



ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 10

DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (IDEAS)
– AN UPDATE**

Submitted by UNDP and the World Bank

Agenda item 10

**34th meeting
22-23 May 2001**

DRAFT

Highlights of the IDEAS Preparatory Meeting

London, England--May 7-8, 2001

1. On May 7-8, 2001, a meeting was held in London, England to explore the feasibility of setting up an International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). Ahead of the meeting, a suggested rationale for creating a global voluntary organization designed to connect evaluators concerned with development was laid out in a note sent to participants (Annex 1). The concept note which served as a basis for discussion had been shaped in light of broad ranging consultations, including a survey addressed to 75 individuals from the development community and debates held within existing regional evaluation associations.
2. In order to further ascertain the interest of developing countries in creating such an organization, delineate its scope, formulate its objectives and draw a road map for its establishment, the UNDP Evaluation Office and the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department (OED) co-sponsored the May 7-8 preparatory meeting. The 26 participants were selected for their professional reputation, their wide ranging experience in development and their interest in evaluation capacity building.
3. The participants included twelve representatives of developing countries from East Asia, South Asia, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa. The meeting also included evaluation partners from developed countries -- among them, the presidents of the American Evaluation Association and the Italian Evaluation Association, the president elect of the European Evaluation Society, the head of the Danish aid agency evaluation unit (and chairperson of the OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation) as well as representatives from the Dutch and British bilateral development assistance evaluation units.
4. The goals and the agenda of the preparatory meeting are shown in Annex 2. There was a comprehensive debate about the special evaluation needs of developing countries, the role of professional evaluation associations, the lessons of experience in setting up such associations, the major challenges of sustainability which voluntary associations face, the numerous advantages of leveraging on the activities of existing associations and the need to be realistic and hard headed as well as responsive to the priority needs of developing countries in the creation of IDEAS.

5. Areas of Agreement

1. IDEAS would be a broad-based association for promoting excellence in the theory and practice of development evaluation. While global in character, it should, however, be firmly anchored on the needs of the South, i.e., developing countries and transition economies.
2. The creation of IDEAS would fill an important institutional gap in the global evaluation architecture. The special needs of development evaluators are currently not being met by existing evaluation associations. An African Evaluation Association is being set up but it is still in its infancy and would benefit from linkages to a global development evaluation association. The global federation of evaluation associations now on the drawing board would not meet the needs of individual evaluators located in countries not currently served by national evaluation associations.
3. IDEAS is a critical asset for strengthening the development dimension of existing evaluation associations as well as an ally for the creation of new evaluation associations at country level, especially in developing countries. There was broad recognition that the existing capacities (supply) to evaluate the outcomes and impacts

of development initiatives are exceptionally weak in developing countries, both at individual and institutional levels. In particular, the civil society and the private sector are still relatively inactive in the evaluation of public policies and programs. Furthermore, development evaluators are not connected to one another—or to centers of evaluation competence—and therefore they cannot readily share knowledge and ideas or join forces to promote excellence in the theory and practice of development evaluation.

4. Participants welcomed the views of leaders of existing evaluation associations. They recognized that the lessons of experience can inform the creation of IDEAS and that IDEAS will have a supportive role to play in evaluation capacity development in concert with the efforts of the development community and of national and regional evaluation associations.
5. The consensus opinion was that the governance of IDEAS should give a dominant weight to developing country and transition economies representatives.
6. IDEAS would be an open, democratic, and inclusive organization, with a minimum of gate keeping on membership, affiliation, or participation. Membership should be global and pluralistic, i.e., including both individuals and institutions from the South and North. No certification would be required to join the association. Membership would be open to all those interested in development evaluation, with the possibility of differentiation in fees among primary members, associate members and institutional sponsors.
7. IDEAS should operate according to the subsidiarity principle—i.e. IDEAS would not operate so as not to crowd out national and regional evaluation organizations. Rather, it would pursue a proactive approach in brokering such mechanisms and in supporting national and regional efforts to promote development evaluation.
8. The initial focus of IDEAS would be on evaluation capacity building in developing countries, with an emphasis on advocacy efforts towards the creation of effective demand for independent evaluation in the governance of host countries. There is a need to mainstream evaluation in the overall development process and to consider evaluation not as a technical exercise but more as an instrument for decision-making and other governance processes. IDEAS would also have the option of brokering evaluation knowledge, holding conferences and workshops, providing internships, strengthening evaluation networks and alliances and providing a forum for debates on development and evaluation.
9. There was agreement that IDEAS should start small and operate efficiently, relying as much as possible on other agencies and connecting to other evaluation associations for advice and support.

