Peer Reviews of Evaluation Functions and Development Effectiveness Reviews of Multilateral Organisations
Current efforts within the OECD DAC Evaluation Network

BACKGROUND

In the context of increasing accountability pressures and tightening budgets, all development partners – including bilateral donors, partner country governments, civil society groups, United Nations organisations and multilateral development banks – are working to better understand and improve the impacts of their development co-operation activities. This includes both reviewing the organisational effectiveness of individual institutions and working to evaluate the results of the collective effort in terms of achieving development goals.

Specifically, there is demand from many stakeholders for more information on the performance and development effectiveness of multilateral development organisations. Bilateral donors are also looking to assess their own contributions and the suitability of their overall multilateral portfolios – including, for example, the match between different organisations’ mandates and their own priorities.

Responding to member interest, a joint approach has emerged in the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, made up of the evaluation departments of all DAC member countries and seven multilaterals. This approach combines peer reviews of evaluation functions and a meta-evaluation/synthesis approach to reviewing development effectiveness. This note provides a brief overview of these efforts, highlighting the complementarity of different approaches.

This is by no means a comprehensive overview; various other initiatives are also underway including QuODA (CGDEV and Brookings), COMPAS, and numerous initiatives within individual organisations.

CURRENT EFFORTS SUPPORTED BY THE DAC EVALUATION NETWORK

Multilaterals own evaluation systems, results reporting and peer reviews
Multilateral development institutions have their own independent evaluation units and management systems to ensure the quality of their work. Individual multilateral institutions are also reporting on results at various levels and several have experimented with development effectiveness reviews and reports on overall performance.

DAC members are encouraged to use and strengthen these evaluation and results systems. As part of this effort, the DAC Evaluation Network and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) work together to review the evaluation functions of UN organisations, using a peer review framework developed by a collaborative task team of the two groups. A peer review of the evaluation functions of an organisation is not in itself an assessment of the effectiveness of that organisation. However, it can contribute to the basis for assessing the effectiveness of the organisation by testing the capacity and quality of the organisation’s own evaluations, and thus the confidence that can be placed in them. A review has been completed to take stock of the peer reviews and distil lessons.
Development effectiveness reviews

This approach to “Assessing the Development Effectiveness of Multilateral Organizations” was developed under the guidance of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation in 2010-2011, responding to the request from DAC members for more systematic information on the development results of multilateral institutions. The work has been led by Canada, together with other interested members. The approach was designed to complement the periodic assessments done by the MOPAN and to try to reduce the demand for ad hoc reviews by individual donors.

The method was piloted on reviews of the Asian Development Bank and the World Health Organisation (WHO), and, since being finalised, has been used to review the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP). A review of UNICEF was recently completed and the report for the African Development Bank is being finalised (May 2013). The reviews provide an independent and evidence-based assessment of the development effectiveness of the humanitarian and development programming. The reports are designed for use by the members of the OECD DAC and other interested stakeholders.

RELATED DAC WORK ON MULTILATERAL AID

The DAC Report on Multilateral Aid examines recent trends in multilateral development co-operation. The 2012 report looks at how multilateral co-operation affects the fragmentation of aid, gives an overview of bilateral and joint assessments of multilateral organisations, and outlines guiding principles to limit the proliferation of multilateral aid channels.

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is a network of 17 donor countries with a common interest in assessing the organisational effectiveness of the major multilateral organisations they fund. MOPAN members agree to carry out joint assessments, share information and draw on each other’s experience in monitoring and evaluation. An evaluation of MOPAN is currently underway and will inform further efforts to strengthen the review process. The MOPAN Secretariat was recently moved to the OECD.

FURTHER READING

- Further information on assessing multilateral effectiveness and access to all of the reports mentioned above are available on the OECD DAC Evaluation Network website: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/evaluatingmultilateraleffectiveness
- DAC Evaluation Resource Centre (DEReC): Contains evaluation reports, including multilateral aid evaluations by DAC members and evaluations carried out by the independent evaluation units of the World Bank Group, the IMF, UNDP, IADB, EBRD, AfDB and the ADB. Visit: www.oecd.org/derec
- MOPAN reports and information on the approach are available online at: www.mopanonline.org
- The DAC Report on Multilateral Aid and statistics on multilateral aid are available from the DAC: www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/multilateraaid.
- The Evaluation Co-operation Group brings together the independent evaluation bodies of multilateral development organisations website.
- The United Nations Evaluation Group is a network of evaluation units from UN organisations: www.uneval.org.