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**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE**

DAC Network on Development Evaluation

Summary Record of the 16th Meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation

12-13 February 2014

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16TH MEETING OF THE DAC NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION SUMMARY RECORD

WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2014

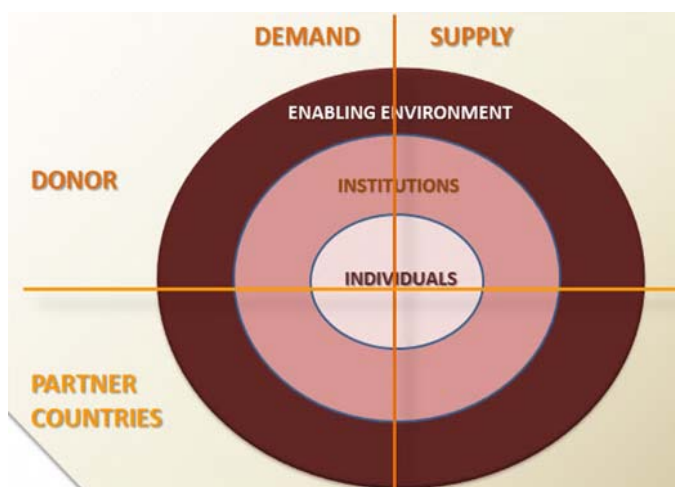
I. OPENING SESSION

1. The draft agenda for the 16th meeting [DCD/DAC/EV/A(2014)1] was approved. The summary record of the 15th meeting [[DCD/DAC/EV/M\(2013\)1](#) / [DCD/DAC/EV/M\(2013\)1 FR](#)] was approved. New members and guests introduced themselves and the Chair welcomed them and the newest DAC member countries: Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The Chair Martyn Pennington (European Commission) announced that he would not be in a position to chair future meetings, and that elections for the next Chair would therefore be held.

II. ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER IN EVALUATION: FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

2. The opening presentations by Finland, Spain and UNEG sparked a lively sharing of experiences among members. The presenters used a common framework for understanding evaluation capacities at the levels of the enabling environment, the institution and the individual; as well as elements of supply and demand for evaluation in both donor and partner countries (see figure).

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for Evaluation Capacity Development



3. José Manuel Argilés Marín (Spain) described how human rights concepts are increasingly included in planning and strategic documents (for example, in country programmes), and attention to human rights is growing. However, evaluating human rights, particularly outside of targeted programmes, remains a low priority and there is little political demand for evaluations on human rights. Giving the example of an evaluation in El Salvador, the presenter also pointed out that human rights and gender are often added on to already overly ambitious terms of reference, resulting in final analyses that lack depth.

4. Marco Segone (UNEG and UNWomen) shared experiences on advocating for evaluation, capacity development and equity-aware evaluations. Across the UN system, a number of efforts are underway to strengthen action and accountability on gender equity, including a system wide action plan that includes one indicator on evaluation. It was suggested that the boards of individual institutions can help by demanding evaluations that address equity issues. UNWomen is working with other partners to do a joint systemic review of gender in development and invited members to join.

5. There was a general sentiment that practice is slightly more advanced on gender than on human rights, although overall progress is disappointing given that these issues have been a priority for several decades in most member countries. Particular concerns were raised about the lack of analysis of the outcomes of equity efforts. For instance, do activities actually result in improved conditions for women and girls, or greater respect for human rights? With regard to human rights, ethical and confidentiality issues can further complicate evaluation. Several members suggested that gender and human rights should be looked at as part of the effectiveness criteria, rather than as a separate criterion. Canada shared a meta-evaluation of mainstreaming gender in evaluation, which assessed the terms of reference, work plan and final report for each evaluation using specific quality criteria. The review found a very low level of quality, with only one aspect ranked above “satisfactory”. During the discussion, several more members described similar findings in meta-evaluations or reviews. Others shared practical experiences and suggestions for simplifying concepts like human rights in order to operationalise them. A gap was seen in evaluating beyond thematic gender equality evaluations or “traditional” sectors to focus on areas not typically associated with gender, such as electricity and natural resource management.

6. It was clear from the discussion that part of the reason evaluations do not adequately address human rights and gender has to do with monitoring, management and information systems; some members have therefore begun to focus on improving evaluability. In terms of what evaluation units can do, it was also suggested that members improve quality checks and hold evaluation teams to account for higher quality analyses. It was clear that a systematic approach, that goes beyond individual training or policies and captures political attention, is required to better address human rights and gender in evaluation.

