

AGENDA ITEM IX.

Ideas and plans for collaboration

Room Document 12.

**EMERGING ISSUES FOR DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION: EVALUATING
GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS**

This document has been prepared by Norway and the IOB Netherlands *for discussion* at the 16th meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network.

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**16th Meeting
12-13 February 2014**

Emerging Issues for Development Evaluation: Evaluating global public goods

1. Background

Within the current aid architecture, OECD-DAC donors are not any more the main players. In many countries and program areas, non-traditional donors from BRICS countries and private foundations already play a leading role. Moreover, there has been a proliferation of thematic and countrywide multidonor trustfunds (MDTF) where several donors share resources for particular purposes.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda devotes major attention to progress in the field of global public goods, also termed international public goods. While the global goals following the Millennium Development Goals have yet to be decided, there are already joint efforts to combat common challenges such as climate change and infectious diseases, and to ensure public goods such as biodiversity, intellectual property rights, financial stability and security. Funding needs in these areas will largely surpass current ODA.

As funding to global public goods increases, evaluations of these become critical. There will be a need for joint planning of evaluation design and execution. Moreover, key questions regarding donor complementarities can be addressed in such a framework.

2. Global public goods – definition and some examples

There are various definitions of 'global public goods'¹, but they commonly refer to goods which benefit both the individual and a larger – and maybe even transboundary – community. The benefits of a global public good are available to everyone, and equally no one can be excluded from their benefits. They are provided by non-market mechanisms, and it is difficult to set a price in a market context. By nature, such goods will have larger effects if there is a collective action.

Global public goods could include anything from street signs to a clean environment. In a development cooperation setting, the term most typically refers to issues such as climate, peace, capital, health and education.

3. Evaluating global goods – possibilities and challenges

While the efforts to support global public goods are on the increase, evaluating such goods is a complex challenge. With our large evaluation agenda, more selectivity is required to enable a focus on key issues of common interest. However, few evaluations are undertaken as a joint effort and cross coordination on evaluation topics is still scarce.

Since tangible effects become only apparent after many years and transboundary effects prevail, the costs and benefits of global public goods need to be shared by multiple agents. Key questions regarding efficient coping and mitigation strategies for low and middle-income countries are prominent on the agenda. Still little attention is given in evaluations to identify adequate methods to address these issues. This can only be taken up as a joint effort and requires considerable subject-matter expertise.

¹ E.g. WHO's definition (www.who.int/trade/glossary/story041/en/)

There is some previous experience with evaluating programs of a more global character. For instance, the independent evaluations of the Stop TB Partnership which is a network of more than 900 public and private sector organizations aiming to eliminate tuberculosis is one such undertaking, while the evaluation of the Global Water Partnership which was created in response to deteriorating fresh water resources is another.

There are several methodological challenges regarding evaluations of such large issues as global public goods. A possible methodological challenge pertains to the fact that some global public goods efforts are easier to measure than others, e.g. vaccines, while for instance measuring the effects of preventive health interventions are more demanding. Similarly, it is easier to document the number of children enrolled in school, compared to measuring the quality of the education they receive. A potential risk when evaluating global public goods would be to concentrate evaluation efforts to what can easily be measured.

4. Issues for discussion

A discussion concentrating on the following issues may help determine the interest and feasibility of conducting joint evaluations of efforts towards global public goods:

- To what extent is the global public good agenda perceived as relevant by the EVALNET members?
- Can we foresee possible joint evaluations of global public goods seen in relation to what comes out of the post 2015 debate?
- Is it possible to find good evaluation methodologies to cover such large issues as global public goods?
- Is there a risk that evaluations focus on global public goods that are more easily measured?
- How can the evaluations link efforts and results at both the global and the local level?
- Should the scope of this exercise be the “whole of government” (i.e. beyond ODA)?
- Would it pose a possible policy dilemma if concrete projects were selected?

5. Next steps

If there is interest in pursuing the possibility of a joint evaluation of global public goods, the first step would be a brief scoping study consisting of the following:

- a. Defining global public goods and recommending which would be of relevance for this study.
- b. Presenting an inventory of existing evaluations of global public goods, looking into various methodological approaches when evaluating global public goods and experiences with these.
- c. Identifying the gaps as to which global public goods have been evaluated - and not.
- d. Gathering lessons learnt from these evaluations.
- e. Proposing a results framework for any future evaluation of global public goods

The study would be conducted jointly, with for instance two donors in charge.