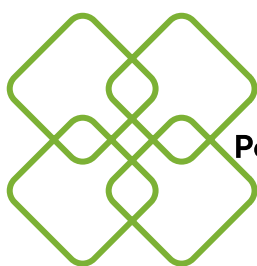




Guidelines for Embedded Advisers

Policy Development Facility Phase II



PDF II

Policy Development Facility Phase II

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Introduction

Purpose of these guidelines

It is hoped that these guidelines will provide practical advice on and solutions to the challenges you are likely to encounter in the early stages of your assignment as an Embedded Adviser (EA), while also highlighting the opportunities that will present themselves to you. The approach outlined in this document aims to orient you in the institutional landscape within which you will be operating for six months or more.

Introduction to PDF II

Policy Development Facility Phase II (PDF II) is a flexible, rapid-response programme funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). DFID funds several programmes in Nigeria that are designed to deliver a more coherent, focused and ambitious approach to economic development, and PDF II falls within the portfolio of the DFID Nigeria Economic Development Team (EDT). The primary objective of PDF II within the EDT is to provide targeted assistance to support Nigeria's Champions of Change to implement economic and social policies that lead to poverty reduction.

The Federal Government of Nigeria is the main target of PDF II support; however, PDF II also supports civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and relevant committees of the National Assembly. PDF II is implemented by Development Alternatives Inc., with day-to-day business conducted by the Abuja Project Management Unit.

Role of Embedded Adviser

The Terms of Reference you have been provided with serve as the basis for your work on behalf of PDF II to support the Nigerian government, and you should refer to them throughout your assignment. As they explain, and these guidelines emphasise, you may have to do more than just support your designated, high-level Champion of Change on flagship programmes. You may need to support other staff and go beyond the Terms of Reference. You will navigate often difficult terrain, negotiating multiple relationships between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with different levels of investment in the pro-poor policies and initiatives you will be engaged in formulating and implementing. To do so successfully, you will need to familiarise yourself with the context you are working in and adopt a proactive, flexible approach that engages all relevant stakeholders, while managing your expectations and those of others.

Rules of engagement

The Induction Guide advises you on where you should look to for support: for technical matters you will report to your Principal or a designated representative within your assigned ministry, department or agency (MDA). For contractual and administrative matters, you should report to PDF II. Recommendations on security and travel, as well as financial arrangements, are also contained in the Induction Guide.

It is important that you bear in mind the political sensitivity of working within the Nigerian Civil Service while being funded by a development partner. Most consultants will be working in fluid and dynamic situations. Please note that PDF II does not require EAs to share information that the Federal Government of Nigeria considers to be confidential.

All potential and material conflicts of interest, and instances or suspicions of fraud, must be reported to PDF II immediately. Details of how to do so can be found in the Induction Guide.

PDF II abides by the rules and regulations outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between DFID and the Federal Government of Nigeria. Local laws must be adhered to by the programme, consultants, employees and partners.

Guidelines

✓ Know and be known

It goes without saying that you should have a good prior knowledge of the sector you will be engaged in. But understanding how things really work should be a key part of your agenda in the early days of your assignment. Getting to know the internal processes – the red tape – and who is responsible for moving things along is key to understanding how the MDA you are embedded in works. Identifying the person(s) responsible for specific stages in the decision-making process helps ‘spot’ who to work with to ensure that the projects you will be involved in don’t get held up.

Since you will be working directly with a high-level Champion of Change and/or a major policy initiative, it is critical to your success to have an understanding of the political economy that influences your sector. There will be pre-existing constraints and opportunities for your work that are determined by the interplay of political and economic factors on a national and state level, as much as by the bureaucratic culture of your MDA. Furthermore, it is important to understand the specific political economy your Principal is operating within. A Champion of Change is likely to be a political appointee for a certain period of time, so it is possible that the imperative for the policies and programmes they have pushed will wane when/ if they move on. Therefore, you will have to make the best use of the political will that your Principal represents. **It is vital that you develop a blueprint of ideas and share these with your Champion of Change before the work begins in order to enlist their support and commitment.**