Governance of IDEAS

6. It was agreed that a Temporary Steering Committee (TSC) would be set up to draft and recommend proposals about the legal formation of IDEAS, its constitution and its initial work programs and funding plans.
7. The TSC would have a majority of developing countries representatives, and its chair would be from a developing country. Selection for membership on the TSC was delegated to the representatives of the UNDP and the WB.
8. The TSC would complete its work within the current calendar year. It would report its findings and make its proposals to a constituent assembly to be set up early in 2002. A governance body for IDEAS would be elected by the constituent assembly in an open and democratic manner.

9. Decisions on the location of IDEAS and its permanent secretariat would be made only after the constituent assembly and governance body had been created.
10. The London meeting participants would serve as a Reference Group for the TSC and would serve in this capacity until the creation of the constituent assembly.
11. A temporary secretariat, supported in its initial phase by UNDP and the World Bank, would be established to support the TSC. The President of the American Evaluation Association's offer of technical support to the TSC was welcomed by participants.

Action Items:

12. The World Bank will invite TSC and Reference Group members to the Fourth Bi-Annual conference on Evaluation & Development in Washington, DC, to provide them an opportunity for undertaking broader consultation with other participants to that conference on the goals and plans for IDEAS.
13. These highlights, including a draft declaration and the names of members of the TSC, will be circulated to the Reference Group. Once finalized, the London Declaration will be circulated widely.
14. The TSC will initiate the preparatory work to launch IDEAS with the support of the temporary secretariat. This preparatory work will include the drafting of a constitution and initial work and financial plans.
15. As the initiative progresses, donors will be kept regularly informed with a view to securing specific commitments to the extent possible by the time a constituent assembly is set up during the first quarter of 2002.
16. The TSC would seek to complete its work by the end of December, 2001 and submit its work to the Reference Group for comment and reactions, prior to bringing the material to the constituent assembly in the early part of 2002.

Annex I

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (IDEAS)

Introduction

As developing and developed countries alike face the challenge of reducing global poverty by half by year 2015, the importance of development evaluation is being more widely recognized for two main reasons. First, development evaluation could be an effective tool for management for results, specifically for demonstrating value for money. Second, it could also contribute to promoting transparency and accountability in decision-making and other governance processes. However, existing capacities to evaluate the outcomes and impact of development initiatives are generally weak, both at the individual and institutional levels. There is clearly a need for effective means of transmitting and accessing knowledge to promote excellence in the theory and practice of development evaluation.

It is in this context that UNDP and the World Bank have agreed to work together towards the establishment of an International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS).

IDEAS: Initial Concept

IDEAS would be a non-profit, non-government, voluntary organization with membership open to individuals and institutions involved in evaluation as well as development issues from developing and developed countries. Its members would include evaluation experts and development practitioners from governments, civil society (e.g., NGOs, academia, research institutions), private sector, and from bilateral and multilateral institutions in the international development cooperation community.

The main objectives of IDEAS are: to promote development evaluation as a key tool for results-based management and good governance; to foster evaluation as a vital instrument of learning; to build bridges of understanding and exchange of professional experience among development evaluators; and to promote excellence in the theory and practice of development evaluation. It is expected that IDEAS would help promote a culture for development evaluation globally and that its members would improve their development evaluation skills and contribute to the conduct of high-quality development evaluations.

In order to achieve its objectives, IDEAS would make optimal use of information technology to facilitate sharing of expertise among its members and to help itself operate as a dynamic and participatory global network. An interactive web site would be established, including a systematic database with a search capacity for important information on members such as their fields of expertise, an electronic newsletter, discussion forum, and a referral service for development evaluators.

