



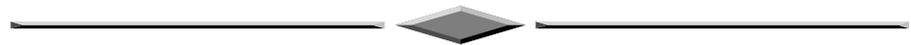
## **ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 7**

**DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION**

### **UPDATE REPORT ON DAC EVALUATION INVENTORY**

**Submitted by CIDA, Canada**

**Agenda item 8 ii)**



**32nd Meeting  
10-11 February 2000**

## **DAC EVALUATION INVENTORY UPDATE**

### **February 2000**

#### **The Evaluation Inventory**

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has been managing and maintaining the DAC Evaluation Inventory since 1988. Over this time the Inventory has evolved significantly from a simple bibliographic reference tool toward becoming an instrument designed to share evaluation findings of international development organizations. Today, the Inventory not only contains findings and lessons of evaluation reports, but also evaluation report methodologies, contacts of contributing members and the evaluation units within the ministries of developing countries, and the evaluation plans of DAC members.

The Inventory products are currently stored and delivered to two separate audiences for different purposes. One audience is the DAC members for the purpose of enhancing learning and co-operation among its members. The second audience includes other individuals/groups interested in international development. In order to serve these two audiences the Inventory is available in three versions:

- a complete version which is stored in a master database located within CIDA's Corporate Memory system (it contains a complete list of evaluations and abstracts submitted since the inception of the Inventory in 1988);
- a CD-ROM version which is updated annually and provided to members of the Development Assistance Committee (it contains abstracts submitted over the last ten years, evaluation plans, development country contacts); and
- a Website version established in 1998 which contains a public version of the inventory. (This Website is in the public domain with access at <http://minweb.idrc.ca/daclog.htm> .)

#### **Current Status and Developments**

##### **Contributions from Members**

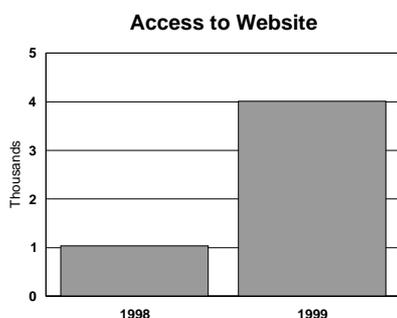
Last year, there were 1,778 contributions to the inventory from 10 members. The complete inventory (master database) contains 9,666 abstracts contributed by 32 members / observers. The CD-ROM version contains a summary of abstracts for only the last ten years (approximately 7,000 abstracts) while the *Inventory Website* contains about 5,000 abstracts since it consists of only those abstracts contributors are willing to share with the public. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage more members to contribute on a regular basis.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>**Guidelines and assistance are available by contacting Doncor at doncor@fox.nstn.ca or Don Paul at CIDA (819-953-**

## Access and Use

At present, members and observers of the Working Party on Aid Evaluation have access to the main database of the Inventory by means of requests made to CIDA. Currently, it is not known how extensive is the use of the CD-ROM version of the Inventory. During the last meeting of the Working Party, it was suggested that



the CD-ROM version may be phased out once a website is operational. Access to the *Inventory Website*, however, provides some insights into the overall significance of the Inventory. Though we can not provide a breakdown of individual users, the number of people visiting the *Inventory Website* has more than quadrupled between 1998 and 1999. This has occurred without much advertising or promotion.

This along with studies of CD-ROM use for distributing information widely suggests that the development of a restricted website in conjunction with the public website might provide the best means of sharing evaluation information between members. It is also the most cost effective way of providing instant access to an up-to-date Inventory, in an on-line secure fashion. Accordingly, CIDA will proceed with the following changes to the provision of Inventory products. These changes will contribute to the efficient management of the data base.

### Last Issue of CD-ROM

The next issue of the CD-ROM during 2000 will be the last. The expectation was to distribute an updated version of the CD-ROM to members during the February 2000 meeting, but owing to upgrades to the servers used to store the data this will not be possible. The target for the production of the CD-ROM is now set for the end of July 2000. Members and Observers are therefore asked to submit, no later than end April 2000 any new abstracts and/or plans they wish to post. On the basis of these submissions, the last version of the CD-ROM will be issued by the end of July 2000. As discussed during the last meeting of the Working Party, the phase out of the *CD-ROM* is based on experience with maintaining and managing the inventory and the evolution of technology used to share information. As well, this is done with the intent of avoiding duplication of effort and resources in storing and retrieving the information gathered.

### A Restricted / Public Inventory Website

A restricted website will be established concurrently with the existing public *Inventory Website*. The restricted site will be only accessible to contributing members. One of the main advantages is the provision of access to the complete database of evaluation records. It will be developed and become operational by the end of December 2000. A number of security measures will be installed to ensure the privacy of the site. The site will have a similar look to the existing public site. It will also include additional information which members find useful.

## **Enhancements and Discussion Issues**

### **Enhancements**

In response to wishes expressed by the Working Party during the last meeting, there were a number of significant enhancements to the *Inventory Website* made in 1999. The website has been updated so that searches on multiple countries, donors and sectors can be conducted in any given combination. One can now search, for example, for all of the abstracts contributed by USAID and AIDAB (along with any other donor) related to the agricultural sector (or any other sector or sectors) in Asia and Africa (or any other region/country or regions/countries). These can also be used in conjunction with key word searching. The results of these searches (either in terms of a listing or the actual abstracts) can now be saved to file and printed using any number of software packages.

### **Internet Links to Member Homepages**

Links to contributor home pages have been created and many of these sites have the full text of some evaluation reports. However, only eight members have provided access to their homepages. Other members are encouraged to do so. Hypertext links between search terms contained in each records also allows users to move freely between the abstracts posted.

The technology now exists which can link individual abstracts to the full text of an evaluation (residing on the donor's own homepage). If more members contributed to the Website in this fashion, a powerful evaluation reference tool could result from hypertext links should the Working Party want to develop such a function. It could be widely used both by evaluation professionals as well as those interested in international development.

### **Evaluation Plans**

In the last fiscal year only two members contributed their evaluation plans. De facto, the OECD Secretariat has undertaken to make available an alternative on its website: the Evaluation Plan Matrix. A decision should be made to eliminate this feature from the Inventory.

### **Coding and Subject Areas**

Many members have observed that current coding does not reflect some of their subject areas and have suggested other sectors. Although key word searching is available within the Inventory, the Working Party should look at whether the current coding used by the DAC is meaningful in terms of their evaluation activities and whether it wishes to add to the coding.