

EXPERIENCES WITH CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS JOINTLY WITH PARTNER COUNTRIES



Evaluation study on experiences with conducting evaluations jointly with partner countries

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Acronyms

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EC	European Commission
EVAl	Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DK)
HQ	Headquarters
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank
HLC	High-Level Consultation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MDP	Ministry of Planning and Development
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRT	Ministry of Roads and Transport
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
OCS	Observatory for Social Change (<i>Observatoire du Changement Social</i>)
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PCS	Planning Commission Secretariat
PMA	Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture
ROACH	Results-Oriented Approach for Capacity Change
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

Since 1999 the Evaluation Department (EVAL) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Denmark has commissioned and taken the lead on a number of evaluations jointly with country partner institutions in countries such as Benin, Bhutan, Ghana, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania, and Uganda. A wealth of experience has been gained both within EVAL, at embassy level, and among partners involved in the evaluations. In late 2008, EVAL therefore commissioned an evaluation study¹ aimed at:

- documenting positive and negative experience gained from the evaluations carried out jointly with partner country institutions;
- assessing the pros and cons of the different methods used, including their usefulness for capacity building in evaluation of development cooperation; and
- presenting recommendations to the Evaluation Department and partners for further refinement of methods for enhanced cooperation in the field of different types of joint partner-donor evaluation exercises at sector and/or country level.

It was initially foreseen that the study would include field work in at least one partner country, but in the end the assignment was conducted as a desk-study only, drawing on document reviews and explorative interviews with key evaluation stakeholders either by use of Skype, video-conferences or through face-to-face interviews conducted in Copenhagen.

The study focuses mainly on lessons learnt with respect to involvement of partner countries and partner country institutions in evaluation work as this aspect of joint evaluations has so far only been documented to a limited extent. Even so, it should be noted that four of the nine evaluations covered by the study were done jointly with both partner countries and other development partners/donor agencies.

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study and comprises four parts: an introductory part outlining study objectives and the methodology applied (Chapters 1-2); a brief presentation of other donor policies/practices (Chapter 3); a presentation of joint partner-donor evaluation experiences structured around the key evaluation elements such as evaluation management, evaluation design/implementation, evaluation dissemination/follow-up, and evaluation utility focusing primarily on the Danida experiences

¹ See terms of reference (TOR) for this study in Annex 1.

(Chapters 4-7²); and a concluding chapter outlining the conclusions and recommendations (Chapter 8).

The team responsible for the conduct of the study comprised Rikke Ingrid Jensen (team leader) and John R. Eriksson (evaluation specialist). Dorte Kabell has quality assured the study.

² These chapters will mainly reflect Danida experiences but will also include other donor experience to the extent available and relevant.

2. Methodology

The methodology for the desk-study is presented below covering applied terminology, study frame, data collection instruments, and limitations of the study.

With regard to **applied terminology** the following definitions have been employed for this desk-study:

- A *joint partner-donor evaluation* refers in this study to an evaluation involving the partner country(ies) and the donor(s) where the partner country is involved in the governance and management of the evaluation through a designated institution, as is the Danida practice used for the evaluations covered by this study³. However, it should be noted that other donors apply different definitions as outlined in Chapter 3.
- A *joint-joint evaluation* refers to an evaluation involving the partner country and several donors.
- The *partner country* refers to the country involved in the joint partner-donor evaluation.
- The *national partner* refer to the formal partner country institution (or individuals) designated to participate in the governance and management of the joint partner-donor evaluation.
- *Donor or development partner* refers to all international organizations providing assistance to a country, including international financial institutions, as well as organizations providing grant assistance — e.g. bilateral agencies, UN organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The Danida partner-donor evaluations constitute the main **study frame** of the study amounting to a total of nine evaluations conducted in seven different countries. See Table 1 below.

The selected evaluations have been further classified into country- and sector/thematic evaluations with the former category being evaluations of Danida's country programmes. The Bhutan evaluation has been placed in the second category although technically speaking it is the first evaluation of a three-phased country evaluation⁴. Furthermore, it is important to underline that the sector evaluations for Ghana (road), Nepal (education), Tanzania (health), and Uganda (agriculture) are all joint-joint evaluations, meaning that they are evaluations conducted jointly with partner country institutions and other development partners.

³The DAC definition of joint evaluation (“an evaluation to which different donors and/or partners participate”) is deemed too broad to be applied for this study. Furthermore the DAC principles address principally multi-donor evaluations.

⁴The Bhutan capacity development evaluation is the first output of a planned 3-phased country evaluation with phase 1 targeting the institutional level (six national institutions have been targeted); phase 2 focusing on the sector level and phase 3 addressing the national level. Evaluation phases 2 and 3 are scheduled for launch in years 2010 and 2013.

Other donor experiences with the conduct of joint partner-donor evaluations have also been explored, although to a limited extent. The policies and practices of nine targeted institutions were briefly reviewed. These included the bilateral development cooperation organizations of Canada (CIDA), Finland, Netherlands, Switzerland (SDC), the United Kingdom (DFID), and the United States (USAID). For multilateral organizations, it included the policies and practices of the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank.

The **approach** is primarily that of a perception study in which the perceptions of the interviewees (see below) have been collected through semi-structured interviews organized by theme: perceptions of partner involvement in evaluation governance and management, design/implementation, dissemination/follow-up, and utility. For the donor interviews questions about evaluation policies (current/planned) were also asked. See Annex 4 for generic interview guides.

Table 1 Danida joint partner-donor evaluations⁵

Partner country	Title ⁶	Year published	National partner	Donor partners
Country evaluations				
Benin	Joint Evaluation of the Danish Country Programme in Benin, 1990-2006 <i>(Benin country evaluation)</i>	2008	Observatory for Social Change (OCS)	n.a.
Ghana	Joint Evaluation of the Ghana-Denmark Development Cooperation, 1990-2006 <i>(Ghana country evaluation)</i>	2008	National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)	n.a.
Mozambique	Evaluation of Development Cooperation between Mozambique and Denmark, 1992-2006 <i>(Mozambique country evaluation)</i>	2008	Ministry of Planning and Development (MDP)	n.a.
Uganda	Evaluation of Danish Assistance to Uganda 1987-2005 <i>(Uganda country evaluation)</i>	2006	Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)	n.a.
Thematic evaluations				
Bhutan	Capacity Development Outcome Evaluation of Danish Supported Organizations in	2006	National Planning Commission Secretariat (NPCS)	n.a.

⁵ The Mozambique 2007 agriculture programme evaluation is not targeted for review as EVAL contributed to the evaluation only to a minor degree.

⁶ Both full and short titles are indicated with the latter written in italics.

	Bhutan <i>(Bhutan capacity development evaluation)</i>			
Ghana	Joint Evaluation of the Road sub-sector Programme 1996-2000 in Ghana <i>(Ghana road evaluation)</i>	2000	Ministry of Roads and Transport (MRT)	Denmark, Germany, UK, Japan, The Netherlands, AfDB, EU, World Bank
Nepal	Evaluation Nepal. Joint Government - Donor Evaluation of Basic and Primary Education Programme II <i>(Nepal education evaluation)</i>	2004	Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)	Denmark led the evaluation on behalf of Norway, Finland, Japan, EU, World Bank, UNICEF, ADB
Tanzania	Joint External Evaluation. The Health Sector in Tanzania, 1999-2006 <i>(Tanzania health evaluation)</i>	2007	Ministry of Finance	Denmark, Belgium, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland
Uganda	Joint Evaluation of Uganda's Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture <i>(Uganda agriculture evaluation)</i>	2005	PMA Steering Committee through the Evaluation Management Group	Denmark funded and initiated the evaluation on behalf of 20 donors

A total of 58 persons have been interviewed. For the study of partner involvement in Danida Evaluations the following informant groups were interviewed with the purpose of juxtaposing the views of the different respondent groups in the report:

- Danida: The EVAL officers responsible for evaluation governance and management, and embassy staff involved in the evaluation processes.
- National partners: The stakeholders of the partner institutions responsible for evaluation governance and management.
- Evaluators: The team-leaders (or deputy team-leaders) responsible for the implementation of the evaluations.

For the brief study of other donor practices, the views of only one informant group was collected, namely perceptions of heads or officers of evaluation departments, complemented with interviews of sector specialists for World Bank evaluations. See Annex 3 for a list of all persons interviewed.

The interviews were not tape-recorded; however, phrases presented in quotation marks in the report were noted at the time as direct speech. Also for accuracy, notes were systematically written-up.

As a secondary data source, key process documents have been reviewed, such as concept notes/scoping studies; memorandums of understanding (MoU); terms of references (TOR) for evaluation teams; minutes of meetings of various evaluation management and governance entities (such as reference groups, steering committees, management groups); inception and evaluation reports and comments on these; dissemination outputs (briefs, articles, workshop reports, etc); follow-up communications (e.g. action matrices or memoranda); and follow-up studies. Furthermore, other documents such as lessons learnt papers and guidelines were explored (though to a lesser extent). For a list of key documents reviewed please consult Annex 2.

With regard to the good practices presented in Boxes 1-10, it should be stressed that these include both current practices as well as proposed practices based on lessons learnt.

With regard to **limitations**, the following challenges were encountered during study conduct:

- *Non-access to key stakeholders.* National partners proved difficult to reach and as a consequence it was not possible to interview national partners for two out of the five thematic evaluations.
- *Time lapse.* For the evaluations completed a number of years ago (Nepal education and Ghana road evaluations) it was difficult for the interviewees to recall all evaluation processes and issues.
- *Conflicting information.* The use of the interview guidelines and the relatively large number of interviewees provided some opportunity for comparison and triangulation. However, as is often the case for perception studies involving different informant groups, for some of the evaluations assessed, it was difficult to get consistent answers to all parts of the protocol. E.g. in the case of the Tanzania health evaluation, the different evaluation stakeholders held diverging views on several issues.

3. Other donor policies/practices

In this chapter a brief review of other donor policies and practices with regard to the conduct of joint partner-donor evaluations is presented based on interviews with staff of six bilateral and three multilateral organizations. More specific experiences on the conduct of joint evaluations are integrated into Chapters 4-7, which present lessons learnt.

Of all the donors contacted, the European Commission (EC) and the United States (USAID) were the only organisations having neither policies nor practices regarding joint partner-donor evaluations. While the EC has not yet been involved in joint partner-donor evaluations, the commission is currently in the process of examining how to involve partner countries in the evaluation of budget support programmes with a specific focus on conditionalities. The EC, however, does not define such partner involvement as a joint partner-donor evaluation since the evaluation will only be focusing on donor inputs and not government inputs. Nevertheless, all EC country level evaluations are presented to all stakeholders in the partner country at the stage of the draft final reports to allow the partner government and the in-country civil society to react to the report. Moreover, the Embassy of the partner country is a member of the reference group.

UNDP's evaluation policy makes a general reference to the principle of involving the partner country in evaluations, but is not very specific⁷. Nonetheless, the agency is currently involved in a joint-joint partner-initiated evaluation of the UN programmes in South Africa scheduled for completion in 2009. At the request of the partner country, the evaluation went beyond the traditional UN development assistance and included activities addressing the environment, peace and security, and humanitarian assistance. The Joint Management Group for the evaluation comprises, on the South African side, representatives of the National Treasury and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - the two "champions of the Evaluation" - as well as the M&E unit in the Presidency, the Public Service Commission, the Department of Public Service and Administration, and the Statistics Office. The UN side is comprised of a Task Force represented by seven UN entities, all members of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) and is co-chaired by UNDP, FAO, and UNICEF⁸.

Canada (CIDA) is obligated under new legislation passed in June 2008 (Official Development Assistance Accountability Act) to apply the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. A commitment under the "Mutual Accountability" principle of the Declaration to

⁷ The UNDP has a May 2006 document, "The evaluation policy of UNDP," which refers to multi-donor evaluations in two places, in the form of a somewhat indirect reference to joint partner evaluations: "7 (c) *National ownership*. Evaluation should be guided by national priorities and concerns. It should be inclusive and take into account diverse national interests and values. Evaluation should strengthen partnerships with governments and key stakeholders. It should build the capacity of national institutions to implement, monitor and evaluate."

⁸ The UN Task Force includes representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNEP, WFP, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

jointly assess aid effectiveness with partner countries is to be considered in a current review of the 2005 CIDA Evaluation Policy. This is expected to lead to an increasing number of joint evaluations. There has already been formal partner country involvement in the governance and management of two country programme evaluations in South Africa (issued in 2003) and in Tanzania (issued in February 2006). For the South Africa Evaluation, the Treasury (Ministry of Finance) participated actively in the governance and management of the evaluation, including drafting of the original evaluation covenant (agreement), identification of the evaluation consulting firm, and review of drafts. For the Tanzania evaluation, the Ministry of Finance provided comments on the TOR and made inputs to the evaluation team. In addition, CIDA has provided financial and technical support to several multi-donor evaluations in which partner countries have been actively involved. These include the 2003 *Evaluation of the Comprehensive Development Framework* (see more detail below) and the *Basic Education Evaluation* (see paragraph on the Netherlands below); and a 2007 *Joint Evaluation of Multi-Donor Budgetary Support in Ghana*, which also involved Ghana and the UK as active partners⁹. CIDA also regards the 2006 *Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support* as a joint evaluation since seven partner countries were on the Steering Committee (Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Uganda, and Vietnam), although it is not clear what role the countries played in the design and management of the evaluation¹⁰.

The United Kingdom (DFID) is about to launch a new evaluation policy committing DFID to increasingly conduct evaluations jointly with partner countries and other stakeholders. Furthermore, it is foreseen that evaluations of issues such as budget support, sector-wide approaches (SWAps), and project impact are to be led by the DFID country offices. DFID's evaluation department at HQ level will foremost be responsible for the conduct of country programme and thematic evaluations.

In Finland general evaluation principles on joint partner-donor evaluation conduct are in the process of being translated into concrete guidance on how to involve partner governments in evaluation work. Inputs for this work will be guided by, among others, Finland's experiences with current joint partner-donor evaluation conduct implemented at HQ and at decentralized level. Three specific joint partner-donor evaluations conducted from HQ were mentioned: a 1998 evaluation of development research efforts in Tanzania; a 2004 evaluation of Finnish NGO development cooperation in Tanzania conducted in partnership with the University of Dar Es Salaam; and a 1998 regional joint partner-donor evaluation on culture in Finnish cooperation in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Vietnam. At the decentralized level, the evaluations conducted are primarily project/programme evaluations.

⁹ While substantive donor involvement, apart from financial support, was not part of the initial design of country case studies conducted as part of the Phase 1 Paris Declaration Evaluation, CIDA also provided technical support to the Senegal Country Case Study.

