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**Working Party on Aid Evaluation**

**1999 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE DAC WORKING  
PARTY ON AID EVALUATION**

*The attached document is submitted to the Working Party on Aid Evaluation for INFORMATION at its meeting on 10-11 February 2000.*

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**1999 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CHAIR  
OF THE DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION**

1. During 1999, the Working Party on Aid Evaluation (WP-EV) made considerable progress in implementing its work programme, despite the fact that the Working Party only met once, in January 1999. Nevertheless, during the course of the year many Members participated in seminars and workshops organised under the auspices of the WP-EV. This body is characterised by the fact that it works in a highly participatory manner, task forces or sub-groups meet on occasion to bring work forward, and most studies are financed by voluntary contributions from Members.

**Complementing and reinforcing the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance**

2. In 1997, Members of the WP-EV completed the Review of the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance, which was published in 1998. In conclusion the Review recommended that, although the Principles remain valid and sound, there is a need to complement and reinforce them to improve evaluation practices.

3. The objective of follow-up work to the review is to seek to improve evaluation practice in development co-operation, focusing on two clusters of activities.

4. The first centres on encouraging and improving compliance with the Principles, in cases where adherence is still lacking. This is mainly the responsibility of Members countries.

5. The second cluster of activities aims to complement and reinforce the Principles with good/best practices in key areas. Work for the year 1999-2000 comprised partnerships in evaluation, feedback and communication practices to promote organisational learning, and performance management systems [see DCD/DAC/EV(99)5 for details].

6. These activities were chosen on the basis of the following considerations:

- Both the Review of the Principles and the 1998 Senior Level Meeting identified that partnerships with recipient countries in evaluation, at both sector and country levels, is one of the main instruments which ensure that donor and recipient partners learn together from achievement and failure of development programmes. During 1999 the WP-EV carried out an analysis of current practices in order to elaborate key elements of evaluation partnership practices. Also, an Evaluation Plan Matrix was elaborated to facilitate the planning of joint evaluations and new collaborative efforts.
- Feedback and communication practices are fundamental to permit an appropriate use of evaluation results and funding in policy development and programme design. The first step will be to review current practices and to discuss next steps at a workshop hosted by Japan in September 2000.

7. The use of results-based management systems is becoming more and more important, as development organisations are asked to demonstrate results. Over the coming years, while individual Members will be involved in performance monitoring and management at agency level, the WP-EV will focus on linking evaluation to performance monitoring as a means of verifying outcomes as well as explaining performance and development outcomes achieved. As a first step, a review of agency experience with Results Based Management (RBM) was initiated in 1999. The results and next steps will be discussed at the February 2000 meeting of the WP.

### **Poverty**

8. In response to the DAC initiative on ways to strengthen its poverty reduction work, the WP-EV has considered a dual approach. One is to further develop and refine evaluation methods specifically for assessing poverty effects. The United Kingdom led this work by hosting a workshop in October 1999. The workshop, which drew over 60 participants, proved very useful in exposing and discussing members' recent experience from poverty evaluations. Workshop papers will be made available on the DAC Evaluation website.

9. As follow-up to the workshop, the group will consider publication of a revised literature review and annotated bibliography, and the production of a 'compendium' of approaches and methods for the evaluation of poverty reduction. This could be developed into a web-based resource to which further additions should be made over time. Canada has offered to host a follow up workshop in 2001, for which several commissioned papers on specific topics would provide a tight conceptual focus, building on the wide-ranging discussions of the UK-hosted workshop.

10. The Poverty Reduction Guidelines and Sourcebook being prepared by the DAC Poverty Network will draw on experience from evaluation studies, including material presented at the UK -hosted workshop.

### **Country Programme Evaluations**

11. The donor community has committed itself to achieving a number of social, economic and environmental goals in the context of the 21st Century Partnership Strategy. To attain these goals it will be required to analyse aid interventions at the country level for both individual donors and the donor community as a whole, and to bring about a greater degree of co-operation in planning, implementing and evaluating development co-operation.