Just as it is important to know your context and the roles and responsibilities of those around you and further afield, it is important to *be known*. Your designated Champion of Change may be very responsive to PDF II support and have high expectations of how you will be able to help them fulfil their mandate. But if staff across levels have not been familiarised with PDF II and your (temporary) assignment within their institution – and there is a chance that a high-level Champion of Change may not have taken the opportunity to fully brief all the people you will be working with – then your legitimacy risks being undermined from the very beginning. It is also possible that misconceptions of

PDF II and DFID and what they stand for will have preceded you. **A practical step to ensure your role is known is to communicate your Terms of Reference with key personnel within your department and beyond, as appropriate.** This will help civil servants understand and accept your role, and consider how to align their own roles accordingly.

It is therefore your responsibility to ensure that you devote adequate time to establishing relationships with the various departments within the institution you are embedded in, taking care to understand how they work (and do not work) and to explain your brief. You cannot assume that staff will be sufficiently aware of and willing to work with an EA simply because the request was made on their behalf to DFID. In short, you need to get on the right foot with your institution: you reap what you sow.

“The Minister plays the role of an architect. He designs the projects while his team builds the structure.”

Embedded Adviser providing legal support to the Ministry of Power, Works and Housing

✓ Know your champions and blockers

PDF II’s Champions of Change are typically Federal Government of Nigeria ministers and senior officials in the President’s and Vice-President’s offices who have requested EA support. You should do background research on your designated Champion of Change, and take note of their working style once your assignment begins. A positive relationship is key to achieving positive results. But as an expert temporarily embedded within an MDA, it is not enough to rely on the good offices of your Principal. As your Champion of Change is likely to be busy with many high-level initiatives, and may also be constrained by political factors, you will have to enlist the help of ‘internal champions’. EAs have supervisors, yet this relationship may not be enough to bring about the changes you are aiming at. For this you’ll need to draw on the expertise of those

individuals who understand how best to push things through at various stages of the process.

A major determinant of EA effectiveness, therefore, lies in developing relationships with a range of civil servants at different levels. For example, it may be essential to secure the support of senior civil servants within departments, such as directors. Their cooperation will not only help you deliver the intended support (outputs) but also improve uptake and embedment among other civil servants as well as decision-makers. That said, such ‘internal champions’ need to be carefully identified and chosen for a specific purpose.

Furthermore, either due to a lack of communication as to the purpose of the EA, tensions between or within departments, other dysfunctional processes in your MDA, or indeed issues with specific individuals, it is

possible that your presence will not be appreciated or welcomed across the board. For practical purposes, following an assessment of your working environment within your department and beyond, it may well be worth avoiding or working around those ‘blockers’ who are opposed to your brief. **You will have to think creatively about how your success depends as much on avoiding particular relationships and interventions as it does on building relationships and identifying ‘best bet’ interventions. Choose your battles!** While you will certainly encounter individuals who are less than enthusiastic about what you are trying to achieve, it is also important to not assume that the bureaucracy is there to obstruct you. As a previous EA noted, you have to “identify the change agents and work with them”. At this point you should also consider how best to network with EAs in other MDAs whose performance will have an impact on your work.



✓ Engage your stakeholders

Public sector

You will have to develop and maintain effective relationships with relevant stakeholders in government, ranging from the technical teams within the MDAs to the legislature. Nurturing such relationships helps manage the risk of ineffectiveness, as you may encounter opposition from civil servants even if you have the Minister's buy-in on an initiative. Often, this is less to do with hostility aimed at you personally or the role you are fulfilling and more to do with a lack of understanding of, and thereby engagement with, the initiative that you are working on. Keep in mind that people do have different ideas about how things should work! Your engagement will facilitate alignment of your department's policy goals with those of others, and encourage ownership across departments. **Therefore, it is critical to get buy-in from MDA staff at all levels and establish partnerships with them.** Many initiatives require coordination between MDAs, as the associated policies are not just the domain of

“Avoid stereotyping people. The pervading impression of a ‘lazy’ public sector should be de-emphasised. Do not rub your privilege of working with development partners in their face or see them as inferior. You will be resisted and your work frustrated.”