Follow-up: Interested members will consider further analysis or joint work. The network should continue sharing experiences to support members in evaluating human rights and gender equity more effectively.

III. MANAGING EVALUATIONS: DIVISION OF LABOUR AND USE OF EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS

7. Karin Kohlweg (Austria) introduced the topic and asked members to describe what factors are driving their decisions about how to manage evaluations, and to share positive and negative experiences.

8. Dominique de Crombrughe de Looringhe (Belgium) described Belgium’s experience with using primarily external consultants for evaluation, because of the perception that external experts would have greater credibility. An experiment with carrying out an evaluation internally was shared. While the result was very good in terms of findings and learning, the staff found the process took a great deal of time because they did not have a clearly defined work plan the way an external consultant would.

9. Caroline Heider (Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank Group) shared her experience with many different models. She emphasised that the perception of independence and the reality are not necessarily the same thing. In fact, some examples were given where evaluation staff were more critical than external consultants and better placed to “rock the boat” in a given institution. An evaluation team is not just a group of individuals but must actually function like a team – and building the team up can take time if they don’t know each other already. Staff-only teams have the advantage of longevity and building up knowledge that stays within the institution. However, this approach can also be limiting in terms of the mix of available skills. A good solution can be to blend internal knowledge with external expertise selected to bring in specific knowledge or thought provoking perspectives. In terms of costs, the idea that hiring external consultants was necessarily cheaper was challenged.

10. Ruerd Ruben (Netherlands) described the experience of combining different modalities. Specific challenges around consultants understanding terms of reference (particularly where the approach is not pre-defined) were raised, and it was pointed out that investing staff time in “controlled interaction” with consultants can be time consuming but pays off in the long run. IOB has used an ex-post appraisal of consultants and suggested that standards for rating consultant quality are needed.

11. The ensuing discussion highlighted the different skills required to manage consultants and carry out evaluations, which has implications for staffing evaluation units. Several members described difficulties around building up a well-functioning team, particularly when the team leader is an external consultant or individual members have not worked together before. There is a steep learning curve for external consultants who must be well briefed on the programmes and culture of the institution. There is also a danger of consultants “walking away with” the knowledge generated by an evaluation. Long term agreements with external firms, blended teams, and doing a thorough debriefing at the end of the process can be used to help tackle these issues. Having clear expectations and guidance is critical for ensuring quality, regardless of who is carrying out the evaluation.

Follow-up: The topic will remain on the network’s overall agenda for future sharing of experience.

IV. FORWARD LOOKING DISCUSSION

12. The DAC Facilitator Lotta Karlsson (Finland) informed members that the network would soon be consulted as part of the process for developing the programme of work and budget for 2015/2016. She emphasised that this is an important biennium within the DAC. The DAC itself will also be evaluated during this biennium. EvalPartners, the United Nations’ Evaluation Group (UNEG) and a number of country/regional evaluation groups have declared 2015 the International Year of Evaluation; members were encouraged to share ideas for activities they could lead at home or within the network.

13. In small groups, members discussed the current development policy environment and some of the key trends affecting evaluation, including the changing geography of poverty and declining share of ODA as a portion of overall development finance; the move in some countries to further integrate development co-operation with foreign policy and trade; new climate finance and sustainable development goals; support to country evaluation systems; and, new evaluation tools and methods. Groups reported back on top priorities. The dominant issues were:

- Evaluating climate finance and sustainable development, especially the importance of being involved in the process early on to help set up adequate results frameworks for monitoring and evaluation, and to engage strategically to inform programme design.
- How evaluation will address private sector activities (already the subject of Evalnet work) and other sources of development finance for developing countries. Moreover, in the context of

pressures to justify aid spending in the context of broader foreign policy objectives, attention needs to be given to the evaluation of non-ODA policies in donor and partner countries.

- Working with and helping to strengthen national evaluation systems with an eye to improving policies and making public investment for development more effective. Re-examining the role of development evaluators in the context of empowering partner countries to do more evaluation.
- Strengthening evaluation capacities by sharing and developing evaluation tools and methods (including in different languages) and helping members improve performance and access resources.
- Responding to and informing the political demands for evidence on key substantive topics. Also dealing with the pressure to produce impact evaluations and straight forward results information, while at the same time working in more complex areas where it is more difficult to clearly assess results – including in settings of conflict and fragility.
- Links to the data revolution and the growing emphasis on transparency. The use of technologies (such as cell phone based data collection or geospatial mapping) in evaluation.
- Engaging with other donors, particularly China and private sector actors, on evaluation.