12. In view of these needs, the WP-EV agreed in November 1997 to review country programme evaluation (CPE) practice and theory, and to involve developing country partners in the discussion. At the May 1998 meeting, it was agreed to organise a workshop on Country Programme Evaluation to facilitate this task.

13. The main objectives of the workshop were to contribute to the implementation of the 21st Century Partnership Strategy; establish better linkage and coherence between evaluation results and policy directions and operations at the country level; share experience, especially with partner countries, in the process of planning, implementing and evaluating country programmes with special focus on methodologies used throughout the whole cycle of CPEs; and identify key elements/good practices of CPEs.

14. The workshop was hosted by Austria and held in Vienna on 11-12 March 1999; there were 68 participants from Member and developing countries. A number of case studies were prepared to facilitate the discussion at the workshop. The workshop report contains an overview of the state-of-the-art approaches and methodologies used for country programme evaluations.

15. The workshop stressed the importance of country programme evaluations as part of a longer and broader process of formulation, implementation and feedback operating at several levels (project, sector, country, agency-wide, donor community and development theory). Country programme evaluations are likely to have the greatest impact upon practice if they feed back rapidly into policy dialogue and if partners participate substantively in both country programming and country programme evaluations. The report *Evaluating Country Programmes: Vienna Workshop, 1999* was published at the end of 1999.

### **Joint Evaluations**

16. The WP-EV is currently increasing its efforts to promote joint sector evaluations in selected developing countries. The WP-EV has found that in the medium term this will be particularly relevant for monitoring progress towards achieving the goals of *Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, and the intention is to select sectors relevant to it.

17. In order to facilitate joint evaluations, the WP-EV has developed several tools: a framework "Options for Actions" by the WP-EV in support of the *Shaping the 21st Century Strategy*; an overview of donors' key sectors of interest; and a more systematic exchange of evaluation plans which is updated annually. The Working Party reviewed a first draft of "Donor Experience with Joint Evaluations: A Typology and Lessons Learned" at its May 1998 meeting. Based on the discussion and further experience of DAC Members with multi-donor evaluations, a paper entitled "Effective Practices for Multi-donor Evaluations", drafted by the US to provide guidance for future multi-donor evaluations, was reviewed by the WP-EV in January 1999, and further work was undertaken with a view to disseminating this report after the February 2000 meeting.

18. In 1999, a joint evaluation involving the EU Member States and the European Commission which covers the European Union aid programme with the African, Caribbean and Pacific region, development aid to the Mediterranean region, aid programmes to Asia and Latin America, and humanitarian aid was completed. Furthermore, two multi-donor evaluations were completed: the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the UN Programme for Accountability and Transparency (PACT).

19. Also in 1999 the first joint sector evaluation was initiated. The evaluation will assess the combined effect of donors' support to the transport sector in Ghana. Participants are Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, UK, the European Commission, the World Bank and, of course, Ghana, who is chairing the evaluation Steering Group jointly with Denmark.

20. Although the evaluations mentioned in the preceding paragraph are not part of the formal DAC agenda, reporting on these and all major joint evaluations takes place at meetings of the WP-EV. Collaboration between agencies is largely facilitated due to the existence of the Working Party.

### **Gender Action Plan**

21. As part of the WP-EV input to the DAC Gender Action Plan, one of the tasks performed is a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the 1993/94 *Assessment of DAC Members' WID Policies and Programmes*. Its purpose is to review the extent to which Members have taken into consideration 1993/94 assessment recommendations and conclusions. This will provide an insight into

how far Members have come in addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in evaluations, and provide ideas and suggestions for future action. Members have provided their input to the follow-up review through a Guide for Reporting. This synthesis report, which was co-ordinated by Sweden, was presented to the WP-EV during the first half of 1999. The results were discussed at a workshop in Stockholm on 25-26 November 1999 which was attended by 43 participants, including representatives from the WP-GEN.

22. The workshop, which had participants from both WPs as well as developing countries, was very useful and provided an opportunity to share experiences, both achievements and problems, in approaches, methods and evaluation designs in this area. The workshop made some suggestions to be considered for future work by the WP-EV. These include feedback of evaluation findings; indicators; methodologies for evaluating implementation of cross-cutting policy goals, empowerment processes and policy dialogue; and peer review processes.

