



DevInfo Inter-Agency Advisory Committee – Meeting minutes

Date:	22 May 2007
Time:	09h30 to 11h30 (NYC time)
Venue:	One UN Plaza, DC-1, 4 th Floor Evaluation Office Conference Room
Chair:	Nicolas Pron, DevInfo Global Administrator, UNICEF, New York

The DevInfo Inter-Agency Advisory Committee meeting that took place on 22 May 2007 was attended by colleagues from FAO, ILO, OCHA, SAHIMS, UNAIDS, UNDGO, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOHCHR, WHO and the World Bank. Colleagues from FAO in Rome, as well as colleagues from ILO, UNAIDS, UNHCR and WHO in Geneva, joined via video link. Colleagues from SAHIMS in South Africa, UNESCAP in Bangkok, OHCHR in Geneva and the World Bank in Washington, D.C. joined via telephone link.

Opening remarks, approval of agenda, round of introductions

After opening remarks from Nicolas Pron, Chair of the Committee, participants in New York and those who joined via video and telephone introduced themselves. Subsequently, the agenda was presented and approved by all participants.

Agenda Item 1: Presentation of DevInfo progress followed by questions and comments

Astrid Marschatz, UNDGO DevInfo Project Manager, gave a summary of DevInfo implementation by the end of 2006, DevInfo activities as reported by UNCTs in the Resident Coordinator Annual Reports, major releases of updates, new tools and DevInfo adaptations, and capacity building in 2006. She also made mention of the DevInfo quarterly newsletter, the DevInfo Information Series disseminated on the MDG Net, the on-going e-discussion on “The use of DevInfo for strategic decision-making” on the CPN and the MDG Net, and the DevInfo Implementation Review. She closed with information on the upcoming “Second OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy”.

Summary of questions and comments by agency:

World Bank

- Eric Swanson: Is there a record of the countries using the internet to disseminate their DevInfo database?
Reply: The information on those countries that have web-enabled DevInfo databases can be found on www.devinform.org.

**FAO**

- Françoise Trine: a) Will the document summarizing the e-discussion on “The use of DevInfo for strategic decision-making” be shared and, if so, when will it be available? b) Will the draft of the DevInfo Implementation Review be shared with the Committee members for their review and comments?

Reply: a) The document summarizing the e-discussion might be ready by Wednesday 23 May. It will be shared on the CPN as well as the MDG Net, and it can also be shared with the members of the Advisory Committee. b) The draft of the DevInfo Implementation Review will also be shared with the Committee members, who are encouraged to share their comments.

- Kafkas Caprazli: For the DevInfo Implementation Review, how many questionnaires are being sent out (for DevInfo focal points and DevInfo users) and how was the process?

Reply: The consultant hired to conduct the DevInfo Implementation Review has sent out questionnaires to all DevInfo focal points in the selected countries. There are between 1 and 4 DevInfo focal points in each country, so about 15-20 focal point questionnaires have probably gone out. In the case of the user questionnaires, maybe about 100 have gone out.

- John Latham: FAO is interested in exploring the mechanisms to move the inter-agency collaborative agenda (between DevInfo and FAO) forward and suggests a meeting later this year.

Reply: DevInfo is committed to the collaboration with FAO. It needs to be determined who will take the lead in organizing a technical meeting with the interested parties. One possibility would be for UNGIWG to take this up. (Steeve Ebaner of WHO suggests asking the co-chairs. The next UNGIWG meeting will be held in New York on 6-7 June 2007, at which point the issue could be taken up. Georges Tadonki of SAHIMS supports the idea.)

UNFPA

- Kourtoum Nacro: a) UNFPA would like to see mention of the development of the SAS, STATA and REDATAM data exchange modules it is supporting. Their existence should be made known to countries so that they can use them. b) More information on the regional workshops in 2006 would be welcome since it was not mentioned in the printout of the PowerPoint presentation, which should be in principle the same shown on the screen.

Reply: a) The SAS and STATA data exchange modules are ready, and work on the REDATAM data exchange module is ongoing. b) Information on the regional workshops was shown in the PowerPoint and discussed during the presentation. In



addition, the copy of the presentation made available to all participants before the meeting through the DGO website (www.undg.org) contained the complete information. The map showing the locations of the regional workshops (which was part of the presentation) was not printed on the paper handout shared with participants in New York only because printers have limited memory and cannot easily handle such large files.

UNDP

- Jens Wandel: UNDP is pleased to see the tremendous progress and the systematic creation of interfaces to connect with other systems such as OCHA's 3W. a) In the 2007 agenda it would be good to see a continued discussion with UNSD and the World Bank around standards. b) Suggests finding out which countries are not using DevInfo and contacting the UNCT directly to find out what we can do for them to use it. Crisis countries are probably highly represented among countries not using DevInfo.

Reply: a) DevInfo is actively involved in the promotion of standards. For example, DevInfo and FAO are working on a link between DevInfo and FAO's CountrySTAT based on standards, and on ISO standards for geographical areas. b) DevInfo welcomes comments, ideas and suggestions from users on how to make DevInfo more widely available in crisis countries.

