



## **Study on Collaborative Partner-Donor Evaluation Work**

### **Concept note**

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June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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### **Concept note**

At the November 2012 meeting of EvalNet, France accepted to prepare a “survey of partner countries involved in the Paris Declaration Evaluation (PDE) in order to identify opportunities to support joint partner-donor evaluations”. This project has been inserted in the 2013 annual program of the Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) Task Team.

This note presents the project main lines, i.e. rationale, assumptions, objectives, road map, work plan, sharing of roles and sharing of costs. In a previous version, it was thoroughly discussed at the June 2013 meeting of the ECD Task Team. In June 2013, EvalNet reiterated the mandate for the study under the condition that a sufficient number of partner and donor countries confirm their interest within the subsequent months

Collaborative partner-donor evaluation is understood as just one among many capacity-building instruments. Together with country-led evaluations it activates a series of learning-by-doing mechanisms.

The project will add value to the previous international efforts at promoting joint evaluation in the sense that first, it shifts the focus from cooperation between donors to partner-donor cooperation and second, it concentrates on collaborative activities that are intended to strengthen country evaluation systems.

The objectives of the study are: (1) to understand the capacity building potential of collaborative evaluation work, (2) to draw new lessons about capacity building strategies, and (3) to pave the way to a multi-annual partner-donor collaboration on evaluation work.

The project consists of a series of partner country studies, each one including: (1) a review of the PDE process in terms of its contribution to building evaluation capacity; (2) the collection of positive stories of partner-donor evaluation work (in addition to PDE); and (3) an exploration of future opportunities for undertaking such work. The study will end in an international workshop aimed at synthesizing the country studies and proposing steps forward.

In line with the spirit of the PDE, the project will be initialized, managed, and synthesized through partner-donor collaboration while the country studies will be undertaken by coordinators in the partner countries. Among the partner countries involved in the PDE, a few ones have been consulted on this project and the early signals are quite positive.

During the summer, all those involved in the Phase 2 of the PDE will be invited to volunteer for taking part in the project, i.e. the 21 country coordinators as well as EvalNet members. In parallel, volunteering donor countries will be invited to confirm their interest and to specify their support.

The country studies will be undertaken from October 2013 to March 2014 and the synthesis workshop will be held in June 2014.

# Contents

- 1. Mandate, rationale and context..... 5
  - 1.1. Mandate ..... 5
  - 1.2. Rationale for the project in the present context ..... 5
- 2. Assumptions and definitions ..... 7
  - 2.1. How collaborative evaluation work may strengthen country evaluation systems..... 7
  - 2.2. Factors that may affect the learning from partner-donor evaluations..... 12
  - 2.3. Unintended negative effects that may arise from donor-led evaluations..... 12
- 3. Strategy and objectives of the study..... 13
- 4. Road map..... 13
- 5. Components of the project ..... 14
  - 5.1. Review of the PDE experience in terms of strengthening country systems ..... 14
  - 5.2. Positive stories of collaborative partner-donor evaluations..... 15
  - 5.3. Opportunities for collaborative partner-donor evaluation works ..... 16
  - 5.4. International workshop..... 17
- 6. Work plan ..... 17
  - 6.1. Contacting PDE coordinators ..... 17
  - 6.2. Establishing a Management Group ..... 18
  - 6.3. Setting the project working arrangements ..... 18
  - 6.4. Raising financial and in-kind contributions ..... 18
  - 6.5. Writing the inception note ..... 18
  - 6.6. Coordinating country studies ..... 18
  - 6.7. Carrying out country studies ..... 19
  - 6.8. Convening the international workshop..... 19
  - 6.9. Writing and disseminating synthesis papers..... 19
  - 6.10. Taking the next steps..... 19
- 7. Organization ..... 20
- 8. Cost, financing, and timeline ..... 21
- Appendix 1: Note on promoting partner-donor evaluation..... 22
- Appendix 2: Glossary ..... 23
- Appendix 3: Bibliography ..... 26
- Appendix 4: Learning-by-doing at various levels ..... 27
- Appendix 5: Mapping of M&E country frameworks ..... 29
- Appendix 6 - Joint Evaluation of Development Cooperation between Ghana and Denmark ..... 30
- Appendix 7 - Joint Evaluation of Benin 10-year Education plan (Benin, AFD, Danida) ..... 34

**Figures and tables**

Figure 1 - How collaborative evaluations may strengthen country evaluation systems ..... 11

Table 1 – Cost, financing, and timeline ..... 21

Table 2 – Three levels of learning..... 27

## **1. Mandate, rationale and context**

### **1.1. Mandate**

1. This document proposes to take a step forward beyond the Paris Declaration Evaluation (PDE) with an aim to transform the network of concerned countries (PDE Network) into a lasting partner-donor<sup>1</sup> collaboration on evaluation work.