¹⁰ The evaluation was carried out by a consortium of consultants led by the International Development Department of the University of Birmingham in the UK. In addition to the seven partner countries, the Steering Committee was comprised of five multilateral aid agencies and 19 bilateral aid agencies, including CIDA. A five-person Management Group was chaired by DFID and included members from the EC, Belgian Technical Cooperation, a consultant to the Netherlands Foreign Ministry, and another member from DFID.

For the Netherlands, the DAC principles for joint evaluations¹¹ have functioned as *de facto* guidelines for all types of joint evaluations, including those with a close involvement of partner country institutions. The Netherlands has participated in a series of joint partner-donor evaluations which included a large number of donor actors. However, the first major Dutch experience was the 2003 global joint/joint evaluation on education — *Local Solutions to Global Challenges: Towards Effective Partnership in Basic Education* — conducted in partnership with 13 donors¹² and four countries — Uganda, Zambia, Burkina Faso, and Bolivia. In 2006, the Netherlands participated in a partner-led joint partner-donor evaluation of the *Netherlands Mixed Credit Programme in China* in partnership with China's National Centre for Science and Technology Evaluation (NCSTE). Then in 2008 the *impact evaluation on primary education in Zambia and Uganda*, conducted in partnership with the respective governments, was published. Furthermore, the Netherlands was a co-sponsor of the Tanzania health evaluation and had a member of the evaluation department in the steering committee.

Switzerland (SDC), as with the Netherlands, applies the DAC/OECD-standards for joint evaluations in the absence of specific SDC guidelines on the matter. In approximately 20 per cent of SDC's evaluations, partner countries are invited to take an active role including commenting on TOR, participating in the selection of consultants, and commenting on draft reports. Nevertheless, SDC has only experienced one example of an evaluation being initiated, managed and implemented under the lead of a partner country; namely the country assessment for South Africa. For all the other joint evaluations, the donors have been the driving force, including for the Tanzania Health Evaluation where SDC was a contributing partner. This is why the identification of measures for supporting country partner leadership on joint evaluations is high on the agenda. "We (want to) move from donor-driven joint evaluations to partner country-driven joint evaluations. (This) is quite different from inviting partners to participate – the partners should invite the donors." As a way forward, pilot activities are currently underway, such as the on-going SDC country programme evaluation for Tanzania.

Finally, with regard to the World Bank two different sets of policies/practices were noted: the conduct of joint partner-donor evaluations by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) with the main purpose of accountability; and the joint partner-donor impact evaluations conducted by the Africa and Latin America and Caribbean Regions of the World Bank, as well as some of the Sectoral Networks with the purpose of learning. For the first category, only four joint partner-donor evaluations have been registered. The first evaluation, that of the 1999 *Comprehensive Development Framework* (issued in 2003), was managed by 30 self-selected partner country and donor representatives. All parties were actively involved in governance and

¹¹ OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). *Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations*. DAC Evaluation Series. Paris: OECD 2006. The DAC guidelines, however, address principally multi-donor evaluations. This is why in November 2008, the OECD/DAC evaluation group agreed on a number of good practices regarding evaluation planning which also touches on the question of improved involvement of partner countries. See the report: Swedish Agency for Development Cooperation (SADEV). *Constraints, opportunities and approaches for increasing joint donor programming of evaluations*, Viktoria Hildenwall and Inger Wikstrom Obrand, Stockholm: SADEV, November 2008. However, a decision to up-date the guidelines on joint evaluations is yet to be made.

¹² The donors were: Canada (CIDA), Denmark (Danida), European Commission (EC), Germany (BMZ), Ireland, Japan (JICA), Netherlands, Norway, (Norad), Sweden (Sida), United Kingdom (DFID), UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank.

management. Six partner countries also provided case studies, including Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Romania, Uganda, and Vietnam. The donors and development agencies that provided financial and/or technical support, included the governments of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the World Bank (staff and consultant support for the Vietnam study was provided by the Asian Development Bank and Japan). The second example is a country assistance evaluation for Tanzania from 1999/2000 conducted by the World Bank and the Tanzanian Ministry of Finance in partnership. Thirdly a 2004 Social Safety Net evaluation for Colombia was undertaken jointly with the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); and finally a Ghana road joint-joint evaluation was undertaken jointly with the Government. No specific joint evaluation policy guided these four evaluations in accordance with the general understanding that that IEG should not involve the partner country in the design, management and governance of evaluations as it is viewed as interfering with IEG's independence and accountability function.

With regard to the World Bank's impact evaluations the rapid expansion over the last ten years of donor-funded Trust Funds in the World Bank has permitted an equally rapid growth of impact evaluations in the Bank's regional operations. The Bank maintains a database with information on ongoing impact evaluations which are supported by Trust Funds and other forms of assistance. The Database for Impact Evaluations (DIME) currently lists 165 impact evaluations, of which 64 are in the Bank's Africa Region; 39 in South Asia; 33 in Latin America and the Caribbean; 20 in East Asia and the Pacific; 4 in Europe and Central Asia; and 3 in the Middle East and North Africa. These are all joint partner-country evaluations, "by definition," according to Bank staff, as the national partners are said to be integrally involved in the selection of programmes to be evaluated, in design of the evaluation, in selection and oversight of the evaluation teams, and in reviewing and disseminating the reports in line with the evaluation learning purpose. In terms of evaluation themes, 2/3 of the ongoing impact evaluations in the World Bank are in the human development sectors (education, health, nutrition, social protection, population, water supply and sanitation), and 1/3 are in other sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and fragile states¹³.

¹³ Ariel Fiszbein, *Impact Evaluation Across the Human Development Network*. Slide presentation, Washington, D.C., April 2008. According to this source, education accounted for 42% of human development impact evaluations, followed by health at 28%, social protection at 25%, and cross-cutting evaluations at 5%.

4. Evaluation governance and management

The scope of partner involvement in evaluation governance and management in the nine evaluations covered by this study has been assessed in accordance with two parameters: evaluation initiation, and roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, experiences made with regard to partner selection have been summarized.

Generally speaking, *governance* provides the authorizing environment for an evaluation. A governing body makes major decisions, such as sanctioning the evaluation, approving such documents as an MOU, TOR and budget; endorsing the criteria for selecting the evaluation team; approving a draft and final report; and endorsing a dissemination plan. *Management* provides more frequent oversight of the evaluation, including selection of the evaluation team according to the approved criteria by the governing body. Since it was difficult to separate governance from management in most of the evaluations, the term “management” will be used to cover both the governance and management functions in the following sections.

4.1 Evaluation initiation – setting the stage

For each of the assessed joint evaluations, it was Danida that initiated the process with EVAL as the department responsible for the formal evaluation launch. The identification of evaluation needs, however, originated from both headquarters (HQ) and decentralized level alike¹⁴.

In the case of the four country evaluations for Benin, Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda, the initiative came from Danida HQ in response to identified accountability needs of the Danish constituencies. Nonetheless, the national partners were consulted on the appropriateness of the evaluation or to put it more candidly in the words of the Mozambique national partner: “The evaluation was neither forced nor imposed on us; indeed, we found that the country evaluation could be useful as a stock-taking exercise”. For the Ghana and Benin national partners, the primary drive for involvement was to test the Danida partnership evaluation approach as a model for future evaluations of donor programmes. For the national partner in Uganda, the partnership engagement was motivated by the learning opportunities the evaluation offered and this especially with regard to evaluation management processes; in words of the key partner stakeholder: “I had yearned for capacity development opportunities, so I was very happy being offered this opportunity to learn”.

However, the national partners of Benin, Ghana and Mozambique found that the evaluation partnership should have been formed earlier in the process in order for the institutions to adequately plan and budget for the evaluation work: “the evaluation was sprung on us without warning”. Furthermore, the three national partners for the Benin, Ghana and Mozambique

¹⁴ EVAL’s rolling two-year evaluation programme is developed based on i.a. inputs from embassies and HQ departments. The draft programme is presented at a public annual meeting in Copenhagen and forwarded to the Danida Board. The final programme is subsequently forwarded to the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Danish Parliament.

evaluations all believed that the TOR development work was already too advanced for the institutions to provide major changes in focus/approach — although this might have been a misperception, caused by weak communication between the national partner and EVAL (see further in Sections 4.3 and 5.1 below).

With regard to the sectoral/thematic evaluations, two of these were initiated from decentralized level. For the Ghana road evaluation, the evaluation initiative came from the embassy in response to a general call from EVAL for ideas for sector evaluations. In the case of Bhutan, the evaluation was programmed for in the Danida Country Strategy 2003-07 with the purpose of assessing country programme results achieved and providing direction for future development cooperation between Denmark and Bhutan. Both evaluation initiatives were received very positively by the country stakeholders, albeit for different reasons. In Ghana, the country partner, who was also the key stakeholder (MRT), saw the evaluation as an opportunity to document identified sector challenges. In the case of Bhutan, the country partner (PCS) regarded the evaluation partnership as a learning opportunity.

The picture was more mixed for the sectoral/thematic evaluations initiated from Danida HQ. For the Uganda agriculture evaluation, the evaluation initiative was well-received, as demonstrated by the speedy adoption of TOR by the Joint PMA Annual Review of year 2003. Regarding the evaluations for Tanzania¹⁵ and Nepal, however, the initial country stakeholder response (embassy staff, national partner, and other development partners) was lukewarm, if not negative due to the following stated reservations:

- *Lack of added-value.* The education sector in Nepal (and basic and primary education in particular) had been subject to numerous reviews already. Hence another evaluation was not seen as likely to add anything other than the production of yet another report to the “meters of reports on the bookshelves” already existing. Similarly, in Tanzania the existing health review mechanisms, harmonizing the review activities of all donor and government stakeholders, were seen by some stakeholders as working so effectively that an evaluation was not expected to add anything new.
- *Wrong or inappropriate timing.* In Nepal the evaluation was launched too late to guide the formulation of the next programme phase. In Tanzania the initial timing was seen by some stakeholders as being inappropriate. The evaluation was thus launched two years later than originally anticipated (with the objective of aligning it to the formulation of Tanzania’s new Health Sector Strategy Plan (see further below). Furthermore, the harmonization with other on-going missions was not regarded as being fully taken into consideration, especially for Tanzania which operates with a five-month mission-free period.

¹⁵ The Tanzania health evaluation was agreed between the Nordic Plus partners at a meeting in Stockholm in June 2004. It was further agreed that EVAL should take the lead, while other partners agreed to take the lead on other joint partner-donor evaluations.

- *High complexity.* In Tanzania the in-country development partners found that the complexity of the health sector was too difficult for an external evaluation team to take on.

Aside from the reservations listed above, the manner in which Danida approached the Nepal and Tanzania stakeholders with evaluation proposals compounded the problem of the initial negative reception. This was particularly the case in Tanzania where EVAL, according to the interviewed embassy stakeholder, with its evaluation initiations (four initial attempts were made), was seen as by-passing the working mechanisms of the government and the donors of the sector. The same stakeholder stressed that Danida HQ had provoked a strong government reaction to the evaluation with its first communication with the government of Tanzania, by identifying (‘prescribing’) ‘government accountability needs’: “Had Danida instead referred to its own accountability needs, the reception would likely have been more positive – at least vis-à-vis the government”.

However, in the end the country stakeholders of the two countries did agree to the evaluations. The Nepal country partner (MOES) was won over by the potential for diminished transaction costs since the evaluation was presented as a joint/joint effort: “one joint/joint evaluation conducted now can save the work of future bilateral evaluations.” For the Tanzania health evaluation, the key stakeholder, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), was motivated by the positive follow-up actions to the recently conducted education evaluation in the form of increased government funding to the sector. Furthermore, the evaluation was designed to guide Tanzania’s planned new health sector strategy paper.

Nonetheless, Danish embassy health staff in Tanzania expressed concerns that to this date the evaluation initiation process had resulted in a loss of trust vis-à-vis the government and the other development partners. As one stakeholder puts it, “Danida preaches ownership, harmonization and alignment but acts differently.” And this in spite of the fact that the evaluation, when finally conducted, became a joint/joint effort,¹⁶ which resulted in a widely referred-to evaluation report (see further below).

With regard to other donor practices, the World Bank referred to the shift from donor- to partner-initiated evaluations in Colombia with the establishment in 2004 of an Intersectoral Evaluation Committee chaired by the Director of the National Planning Department. This Committee decided what should be evaluated, based on strategic priorities, regardless of funding availabilities. Most donors accepted this approach (with the exception of USAID). The value added by this approach stems from setting minimum standards for evaluation, matching needs or demand with supply, and identifying courses of action. It also permits flexibility.

¹⁶ The Tanzania health evaluation was co-sponsored by six donors: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, and Switzerland.

Box 1 Good practices identified with regard to evaluation initiation

Promote evaluations initiated by partner country stakeholders by:

- Calling for suggestions about evaluation topics
- Supporting calls for (joint) evaluations on overall national development strategies including national poverty reduction strategies
- Supporting the establishment of a joint inter-sectoral evaluation committee
- Programming for joint evaluations at sector level

For donor HQ initiated evaluations:

- Program for evaluations already during the development of country strategies and/or country programmes
- Initiate evaluations through established government/development partner mechanisms where they exist
- Approach targeted national partner early to allow for adequate resourcing and strong ownership
- Communicate clearly the value-added of the evaluation, especially for sector evaluations in countries where advanced review structures are already in place
- Be candid about whose accountability needs the evaluation is seeking to meet (donor and/or partner constituencies in the form of e.g. senior management, executive boards, ministers, and parliaments)
- Be patient, a proposed evaluation might have to be launched years after initiation in order to align with partner country processes

4.2 Identification of national partners

While no formal guidelines on the identification of national partner institution exist for Danida¹⁷, practices have emerged and evolved, based on the experiences with joint partner-donor evaluation conduct.

For the earlier thematic evaluations, the identification of government partners was seen as automatically being that of the key stakeholder such as the Ministry of Roads and Transport for the Ghana road evaluation, the Ministry of Education (MoE) for the Nepal education evaluation, and the PMA steering committee for the Uganda agriculture evaluation. This was done primarily with the objective of optimizing ownership and hence utilization of evaluation findings as well as ensuring sector-knowledge. For the more recent thematic evaluations, however, other parameters were applied to the country partner selection process, such as that of partner independence and mandate. As a result, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) was identified as the formal country partner for the Tanzania health evaluation. This was, in fact, done on the recommendation of MOHSW in order to ensure high evaluation credibility. In Bhutan, it was the Planning Commission Secretariat, holding the mandate to monitor and evaluate Bhutan's five-year plans, which was selected as country partner. Finally, for the four country evaluations (Benin, Ghana, Mozambique, and Uganda), the identification parameters of independence and

¹⁷Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: Evaluation Guidelines, Copenhagen 2006.

government mandate continued to be applied, thereby ensuring that not only did none of the four selected institutions hold a direct role in the implementation of Danida's programmes, but that all four national partners held mandates to monitor and evaluate their government's national development efforts.