SAHIMS

- Georges Tadonki: a) In emergency countries in southern Africa he has observed a high number of people trained in DevInfo but low usage. The use of DevInfo needs to be further streamlined. b) SAHIMS is increasingly receiving requests for the use of DevInfo outside of the traditional statistical sphere, and they are wondering whether other regions are receiving such requests too. c) SAHIMS, together with SADC, will organize an annual event on statistical data dissemination, including issues of standardization. This year's event will take place at the end of September or beginning of October in Gaborone.

Reply: a) See response b) above.

UNHCR

- Shelley Gornall: Will EmergencyInfo be part of the DevInfo Implementation Review?
Reply: Emergency Info will be part of the DevInfo Implementation Review only in as far as the selected countries are implementing EmergencyInfo as part of DevInfo, but it will not be looked at separately. Nevertheless, DevInfo could arrange to put UNHCR in contact with EmergencyInfo users.



ILO

- Federico Blanco: ILO would like to know more about the technical support missions by the DevInfo Support Group, in particular if there is any documented record of the use of these missions to countries or any statistics about them.

Reply: The DevInfo Implementation Review should provide information about the usefulness of the technical support missions by the DevInfo Support Group.

Agenda Item 2: Use of DevInfo for programming and strategic decision-making followed by questions and comments

John Patterson, Policy Adviser with UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy, presented UNDP's experience using DevInfo to track expenditures by MDGs. He explained how UNDP's expenditures are mapped to individual MDGs using existing information in UNDP's Atlas system (to avoid being invasive and asking the field to supply information). For the exercise, a simple mapping approach was used. A major challenge for the future is to have a consistent and standard mapping approach which will allow other UN agencies and others beyond to implement it. In order to develop this mapping approach, high-level involvement of other organizations is necessary. Efforts are being made to elevate this up to management to try to pursue an agreement.

Summary of questions and comments by agency:

FAO

- Kafkas Caprazli: What are the technical details of this undertaking? What are the steps to implement it? Is it a transferable exercise? Were weights applied to the expenditures to map them to the MDGs or was it a 1-to-1 mapping?

Reply: Not all agencies are using Atlas but the exercise is transferable to other agencies since what is necessary is to be able to extract the data from the system that they are using (instead of Atlas). The model used was very simple, so that for example, an expenditure that had to be mapped to 3 MDGs was simply split in three equal parts and each part was associated with 1 of the 3 MDGs. Nevertheless, it would be desirable to pursue an agreement with other agencies with regards to the mapping to MDGs.

UNAIDS

- Matthew Cooke: Is this signaling a thrust of DevInfo away from indicator management and towards project management?

Reply: No, this exercise is not project management. It simply aims to show information on what is happening.

UNFPA

- This is a good initiative and consideration should be given to extending it to other agencies such as UNFPA, which also uses Atlas.

Reply: Efforts are being made to elevate this up to management to get the attention of other agencies and try to pursue an agreement on the mapping approach.

Agenda Item 3: Presentation of Service Pack 1 and Service Pack 2 followed by questions and comments

Nicolas Pron, DevInfo Global Administrator, UNICEF, and Chair of the DevInfo Advisory Committee, presented the new features in Service Pack and Service Pack 2. The aim of some of these new features that help track project information is to have greater transparency on how we allocate funding to the MDGs.

OHCHR

- Remy van der Plaetsen: When will Service Pack 2 be available?

Reply: Service Pack 2 is available now and it will be available for distribution and downloading from the DevInfo website in a few weeks. An announcement will be made when it is ready for downloading. (SAHIMS and ILO also expressed interest in Service Pack 2.)

World Bank

- Olivier Dupriez: a) Proposes picking a country to show how the improved, standardized metadata works at country level. Would like to include a country in Africa. b) Are there any plans to develop a Web service for DevInfo?

Reply: a) Sri Lanka could be a country for showing this. b) There is the idea of a Web service for DevInfo, but not a plan yet.

Agenda Item 4: Any other business

OCHA

- Paolo Palmero: Is there a timeline for migrating to open source?

Reply: There is no timeline. It is work in progress, starting with the mapping module.

FAO

- Kafkas Caprazli: FAO looks forward to the joint collaboration between DevInfo and FAO's CountrySTAT on the basis of standards. There are already some ideas of donors to approach with a letter of interest. A test could be conducted in one of the One UN countries, as an example of UN collaboration in that country.
- Françoise Trine / John Latham: Following the discussions held in Rome earlier this year and the messages exchanged afterwards, FAO is interested in a signal on how the DevInfo management is planning to move forward on compliance of DevInfo



with internationally agreed standards.

Reply: DevInfo complies with standards. In addition, discussions are ongoing with Kafkas Caprazli on linkages with CountrySTAT on the basis of standards. DevInfo endorses the suggestion to put this on the agenda of the next UNGIWG meeting.

UNFPA

- Kourtoum Nacro: Suggests starting future meetings with feedback on the issues discussed in the previous meeting for improved continuity in the discussions and assessment of the implementation status of the decisions taken in previous meetings.

Reply: Good idea.