Funds would also be provided for seminars/training programmes, studies/fellowships, publication of professional papers, and a biennial conference.

UNDP and the World Bank are committing some funds for the establishment and initial operation of IDEAS and at the same time seeking the support of other institutions. Eventually, however, IDEAS should be a self-sustained organization.

IDEAS would be governed by key officers and an unpaid Board elected from among its members, to be supported by a small secretariat.

ISSUES

UNDP and the World Bank shared the initial concept with around 40 evaluation experts around the world: academia, private sector, government and civil society; donors and non-donors; bilateral development organizations and regional development banks. They also presented it at the November 2000 meeting of the OECD-DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation in Paris. Overall, the feedback was positive. The consultations proved to be particularly useful in highlighting three basic considerations that should be taken into account in establishing IDEAS:

- The need for IDEAS to be firmly anchored on the needs of developing countries, i.e., an initiative that is truly driven by the South, not by donors
- The need to link the IDEAS objective to capacity-building in developing countries
- The need to ensure that IDEAS does not stifle or fragment national initiatives such as national evaluation associations and similar networks for promoting evaluation capacity development

With these as the overall considerations, the following issues need to be addressed in arriving at a consensus on the objectives and key programmes, membership, governance, and sustainability of IDEAS.

Objectives and Key Programmes

- “Is yet another institution the answer or is a more fluid, virtual network more interesting?”
- What would be the value-added of IDEAS to the South in particular?
- What would be the comparative advantage of IDEAS vis-à-vis existing evaluation associations and similar networks?
- How do we involve partners from the South in identifying (and eventually, developing and implementing) key programmes for IDEAS?

Membership

- Should membership be targeted at specific individuals/institutions or should it be open to anyone interested in the objectives of IDEAS? What kind of membership would help achieve the objectives of IDEAS? How do you ensure that membership in IDEAS is not simply used as another “fancy” item in one’s CV?
- What contributions (e.g., membership fees) and benefits (e.g., influence in governance, participation in programmes) would be associated with individual members? With institutional members?

Governance

- What governance structure would be most appropriate to ensure that IDEAS truly becomes a South-driven association effectively responding to the development needs of the South?
- How do you ensure the independence of IDEAS in light of the substantial support expected from donors? What does “independence” mean?

Sustainability

- If donors are to provide support to IDEAS only during the initial years, how can IDEAS sustain itself?

Annex II

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (IDEAS) Preparatory Meeting

London, 7-8 May 2001

Purpose

- To debate issues emerging from the earlier consultations (mandate, scope, etc.) and reach a consensus about them.
- To identify partner institutions and individuals that might help establish, fund and operate IDEAS
- To agree on the actions to be taken to establish IDEAS.

Program

The program covers the following:

- Sharing of relevant experience in setting up and operating professional evaluation organizations;
- Exploration of the priority professional needs of developing country evaluators which might be met by IDEAS.
- Discussion of the main objectives, key programmes and membership requirements of IDEAS
- Action Plan

7 May	
12:30 – 2:00 p.m.	Opening Lunch and Welcome, Colin Kirk
2:00 – 3:30	The Relevance of ECD Lessons for IDEAS
	<i>Nurul Alam & Osvaldo Feinstein</i>
3:30 – 4:00	Coffee Break
4:00- 5:30	What do Evaluation Associations Do ?: Implications for IDEAS
	<i>Xinia Picado, Kate Spring</i>
5:30-6:15	What Do Development Evaluators Need ?
	<i>Ray Rist, Eduardo Wiesner</i>
7:30 p.m.	Dinner
8 May	
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	IDEAS: Discussion on Priorities and Programs
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:30	IDEAS : Membership and Governance
	<i>Kenneth King, Heba Handoussa</i>
12:30- 2:00	Lunch
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Concluding Discussion and Action Plan
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3:30-4:00	Coffee Break
4:00 – 5:00	Concluding Discussion and Action Plan (continued)