However, the issue of independence seemed to matter only to EVAL and the identified national partners in line with their mandate. Other stakeholders such as evaluators and involved embassy staff had a different understanding of the term "partnership". They made a distinction between "formal national partners" and "direct national partners" with the latter typically being the key implementing entity, such as a line ministry. For the Tanzania health evaluation, the 'direct' evaluation partner was the reform office of the MOHSW, the key line ministry. The "formal" partner MoF was, according to the evaluator, only to be called upon for chairing workshops and similar, hence a more limited role than what was originally intended when drafting the TOR. Indeed, direct country partners were in general viewed as being more valuable due to their perceived stronger ownership of the evaluation. As one evaluator pointedly said: "when choosing between independence and high ownership, I will always prioritize ownership". Another respondent, a Danida staff, went even further by stating that "ownership can never be unbiased, you can only have ownership to an evaluation if there is something at stake". A continuum of evaluation partnerships was proposed, ranging from "full partnership", including involvement in governance and management, to "indirect" partner involvement only (implying no formal evaluation partnership but a role as an observer, commenting on drafts, etc.) for those evaluations with limited relevance to the partner, such as the country programme evaluations (see Sections 4.3 and 5.1 below).

With regard to national partner mandate, several Danida staff reflected upon the dilemma of needing to respond to the Paris Declaration's call for greater partner country ownership while working in country contexts where government evaluation bodies are yet to be created, such as in Tanzania. Indeed the choice of MoF as partner for the Tanzania health evaluation was regarded as a default choice. Furthermore, several embassy staff members stressed the importance of ensuring that the identified national partner was in a position to feed evaluation results into the partner's reporting mechanisms – particularly in the case of accountability evaluations. The implication was that a formal Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mandate is not sufficient, the national partner needs also to be in a position to influence decision-making processes.

Finally, the parameter of national partner capacity seems to have mattered little, if at all, in the identification process. This was probably due to the limited choice of partner institutions to begin with. As a consequence, no institutional assessments, even rudimentary ones, of country partners were undertaken. Indeed, only for the national partner (MPD) of Mozambique was the capacity issue directly addressed and this by recruitment of a process consultant to assist the partner with logistical issues. Inadequate partner capacities reflected negatively on the evaluation partnerships, whether in the form of inadequate evaluation competencies or as the result of scarce human or financial resources (see further in Section 4.3 below). As a consequence, the

partnership between the partner and Danida was perceived by the vast majority of respondents, including the national partners themselves, as being unbalanced.

With regard to other donor practices, the World Bank regards the identification of the key stakeholder as country partner as critical for evaluations having *learning* as their primary purpose; which in the case of the World Bank includes all impact evaluations conducted so far, also described as self-evaluations, as referred to above. As staff members put it, “the country has to be involved; it can’t be done without it;” and “if it doesn’t involve the country, it’s useless.” However, a similar approach to partner involvement is not regarded as appropriate for the *accountability* evaluations conducted by the World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) where the involvement of the partner country in this type of evaluation is seen to pose a conflict of interest and compromise the accountability function. In the words of one evaluator, “this would shift the focus of the assessment from the donor to the partner country, which would then be put in the position of assessing the donor.” Nonetheless, in the Latin American and Caribbean Region, there is active demand for impact evaluations at senior government levels – the President in the case of Panama. According to one staff member, impact evaluations “have in fact become accountability mechanisms” in the region. There may be some validity to this notion, but the role of impact evaluations in serving accountability purposes is likely to be only partial at best. They tend to be micro in nature, focused on one project or programme. Moreover, they typically do not assess input and process issues, such as fiduciary accountability¹⁸.

Partner involvement versus evaluation independence was also recently a topic for discussion in relation to a multi-donor programme evaluation in Bangladesh. The Netherlands and the UK, as two of five major donors embarking on such an evaluation, wanted the partner country, Bangladesh, integrally involved in the evaluation. However, the other donors resisted, with one representative arguing that the independence of the evaluation would be jeopardized. As a consequence, the Netherlands decided not to be involved in the evaluation¹⁹. However, retrospectively, there might have been a willingness, in principle, to accept the involvement of a qualified independent audit body from the government. Senior country officials did participate in a final meeting where they shared candid views about each of the four donors. It is possible that partner country participation in the evaluation might have been more substantial and consistent had it been welcomed earlier in the process.

Box 2 Good practices identified with regard to the identification of national partners

- Assess the parameters for partner country/donor partnership based on the evaluation purpose (accountability or learning or both) and relevance (e.g. strategy or policy relevance, intended evaluation audiences/designated accountability needs)
- Ensure that for joint/joint evaluations there is up-front consensus on the

¹⁸ IEG has undertaken a handful of “impact evaluations” over the years and one on agricultural development in several countries is currently underway now. But However, these are not joint partner-donor evaluations that which involve the partner country in governance and management.

¹⁹ The other three donors were the Asian Development Bank, Japan, and the World Bank.

identification criteria for selection of country partner(s) such as: independence, ownership, M&E mandate, and capacity. In some evaluations, some of the parameters might need to be balanced, such as the need for independence with the need for ownership in order to ensure buy-in into the evaluation process and follow-up/use of evaluation recommendations

- Highlight evaluation ownership as a key parameter in the selection of national partner
- Assess country partner(s)'s evaluation capacity up-front to ensure planned national partner input

4.3 Roles and responsibilities of partners

In order to facilitate the management of the joint partner-donor evaluations, Danida has experimented with a number of tools specifically applied to strengthen country partner involvement. These tools include: memoranda of understandings (MoUs) and TORs to guide country evaluation partnerships (see sample MoU in Annex 5); peer reviewers to comment on draft evaluation reports; process consultants to assist with logistical and liaison tasks²⁰, and steering committees/reference groups to comment on evaluation outputs, and in the case of the steering committee for the Tanzania health evaluation to approve draft evaluation outputs. However, for the majority of the nine partner-donor evaluations, and in spite of the measures taken, the partnerships were seen as not being balanced in terms of sharing responsibilities and decision-making, as described in the various TORs and MoUs.

For the Uganda agriculture evaluation, the partnership between the national partner and EVAL was perceived as being successful. This was attributed to the fact that the different informant groups (EVAL, embassy, and evaluator) all perceived the PMA Evaluation Management Group as the primary decision-making body. Factors identified as contributing to the strong partnership were:

- The partner composition — the PMA Evaluation Management Group was composed of both government and donor stakeholders including a representative from the Danish embassy which facilitated the unanimity of voice.
- Independent chair — the PMA Evaluation Management Group was chaired by a neutral (non-government) researcher which facilitated the negotiation of conflicting comments from the partner/EVAL as in the case of the commenting on the household survey design.
- High ownership — that the PMA Evaluation Management Group owned the evaluation is most clearly reflected in the partner's decision to re-publish the evaluation report when the first (Danida published) version had only Danida's name on the cover and as preface signature. According to the embassy stakeholder: "the first version was seen as an inadequate reflection of the evaluation partnership; which is why the partner took the initiative to publish a 2nd version of the report with changed cover and preface".

²⁰ For the Tanzania health evaluation EVAL and BMZ's evaluation department engaged a staff member of the local office of the Aga Khan Foundation to carry out liaison functions in Dar es Salaam. This saved an estimated 10 round trips from Europe.

However, for the other eight evaluations, the partnerships were seen as asymmetrical with Danida typically taking the lead on substantive issues and the partner institution taking mainly a facilitating role, such as, organization of workshops and meetings. The contributing factors to asymmetrical partnerships have been identified as follows:

- *Weak communication.* It became clear during interviews with national partners, that especially for those partner institutions responsible for the country evaluations the realm of the partnership was poorly understood. Or to put it in the words of one of the evaluators: “Danida made place for evaluation partnership, but the country partner didn’t take it.” E.g. the majority of the partners would have liked to shift the focus of the TOR towards more impact-oriented outputs, but they did not voice this concern since they all perceived that it was the prerogative of Danida to formulate the TOR (see also Section 5.1). Similarly, several of the partners would, for learning purposes, have liked to be directly involved in evaluation conduct in the form of self-assessments, or as a minimum participate in all meetings as observers. Again this wish was not voiced.
- *Unrealistic management set-up.* For some of the evaluations, the management set-up was unrealistic in terms of feasibility on the ground. This can be a result of bureaucratic restrictions in the partner country. For example, the steering committee of the Tanzania health evaluation was composed of six permanent secretaries on the initiative of the MoF. The committee never met and as a consequence the approval of inception and evaluation reports had to be taken by tacit approval. The sub-committees of the steering committee of the same evaluation, composed of technical staff, did however meet. Furthermore, the reference groups of the four country evaluations functioned only partially due to lack of resources to finance participation (Benin, Ghana and Mozambique), and in the case of Benin, due to a shifted evaluation timetable, which made it difficult to hold meetings as originally scheduled (see further below). Also, some evaluators and Danida staff observed that the composition of some reference groups limited the level of technical inputs due to an unbalanced skill base. For the Uganda country evaluation, the logistical insufficiencies interfered with the conduct of workshops to discuss the inception report. In terms of country partner-initiated peer reviews (Benin and Ghana country evaluations) these were generally perceived very positively by the evaluators.
- *Capacity constraints.* As described above many of the national partner institutions did not have adequate capacity to fulfil their agreed-upon roles and responsibilities. With regard to specific evaluation competencies, the partner institutions experienced difficulties engaging in debates about evaluation methodologies during the inception phase. Furthermore, and for the country evaluations in particular, the country partner did not have the intimate knowledge of Danida’s development cooperation programme required in order to guide the evaluation team. In terms of human resources, it was difficult for several partners to free-up staff members to engage with evaluation management on a day-to-day basis. Finally, with regard to financial constraints, several of the national partners had difficulties meeting basic administrative needs such as the printing of documents, due to lack of funds, as the evaluations had not been budgeted for. Such

obstacles were eventually overcome, but more smooth ways of tackling the issue could have been found. Furthermore, in the Ghana and Mozambique country evaluations, reference groups were primarily composed of consultants and researchers, with the result that the groups could not function as intended due to unmet financial needs, including the payment of transportation costs. Had the financial needs been flagged up-front, however, EVAL could have provided financing as long as the financing does not clash with partner country policies or agreements between partner countries and development partners – such as the in the case of Ghana where only attendance in seminars can be remunerated.

- *Evaluation roll-out.* Danida staff, country partners, and evaluators alike found that the tightly programmed evaluation roll-out with short turn-around times for commenting were not conducive to partner involvement (see also Section 5.3). On the other hand, for very long evaluation processes such as the one for the Ghana country evaluation, donor and partner stakeholder evaluation fatigue and somewhat outdated evaluation results were reported by the interviewed embassy staff (see also Chapter 6). For the Uganda country evaluation, the very long roll-out process made it difficult for stakeholders to follow the overall evaluation process including knowing when to intervene/provide comments.
- *Language barriers.* Finally, language barriers for the non-Anglophone countries (Benin, Mozambique) were seen as a constraint to engagement. As a consequence, consultants were recruited to act as an interface between the country partner and the evaluation team (Mozambique) and between the country partner and Danida (Benin).

As a consequence of the limited partner input, and in spite of the extensive preparatory studies undertaken for several of the evaluations, the embassies took on a much larger role than anticipated in all the evaluations, including identification of background documents and organization of field work. For the Tanzania health evaluation, a local consultant was recruited to assist with the development of the TOR.

Nonetheless, regardless of the asymmetrical country partner involvement, most of the evaluators and Danida staff described the partner inputs as critical if not invaluable, especially with regard to the facilitation of workshops with stakeholders (see Section 5.3) and building of local ownership. E.g. for the Benin country evaluation it was noted that the evaluation partnership with OCS strengthened local awareness, if not ownership, of the evaluation. To quote a high-ranking official at the Danish embassy in Benin: “without the involvement of OCS we could have cancelled the evaluation mid-stream without one single stakeholder in Benin taking notice”. For Bhutan, the country partner PCS co-funded the evaluation by financing the conduct of the various workshops. Furthermore, for the Ghana country evaluation, the interviewed embassy staff saw the inclusion of Ghana as evaluation country partner as enhancing the overall credibility of the evaluation: “NDPC acted as a witness to the evaluation process and thereby contributed to not only enhanced transparency but also to strengthened Danida responsibility”. For the Uganda country evaluation, the partnership was seen as balanced as regards the managerial aspects of the evaluation, with the partner OPM playing a critical role in the identification and steering of government stakeholders.

With regard to other donor practices, the experience of the World Bank supports the conclusion of the need for timetable flexibility since evaluations with a high level of involvement of partner countries typically take longer than traditional evaluations. There were several causes for this, including bureaucratic delays, differing procedures, and the need to get a consensus among a larger number of parties and persons. Capacity building is another reason for a longer timeframe, but according to one interlocutor, it should be given weight equal to that of other objectives even if the implication is delayed evaluation outputs. Furthermore, World Bank staff, responsible for overseeing the impact evaluations, observe that the rigorous methodological demands of such evaluations typically lead to delays. The evaluations are typically planned for a six-month or twelve-month period, but they usually take longer than a year.

For CIDA the main challenge for joint evaluation conduct is country partner capacity constraints. Based on experience with the Tanzania joint partner-donor evaluation of CIDA's country programme, each milestone, such as feedback on the TOR, took at least a month longer than for a unilateral evaluation. The evaluation as a whole took three-to-six months longer. This delay is only partially recognized and accepted by donor headquarter management. There is typically not a "critical mass" of evaluation capacity in a country like Tanzania and the use of consulting firms may be the only feasible approach.

In contrast to the experiences of the Tanzania health evaluation, the management set-up of the equally complex World Bank CDF evaluation worked out well. The respective experiences of governance and management of the CDF and the Tanzania health evaluations provide some similarities, contrasts and lessons. Both evaluations employed multi-stakeholder reference or steering committees. Both were initiated by a donor, the World Bank and Danida, respectively. However, in the case of the CDF evaluation, although a large number of invitations to organizations were extended, the members of the Steering Committee (SC) were self-selected, including from partner countries. While potential CDF Evaluation Management Group (MG) candidates from both partner countries and donors were approached informally, those proposed to the SC enthusiastically accepted the invitation and were solidly endorsed by the SC. The MG diligently undertook its decision-making and oversight responsibilities. There was therefore a high degree of ownership of, and commitment to, the evaluation by stakeholders. Interest in the CDF by senior officials of the stakeholder bodies also helped.

