determine the impact of specific decisions, policy recommendations, financing modalities, etc., on progress toward better education outcomes. Many partners feel insufficiently informed of progress country-by-country or of the Partnership as a whole.

What is the vision?

Strong evidence-based policy dialogue within LEGs and for the Partnership as a whole. Board decisions informed by objective information on performance at the country level.

What is planned?

A comprehensive monitoring system will provide the information required for effective management and decision-making of the Partnership and serve as the tool for a robust evaluation process.

Progress to date:

- Concept Note on 'Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for a Mutual Accountability Based on Results' prepared and circulated

- Draft EFA FTI Results Framework prepared and circulated
- Contracting process initiated for organization to help develop indicators, metrics for M&E strategy/results framework: Terms of reference/Draft Statement of Work prepared
- Recruitment process launched for senior M&E specialist
- Dialogue well advanced for creation of external unit to implement M&E strategy

IV. Elevating the EFA-FTI Profile: *securing high level political support*

Why is reform needed?

EFA and FTI continue to have a relatively low profile internationally—insufficient participation/visible support at the highest levels internationally.

What is the vision?

FTI is an effective global forum to promote EFA, with strong and sustained high level political commitment. FTI has a unique identity at the country and global levels and is considered a positive, flexible facilitator of aid coordination and results for education.

What is planned?

- Recruitment of a senior external relations and communications officer for the FTI Secretariat
- Endorsement of the results framework
- High-level champions for EFA helping to actively promote the FTI "Brand"

Progress to date

Recruitment process for a senior external relations and communications officer under way

V. Ensuring long-term predictable financing for achievement of EFA goals, including through FTI trust funds

Why is reform needed?

External financing for basic education in low-income countries is well below the levels needed. The expected priority for basic education within ODA for education has not materialized. FTI trust funds are not supported by long-term donor commitments. Donors have expressed concern about the pace of disbursements. Dialogue around innovative financing has not yet resulted in a clear strategy for basic education.

What is the vision?

Sustained increases in overall ODA for basic education, with the education sector taking the lead in implementing the Paris agenda for effective aid. Three years' financing for the FTI trust funds of at least one billion dollars annually, and clear success in leveraging additional ODA support.

What is planned?

- Resource mobilization campaign to secure long-term funding from bilateral agencies for basic education and EFA Trust funds
- Agreement on innovative financing approaches for EFA

Progress to date

Recruitment of Chair with responsibility for supporting resource mobilization process; initial process of visits to donors and potential donors under way.

VI. Enabling reforms through a Stronger Secretariat

Why is reform needed?

The Secretariat does not have enough senior staff, or enough staff or capacity overall, to help the Partnership move to a higher level of support to LEGs, including promoting political visibility and facilitating overall policy dialogue.

What is the vision?

More proactive role for the Secretariat in support of LEGs, including M&E functions, evidence-based policy reform, and advocacy.

What is planned?

- Re-organization of FTI Secretariat with new functions for external relations and communications, monitoring and evaluation, policy and programming
- Recruitment of senior(H-level) level leadership for external relations and communications, monitoring and evaluation, policy and programming
- Recruitment of staff with significant operational experience (G-level) as focal points to provide LEG support

Progress to date

- Recruitment process launched for senior staff for external relations and communications, monitoring and evaluation, policy and programming
- Creation of focal points for dialogue with LEGs

VII. Securing Partner Country Voice in Decision-making

Why is reform needed?

Developing country partners have not been a part of decision-making around allocations through the FTI trust funds. While Board membership includes developing country partners, impact has been muted through lack of support for consultation and dialogue with constituencies.

What is the vision?

- Board membership is constituency-based and Partner countries play a more active role in FTI leadership and decision-making. Higher level involvement in FTI Board
- Board meetings characterized by strategic discussion and decision-making

What is planned?

- Review of Board composition and decision-making with the purpose of rebalancing of FTI leadership to increase voice/influence of Partner countries
- Logistical support to Board members to facilitate fulfillment of Board roles and responsibilities, including effective communication with constituencies

Progress to date

- Working group document with options on Board Composition prepared; to be discussed at May 2010 Board meeting
- Agreement in principle that financial allocations will be decided at the Board, giving partner countries a voice in these decisions