Embedded Adviser providing legal support to the Ministry of Power, Works and Housing

a single institution. You will have to be aware of existing relationships and consider how to develop others required for the success of the initiatives you are involved in. You are not here to do civil servants' jobs for them; you are meant to be working with them as co-partners.



Private sector and civil society

Engagement with different stakeholders at different points of the process is important. You cannot assume that you only need to engage with the private sector and with civil society once a given policy has been formulated by your MDA, is approved by the legislature, and is ready for roll-out. **Involving the private sector and civil society right from the outset is the best way to ensure the success of your policy initiatives.** After all, it is often the private sector that will be approached to invest in and work in partnership with government for policies geared towards stimulating economic growth. Civil society represents the communities that are meant to benefit from successful implementation of such policies. It stands to reason that these sets of stakeholders will have critical insights into the nature of the problems faced and what policies would best address them.

At the implementation stage, the private sector is often expected to take centre stage. But if these actors have not been engaged with at an earlier stage, it is quite possible that they will not respond later on to policy interventions. This is often the case with local financial service providers, in which case international development banks may take the opportunity to step in, leading to potential distortions and dependencies that run counter to the purpose of achieving long-term, sustainable economic growth. The competitive discipline of the private sector will help validate and temper government initiatives that will have to hold their own against national and international market forces.

Furthermore, without the participation of poor communities, all poverty reduction policies are doomed to fail. Community consultations, via advocacy and lobbying groups from civil society, should be incorporated into the timeline of your activities to help communicate the details of programmes and their benefits to the poor. Field visits are an important part of your remit – providing, according to one EA, a “360° bird’s eye view” – and you should take the opportunity to travel and meet the people whom your policies will affect. Ask them questions; this will give you a valuable perspective on how policies are likely to be received and implemented, and may improve stakeholder perceptions of you, your institutional champion and the policies you are representing.