Box 3 Good practices identified with regard to roles and responsibilities

Key parameters for a successful partnership include:

- Ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities of the partners are understood.
- Establish simple and feasible management.
- Promote self-selection of steering/reference/management group members to ensure ownership with quality as the over-arching principle.
- Strike a balance with regard to evaluation roll-out duration, allowing for partner involvement while avoiding evaluation fatigue.

- Ensure that the role and responsibilities match the capacity of the country partner.
- Provide lump-sum funding to meet administrative/remuneration needs.

Regarding the application of governance and management instruments:

- Maintain MoUs as a tool to guide the partnership but ensure they are communicated to all relevant national partner and donor staff.
- Agree to guidelines for reference group membership composition up-front.
- Maintain the usage of independent peer reviewers but ensure that their commenting is programmed up-front.

5. Evaluation implementation

The scope of partner involvement in evaluation management has been assessed on four parameters: development of TOR, selection of evaluation team, commenting on draft reports, and data collection.

5.1 *Development of TOR*

While Danida generally welcomed national partner input to the development of the terms of reference (TOR), partner involvement in setting evaluation priorities for the country evaluations was limited, with Danida taking the lead in drafting the concept notes and TOR. As mentioned above (Section 4.2) several of the national partners would have liked to provide further inputs to the TOR had this been feasible in terms of (perceived) mandate and timing. For the embassy staff the limited commenting was ascribed to Danida HQ need for country evaluation comparability, which limited the scope for adjustment of the evaluation framework to reflect country partner input.

Had the various stakeholders provided comments as desired, the TOR of the *country* evaluations might have shifted as follows:

- *Shift towards impact evaluations.* The three national partners of the Benin, Ghana and Mozambique evaluations desired a shift from the current process evaluation approach to sector-oriented impact evaluations in order to inform their policy development work: “We need to understand what works and what doesn’t work”.
- *Shorter evaluation time frames.* For the Benin country evaluation the embassy staff found that the evaluation of the project modalities of the early 1990s had limited relevance with regard to the challenges faced by Danida today. For the Ghana country evaluation the country partner would have preferred to break the 16-year evaluation time-frame into shorter segments in order to generate impact findings aligned with applied aid modalities.
- *Alignment to national programming/policy development.* The national partners of Benin, Ghana and Mozambique desired, as a minimum, stronger evaluation alignment with government programme/policy development cycles in order to optimize utilization of lessons learnt.
- *Harmonisation of evaluation efforts.* The national partners of Benin, Ghana and Mozambique would have liked to enlarge the Danida country evaluation exercise to also encompass the evaluation of other donors’ country programmes. Or, as proposed by the national partner of Mozambique, to replace the donor country programme evaluation with an evaluation of Mozambique’s poverty reduction strategies (PARPA). Indeed, many of the interviewees saw limited relevance for future donor country evaluations aside from the meeting of specific donor accountability needs. For the Uganda country evaluation, embassy staff found that the conduct of a joint-joint evaluation, evaluating more donor country programmes, would not only have enhanced the relevance of the evaluation but would also have strengthened the subsequent learning at country level: “In Uganda there

are so many studies and evaluations produced every year that the government finds it difficult to keep track of/internalize them all”.

- *Narrower focus.* National partners, Danida staff and evaluators alike found that the TORs for the Benin, Ghana and Mozambique country evaluations were too broad to be able to conduct in-depth causality analyses; indeed, one evaluator categorized the number of evaluation questions as infinite. It was therefore proposed by most persons interviewed to limit the evaluation focus to two or three issues/themes/sectors. For the Uganda country evaluation, the evaluator assessed the TOR to “be perfectly clear”. However, a shift from a longitudinal to a sector focus would have been better if the objective was to enhance evaluation relevance for the national partner.
- *More focus on current country-specific challenges.* For Benin it was found that the country evaluation failed to provide answers to a key challenge faced in development cooperation today; such as the identified aid effectiveness gaps as exemplified by the low disbursement rate for aligned development assistance²¹.
- *Fewer evaluation outputs.* Several evaluators and Danida staff found that for future country evaluations, the number of evaluation outputs should be more limited compared to the current practice (e.g. at an extreme, 17 thematic background papers for the Benin evaluation).

For the *thematic* evaluations the TOR development processes were generally more inclusive although to a varying degree. For the Ghana road evaluation the draft TOR were developed in partnership with the partner institution, the Ministry of Roads and Transport, and the development partners active in the sub-sector. The formulation process benefited from the fact that the EVAL officer in-charge had worked previously as road sector desk officer at the embassy in Ghana, thereby having both country and sector knowledge. For the Nepal education evaluation, it was EVAL staff, assisted by an external consultant, who took the lead in drafting both the concept paper and the TOR but the national partner (and the development partners), were consulted extensively throughout the process. For the Tanzania health evaluation, the formulation of the TOR was a lengthy process with an external consultant recruited to facilitate the formulation process, seeking consensus among the various country stakeholders and the numerous (20+) development partners based on an 2004 Approach Paper. Nonetheless, for both the Nepal and the Tanzania evaluations, the TORs were perceived by the evaluators as insufficiently focused, leading especially in the Tanzania TOR to an extension of the inception phase. The evaluator interviewed on the Tanzania experiences therefore proposed an external TOR peer review mechanism for future evaluations, engaging e.g. the services of local researchers. For the Uganda agriculture evaluation, EVAL took lead in the formulation of the TOR but the national partner participated actively through commenting. The final TOR, which were approved by both EVAL and the national partner, were found adequate by the evaluator even if they were “maybe a bit over-ambitious”. Finally for Bhutan, the country partner PCS merely commented on the TOR – and this only to a limited extent.

²¹ In Benin only 50% of the donor funds allocated to the government for education is disbursed due to low implementation capacity.

With regard to the overall focus of thematic evaluations there was general agreement that sector evaluations should:

- Focus at the strategic level – especially for country sectors where sophisticated review mechanisms are already in place;
- Remain targeted – even when aiming at the strategic level, a focus area for evaluation should be retained in order to generate the needed analytical depth; and
- Be forward looking – partner country institutions in particular stressed that the evaluations should apply formative over summative approaches in order to enhance relevance in terms of input to programme/policy processes. E.g. for the Nepal education evaluation, the utility of the evaluation results were seen as being limited due to a scheduled shift to the global “Education For All” programming approach.

With regard to other donor practices similar expressions of the need for focus and shorter evaluation time-frames have been made. For the South Africa – UN joint evaluation, issues for re-consideration include: (1) the length of time the evaluation is supposed to cover – from 1994 to the present – 15 years; (2) evaluability, given the duration and consequent evidence gaps, as well as the vast range of issues encompassed by the four themes; and (3) the high stakes for both South Africa and the UN in South Africa, since the results could bring about major changes in the UN country presence, institutional structure, and development programmes in South Africa²². The lessons that one UN participant draws from the experience is for future evaluations of this type, to cover only one or two themes (rather than four), to cover a shorter time period or to limit the focus to the responsiveness of UN entities alone to changes in processes.

Box 4 Good practices for partner involvement in the development of TOR

TOR formulation process:

- Involve the country partner in the formulation process early.
- Introduce peer review of the TOR by independent in-country sector/thematic experts.

TOR content:

- Alignment to national policies and procedures, both with regard to (i) evaluation objects focusing on national programmes and to (ii) evaluation timing aligning to local decision-making processes and procedures.
- The TOR should be focused on maximum two-four selected themes/issues in order to attain analytical depth.
- Formative (over summative) outcome/impact evaluations should be prioritized²³.

²² The appointment of a new UN Resident Coordinator is awaiting the outcome of the Evaluation.

²³ A clearer understanding of what stakeholders mean when they refer to impact evaluations (e.g Randomly Controlled Trial studies or broader studies of impact) are to be determined in subsequent studies.

5.2 Selection of evaluation team

For the Bhutan evaluation the evaluation team was, with the approval of the country partner, selected directly to capitalize on earlier experiences with the evaluation methodology from Ghana.²⁴ This was possible, because the assignment had an estimated value below the threshold for direct procurement. For all the other evaluations, tenders were held following the tender procedures of Danida and later EU, with the approval of country partners, to speed-up tendering work. Overall the various interviewees – Danida, partner organizations, and evaluators alike - expressed satisfaction with the bidding process, both in terms of timeliness and the output and quality of evaluation teams. Furthermore, for all evaluations the country partner institution participated in the tender work including in the interviewing of potential evaluation team-leaders; a participation which, in the words of one Danida evaluation officer, had been critical to the building of country partner ownership. Nonetheless, in spite of the overall satisfaction with the evaluation team selected, the partner of the Uganda agriculture evaluation would have preferred to have conducted a process applying national procedures funded through sectoral budget support to enhance ownership/transparency.

It was noted that there was room for improvement in evaluation team selection. A Tanzanian sector specialist expressed the desirability of contracting country-experienced evaluators, especially in the case of sectoral evaluations where institutional and sector memory is seen as critical for effective evaluation conduct: “Without country-specific sector experience it is impossible for the evaluators to make short-cuts.” A similar concern was raised with regard to the Nepal education evaluation where a Danida staff member noted that “reviews and evaluations are surprisingly quickly forgotten and therefore repeated.” Both country respondents called, as a consequence, for a more pragmatic tendering approach with greater weight given to country-specific experience (see also Section 5.4). For the Mozambique country evaluation, the partners would have preferred to contract a local evaluation team only as “local consultants know the country better and would have had a different perspective”. The deputy evaluation team leader of Nepal called for similar local involvement but as deputy team-leaders only, with the purpose of building local capacities.

With regard to other donor practices, the TOR for the evaluation of UN Programmes in South Africa called for dominant South African participation in the evaluation team. This included as head a highly respected South African with both Government and private sector experience, one of two deputies, and four specialists covering each of the four thematic areas. The South African lead role stemmed in part from the fact that the partner county requested the evaluation in the first place and in part from the fact that the South African Treasury and Ministry of Foreign Affairs assumed strong leadership roles. The expansion of the evaluation to four broad thematic areas evolved from the scoping phase and reflected widespread interest in the evaluation in the South African Government and in the UN.

²⁴ The applied evaluation methodology ROACH (Result-Oriented Approach to Capacity Change) was developed by EVAL and field-tested in Ghana in 2004. A brief introduction to ROACH methodology can be found at www.danidadevforum.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/5BFF9B91-D957-49A0-8A64-EF4F70C6B84C/0/Session2ROACH.ppt

With regard to the World Bank impact evaluations, the evaluation teams were at first composed of M&E specialists but it became evident that officials with policy influence were also needed (“informed consumers of evaluation products”). The reason for this expansion was to increase the likelihood that evaluation findings would be utilized. In terms of specific team selection processes, country researchers are hired for implementation of the evaluation, including a local firm for data collection, which is typically paid for by the Government, while Technical Assistance (TA) is paid for by a Bank-managed Trust Fund.

For the World Bank IEG CDF evaluation, the importance of having at least one respected partner country expert on each of the country case study teams was stressed since it was seen to enhance country ownership of the evaluation.

Box 5 Good practices for partner involvement in the selection of the evaluation team

- A balance should be struck between speed and alignment to local procedures.
- Local consultants should be called on to take on a more prominent role; in order to ensure country knowledge as well as to enhance the building of local evaluation capacities.
- As appropriate, government officials with policy influence should be included as team members so as to enhance the likelihood of evaluation utilization in decision-making.

5.3 *Commenting on draft reports*

For all the evaluations reviewed it was found that the conduct of workshops was the most effective means to obtaining comments to draft reports for several reasons:

- Firstly, workshops were seen as building on the strong oral tradition of countries such as Ghana and Mozambique;
- Secondly, participation in workshops was regarded as more efficient by the participants since reading requirements are limited and findings are presented and discussed during the workshop;
- Thirdly, the conduct of workshops was seen as having the added benefit of explaining and interpreting findings to participants; and
- Fourthly, workshops were regarded as vehicles for enhanced country and sector dialogue, especially to a large but disparate stakeholder community, as in the case of the Tanzania health sector evaluation.

Typically, two workshops were held for each evaluation: one workshop to kick-off the evaluation by presenting the inception report and one workshop to discuss the draft evaluation report. In Tanzania, Bhutan and Mozambique, however, the total number of workshops was higher and included regional workshops to discuss draft findings and separate kick-off and inception workshops.

In terms of the workshop inputs received, most evaluators interviewed found that the national partners and stakeholders generally had difficulty commenting on the proposed evaluation methodologies and inception reports. Sector specialists with only limited (if any) evaluation

competencies had, generally speaking, difficulty engaging. Although for the Uganda agriculture evaluation, the national partner provided extensive comments and guidance on the household survey design. It has therefore been proposed by the team leader of the Ghana country evaluation to prolong the inception periods for methodology testing, based on the idea that applied methodologies are easier to comprehend than pure theoretical ones. Such an approach was applied by the Nepal education evaluation team, which strengthened partner involvement. In Bhutan, where a complex institutional assessment evaluation methodology was applied (ROACH), the country partner and the evaluators conducted inception meetings with the institutions targeted for evaluation to explain the proposed methodology.

Regarding partner country input to draft reports, the national partner institutions and their fellow national stakeholders played a bigger role in commenting on the draft evaluation reports – for country and sector/thematic evaluations alike. Not only were the workshops well attended, in Tanzania by up-to 300 participants, but the debates provided useful input to the evaluation reports. E.g. for the Mozambique country evaluation, the country partner and stakeholders were seen as instrumental in rectifying the presentation of Danida’s past cooperation development approaches by ensuring that past donor behaviour, such as the conduct of development projects, was not measured against today’s standards. However, by the same token, learning at the Mozambique workshops was hampered by the conveyed perception that government stakeholders should express one government view only. For the Uganda country evaluation, the national partner comments received were perceived as being limited according to the interviewed evaluator. Nonetheless, an embassy staff member found that the involvement of partner country stakeholders had been critical as a catalyst for balanced evaluation analysis.

In terms of the organization of the discussed workshops, different approaches were applied ranging from country partner-led workshops, to workshop outsourcing (within Mozambique), to workshop organization and facilitation managed by the evaluators. The latter model led for the Tanzania health evaluation to strained evaluator-partner relationship owing to the workshop culture: “due to budget constraints we as evaluators had to decide who should, and who should not, attend the workshops.”