2. In February 2012, EvalNet offered to serve as a hub for maintaining sustainable exchanges within the PDE Network and undertaking light joint activities. France accepted the task of preparing a proposal and submitted a one page note at the 14<sup>th</sup> EvalNet meeting in November 2012 (Appendix 1). France was then given the mandate to propose “a survey of partner countries involved in the PDE to identify opportunities for supporting joint partner-donor evaluation work.” The project has then been inserted in the 2013 annual program of the ECD Task Team.

3. This note presents the project main lines, i.e. rationale, assumptions, objectives, road map, tasks, work plan, sharing of roles and sharing of costs. In a previous version, it was thoroughly discussed at the June 2013 meeting of the ECD Task Team.

4. In June 2013, EvalNet reiterated the mandate for a “Study on Collaborative Partner-Donor Evaluation Work” under the conditions that a sufficient number of partner and donor countries confirm their interest within the subsequent months.

### **1.2. Rationale for the project in the present context**

5. There are four reasons for partner countries to play a stronger role in the evaluation of Official Development Assistance (ODA):

- Changes in development assistance;
- Commitments to use partner country systems;
- Commitment to increase result information and mutual accountability;
- Successful collaboration on the PDE.

#### **1.2.1. Changes in development assistance**

6. ODA represents a declining share of the overall financing for development, besides e.g. domestic resources, trade related assistance, or financing climate and biodiversity actions. This calls for ODA to play a catalytic role rather than to work in isolation. Conversely, this calls for ODA evaluation to consider the broad picture of country development activities rather than specific operations.

7. ODA delivery modalities are evolving toward more programmatic approaches aligned with partner country strategies and more use of country systems through e.g. budget support operations (general and sectoral). This calls for partner countries to play a stronger role in ODA evaluations.

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<sup>1</sup> It might be desirable to use “development partner” instead of “donor”, but this is not feasible in a context where “partner countries” and “development partners” need to be distinguished in a straightforward manner. Then, this concept note follows the PDE terminology.

8. A growing share of ODA is delivered through partnerships involving multiple donors. This calls for ODA evaluations to consider the combined impact of all partners' activities, including country policies, rather than the distinct impact of each partner.

### **1.2.2. Commitment to use partner country systems**

9. In the Paris Declaration, donors committed themselves to use partner country systems as the default approach and to justify the exceptions. This commitment has been reiterated in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation<sup>2</sup> and it deserves to be applied in the area of evaluations. This calls for:

- Making larger use of partner country evaluation systems;
- Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of country evaluation systems and monitoring their progress<sup>3</sup>;
- Collaborating on action plans or programs that aim to strengthen country evaluation systems;
- Avoiding any practice that might slow down the development of country evaluation systems in line with the "Do No Harm" principle<sup>4</sup>.

### **1.2.3. Commitment to increase result information and mutual accountability**

10. The 'Results and Mutual Accountability' Agenda is supported by a coalition of donors and partner countries on a voluntary basis within the framework of the Global Partnership (Busan). The Agenda aims at addressing two problems:

- Result information is often not clear and strategic enough to assess whether development co-operation is making a lasting difference to the lives of the poor. Among the causes of this problem are the fact that: (1) donors have set up separate information systems that undermine partner countries' own capacity to define, track and evaluate their results; (2) information systems tend to track resource flows and inputs much better than results; and (3) result indicators may not be properly owned by the partner countries.
- Accountability for development co-operation tends to satisfy donors' needs in an unbalanced manner.

11. In response to the identified problems, volunteering countries are invited to set country Results and Accountability Agreements aimed at strengthening result-oriented dialogue, mutual accountability between partner countries and donors, and accountability to partner country citizens. More precisely, the agreements cover all or part of the following issue: (1) production and use of result-oriented performance information; (2) use and strengthening of existing country structures and frameworks; (3) result-based public sector management; (4) result-based aid; and (5) result-oriented reporting.