Follow-up: The network suggestions for work areas will be used as an input to planning for the next programme of work and future meetings. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau and EvalPartners, will develop a proposal for International Year of Evaluation 2015.

V. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND WORK WITH PARTNERS

14. The network's task team on Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) chair Riitta Oksanen (Finland) gave an overview of work achieved over the past two years. The task team has provided a platform for sharing experiences, reached out to partner networks to identify needs and interests, and supported collaborations with other international ECD initiatives, such as EvalPartners. Future work could focus on better understanding what works best in supporting capacity development, and may include an evaluation of ECD support.

15. France reported on progress with the “Collaborative Partner-Donor Evaluation Initiative”. Financing arrangements have been agreed and several members have pledged support. A consultant is being recruited and work on the country studies will begin shortly, with a kick-off workshop in Uganda 24-25 March 2014. A synthesis workshop to gather lessons from the project is also planned in late 2014 in Hanoi, and it is hoped that some pilot collaborative evaluations would be underway shortly thereafter.

16. During the discussion a number of other ECD initiatives were highlighted, including efforts by IEG World Bank to support professional development and training, and an eLearning curriculum that has been developed by Germany.

Follow-up: The UK will take over as chair of the ECD task team from April 2014. There was support from members to consider a future evaluation of ECD, possibly based on an initial evaluability study and a review of existing literature.

VI. MULTI-DONOR PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTILATERAL EVALUATIONS

17. Jan Klugkist (Netherlands) shared a proposal to explore the need for further joint work on “Monitoring and evaluation in multi-donor partnership programmes”. It was agreed that a useful way

forward would be to draw on existing work and identify needs for further joint effort, starting with the *Sourcebook for Evaluating Global and Regional Partnership Programs- Indicative Principles and Standards*. It was suggested to consider developing an *Evaluation Insights* note that would look at evaluation arrangements and funds architecture in different sectors. Members expressed support for addressing evaluation within the context of broader governance reform measures of individual funds and globally. Interest in this work was indicated by Austria, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the IEG World Bank.

Follow-up: The IEG World Bank will investigate how the Sourcebook material might be made more user-friendly and accessible. Members interested in pursuing the proposed work on multi-donor trust funds are invited to contact the Netherlands to explore options.

18. James Melanson (Canada) gave an update on the development effectiveness reviews, and a review comparing the methodological approach with the results component of MOPAN assessments. A number of options for blending the two approaches have been suggested and are being reviewed. Björn Gillsäter (MOPAN Secretariat) described work underway to revise the MOPAN methodology. Members generally agreed that MOPAN should try to integrate aspects of the development effectiveness review and there was support for resolving this issue with the MOPAN methodology currently being developed. During the discussion members expressed specific concerns about the risk of overlap in reviews of the four institutions planned in 2014. The Netherlands and Canada confirmed that they will be conducting development effectiveness reviews in 2014 on UN-WOMEN, UNHCR and UNFPA. They intend to work with interested members and closely coordinate with the MOPAN reviews of these organisations.

Follow-up: Members will work with their MOPAN representatives to promote integrating of development effectiveness aspects into the new MOPAN approach.

19. Dominique de Crombrugghe de Looringhe (Belgium) and Indran Naidoo (UNDP) provided an update on the joint UNEG (United Nations Evaluation Group) – DAC task team on peer reviews of the evaluation function of United Nations organisations and encouraged members to support ongoing reviews. There have been a number of improvements in terms of both process and substance and the peer reviews enjoy a high level of success in the UN system, with strong demand for more reviews. During the discussion members shared a number of experiences with peer reviews, self-evaluations and other review exercises. Bilateral members were also encouraged to think of requesting a peer review as a support to internal processes.

Follow-up: The joint task team on peer review of UN organisation evaluation functions will produce a number of reviews this year; interested members willing to serve as a peer reviewer are encouraged to contact Evalnet representative Dominique de Crombrugghe de Looringhe.

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VII. EVALUATING IN SETTINGS OF FRAGILITY

20. Megan Kennedy-Chouane (Secretariat) gave an overview of recent work on evaluating in environments of violent conflict and fragility, including the process of developing the DAC guidance “Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility – Improving Learning for results” (OECD 2012). She described current debates on fragility, particularly concerns around learning from experience, and the difficulties of getting and using good evidence to inform decision-making.