With regard to other donor practices, the World Bank in its regional impact evaluations has faced difficulties translating the methodology, results, and limitations expressed by the technical members of its teams into a language that key partner country programme managers and policy makers can understand. Therefore the teams begin the evaluation process by arranging a one-week workshop for all key stakeholders to agree on a research design and methodology. When draft findings are available, a second workshop is typically held to discuss results and their implications.

Box 6 Good practices for partner involvement in commenting on draft reports

- As feasible, prolong the inception phase to generate methodology-test results for discussion
- Continue and expand use of partner-led stakeholder workshops to collect oral comments
- Stipulate up-front the workshop attendance criteria

5.4 Data collection

All country partner institutions contributed to data collection to some extent whether in the form of identification of stakeholders to be contacted and/or identification of background documentation. Furthermore several partners participated in the field work either as observers (Bhutan, Mozambique, and Nepal) or as self-evaluators (Tanzania) with the key stakeholder (MOHWS) conducting district self-assessments in parallel with those conducted by the evaluation team for validation purposes. These inputs, especially with regard to the Tanzania self-assessment, helped strengthen country partner ownership to the overall evaluation. A practice which the interviewed Tanzania evaluator would have liked to apply to the collection of finance data by engaging the Ministry of Finance in self-assessment efforts (see further in Section 7.1): “A lot of time could have been saved had the MoF collected the first data set which we then as evaluators validated”.

Other country partners (Bhutan, Benin, and Mozambique) would have liked to be engaged in similar self-assessment with the purpose of building evaluation competencies. For Ghana, the country partner NDPC would have liked to apply the national M&E system in the data collection efforts especially at the decentralized level as a pilot exercise. Also, several partners (in Benin and Mozambique) would have liked to observe the evaluation team work more closely for learning purposes.

Nonetheless, the bulk of the back-stopping work fell on EVAL and embassies, as these entities were not only better equipped in terms of access to archives but also with regard to the country evaluations especially, as they held the institutional memory required to identify information sources. Furthermore, pre-evaluation studies were launched for the four country evaluations with the objective of easing the evaluation work-load of national partners and embassies; and to ensure that earlier evaluations were not repeated (see also Section 4.3).

With regard to other donor practices, the Netherlands’ impact evaluation of primary education was not designed from the beginning as a joint partner-donor evaluation with Zambia and Uganda. But during the evaluation conduct, partner involvement emerged in the form of partner self-assessments using existing data. As a consequence, ownership to the evaluation was formed and the evaluation report was presented to the parliaments of the two countries. For the follow-up exercise in Uganda in progress, the country partner now plays a much larger role. E.g. the government of Uganda took the leadership in drafting the TOR for the follow-up study.

Box 7 Good practices for partner involvement in data collection

- As appropriate, and subject to validation, apply self-assessment measures in order to strengthen ownership, build capacities, and enhance efficiency
- To the extent possible invite government staff to observe evaluation field work for learning purposes

6. Evaluation dissemination/follow-up

For all the studied evaluations, neither Danida nor the national partner had developed specific *dissemination* plans. Although for the Uganda country evaluation reference to the evaluation was made in the general communication plan for the embassy; and for the Ghana and Mozambique country evaluations, dissemination activities were included in the action plans outlining the evaluation process.

As a consequence the majority of the dissemination activities were for most partner countries limited to a workshop-event underpinned by the distribution of the printed evaluation report managed by the embassy. The glaring exemption to this approach was the dissemination approach applied by the Tanzania health evaluation, where the government widely disseminated the findings of the health evaluation including at regional and global events such as the 2008 Accra High-Level Forum. For the Uganda country evaluation, an extensive press release was issued in the Ugandan newspapers in connection with the Danish national day (*Grundlovsdag*) summarizing the results of Danish development cooperation in Uganda over the past 20 years; and the national partner (OPM) disseminated the evaluation findings to the key ministries through the ministerial cabinets. In Bhutan the national partner evaluates their dissemination activities as lacking in that the evaluation findings should have been launched in the media.

Furthermore, and at a more general level, it was found that the delayed release of the evaluation reports – up to four months after conduct of the final workshop – not only hampered the dissemination work but also, in some instances, made the evaluation findings seem non-relevant at country level (Ghana). This delay is found to be even further compounded for non-Anglophone countries such as Mozambique where the translated evaluation report in Portuguese was released about two months after the English version had been released. In connection with the Mozambique country evaluation, an innovative dissemination experiment was undertaken by including a journalist/author in the evaluation team with the mandate of producing the history of the development cooperation between Mozambique and Denmark in a story-telling non-academic format of a novel. As a result, a 500 pages book was produced and launched at the same time as the official country evaluation report²⁵. The book was published in Danish only since it was initially targeted for the Danish audience. Part of the book, however, is now being translated to Portuguese for publication in Mozambique.

In terms of *follow-up actions*, Danida is required to follow-up on evaluations by developing follow-up notes with issues for future discussion/action; and to monitor actions taken through performance reviews and hearings. Hence for all nine joint partner-donor evaluations studied, follow-up actions have been identified. With regard to the follow-up actions taken by the national partners the picture is more mixed. It is too early to comment on follow-up actions

²⁵ Tygesen, Peter. *De gode menneskers land - Danmark i Mozambique*. People's Press. 2008.

already taken with regard to the three recent country evaluations for Benin, Ghana and Mozambique. However, the country partner of Benin has reported that OSC has scheduled consultations with sector ministries for the development of an Action Note to be presented to the Ministers' Council (*conseil des ministres*) for approval. For follow-up on actions to be taken by Danida, the High-Level Consultations (HLC) between Denmark and Benin will address these. For Ghana and Mozambique, formal national partner follow-up mechanisms are yet to be identified. However for both Ghana and Mozambique the evaluations informed the HLCs; and for Mozambique the evaluation was used as background documentation when the Prime Minister of Mozambique visited Denmark in the autumn of 2008. For the Uganda country evaluation, the evaluation recommendations were presented to the relevant ministerial cabinets for discussion/action; however, evidence of actions taken has not been identified.

For the thematic evaluations extensive follow-up was carried out for the Ghana Road evaluation in the form of two follow-up studies: one study conducted three years and one study conducted five years after evaluation completion. This is reported to have “helped – at low cost – to retain focus on the evaluation findings”. For the Tanzania health evaluation, follow-up was ensured by the key stakeholder, MOHSW, requiring that the evaluation findings be one of several key inputs for the 11 technical working groups formed for the development of the new health sector strategy plan issued in November 2008. For the Uganda agriculture evaluation, the national partner developed an action plan for implementation and the same actions were communicated in the EVAL follow-up memorandum to the Board of Danida and Parliamentary Finance Committee. For Nepal and Bhutan, no formal follow-up actions were made by the national partners although for the latter, such a measure is expected to be taken into consideration for phase II of the evaluation.

Box 8 Good practices for partner involvement in evaluation dissemination/follow-up

- Attach a joint dissemination/follow-up strategy as an annex to the initial memorandum of understanding or approach/inception paper to ensure that action will be taken.
- Speed-up printing and translation process to ensure a timely evaluation launch in both Denmark and in partner country(ies).
- Conduct, as needed, follow-up studies to retain evaluation findings.

7. Evaluation utility

In this chapter lessons learnt with regard to evaluation utility are presented in terms of (i) evaluation capacities built in partner institutions; and (ii) usage of evaluation results in the partner country and among donors.

7.1 *Evaluation capacity development*

While capacity building of national consultants/interns has been a target in some of the evaluations²⁶, the building of evaluation capacities of national partner staff members has not been addressed as a specific objective in the TOR of the nine evaluations covered by this study. This probably explains why, out of the nine national partners, evidence of capacity building was noted only for Bhutan, Tanzania, and Uganda (OPM)²⁷.

For Bhutan, the country partner PCS considered the evaluation partnership a good learning experience as it was the first time the institution was involved in the management of a large evaluation. PCS's prior experiences have almost entirely been concentrated on monitoring or review efforts, such as annual sector reviews. In terms of the specific learning generated from the evaluation this can perhaps best be summarized in terms of what the Bhutanese partner is seeking to do differently for the next evaluation phase, namely: early involvement in the evaluation process, including direct involvement in the formulation of TOR, development of dissemination plans, and launching of follow-up mechanisms. Furthermore, the PCS also regards self-assessments as a potential measure for the building of evaluation capacities. Specifically the desire to be involved in the design of surveys and conduct of focus-group discussions was mentioned. From Danida's side, capacity development aspects of the evaluation phase 2 might be addressed through the introduction of evaluation training and exchange activities.

In Tanzania the key stakeholder, MOHWS, benefited from capacity development primarily through direct evaluation conduct in the form of district self-assessments conducted in parallel with similar assessments carried out by the evaluation team. The parallel assessment process not only allowed for validation of findings (overlap of two district assessments) but also gave ground for important exchange of knowledge and hence learning opportunities.

For Uganda, the designated staff member of OPM saw the building of evaluation capacities as the most important partner benefit. Evidence of the learning can be measured in the new evaluative elements introduced into the Uganda PRSP (PEAP) review and evaluation exercises,

²⁶ E.g. for the Mozambique country evaluation, three national interns — students of the Institute of Foreign Relations — were recruited explicitly for learning purposes: “the students were recruited to act as a ‘fly on the wall’ while also contributing to the evaluation in the form of review of newspaper clippings and translation work.

²⁷ In line with EVAL's capacity building mandate — “contributing to the development of evaluation capacity in partner countries through bilateral and multilateral cooperation” (source: Evaluation policy, page 4) — the support to the building of evaluation capacities is primarily given in the form of financial support to the training of partner representatives at the IPDET course in Ottawa; and support to IDEAS and other networks like 3iE and NONIE.

such as the establishment of an evaluation management team for governance; the drawing on national peer reviewers for quality control; and the employment of an independent evaluation team for transparency purposes.

For the other six joint partner-donor evaluations the absence of evaluation capacity development (ECD) outputs can be subscribed to the following:

- *Lack of general ECD programmes.* Several interviewees, including country partners, stressed the importance of anchoring the specific evaluation in general ECD programmes for enhanced capacity development. E.g. the Mozambique country partner specifically requested the conduct of evaluation management training sessions to better prepare their team members for their partnership responsibilities.
- *Weak evaluation relevance.* For all evaluators interviewed, strong ownership was seen as key to capacity development. Several evaluation team leaders, however, perceived their country partner's ownership of the evaluation to be low, owing to low evaluation relevance for the country partner. The three country evaluations (Benin, Ghana and Mozambique) were, in particular, seen as designed to satisfy primarily Danida's accountability needs.
- *Limited evaluation demand.* The general lack of demand for evaluation results in partner countries is linked to the issue of ownership. Indeed, several Danida staff members and evaluators believed that evaluation capacities will not be built in partner countries until there is a real demand. Some therefore suggested that not only evaluation supply but also the evaluation demand-side should be strengthened.
- *Low partner involvement.* The majority of the national partners interviewed voiced the desire to be involved directly in evaluation self-assessment practices for learning purposes (see Section 5.4). A similar concern was raised by one evaluator who stated that for evaluations stressing capacity development purposes, future evaluation partnerships should be centered around evaluation conduct and not evaluation management as is presently the case.
- *Capacity development not a priority.* Several evaluators stressed that ECD objectives have to be prioritized, allowing e.g. for a slower evaluation implementation process for learning purposes, if real capacity strengthening is to take place. However, as mentioned above specific/targeted ECD activities for national partners were not planned for in the TOR. Had such activities been planned for, a different partner approach would have been proposed by the evaluators, such as: the conduct of training sessions during the inception phase and inclusion of partner staff in the evaluation team as observers.

Box 9 Good practices for developing partner evaluation capacities

- As relevant, formulate evaluation capacity development (ECD) as an objective in TOR
- Anchor evaluation in general ECD programme/activities through the conduct of generic training activities
- Include as relevant and appropriate self-assessment elements and employ, if possible, national M&E systems

- As appropriate, include partner staff in the evaluation team as observers
- Strengthen evaluation demand in partner countries

7.2 Usage of evaluation results

For the majority of the Danida evaluations analyzed in this study, limited new information/insights came out of the evaluation exercises especially for those respondents in the know such as the national partners, embassy staff, and sector specialists. Instead the evaluations have mainly served the role of “documenting the known” in the form of the compilation of background study findings and/or in the provision of arguments for decisions already made. Nonetheless, the usages of the evaluations were many-fold with the primary ones identified below.

All of the evaluations studied have provided *input to new programming* although to a varying degree. For the four country evaluations (Benin, Ghana, Mozambique, and Uganda) the evaluation findings have/are foreseen to provide inputs to future country programming work. For Uganda, the evaluation findings have already been used to guide the design of new programmes such as guidance with regard to aid modality selection and degree of alignment to national structures. Furthermore, the evaluation has been used to document Danida’s leadership and results in the water and agricultural sectors for the ‘Division of Labour’ negotiations with other donors. For Benin, the evaluation has provided documentation for “difficult” decision-making such as the decision to discontinue Danida support for the agricultural sector. The evaluation recommended enhanced programme focus. For Mozambique, the evaluation also helped strengthen the understanding of the ‘Danida approach’ over time of the Danish embassy in Mozambique, especially for local staff less exposed to Danida policies. Furthermore, the Mozambique country evaluation results are expected to provide *input into the cooperation policy* under development.

Regarding the sectoral/thematic evaluations, the evaluation results have also mainly served to reinforce existing programming/policies. This was particularly the case for country partner-initiatives, such as Nepal’s Education For All (EFA) programme and Tanzania’s new health sector strategy plan. In addition, the positive evaluation of the basket-fund modality in Tanzania helped secure DFID sector budget support for the new programme. For Bhutan the positive evaluation of Danida’s capacity development effort led to a reorientation of Danida’s country programme with the Danish National Auditor (*Rigsrevisionen*) recommending discontinued Danida support to selected institutions in Bhutan such as the Department of Revenue and Customs as the institutions were regarded as sufficiently capacitated. Furthermore, the Bhutan evaluation guided the formulation of Bhutan’s 10th 5-year plan.

For the Ghana road evaluation, the evaluation served as an *interim sector vision* and road-map in the absence of a government sector policy/strategy – both for government and donor stakeholders. This function was also served by the two follow-up studies, which helped to retain a focus on its conclusions and recommendations (see also chapter 6 above). Also the same evaluation led to the conduct of a series of institutional analyses and a different financing approach for the sector.