### **Best Practice in Evaluating Humanitarian Aid**

23. A review of humanitarian aid practices and experiences was initiated under the leadership of Denmark in collaboration with the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland in 1997. The aim of the review was to identify and disseminate best practices in the evaluation of humanitarian assistance programmes. It is hoped that this in turn will enhance the effectiveness of the evaluation process by improving the quality, comparability and degree of commonality of evaluations, and reduce duplication. The review also aims to inform those involved in the future development of good practice on monitoring and reporting of humanitarian aid by furthering understanding of the criteria and indicators that may be used to measure the performance of relief operations.

24. A first draft was discussed at a workshop hosted by Danida in Copenhagen in January 1998. It was subsequently decided to produce two reports: i) "Best Practice in Evaluating Humanitarian Aid", primarily for humanitarian field workers. This document was published in October 1998 by the Relief and Rehabilitation Network, which collaborated with the WP-EV in this project; ii) a guidance for evaluation managers. The *report Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies* was submitted for final review by the WP-EV in January 1999 and was revised and published in November 1999.

### **Capacity Development in Environment**

25. A synthesis study of donor support for the development of institutional capacity in environment, one of the key areas of *Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, was initiated in 1997. This study, which is co-ordinated by the Netherlands in collaboration with Denmark and the United Kingdom, aims to assess DAC Members' capacities to support the two key processes of capacity development in environment, i.e. integrating environment and development concerns, and "ownership" at national and local levels by strengthening institutional pluralism. The synthesis will be based on existing evaluation material and other sources of information, and will identify lessons learned and provide recommendations for institutional capacity development.

26. A first draft of the study was shared with Members of the WP-EV and discussed at its May 1998 meeting. Following this discussion, Members were given further time to provide inputs and comments. The study was submitted for review to the WP-EV in January 1999, and the results were shared with the Working Party on Development Co-operation and Environment prior to publication in February 2000.

### **Peace Building and Conflict Resolution**

27. Few members of the WP-EV have initiated work to evaluate the impact of development aid on peace building and conflict resolution. There is, however a strong interest in developing joint work in this area and a workshop is being considered to carry forward the work in this new area.

### **Evaluation Inventory/Web-site**

28. In 1999, the Evaluation Inventory was updated and distributed to Working Party Members in the form of a CD-Rom, which contains the full version of the Inventory. As agreed by the Working Party, the Evaluation Inventory was put on Internet in early 1998, under the direction and management of CIDA. The instrument has a considerable potential and WP Members will continue to work on improving it as a knowledge tool.

29. The Evaluation Inventory is a valuable instrument for evaluators and researchers and the intention is to make it more widely known in partner countries and in the broader development community.

30. A website destined for the WP-EV was launched in March 1999. The website operates in two parts: a restricted area for Members only and a public area. The website provides general information about the work of the WP-EV, information about up-coming events as well as links to Members' websites and to the Evaluation Inventory.

### **Building Expertise in Member Agencies**

31. Building evaluation expertise in Member agencies is one of the core elements in the WP-EV mandate. Co-operation in the WP synthesis work, developing best practices, and sharing methodologies and new approaches at seminars and workshops contribute to this. In addition, the WP-EV occasionally organises joint training for staff.

32. In order to facilitate common understanding and communication the WP-EV initiated work in 1999 to produce a glossary of terms used in evaluation and RBM. This will be a complex undertaking but with important potential benefits, and the intention is to make this glossary available in English, French, Spanish and, possibly, in German.

### **Evaluation Capacity Building**

33. This subject is part of the mandate of the WP-EV and is an area where the WP has been particularly active. The WP has held seminars and conferences in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Several Members provide direct assistance, although most assistance is undertaken by the multilateral agencies such as UNDP, World Bank and the regional banks.

34. While donors can support evaluation capacity development in many ways, and there is a readiness to do so, evaluation should not be donor driven, but be based on domestic need and commitment within a broader context of good governance. By involving partner countries in individual as well as joint evaluations, better understanding of evaluation as a performance management tool may be fostered.