21. Nick York (IEG World Bank) shared findings from the IEG evaluation of “World Bank Group Assistance to Low-Income Fragile and Conflict-Affected States,” which has been widely disseminated and gained substantial traction. A key finding from the nine in-depth country analyses was that overall performance ratings in the portfolio had improved, but fragility and conflict at the country level were not seen to be improving. This could be an indication that the Bank is “doing things right” but not “doing the right things”. Findings on gender equality were particularly disappointing. The IEG is planning further work.

22. Susan Ulbaek (Denmark) reflected on how to do better in evaluating statebuilding and conflict prevention support, drawing on a recent book on *Evaluation Methodologies for Aid in Conflict* (Routledge 2014) and a Danida meta-evaluation. She described how standard methods are not producing in-depth analysis and tend to replicate conventional wisdom. There is no silver bullet to address challenges in these settings. Moving forward there is considerable scope to use data better and to better address causality, and a need for greater flexibility. It was also suggested that evaluators need to think carefully about their own biases and own role in conflict settings.

23. During the discussion, members welcomed progress made and pointed to the added value of the network’s contributions in this field. The issue of evaluability (designing and monitoring programmes in ways that make evaluation feasible) was seen as a key weakness, particularly in settings where there is a need for faster feedback (and therefore little time to recreate baselines or collect new data). Strengthening evaluability will be an important focus area for some members. Several evaluations have pointed to the failure to use conflict analyses in a meaningful way, resulting in programmes and policies that do not actually address conflict drivers. Some members are experimenting with whole of government evaluations in conflict settings such as Afghanistan. The discussion also highlighted sensitivity around the “fragility” label, which can create barriers for evaluation, and the need to also look at fragility “pockets” in otherwise stable countries. The role of job creation and economic growth in supporting stability and development was highlighted as a relatively neglected area of research and evaluation.

Follow-up: The network should continue to provide a platform for sharing experiences and engage beyond the membership to support continued learning. USAID will send around their work experimenting with complexity-aware evaluation and monitoring.

VIII. PRIVATE SECTOR

24. Eva Terberger (KfW Entwicklungsbank Evaluation Department, Germany) shared findings of a systematic review on supporting job creation, highlighting both lessons and some of the methodological issues surrounding systematic reviews. Specifically, ways to better synthesise or capture lessons from non-RCTs studies (which are generally excluded from systematic reviews) are needed to provide more comprehensive and relevant lessons.

25. Rakesh Nangia (African Development Bank, chair of the Evaluation Co-operation Group (ECG)) gave an update on ECG efforts to develop and harmonise evaluation metrics and benchmarks. The ECG is now piloting options for combining good practice standards for evaluating public and private sector support.

Follow-up: Expressions of interest in getting together to further discuss evaluating private sector support were noted from: the World Bank IEG, EIB, EBRD, Switzerland, Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, African Development Bank, Belgium, and Germany.

IX. SHARING IDEAS AND PLANS FOR COLLABORATION

Global public goods

26. A room document submitted by the Netherlands and Norway described the increasing joint efforts to promote global public goods such as biodiversity and security (and fight global public “bads” such as pollution and disease). There is a particular interest in supporting coping and mitigation strategies for low and middle-income countries, though little work has been done to identify adequate evaluation methods to address such large, complex issues.

Follow-up: Interested members are invited to contact the Netherlands and Norway and the topic could be addressed at the next Evalnet meeting, depending on interest.

Budget support

27. Catherine Pravin (European Commission) gave an update on evaluations of budget support underway or recently completed in Burundi, Morocco, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Vietnam. Members reported that interest in the evaluations has been strong, particularly in Tanzania, Mozambique and Tunisia where the findings fed into policy dialogue between donors and the government. The agreed methodology is producing interesting results, but should perhaps be revisited after some time to resolve issues, including links to the political economy context and coverage of donor decision making (including variable tranche financing). For evaluations in 2013/14, the country contexts are becoming more diverse and flexibility on management and funding arrangements has allowed a larger number of studies to move forward with different partners in the lead or participating. During the discussion it was suggested that consideration be given to studying atypical features of the political economy to support targeted learning in future evaluations. There was interest in carrying out a synthesis of findings from the latest evaluations, as well as finding ways to strengthen the evidence base not just on budget support itself, but also in comparison to other aid instruments.

Follow-up: The European Commission will contact interested members and consider reconstituting the Steering Group on Budget Support to take forward further synthesis work and discuss possible adaptation and improvement of the approach.

Climate change

28. The Chair invited members to take note of an upcoming conference on evaluating climate change interventions, being organised by the Global Environment Fund (GEF) and Climate-Eval later this year (discussed in room document number 13).