For the Uganda agriculture evaluation, the findings were used to guide the restructuring of the PMA programme including the overall coordination mechanism. Furthermore, alignment and ownership were said to be enhanced as a result of the evaluation. However, only approximately 50% of the actions listed for implementation were followed-through due to shift in government policies/strategies which conflicted with some of the PMA principles and practices.

Finally, the positive basket-fund findings of the Tanzania health evaluation have been used as a *negotiation tool* in the on-going effort of trying to include the vertical funds in the sector-wide approach programme (SWAp).

In terms of parameters for enhanced evaluation usage, the country partners found greater usage for the thematic evaluations as these were more result-oriented and – for the most part – aligned to local processes, whether in terms of substance or timing. Furthermore, as already mentioned in Section 5.1, the usage might even have been greater if the TOR for the sectoral/thematic evaluations had applied a formative approach with emphasis on impact for strategic decision-making.

In the country evaluations, potential partner usage was seen as being fairly limited and led to a call for greater results-orientation in these evaluations in terms of narrower scope, shorter time-frames, and focus on impact. Indeed, some interviewees went so far as to say that “the days of country evaluations are over” and that Danida, with other donors, should instead evaluate their country efforts within the framework of a PRSP or JAS evaluation to ensure that the country partner is in the driver’s seat. This can obviously only be done, where such strategies already exist. For sectoral evaluations, however, interviewees proposed that such evaluations be programmed as part of joint sector programmes or strategies, so as to eliminate evaluation initiation problems and strengthen alignment to local policy/programme processes.

Box 10 Good practices for partner usage of evaluation results

- Expand/replace donor (country) programme evaluations with evaluations of national programmes assessing simultaneously the performance of the country partner and the donor(s)
- Programme for joint evaluations during the formulation of joint sector programmes
- Apply formative and result-oriented evaluation approaches with focus on outcome/impact

8. Conclusions/recommendations

This assessment of Danida's nine joint partner-donor evaluations along with a brief review of other donors' joint evaluation practices suggested a number of good practices presented in Boxes 1-10. These are summarized in Box 11 below. It should be emphasized that some of the good practices mentioned are already practiced by various donors (including Danida), while others have come up in the process of preparing the present study as new ideas which may need further development and testing to be fully adopted as good practices.

However, with the objective of (further) substantiating and increasing the likelihood of implementation of the identified better practices, some conclusions pertaining to institutional challenges of donors are identified below.

- *Unclear terminology.* It became clear from interviews with Danida staff and the staff of other donor organizations that there is confusion about the terminology used. This is not only the case between donor organizations but also among staff within an organization. The confusion was identified at two levels: the definition of what constitutes a joint partner-donor evaluation and clarification with regard to the evaluation purposes. With regard to the former, some donors regarded the usage of local consultants as (informal) evaluation partnerships while others only viewed country-led evaluations, or evaluations governed and managed by partner country government representatives, as well as one or more donors, as joint efforts. With regard to evaluation purposes, it was found that greater clarity needs to be given to the definitions of what constitutes an accountability evaluation and a learning evaluation (and whether they can be combined in the same evaluation), as well as the implications the evaluation purpose holds for joint evaluation.
- *Lack of explicit policy on involvement of partner countries in evaluation work.* While Danida has adopted a policy and tested practices with regard to the conduct of joint evaluations, along with the other donors, it lacks principles to clearly guide country partner involvement, in particular with regard to criteria for country partner identification and scope for self-assessment. With regard to the other donors, about half did not recognize a need for developing a specific policy to guide joint evaluations. Some (EC) found policy development premature as the donors first need to understand what the partner countries would want, particularly through the conduct of pilot exercises in middle-income countries. Others (SDC) found that the development of policy would not be answering to the real issues; namely the missing demand for evaluations at country partner level. For Finland there is no lack of guidelines but of capacities, in terms of evaluation department man-power, at donor HQ. For the World Bank, the interviewed staff overseeing impact evaluations did not feel a need for policy development as their scientific protocols for impact evaluations were sufficiently clear on the issue. For the World Bank IEG staff involved in accountability evaluations there was, however, agreement on the need for guidelines to be issued by the Multilateral Development Bank

(MDB) Evaluation Cooperation Group, either in conjunction with expanded OECD/DAC guidelines or separately. For the Netherlands the need for further guidelines was seen as limited and then only in the form of an update of current guidelines such as the OECD/DAC guidelines guiding joint donor evaluations (multi-donor). CIDA, DFID, UNDP, and USAID unanimously agreed, that guidelines along the lines of those issued by the OECD/DAC on joint evaluations for donors should be issued for joint evaluations involving partner countries. As mentioned in Chapter 3, DFID has already developed guidance notes on the issue as part of their new evaluation policy guidelines.

- *Disjunct between HQ and decentralized level.* Gaps in perceived evaluation needs and challenges between EVAL and embassies have been identified; gaps which might have widened with the decentralization, particularly with regard to donor responses to alignment/harmonization requirements. E.g. differing views on alignment (ownership) approaches during evaluation initiation were noted as well as different opinions as to what future evaluations should focus on: evaluation of Danida or of national programmes?

Box 11 Good practices for country partner involvement in joint evaluations

Evaluation initiation

Promote evaluations initiated by partner country stakeholders by:

- Calling for suggestions about evaluation topics
- Supporting calls for (joint) evaluations on overall national development strategies including national poverty reduction strategies
- Supporting the establishment of a joint inter-sectoral evaluation committee
- Programming for joint evaluations at sector level

For donor HQ initiated evaluations:

- Program for evaluations already during the development of country strategies and/or country programmes
- Initiate evaluations through established government/development partner mechanisms where they exist
- Approach targeted national partner(s) early to allow for adequate resourcing and strong ownership
- communicate clearly the value-added of the evaluation, especially for sector evaluations in countries where advanced review structures are already in place
- Be candid about whose accountability needs the evaluation is seeking to meet (donor and/or partner constituencies in the form of e.g. senior management, executive boards, ministers, and parliaments)
- Be patient, a proposed evaluation might have to be launched years after initiation in order to align with partner country processes

Identification of national partner

- Assess the parameters for partner country/donor partnership based on the evaluation purpose (accountability or learning or both) and relevance (e.g. strategy or policy relevance, intended evaluation audiences/designated accountability needs)
- Ensure that for joint/joint evaluations there is up-front consensus on the identification criteria for selection of country partner(s) such as: independence, ownership, M&E mandate, and capacity. In some evaluations, some of the parameters might need to be balanced, such as the need for independence with the need for ownership in order to ensure buy-in into the evaluation process and follow-up/use of evaluation recommendations
- Highlight evaluation ownership as a key parameter in the selection of national partner
- Assess country partner(s)'s evaluation capacity up-front to ensure planned national partner input

Roles and responsibilities

Key parameters for a successful partnership include:

- Ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities of the partners are understood
- Establish simple and feasible management
- Promote self-selection of steering/reference/management group members to ensure ownership with quality as the over-arching principle
- Strike a balance with regard to evaluation roll-out duration, allowing for partner involvement while avoiding evaluation fatigue
- Ensure that the role and responsibilities match the capacity of the country partner
- Provide lump-sum funding to meet administrative/remuneration needs

Regarding the application of governance and management instruments:

- Maintain MoUs as a tool to guide the partnership but ensure they are communicated to all relevant national partner and donor staff
- Agree to guidelines for reference group membership composition up-front
- Maintain the usage of independent peer reviewers but ensure that their commenting is programmed up-front

TOR development process

TOR formulation

- Involve the country partner in the formulation process early
- Introduce peer review of the TOR by independent in-country sector/thematic experts

TOR content

- Alignment to national policies and procedures, both with regard to (i) evaluation objects focusing on national programmes and to (ii) evaluation timing aligning to

local decision-making processes and procedures.

- The TOR should be focused on maximum two-four selected themes/issues in order to attain analytical depth
- Formative (over summative) outcome/impact evaluations should be prioritized

Selection of evaluation team

- A balance should be struck between speed and alignment to local procedures
- Local consultants should be called on to take on a more prominent role in order to ensure country knowledge, as well as to enhance the building of local evaluation capacities
- As appropriate, government officials with policy influence should be included as team members to enhance the likelihood of evaluation utilization in decision-making

Commenting on draft reports

- Prolong the inception phase to generate methodology-test results for discussion
- Continue and expand use of partner-led stakeholder workshops to collect oral comments
- Stipulate up-front the workshop attendance criteria

Evaluation data collection

- As appropriate, and subject to validation, apply self-assessment measures in order to strengthen ownership, build capacities, and enhance efficiency
- To the extent possible invite government staff to observe evaluation field work for learning purposes

Evaluation dissemination/follow-up

- Attach a joint dissemination/follow-up strategy as an annex to the initial memorandum of understanding or approach/inception paper to ensure that action will be taken
- Speed-up printing and translation process to ensure a timely evaluation launch in both Denmark and in partner country(ies)
- Conduct, as needed, follow-up studies to retain evaluation findings

Building of evaluation capacities

- As relevant, formulate evaluation capacity development (ECD) as an objective in TOR
- Anchor evaluation in general ECD programme/activities through the conduct of generic training activities
- Include as relevant and appropriate self-assessment elements and employ, if possible, national M&E systems
- As appropriate, include partner staff in the evaluation team as observers
- Strengthen evaluation demand in partner countries

Usage of evaluation results

- Expand/replace donor (country) programme evaluations with evaluations of national programmes assessing simultaneously the performance of the country partner and the donor(s)
- Programme for joint evaluations during the formulation of joint sector programmes
- Apply formative and result-oriented evaluation approaches with focus on outcome/impact

In response to the conclusions summarized above, the following recommendations have been identified, addressing the donor community at large:

1. In the context of the OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation and the MDB Evaluation Cooperation Group a consensus should be reached on terminology to be used with regard to joint partner-donor evaluation partnerships and purposes, drawing on the guidelines to be developed (see below).
2. Donors expressing a need for full (or revised) guidelines for joint evaluation partnerships (CIDA, Danida, DFID, the Netherlands, UNDP, USAID, World Bank), should form a working group, or another modality for follow-up, to issue joint TOR for development of guidelines. Taking into consideration the better practices noted above, the guidelines should in particular address: terminology – establishing definitions of joint partner-donor evaluation partnerships/purposes; modalities for enhancing partner-initiated and -led evaluations (see also recommendation 3 below); criteria for identification of country partner institution/representatives and for conduct of self-assessments linked with evaluation purpose; evaluation management-models linked to evaluation type (multiple or singular partner-donor set-up); and modalities for integrating ECD efforts with evaluation governance/management.
3. To feed into the guideline formulation work, conduct pilot work in partner countries assessing support mechanisms for country-led evaluations building on existing experiences such as the Colombian Intersectoral Evaluation Committee.

Evaluation study on experience with conducting evaluations jointly with partner countries

Background

During the past five years or so, the Evaluation Department (EVAL) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has commissioned and taken the lead on a number of evaluations jointly with institutions responsible for evaluations in partner countries such as Bhutan, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Benin and Mozambique²⁸. The level of awareness and capacity within evaluation of development efforts varies from country to country. Thus while some of the partner countries have a clear institutional framework for responsibilities related to evaluations, others do not. Also, some of the evaluations have been conducted jointly with other donor agencies, while others have not.

A wealth of experience has been gained both within the Evaluation Department in MFA, at embassy level and among partners involved in the evaluations. Experience has so far not been systematically documented, however, and thus EVAL would now like to conduct an evaluation study focusing on the lessons learnt from these joint exercises both in terms of their usefulness to different partners and the adequateness of methodologies used²⁹. Other donor agencies have also expressed their interest in sharing experience from joint evaluation exercises of different kinds and it is therefore envisaged that the resulting evaluation study will be discussed in a forthcoming meeting within the OECD/DAC Evaluation Network.

Objective of the evaluation study

The objectives of the evaluation study are to a) document positive and negative experience gained from the evaluations carried out jointly with partner country institutions b) assess the pros and cons of the different methods used, including their usefulness for capacity building in evaluation of development cooperation, and c) present recommendations to the Evaluation Department and partners for further refinement of methods for enhanced cooperation in the field of different types of joint evaluation exercises at sector and/or country level.

Scope of Work

The work of the consultant will be to produce a report to EVAL with a view to publish it as an evaluation study.

²⁸ At this stage it is not envisaged to include the experience from the Paris Declaration evaluation directly in this paper although Denmark has also taken the lead on this evaluation.

²⁹ The work should be seen in light of the OECD/DAC Guidelines for Managing Joint Evaluations and as a contribution to take the guidelines a step further by sharing the experience gained by EVAL and partners in the joint evaluation exercises covered by the study.

The consultants will focus mainly on the experience with the evaluations where EVAL has taken the lead but will use available information (e.g. on the internet) on the experience of other evaluation units within donor agencies as far as working jointly with partner countries to put the EVAL experience into perspective.

Focus of the work will be on documenting experience gained from the evaluation *processes*, rather than on the findings and outcome of the evaluations, although aspects of usefulness of the evaluations to partner countries should be included as part of the assessment.

The work will be carried out in two phases. The process will include at least the following key steps:

PHASE 1

1. A brief review of similar studies to the extent they may exist.
2. Familiarization with the evaluation processes, procedures used and objectives of evaluations carried out jointly with partner countries through studying of relevant documents (approach papers, TORs etc) and interviews with key staff in MFA Copenhagen.
3. Submission of an inception report, including interview guides, outline of specific methodology to be used, work-plans and staffing etc. The inception report shall be submitted to EVAL for approval prior to the initiation of field work.
4. Interviews with representative from partner countries, evaluators, Danida staff involved with the selected thematic evaluations (Bhutan capacity development, Ghana road, Nepal education, Tanzania health).
5. Interviews with group of representatives from partner countries + team leaders of evaluations of the country programmes for Ghana, Benin and Mozambique visiting Copenhagen on the occasion of the presentation of the three country programme evaluations (Public meeting is scheduled for 9th October 2008; interviews and focus group discussions/seminar can be organised on 8th and/or 10th October 2008).

PHASE 2

6. Conduct of survey on evaluation utility
7. Field work in selected countries (Uganda)
8. Drafting the evaluation study and presenting it at an internal meeting in Copenhagen for discussion with EVAL and possibly key staff from KVA, UDV and other relevant departments. The draft report will also be circulated to relevant partner country representatives and embassies for comments.
9. If necessary revisions to the draft will be made prior to circulation to a wider audience, including other donor agencies.
10. Preparing the final evaluation study based on comments received and close interaction with EVAL.

Methodology

The assignment will be based on an assessment of existing background documentation on the evaluation processes (approach papers, TOR, communication with partners in the process, progress reports from team-leaders etc), interviews and focus group discussions.