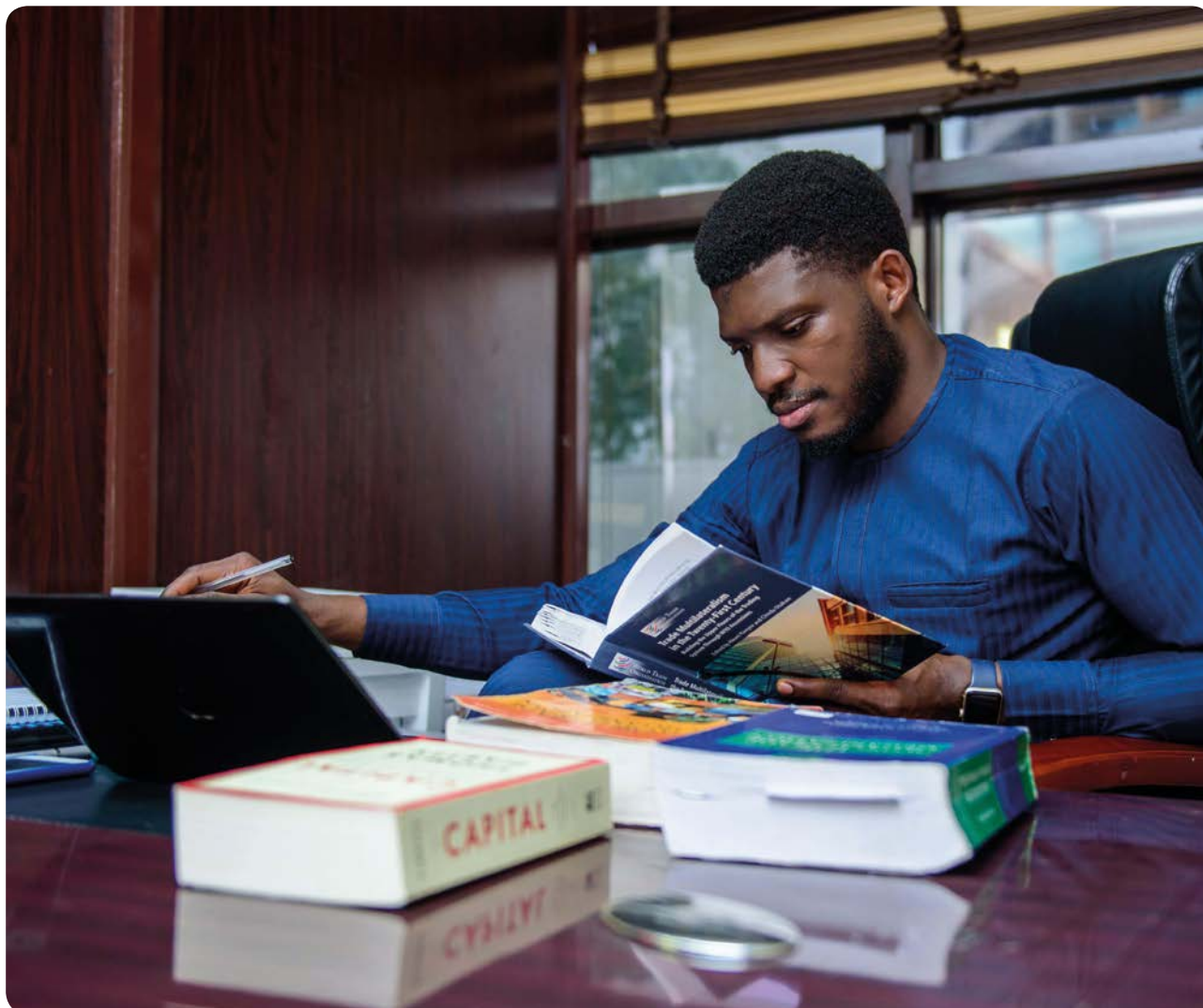
Media

Your assignment may require you to be directly responsible for a communications strategy as part of a stakeholder engagement strategy. Media engagement is likely to have been neglected or problematic within your MDA, and will be crucially important in presenting your work to the public, civil society and other MDAs that may not have direct links with your own institution. If you are directly involved in providing narratives to the media then you will have to carefully craft your press lines and cultivate relationships with media outlets so that facts are not misrepresented. Make sure that your press releases are not political.

Be proactive

Your goal as an EA is to provide a valuable, expert perspective to identify challenges in the sector, consider the flaws in past and current government interventions, and devise ways to support your Champion of Change in improving systems or introducing new ones. As such, you will have to approach your task creatively, with an open mind. As you are likely to encounter set processes and individuals accustomed to doing things a certain way, to do anything differently you will have to begin by doing it yourself. This may include undertaking deliverables that are not explicitly specified in your original Terms of Reference. The reporting templates allow such deliverables to be added along the way. While you should flag any instances where these additional deliverables are affecting your ability to advance your original tasks, you should not shy away from these activities if you consider them necessary for the success of your work. **Your initiative and positive attitude is key to securing the support of your partners.**

Practically speaking, these deliverables, whether included in your Terms of Reference or not, may require you to carry out certain tasks and activities that you have not anticipated, such as impromptu field visits and meetings with stakeholders involving travel. Since it is expected that your MDA will cover expenses for these activities and other associated office costs, it is important that you keep a record of and discuss any ‘extras’ with them from the beginning of your assignment.



EAs are also likely to be involved with large-scale policy initiatives and programmes that will require the cooperation and approval of partners within and across MDAs and levels of governance. None of these procedures will be straightforward; it is inevitable that you will encounter obstacles and delays at various points. **It is best to try to anticipate delays and plan for them by accounting for them in your schedules, with long lead-in times.** Built-in flexibility may look messier on paper, but will help avoid frustration later.

✓ Be realistic

Your Terms of Reference will lay out what is expected of you in the course of your assignment. Your Champion of Change will have certain expectations of how you and PDF II will provide the support that they have requested, as will officials across the MDA you are embedded in. You, of course, will have your

own ideas about what you are setting out to achieve! Managing all these expectations will be an ongoing process, but one that it is useful to keep track of to avoid disappointment – on your part or that of your partners.