Follow-up: Members wanting to participate in or support the conference are invited to contact the GEF evaluation office. A report back from the event will be provided to the network.

29. Nicolina Lamhauge (Secretariat) provided an update on the OECD ENV-DAC joint task team on Climate Change and Development work on monitoring and evaluating climate change adaptation activities. The work focuses on applying lessons from development evaluation on dealing with attribution/contribution, baselines, and long-time horizons.

Follow-up: Papers on monitoring and evaluating climate adaptation, including country examples from the UK, Germany, Nepal and Mozambique, will be shared with the network.

Evaluation plans tool and Evaluation Insights series

30. Joëlline Benefice (Secretariat) presented a new visual tool for sharing evaluation plans and thanked members for contributing their updated work programmes. Members welcomed the new tool. It was suggested that members should apply transparent publishing standards to their evaluation reports (as Finland is now doing) in order to facilitate the sharing of evaluation information. KOICA is inviting expressions of interest for joint work in the health sector in Vietnam and governance in Tanzania; interested members should contact Korea directly. Megan Kennedy-Chouane (Secretariat) gave an update on the *Evaluation Insights* series.

Follow-up: The plans database will be updated with plans submitted and the Secretariat will continue to carry out periodic analysis of overall trends. Members should alert the Secretariat regarding any information in the plans that cannot be shared publicly; email addresses will be removed from the database before it is made public. The Secretariat will look into options for creating a similar tool for DEREc and provide guidance to members on submitting reports to DEREc (using a form). The *Insights* note on jobs will be finalised. Members are encouraged to share ideas for new *Insights* with the Secretariat.

X. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. The European Commission announced that it is doing work looking at criteria to improve project level evaluations and will soon be contacting members with a survey. The Netherlands IOB would like to host a meeting of evaluation units whose mandates include trade policy. Members were invited to participate in the European Evaluation Society biennial conference “Evaluation for an equitable society” in Dublin 1-3 October 2014.

XI. CLOSING SESSION

32. Following the announcement of elections for network chair, Penny Hawkins (United Kingdom) was nominated by Belgium with a second from Ireland. Karin Kohlweg (Austria) and William Carlos (Ireland) have indicated their willingness to continue to serve as vice-chairs of the network. Hans Lundgren (Secretariat), on behalf of the network, thanked outgoing Chair Martyn Pennington for his many contributions and excellent chairing of the network.

The next meeting of the network will take place 19-20 November 2014.

XII. INFORMAL SESSION

33. Makki Hamid (United Arab Emirates) provided an overview of the foreign aid sector and current work developing an evaluation framework, building on existing evaluation norms and standards. The political demand for evaluation is quite strong, with the Minister calling for information on the impacts of foreign aid, but more work is needed to help management and staff understand the value and role of evaluation.

34. Cindy Clapp-Wincek and Eileen Cronin (United States of America) described a meta-evaluation of evaluation quality and coverage, which highlighted progress on rebuilding evaluation capacity and implementing the new evaluation policy. Demand for evaluation is increasing and an utilisation study is planned in 2014. Linking to earlier discussions, the review found very poor results on gender, despite many resources and a legal mandate.
35. Penny Hawkins and Alexandra Cran-McGreehin (United Kingdom) gave an update on DFID and ICAI's complimentary roles in working to improve accountability for UKAid and to strengthen learning across DFID. Members discussed how different types of evaluation can be used in different ways, for example learning is supported when people are engaged in the evaluation process.
36. Emilie Aberlen (France) shared the experience of the Agence Française de Développement in developing an evaluation policy. Through a one year consultative process a policy was designed for the agency (not the evaluation unit) which puts the emphasis on creating demand for evaluation by defining the vision of evaluation as a tool for learning. The discussion highlighted concerns on how to hold institutions accountable for learning.
37. Keith Leonard (EBRD) reflected on experience evaluating EBRD's experience with policy dialogue with the Ukraine. The lack of a formal approach to policy dialogue and the fact that much of the work was undocumented led to an iterative approach to the evaluation based on five case studies, over 100 interviews and two staff surveys.
38. James Melanson (Canada) shared a review of Country Programme Evaluations, sparking a discussion on questions of accountability for overall development results and the utility of contribution analysis. Several members are experimenting with clustering country evaluations or doing country studies within thematic evaluations, to increase the scope for learning.

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Liste des Participants pour Réseau du CAD sur l'évaluation du
développement**

12/2/2014 - 13/2/2014

All Sessions

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