Consultations with relevant partner country institutions are an important part of the process. The assignment will therefore include field work to at least one partner countries,.

Other options for interviewing partners and embassy representatives (e.g. visits to Denmark in October by representatives of partner country institutions in Ghana, Benin and Mozambique; video-conferences, interviews by local consultants and telephone interviews) will be used to cover the countries not visited by the international consultants.

Inputs

EVAL will provide background documentation to the extent that this is not available already at www.evaluation.dk and will undertake coordination of the internal consultation process. Assistance will also be provided in terms of facilitation of contacts to key partners to be interviewed.

Relevant embassies are expected to contribute to the process but consultants will not be able to rely on the embassies for coordination of meetings etc.

Output

A brief inception report will be submitted by the consultants to EVAL in early September 2008. The inception report will present more elaborate considerations on the methodology to be used, draft interview guidelines and suggestions concerning possible types and groups of interviewees in partner countries to be visited as part of the assignment.

The final output will be an Evaluation Study of no more than 30 – 35 pages + annexes. The final report will adhere to EVALs layout-guidelines, which are annexed to these TOR.

The consultant

A team of two to three consultants (one of whom should be fully conversant with French) will be requested for the work. The team may include a consultant from a partner country.

The consultants are required to have state-of-the art knowledge in evaluation techniques related to evaluation of development efforts in Africa, general knowledge of Danish development cooperation (policies, procedures and activities in the field) and a high level of sensitivity to issues of multi-cultural cooperation.

Timing and reporting

The assignment will start on 12 August 2008. A maximum of 380 working hours for international consultants and 144 working hours for local consultants will be allocated for the work.

A written output of phase 1 will be submitted to the Evaluation Department by end-October 2008.. The final Evaluation Study will be submitted upon completion of survey and field work in February 2008.

References (to be extended by evaluation team):

Draft approach papers and MoUs for the various evaluations conducted jointly with partner country institutions.

Harmonisation and Alignment of Evaluation (Portfolio) Management, by Henrik A. Nielsen, Senior Technical Adviser, EVAL.

OECD/DAC guidelines for Managing Joint Evaluations (dealing with evaluations conducted jointly with other donors).

DAC Evaluation Network Working Paper: Joint Evaluations: Recent Experiences, Lessons Learned and Options for the future.

EVAL: Lay-out guidelines.

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EVAL

Annex 2 References³⁰

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Annex 3 Persons interviewed

Danida joint partner-donor evaluation stakeholders

Eval staff

Andersen, Ole Winckler. Head, Evaluation Department (EVAL), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Danida, EVAL contact person for the Benin country evaluation

Andersen, Margrethe Holm. Deputy head, EVAL, Danida, EVAL contact person for the Ghana and Mozambique country evaluations

Dabelstein, Niels. Former head, EVAL, Danida.

Elle, Lars. Head of section, EVAL, Danida, EVAL contact person for the Ghana road, Nepal education, and Tanzania health evaluations

Nielsen, Henrik A. Head, Liaison Office of Denmark in Bhutan (former staff of EVAL), Danida, EVAL contact person for the Uganda country, the Bhutan capacity development, and the Uganda agriculture evaluations

Benin Country evaluation

Meinecke, Gert. Ambassador, Embassy of Denmark in Benin, embassy contact person for Benin country evaluation Danida, (phone interview)

Odjube, Justine. Director, Observatoire du Changement Social (OCS), national partner for Benin country evaluation

Jørgensen, Hans Genefke. Consultant, Dnet Consult, team leader for Benin country evaluation

Ghana country evaluation

Petersen, Fleming Bjørk. Former ambassador for Embassy of Denmark in Ghana (now retired), Danida, embassy contact person for Ghana country evaluation, (phone interview)

Adutwum, Regina, Director, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), Ghana, national partner for Ghana country evaluation

Ladj, Georg. Partner, Particip GmP, team leader for Ghana country evaluation

Mozambique country evaluation

Richter, Niels. Deputy Head of Mission of Embassy of Mozambique, Danida, embassy contact person for Benin country evaluation, (phone interview)

Muchanga, Rocque. Ministry of Planning and Development, Mozambique, national partner for Mozambique country evaluation

Santos José, Ester dos. Deputy Director of Investment and Cooperation, Ministry of Planning and Development, Mozambique, national partner for Mozambique country evaluation

Lister, Stephen. Principal consultant, Mokoro ltd., team leader for Mozambique country evaluation

Uganda country evaluation

Markussen, Birgitte, Former Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Denmark in Uganda, Danida, embassy contact person for Uganda country evaluation

Ogwal, Peter Ogwang, Programme Officer, Embassy of Denmark in Uganda, Danida, embassy contact person for Uganda country evaluation, (phone interview)

Ssentongo, Peter. Former staff member of the Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda, national partner for Uganda country evaluation, (phone interview)

Lister, Stephen. Principal consultant, Mokoro ltd., team leader for Uganda country evaluation, (phone interview)

Davies, Ian. Consultant, Capacity Inc., team leader for capacity assessment study of OPM Uganda.

Bhutan capacity development evaluation

Chhetri, Tek Bahadur. Deputy head, Liaison Office of Denmark in Bhutan, Danida, embassy contact person for Bhutan capacity development evaluation, (phone interview)

Kalleg, Karma. Senior Planning Officer, Perspective Planning and Prioritization Division Gross National Happiness Commission, Bhutan, (phone interview), national partner for Bhutan capacity development evaluation

Ghana road evaluation

Larsen, Torben Traustedt. Senior Technical Advisor, Danida, embassy contact person for Ghana road evaluation

Smit, Geert. Netherlands Economic Institute, deputy team leader for Ghana road evaluation and team leader for evaluation follow-up studies, (phone interview)

Nepal education evaluation

Nielsen, Else Møller, former embassy counsellor (education) in Nepal (now retired), Danida, embassy contact person for Nepal education evaluation (phone interview),

Mortensen, Kurt, former education specialist, Danida, education specialist advising on the Nepal evaluation, (phone interview)

Awasthi, Lava A. Under Secretary, Ministry of Education, Nepal, national partner for Nepal education evaluation, (phone interview)

Olesen, Niels Eilshov, consultant, COWI, deputy team leader for Nepal education evaluation (phone interview)

Tanzania health evaluation

Olsen, Sanne. Embassy Counsellor (health), Embassy of Denmark in Tanzania, Danida, embassy contact person for Tanzania health evaluation, (phone interview)

Enemark, Ulrika. Consultant, health specialist responsible for programming of new health programme in Tanzania, (phone interview)

Dahl-Østergaard, Tom. Consultant, COWI, deputy team leader for Tanzania health evaluation (phone interview)

Uganda agriculture evaluation

Olweny, John F, Programme Officer, Embassy of Denmark in Uganda, Danida, embassy contact person for Uganda agriculture evaluation, (phone interview)

Thomson, Anne, Principal consultant, Oxford Policy Management, team leader for Uganda agriculture evaluation, (phone interview)

Other donors

Singh, Goberdhan. Director of Evaluation, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), (phone interview)

Girdwood, Alison, Evaluation Department, Department for International Development (DFID), (phone interview)

Robertson, Tim. Evaluation Department, Department for International Development (DFID), (phone interview)

Chomel, Jean-Louis, Head, Joint Evaluation Unit, European Commission (EC), (phone interview)

Päivöke, Aira. Director, Evaluation and Internal Auditing of Development Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, (phone interview)

Kliest, Ted. Deputy-head, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (phone interview)

Siegfried, Gerhard. Head, Evaluation and Controlling, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), (phone interview)

Menon, Saraswathi. Director, Evaluation Office, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), (phone interview)

Garcia, Oscar A. Senior Evaluation Advisor, Evaluation Office, UNDP, (phone interview)

Kumar, Krishna. Senior Evaluation Officer, Foreign Assistance Office, US Department of State (USAID)

Carvalho, Soniya. Lead Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Group (IEC), Sector Evaluations Unit, IEGSE, World Bank

Castro Quiroz, Manuel Fernando. Senior Evaluation Officer, IEGKE, World Bank

Gerrard, Christopher. Lead Evaluation Officer, Corporate Global and Methods Unit, IEGCG, World Bank

Hassan, Fareed. Senior Evaluation Officer, IEGCR, World Bank

Jaramillo-Vallejo, Jaime. Lead Economist, IEGCR, World Bank

Khadr, Ali. Senior Manager, Country Evaluation and Regional Relations Unit, IEGCR, World Bank,

Mackay, Keith. Consultant, M&E Capacity Building, Knowledge and Evaluation Capacity Development Unit, Independent Evaluation Group (IEGKE), World Bank, Washington, DC. (email exchange).

Sackey, James. Lead Economist, IEGCR, World Bank

Tilmes, Klaus. Manager, IEGKE, World Bank

Vandendries, Rene. Consultant, IEGCR, World Bank,.

Bamberger, Michael. Consultant, Latin America and Caribbean Region, World Bank, (phone interview)

Bruns, Barbara. Lead Economist, Office of the Vice President and Head of Human Development Network (HDNVP), World Bank

Coudouel, Aline. Senior Economist, Social Protection Sector, Latin America and Caribbean Region (LCSHS), World Bank

Legovini, Arianna. Lead Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Africa Technical Families: Quality and Knowledge Services: Results and Learning, Africa Region (AFTRL), World Bank

Lopez-Acevedo, Gladys. Senior Economist, Poverty Sector, Latin America and Caribbean Region (LCSPP), World Bank

Annex 4

Data collection instruments

Themes	Respondents: IMPLEMENTERS				
	Donor Protocol Evaluation officer, Steering Committee/Evaluation Mgt. Group members	Partner country Protocol National evaluation mgr, Steering Committee/Evaluation Mgt. Group members	Evaluators Protocol (e.g.consultants)	Document review	Comments (Factors for assessment)
Evaluation management	Who initiated the evaluation? Who is financing it? Were the <i>evaluation priorities</i> jointly agreed to (focus, purpose, scope, timeframe, accountabilities)? Was a pre-evaluation scoping/options/approach paper launched to clarify priorities? How was the number of actors identified? Was the inclusion of more donors considered to lower or raise transaction costs? Did the evaluation align to partner country processes?	Who initiated the evaluation? Who is financing it? Were the <i>evaluation priorities</i> jointly agreed to (focus, purpose, scope, timeframe, accountabilities)? Was a pre-evaluation scoping/options/approach paper launched to clarify priorities? How was the number of actors identified? Was the inclusion of more donors considered to lower or raise transaction costs? Did the evaluation align to partner country processes?	Who initiated the evaluation? Who is financing it? Were the <i>evaluation priorities</i> jointly agreed to (focus, purpose, scope, timeframe, accountabilities)? Was a pre-evaluation scoping/options/approach paper launched to clarify priorities? How was the number of actors identified? Was the inclusion of more donors considered to lower or raise transaction costs? Did the evaluation align to partner country processes?	Pre-evaluation scoping/options/approach paper Donor/partner country programmes of scheduled evaluations	Degree of partner ownership and donor alignment Level of donor/partner flexibility in terms of timing/focus Assessment for donor/partner power imbalances due to skewed financial responsibility (primarily donor-financed evaluation)
	How was the <i>partner organization</i> selected? Were capacities of the partner a significant selection parameter? Did the choice of partner impact on the evaluation quality?		How was the <i>partner organization</i> selected? How important were capacity concerns in the choice of partner? Did the choice of partner impact on the evaluation quality?		Implications for impact/use of evaluation.
	What were the <i>roles</i> and <i>responsibilities</i> of the various evaluation organs (steering committee, management group) and actors (donor, partner country, evaluators)? Were the roles clear? Did they change over time? How was the committee/group members selected? Was the evaluation management set-up satisfactory in terms of: - speedy and transparent decision-making? - quality control? - productive working relationships among partner country, donor(s), evaluators?			MoU, and TORs/ minutes of evaluation reference group/steering committee/management group	Degree of clarity Ease of communication between donor (EVAL), partner institution Quality of evaluation management and its impact on evaluation results
	What were the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted? Were any <i>better practices</i> identified? What would you have done differently today?			Concept notes, evaluation workshop minutes	Lessons learnt

Evaluation design and implementation	Who was the lead drafter of the <i>TOR</i> ? Did compromises by stakeholders have to be made in the development of the TOR? Did the TOR serve as an effective instrument for managing of evaluation expectations/results?	Were the TOR sufficiently clear to meet expectations of stakeholders? If not, how were insufficiencies managed?	TORs	Alignment of donor/partner interests
	Whose <i>bidding procedures</i> were applied in the selection of the evaluators? Did the procedures allow for a speedy and effective selection process?	Did the bidding procedures result in the selection of the best evaluation team?	Tender material	Degree of alignment to partner country procedures
	Which measures were put in place to ensure effective <i>communication by stakeholders with the evaluation team</i> ? E.g. initial briefing workshop, workshop to discuss evaluation findings, ...?	Were the communication measures satisfactory?	Minutes of meetings/workshops	Clear procedures and expectations
	Were conflicting comments to the proposed <i>methodology/inception report</i> put forward? If yes, how were these consolidated or reconciled? Was the applied methodology adequate for delivering the desired results?	Was the applied methodology adequate for delivering the desired results? Did the nature of comments received from partner/donor differ?	Inception reports incl. comments on methodology	Alignment of donor/partner priorities
	Who took the lead in managing the <i>data collection</i> efforts in terms of identifying documents for review, and programming/managing field visits? Did the donor and partner provide different/similar inputs? In what ways? Was sufficient guidance/ back-up provided to evaluation team to allow for adequate data collection?	Was sufficient guidance/ back-up provided to allow for adequate data collection?	Field visit programmes	Assessment of donor/partner information asymmetries
	Were conflicting comments on the <i>evaluation report</i> put forward? If yes, how were these consolidated or reconciled? Were quality control measures applied? Are you satisfied with the final evaluation output?	How many rounds of comments were given on the evaluation report? Were the comments given in a consolidated manner? Did the nature of the comments received from donor/partner differ? In what ways?	Comments to draft evaluation report	Analysis of implications of stakeholder comments
	What were the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted? Were any <i>better practices</i> identified? What would you have done differently today?		Lessons learnt	
Evaluation dissemination /follow-up	Was a <i>dissemination</i> plan designed? If yes, when? Which dissemination measures were applied? Were the targeted audiences met? If yes, how was this measured?	Were you directly involved in the planning/conduct of the dissemination efforts? Role of partner country.	Dissemination plan Dissemination outputs	Clarity of dissemination plan
	Were <i>action plans</i> for implementing the evaluation recommendations issues? If yes, to whom were the action plans? What was the follow-up? And the results?			Conflict resolution
	What were the strengths and weaknesses of the approach		Action plans	Lessons learnt

	adopted? Were any <i>better practices</i> identified? What would you have done differently today?				
Evaluation utility in terms of capacity building	Was an <i>institutional capacity assessment</i> of the partner organization undertaken up-front (at intra-sectoral, institutional, individual level)? If yes, did the assessment reflect the actual needs of the stakeholder groups?		Did you have access to institutional reviews of the partner country's evaluation institution?	Institutional reviews/assessments	Adequacy of respective institutional capacities and plan(s) applying World Bank Evaluation Capacity Development framework for assessment (institutional,, human resources, and resource management aspects).
	Were capacity building elements built into the evaluation process? Did they contribute to the <i>meeting of partner country capacity building needs</i> ? And if yes, how?		Did you perceive capacity building as an objective to be met during evaluation conduct? If yes, how did you go about meeting this objective (involvement of officials in evaluation conduct, training of partner country staff, ...)?	Partner evaluation planning/programming procedures	Lessons learnt.
	What were the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted? Were any <i>better practices</i> identified? What would you have done differently today??	What would you have done differently today? What were the pros/cons? Were any <i>better practices</i> identified? Also, what can we learn from other M&E capacity building efforts conducted in your country such as World Bank Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) projects? Pros/cons, better practices?	What would you have done differently today? What were the pros/cons? Were any <i>better practices</i> identified?	Concept notes, evaluation workshop minutes	
Evaluation utility in terms of usefulness of results	Have the <i>evaluation results</i> served as <i>platform for reflection, discussion</i> and/or as <i>direct input into decision-making processes</i> ? If yes, what were the concrete outcomes (policy/programme input/activity changes)? If no, why not?			Documented shifts in policies/programming	Exogenous factors affecting decision-making.
	What were the strengths and weaknesses of the utilization approach adopted? Were any <i>better practices</i> identified? What would you have done differently today?				Lessons learnt.

