



ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 2

DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

Note on Joint Evaluations

This note was prepared by Niels Dabelstein, Denmark and Vice Chair of the Working Party on Aid Evaluation. It is submitted for consideration under Item 5) of the agenda of the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation meeting on 27 – 28 March 2003.

**37th meeting
27-28 March 2003**

This note is based on the informal meeting on Joint Evaluation held in Washington in November 2002, the workshop on Country Programme Evaluations hosted by IDB in February 2003 and on the OED paper “Lessons Learned from World Bank Experiences in Joint Evaluations”.

Joint evaluation work has several virtues:

- rationalisation of the process of evaluation,
- reduced transaction costs for partner countries,
- improved quality of the work undertaken,
- increased weight (and legitimacy) of the evaluation if undertaken with partners,
- answer questions which cannot be addressed by one actor such as coordination,

but also some costs:

- longer time needed to plan and execute evaluations,
- higher total transaction costs on the donor side (at least for the lead agency)

This note briefly discusses the following issues:

1. Synthetic / meta evaluations
2. Global evaluations
3. Country evaluations
4. Sector evaluations
5. Multi-donor evaluation of international organisations
6. Joint data collection/research
7. Information Exchange
8. Evaluation Capacity Building
9. Collaboration between ECG, IAWG and WP-EV

A. Synthetic work and meta-evaluations.

There is clearly a need for more joint synthetic work, as was conducted for Afghanistan in October 2001 and as the WP-EV is currently undertaking on decentralisation. In this regard it is also important to look back over the recent years to see if there are subjects, which could be taken up in a joint synthetic study or discussed and synthesised through a seminar. Meta-evaluations are a challenge that could be addressed jointly. It is clear that with the increased emphasis on MDG's the need for assessments of effectiveness at the global level increases - without any prejudice on whether or not the evaluation community will be able to answer to that need. Ongoing initiatives are joint work of Germany, Norway,

the Netherlands and the UK on Peace Building. The WP-EW should look at the agendas of the DAC SLM/HLM for possible future demands

B. Global Evaluations

Attention was drawn to the high transaction resulting from full-blown Global Evaluations such as the CDF evaluation and the Basic Education Evaluation. Although the positive effects of such evaluations may be considerable, both cost and time factors need careful consideration. Less ambitious forms of collaboration should be considered, for example through reducing the scope of the evaluation or reducing the number of partners. The recent DFID/SDC workshop on evaluation of budget support actively discussed various options for a joint global evaluation with reduced transaction costs, for example by adopting a common framework for parallel evaluations of various partners.

C. Country Evaluations

The challenge for bilateral donors is tying their evaluation process into the country development process. Both multilateral banks and international organisations are often required to fit into country processes by their own internal regulations. Bilateral donors often focus on their own agency's policy process, rather than the partner countries. The workshop on Country programme evaluations hosted by IDB in February 2003 underlined that while individual agency/donor country programme evaluations may be necessary there is ample scope for better coordination and sharing of information and analysis (see 5 below). Additional options to be explored include synthesising country programme evaluations conducted within a short time span, and encouraging partner country evaluations of donor assistance along the lines of that experienced in South Africa and Tanzania

D. Sector Evaluations

The increasing use of joint programming, co- or parallel funding and basket funding makes joint sector evaluations a necessity. Joint annual sector reviews are becoming the norm and members of the DAC WP-EV should actively pursue opportunities. Initiatives to be noted include proposals for joint evaluations of the health sector in Tanzania, education in Nepal and agricultural sector in Uganda.

E. Multi-donor evaluation of international organisations

Several Multi-donor evaluations of international organisations have been successfully completed: WHO, UNICEF, UNRISD, UNDP/PACT, UNCDF (list not complete) and at least three are under way: UNFPA/IPPF, WFP and IFAD. Consortia of varying size conduct these evaluations and procedures are well established. Donor coordination and cooperation has generally functioned very well, in particular when donors' evaluation departments have initiated and/or managed the evaluations. A notable exception is IFAD, where a proposal for an external evaluation was tabled during the replenishment negotiations and became entangled in the political process. At this stage the evaluation process has been taken over by IFAD's Board and can hardly be defined as external and independent. Some current DAC members are planning to increase their multilateral funding over the next years, and the new members of the EU will likely channel a major part of their aid budgets through multilateral channels. This may create increasing demand/opportunities for joint work in this field

F. Joint data collection/research

Where joint evaluations are not feasible, less ambitious methods of collaboration should be explored such as joint processes and intermediary products: joint missions leading to separate reporting, joint field work, joint data gathering, joint literature reviews, joint research on basic trends and so on, which lead to intermediary products which could be used for evaluations of more than one donor. These issues need

further exploration. The newly launched Country Analytic Work (CAW) Partnership Website is a good example of sharing information. (<http://www.countryanalyticwork.net/>)

G. Information Exchange

The process of information exchange between evaluation communities should be improved. Current information on planned evaluations is often static, out of date and not presented in such a form as to promote consideration. Various means of improving the way information is gathered and presented and to improve the exchange of ideas, suggestions and proposals need to be explored. The evaluation matrix has been somewhat useful, but information on Evaluation plans should be made more dynamic to allow for the relatively long lead time for joint work. The possibility to reintroduce evaluation plans into the DAC Inventory should be considered. CIDA has informed that the new upgraded Inventory already has the technological infrastructure and capacity in place. Regular submission and updating of evaluation plans will allow for easy identification of potential areas for collaboration

H. Evaluation Capacity Building and Utilisation

Joint evaluations should include sufficient attention for evaluation capacity development. In several partner countries the technical capacity exists and could be better be utilised. However, in many countries the institutional capacity is weak or non-existent. In this regard the possibility to set up a fund or foundation for evaluation capacity development in the South should be considered. This fund could enable Southern partners to join international evaluations or joint evaluations in a sector in their country, with full recognition for the needs for capacity building. Capacity building should in general be a subject for consideration.

I. Collaboration between ECG, IAWG and WP-EV

The collaboration between ECG, IAWG and WP-EV needs to be strengthened. The chair of the WP-EV now being a permanent observer in both ECG and IAWG should facilitate this. The three communities should remain separate because they address different communities and have different mandates and tasks. A possible effective way to increase collaboration would be if joint task forces on specific issues could be set up, consisting of members of all three communities and reporting back to the three bodies.