Particularly if you are accustomed to working in the private sector, you may find that the pace of work in the public service is slow. But a delay in achieving results does not mean that you will not get there. **From the beginning, after you have shared your Terms of Reference and agreed on the outcomes for your tenure with PDF II and your partners, it will be useful to differentiate medium- and long-term outputs,** with non-specific dates as far as possible. If you are able to define the expectations of stakeholders and reach a consensus, then it will be easier to identify champions and facilitate their ownership of the process. Success, then, will come about as a result of partnerships rather than being dependent solely on your efforts to keep all the parts moving.

“A delay in achieving results does not mean they will not happen.”

Technical Adviser to the Special Adviser to the President on Economic Matters

✓ Be transparent, honest and consistent

Given the difficult situations you are likely to face, it is crucial that your conduct is irreproachable. You should plan your work activities with transparency in mind; indeed, your assignment is likely to include improving the transparency and consistency of procedures followed within your MDA.

Never forget that you have been recruited to provide technical advice to help your MDA achieve outcomes that the Federal Government of Nigeria has decided on. So when you do make progress, **be careful to give credit to your Champion of Change and the colleagues you have worked with. Equally, you should not shirk from taking responsibility for any problems that may arise in the course of your work**, or seek to shift blame on to problem ‘blockers’. If you have done your homework and have been transparent and consistent in putting procedures in place, and if you have been honest in your dealings with your stakeholders, it should be clear what the value of your contribution has been. A positive attitude will also help build the trust and confidence of stakeholders. A little bit of patience and humility goes a long way.

✓ Track and share your knowledge

Knowledge management is among the most important components of your assignment, because it forms the basis of evaluating your work. By keeping track of your activities at every stage of your assignment, you will not only be recording outcomes against targets that determine the success of individual projects, but you will also be able to gauge your impact on the different stages of policy formulation.

Tracking and sharing your knowledge will not just help you structure your time and measure your success as an EA, it will also constitute a crucial resource to reflect on and learn from as you progress. Your experience, properly documented, will be equally useful to your fellow EAs, colleagues and stakeholders in Nigeria and further afield. It may sometimes seem that the reporting demanded by PDF II is excessive, particularly given how busy you are likely to be with ‘real’ work. Rest assured the lessons you learn will be valuable for the programme and other advisers and programmes that will follow you, and without a structured methodology for organising your reflections, there is a high risk that your knowledge will be lost.

“Be ready to write. A lot may depend on it.”

Embedded Adviser on green bonds, Ministry of Environment

PDF II has integrated knowledge management into its programme: this is part of what differentiates the current programme from its predecessor, PDF. As a result, EAs are required to provide monthly status updates that include progress towards achievement of Terms of Reference outputs and outcomes; risks and mitigation measures; and opportunities and lessons learned. You are also expected to contribute towards interim reports, and annual reports and project completion reports where applicable. **To facilitate this process, as well as keep track of your own progress, it will be useful to keep a diary of meetings attended and next steps, with associated notes.** This will be crucial in gathering evidence to demonstrate when and how influence has occurred – not to mention in keeping a record of instances where you have gone beyond the remit specified in your Terms of Reference. Findings collated from EAs will be discussed and validated with the relevant stakeholders.

Particularly if you have responsibility for engaging the public and stakeholders through communications strategies and media outputs, it will be advantageous to showcase ongoing projects and success stories on social media platforms. Press releases, reports, photo galleries and videos of events will serve as valuable forms of documentation.

PDF II is also responsible for bringing together DFID programmes and a range of donor partners and stakeholders periodically to share information and experiences. This is done through 'anecdote circles', semi-formal events, interim interviews and exit interviews.

Anecdote circles

These informal gatherings have been recognised by past EAs as being among the more valuable knowledge management exercises they have taken part in during their assignments. Anecdote circles offer you the chance to share your perspective with five to seven EAs working in similar areas at least once every six months under the moderation of the PDF II Knowledge Management Adviser (KMA). They are valuable because they focus on the experience of the EAs and on peer learning, and conclude with agreed actions to help you to address any difficulties you may be facing or, for that matter, to share and reinforce the positive aspects of your work.