Themes	Respondents: OTHER DONORS (for context analysis)		
	Donor representative	<i>Document review</i>	<i>Comments</i> (Factors for assessment)
Donor policy	<p>Has your organization had experience with the conduct of other joint (donor/partner) evaluations?</p> <p>If yes, in which countries and on which themes and in what years have such evaluations been conducted? Are there new joint evaluations scheduled?</p> <p>If no, why not? Is there a policy change foreseen on this issue?</p>	<p>Donor evaluation policy</p> <p>Donor evaluation programme</p> <p>Joint evaluation reports</p>	# of donors experienced with joint evaluation conduct
Donor practices	<p>For donors experienced with the conduct of joint evaluations, what are your lessons learnt (pros/cons) in regard to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evaluation management (donor/partner roles and responsibilities)? - evaluation conduct? - evaluation dissemination/follow-up - evaluation impact and this both in terms of (i) capacity building and (ii) usage of evaluation results? 	Concept notes, workshop reports, ...	Representatives with sufficient continuity and experience to make comparisons.
Looking ahead	Do you see the need for development of guidelines for managing of joint donor/partner evaluations, similarly to those developed for joint donor/donor evaluations? Should these be issued through the OCED/DAC Evaluation Working Group? If not, why not?		Ability to make an assessment of the utility of guidelines.

Memorandum of Understanding

Preamble:

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been drafted based on meetings between representatives from the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) in Ghana and the Evaluation Department (EVAL) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) held on January 16, 2007 concerning Joint Evaluation of the Ghana-Denmark Development Cooperation from 1990 – 2006 and a meeting held between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP) in Accra, EVAL and the Embassy of Denmark on 17 January 2007.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding is to clarify roles and responsibilities related to the proposed joint evaluation of the Ghana-Denmark country programme from 1990 – 2006 as outlined in the Draft Concept Paper submitted to the National Development and Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning through the Danish Embassy in Accra and agree on the “way forward” concerning the evaluation.

The evaluation will be carried out by independent consultants recruited through an international competitive tendering process. The draft concept paper outlines the methodology to be used as well as the management of the evaluation, including the role of the evaluation management; the evaluation team (external consultants) and the reference groups in Ghana and Denmark.

A number of issues have been clarified and agreed upon. The MoU summarizes these issues and will be presented to the Director-General of NDPC, the Head of Danida’s Evaluation Department and the Chief Director in MoFEP, for approval. The MoU together with the Draft Concept Paper will provide the platform for the continued collaboration between NDPC, MoFEP and EVAL concerning the evaluation.

2. Clarifications to the Draft Concept Paper

The documentary pre-study initiated already through a separate contract is primarily a collection of documentation concerning the Ghana-Denmark collaboration during the period in question. In addition to information concerning disbursements of funds according to sector and year, the resulting pre-study report will, however, include a preliminary list of issues to be investigated during the main evaluation process. The draft report will be presented by the Evaluation Management to the Embassy of Denmark and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Accra prior to the finalization of the pre-study report.

Concerning the timing of the tendering process, the pre-qualification will be initiated by end of January and should be finalized by 13 March 2007 by the Tender Committee. While the documentary pre-study will be finalized by mid-May 2007 and will be made available to the incumbent evaluation consultant, it is not intended for distribution to all the Tenderers as the documentation is partly confidential. The final pre-study report will be handed over to the Evaluation Team, and the pre-study consultants will also be available for a briefing of the team.

Finally, while the Draft Concept Paper draws on experience from the recent evaluation of the Uganda-Denmark collaboration, the process in Ghana will have to be tailor-made in order to

reflect the specificity of the Ghanaian context and be useful for both Denmark and Ghana (and possibly also other development partners) in the future planning and implementation of development cooperation in Ghana.

3. Evaluation Management

As endorsed by the MoFEP in its letter to EVAL dated 12 January 2007, the NDPC will be EVAL's partner in the preparation and guidance of the evaluation of the Danish development cooperation with Ghana from 1990 – 2006. However, officers handling the Danish Desk and some selected staff of the Budget Development Unit of the MoFEP will join the staff of the NDPC to constitute the Ghanaian team for the exercise.

The obligations of the partners in the management of the Evaluation process are agreed as follows:

The Evaluation Department in MFA:

- will provide funds for the direct costs of the evaluation (including workshops and peer reviews in Ghana) through a contract with the incumbent evaluation consultant. Funds for any remuneration of agreed review work will also be included in the contract and may only be paid according to the Joint Donor Approach to Allowances and Local Travel Per Diems (as per June 12, 2006). Such activities will have to be agreed upon jointly by the Evaluation Management prior to their initialization and payment would depend on acceptance by the Evaluation Management of the agreed output (e.g. notes of comments).
- will appoint a responsible desk officer for the evaluation who can act as a direct focal point for EVAL during the evaluation process, and an alternate/substitute desk officer. EVAL's responsible desk officer is Mrs. Margrethe Holm Andersen, Senior Technical Adviser, while the alternate desk officer is Mr. Henrik A. Nielsen, Senior Technical Adviser.
- will take part in the tendering process as member of the Tender Committee and organise the tendering process according to standard tendering procedures of the MFA in accordance with EU-rules, including the support of an independent secretary to the tender committee and travel expenditures for one NDPC-representative and one MoFEP-representative taking part in the final selection of the evaluation consultants in Copenhagen in May 2007
- will take responsibility for the establishment of a reference group for the evaluation in Denmark and chair meetings of the group. EVAL will furthermore ensure that comments to the ToR, tendering material and draft reports produced in the process (mainly the Inception Report, thematic papers, the perception study and the Draft Synthesis Report) are prepared. Finally, EVAL will organise a presentation workshop for the Danish public in Copenhagen at the end of evaluation
- will take responsibility for and fund the final evaluation report as well as the workshop in Copenhagen at the end of the evaluation
- may undertake and fund any other activities related to the evaluation as per need and as deemed appropriate (e.g. additional peer reviews and quality control).

The National Development and Planning Commission:

- NDPC will appoint a responsible person for the evaluation who can act as a direct counterpart for the Evaluation Department during the evaluation process. The responsible desk officer appointed by NDPC is Dr. Isaac F. Mensa-Bonsu, Director Plan Co-ordination and the alternate desk officer (appointed by MoFEP) is Mr. Emmanuel Aaron Adjetejey.

- will take part in the tendering process as one member of the Tender Committee. In addition MoFEP will participate with a second member in the Tender Committee. The work of the Tender Committee will include comments to tendering documents, participation in a video-conference planned for March 13, 2007 (prequalification of companies) and participation in meetings in Copenhagen from 9 – 14 May concerning evaluation of Tenders.
- NDPC in consultation with MoFEP and the Embassy of Denmark will furthermore take responsibility for the establishment of a reference group to be established in February 2007. NDPC will also call and chair meetings of the reference group in Ghana and organise for comments on the ToR, tendering material and draft reports produced in the process (mainly the Draft Inception Report, thematic papers, the perception study and the Draft Synthesis Report)
- will issue letters of invitation for the workshops to be held in Ghana (logistics will be taken care of by the evaluation consultants).

Communication with the partners will mainly be in the form of e-mail communication directly to the responsible desk officers with copies to the alternate desk officers.

4. Reference groups

The Draft Concept Paper and the first draft of the ToR suggests that two reference groups be established, i.e. one in Ghana and one in Denmark. In both cases, the reference groups should comprise individuals with in-sight into evaluation practices and methodologies as well as in matters related to (Danish-Ghanaian) development cooperation. The Ghana reference group will include MoFEP and the Embassy of Denmark as ex-officio members.

The establishment of a reference group for the evaluation in Ghana is seen as important by all parties. Ghana has during the recent years developed their own methodology for monitoring and evaluation of contributions to the development process in general and for monitoring the GPRS (I and II) in particular. Experience from such efforts – as well as experience from joint evaluations with e.g. the international financing institutions – should be used in setting up the present evaluation.

Reference groups would be kept at approximately 12 persons. The exact composition of the reference groups will be subject to consultation between NDPC and EVAL. The role of the reference groups will be to a) comment on the draft ToR b) comment on the Draft Inception Report, Draft Perception Study and thematic papers (interim outputs) produced by the evaluation team and c) comment on the Draft Synthesis Report.

The reference groups will have advisory status and will be used, among other things, to validate data (i.e. make sure factual information in the evaluation report is correct) and assist in quality control. In line with international standards for evaluations, however, it was agreed that the responsibility for assessments and interpretations would rest with the evaluation consultants and that the independence of the evaluation team should be maintained and respected throughout the process. The evaluation team will, however, carry out intensive interviews with stakeholders (to be documented in a Perception Study) and perceptions on the development cooperation between the two countries will thus be reflected in the evaluation.

Concerning the links between the two reference groups, written comments and minutes from meetings in the respective reference groups should be made use of and circulated by mail

through the Evaluation Management. As a preparatory step to workshops held in Ghana, the reference group in Copenhagen could provide written comments to draft reports and vice-versa.

5. Workshops

It is intended to hold two major workshops in Ghana during the Evaluation. One will be held in late July 2007 and will focus on the Draft Inception Report. The other workshop will be held in the third week of November 2007 and will take as its departure point a presentation by the Evaluation Team of the Draft Synthesis Report.

Participants in the two workshops will include members of the reference group in Ghana and other stakeholders (including government officials, parliamentarians, representatives from the private sector, researchers and civil society as well as the MoFEP, the Embassy of Denmark and other development partners). EVAL will also participate in the workshops. Lists of suggested participants in both workshops will be prepared by the Evaluation Management and consulted with the Danish Embassy and the Ministry of Finance and Planning in Accra.

Finally, EVAL will organise a presentation of the final evaluation report to the general public in Copenhagen. High level representatives from NDPC and MoFEP will be invited to participate in this event.

6. Final output (publication) of the evaluation.

The final output of the evaluation will be a Synthesis Report accompanied by the Stakeholder Perception Study and a number of thematic papers and background documentation.

The format (design, cover, etc.) of the Synthesis Report and the Perception Study - to be available in printed form - will be agreed upon by the partners and should reflect the fact that this will be a joint exercise. There is also an option to make two versions of the final report, i.e. one for distribution in Ghana and one for distribution in Denmark. The contents of the evaluation report would remain the same, however.

Thematic papers and other background documents will only be available in electronic form (CD-rom + at web-sites of Danida's Evaluation Department and NDPC respectively). Finally, a short summary (flyer) of the evaluation for distribution to a wider audience will be prepared. It may also be considered to publish a popular shorter version of the evaluation report for publication in English or other appropriate languages.

7. Next steps

Approval of Memorandum of Understanding	Latest by 22 January 2007
Establishment of Tender Committee (TC)	Latest by 22 January 2007
Draft Procurement Strategy and Contract Notice to TC	By 22 January 2007
1 st Meeting in TC (e-mail consultation)	23 January 2007
Submit Contract Notice to Official Journal	29 January 2007
Proposal for constitution of reference groups	By 2 February 2007
Approval of reference groups	By 9 February 2007
Draft TOR ready for commenting by Reference Groups	By 9 February 2007
1 st Meeting in Reference Groups on Draft ToR	Latest by 27 February 2007
Dead-line for comments to Draft TOR	1 March 2007
Dead-line for PQ applications	1 March 2007

Draft PQ report forwarded to TC	9 March 2007
2 nd Meeting in TC: prequalification concluded (by video)	13 March 2007
Invitation letters incl. Final ToR to be sent to Tenderers	15 March 2007
Dead-line for submission of Tenders	23 April 2007
3 rd Meeting of Tender Committee: Evaluation of Tenders	8-14 May 2007
Pre-study report completed	By 11 May 2007
Signature of Contract Agreement	14 May 2007
Mobilisation of Consultant	14 May – 14 June 2007
Briefing, desk-studies, drafting Inception Report	14 June – 15 July 2007
Submission of Draft Inception Report	15 July 2007
Workshop in Accra on Draft Inception Report, including work plan for field work	26 July 2007
Field-studies, perception study and thematic papers	August – 15 September 2007
Analysis, drafting of Draft Synthesis Report	15 Sept – End Nov. 2007
Submission of Draft Synthesis Report	1 November 2007
Workshop in Accra on Draft Synthesis Report	3 rd week November 2007
Finalization of report	November - December 2007
Submission of Final Report	31 December 2007
Presentation in Copenhagen of Final Report	January 2008

The mission free period in Ghana from 15 September to 15 November 2007 should to the highest extent possible be respected and thus adherence to all dead-lines is highly important.



For Ministry of Finance and Planning, Ghana

5/2/07

Date



For National Development Planning Commission

9/2/07

Date



For the Evaluation Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NIELS DABELSTEIN

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