Semi-formal events

Once a year, all EAs come together in a semi-formal event to share experiences and successes. This event is a networking forum that has been expanded to include DFID advisers and DFID programmes within the growth and governance portfolios. Outside of these PDF II-organised events, it will be useful for you to maintain close contact with other EAs.

Interim interviews and exit interviews

Aside from meetings of EAs where you will be given the opportunity to voice your concerns and share positive and negative experiences, individual interviews with the KMA will seek to capture tacit knowledge from EAs. Your input into the progress of your assignment, including your conclusions on achievements, challenges and sustainability, will be (with your consent) recorded, transcribed and used to inform PDF II knowledge products and management support to future projects.

Do keep in mind that there is no such thing as a complete success, as things could always have gone better. Similarly, there is no such thing as an absolute failure, as lessons can always be learned.

Your critical, unvarnished input, received through your reporting and group/individual sharing of experiences, is fundamental to tracking progress of the PDF II programme.

Embed your work

Sustainability is not a vague, feel-good buzzword. It can be achieved through institutionalisation: the process of embedding and integrating new practices within an MDA as an established way of doing things. As an EA, you will be involved in setting up new structures, standards and processes aimed at specific outcomes that link individuals and departments within and across MDAs and public and private stakeholders. Systematising due process will boost accountability within your MDA. The sustainability of these structures will determine the residual value of your contribution.

The benefits of institutionalisation within MDAs cannot be overemphasised. EAs are temporary and even the Champions of Change are political appointees, liable to be transferred following a change in administration. Securing buy-in from staff within and across departments is crucial. Their ownership of the sustainable structures you have helped to set up improves the chances of your work continuing once you have moved on. This kind of ownership of reforms should be anchored within MDAs at several levels, such that a change in administration or posting of civil servants does not impinge on sustainability.

What's more, you should never forget that the test of PDF II's effectiveness lies in the extent to which you have been able to support pro-poor policies from formulation through to implementation.

Success in building partnerships with stakeholders and securing their ownership of your initiatives will improve the chances of policies actually being implemented and achieving the outcomes they were meant to deliver in the first place. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation are difficult to institutionalise, but are the only way to keep track of projects and provide feedback to policy.

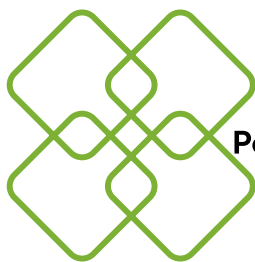
In planning your work and moving forward, then, you should take care to build on and enhance existing structures rather than starting from scratch or duplicating efforts. You will have a better chance of enlisting the help of staff if you begin by

working with structures with which they are already familiar. Procedural documents and guides on best practices can be very useful reference points. **Build a knowledge registry where all these documents can be easily accessed by relevant staff.** Keep in mind that these processes should be flexible and adaptable for future use.

A final word

Ultimately, however well prepared you are for your assignment as an EA – with clearly articulated plans and timelines and a positive attitude to match – there will be some things that are beyond your control. You may be caught up in turf wars between MDAs or indeed between your Champion of Change and other senior civil servants, and the pressure to deliver on immediate political agendas may override the need for a more strategic approach. The best you can do is to try to understand the situation at inception by gathering relevant information and ensuring adequate support. The overall experience of EAs has been that hardly any process was straightforward, which appears to suggest that mental preparation is as important as anything else. You may feel that you have been recruited for your technical skills or for your soft skills, but the reality is that both will be needed at different stages of your assignment. Your time as an EA is a journey, not only for you but for the stakeholders you will need to carry along with you. As one adviser put it, “Have the good will to work with people. Do not lose focus on the essence of the work.”





PDF II

Policy Development Facility Phase II



About us

Policy Development Facility Phase II (PDF II), funded with UK aid from the UK government, is a flexible, rapid-response facility set up to support Champions of Change in implementing economic and social policies that lead to poverty reduction in Nigeria. Its goal is to provide Champions of Change with improved capacity and evidence to enable them to pursue vital economic and social reforms.