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<sup>2</sup> "Use country public financial management systems as the default option for development financing, and support the strengthening of these systems where necessary" - High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> See Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Program for country public financial management systems and Evaluation function peer reviews.

<sup>4</sup> OECD, 2010.

In the framework of the Agenda, volunteering countries and donors intend to build upon the positive experiences to date, especially as regards monitoring and evaluation.

#### **1.2.4. Successful collaboration on the PDE**

12. During the second phase of the PDE process, 21 partner country evaluations<sup>5</sup> were carried out within a common framework. These works were implemented by partner country organizations under the responsibility of country coordinators using country systems. At the end of the process, the country coordinators participated in a 'lessons learned workshop'<sup>6</sup>.

13. In the report to the following EvalNet meeting, the PDE Secretariat stressed that:

- International PDE like evaluations are the exception rather than the rule;
- There is a strong interest in joint evaluations on both donor and partner sides;
- Some partner countries have the institutional capacity to lead joint evaluations while others need support and/or mentoring in order to play that role;
- Evaluation training opportunities are offered (IPDET, CLEAR, evaluation associations, universities) but participation might be increased by financial support and bursaries;
- There is a need to promote learning by doing.

Then, EvalNet accepted to play the role of a hub for taking collaborative action on these points. The following countries indicated support: Denmark, France<sup>7</sup>, EC, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UNEG, UK, and US.

## **2. Assumptions and definitions**

14. This section displays and explains the conceptual framework of the study through three sets of assumptions on respectively:

- How collaborative partner-donor evaluation work may initiate a learning by doing process that may itself strengthen partner country evaluation systems;
- Which factors may facilitate or hamper the learning from partner-donor evaluations
- What kind of unintended negative effects may arise from donor-led evaluation practice.

### **2.1. How collaborative evaluation work may strengthen country evaluation systems**

15. The following lines define collaborative evaluation and country evaluation systems successively, and display the logic of using collaborative evaluation for strengthening country systems.

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<sup>5</sup> See the list of 21 countries in Appendix 5.

<sup>6</sup> Workshop on Lessons Learned From International Joint Evaluations, French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry, DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Paris Declaration Evaluation Secretariat, Paris, 6-7 February 2012.

<sup>7</sup> France organized a workshop in February 2013 on the perspectives of development evaluation including a session on lessons learned from the PDE at partner country level. The workshop included presentations by country PDE coordinators in Benin, Mali and Senegal.

### 2.1.1. Defining ‘collaborative partner-donor evaluation work’

16. A **joint evaluation** is an evaluation “in which different donors and/or partners participate” (OECD, 2006). Over the last ten years, joint evaluation has been studied, promoted, and applied at large scale<sup>8</sup>, although in a form that involves different donors rather than in the form of partner-donor cooperation. This note adds value to the current approach by focusing on **collaborative partner-donor evaluation**, an evaluation practice which involves one or more organizations / institutions of the partner country<sup>9</sup> and one or several donors. The term **collaborative partner-donor evaluation work** encompasses a range of evaluation related practices such as partner-donor evaluations, partner-donor evaluation plans, and joint partner-donor undertakings at any stage of the evaluation process, e.g. financing, assessing quality, or synthesizing results.

17. The **scope** of a collaborative evaluation is a set of activities that have been designed, financed, and/or implemented jointly, such as a projects, programs, sectoral policies, budget support, debt relief, or ‘Results and Mutual Accountability Country Agreements’.

18. The main purpose of a collaborative evaluation may be **joint learning** and/or **mutual accountability**<sup>10</sup>.

19. There are various **hybrid** forms of collaborative evaluation, of which: “(a) delegating responsibilities to one or more organizations while others take a ‘silent partner’ role; (b) undertaking some components of the evaluation jointly while others are delivered separately; ... (d) agreeing on a common evaluation framework [or program] and delegating responsibility for the implementation of individual evaluations to different partners ...” (OECD, 2006).

20. The degree of ‘**jointness**’ depends on the extent to which the involved organizations / institutions co-operate in the evaluation process. The degree of “**partner-donor jointness**” depends on the extent to which country organizations / institutions and donors co-operate in the evaluation process. The ‘**partner-donor profile**’ of an evaluation describes the degree of jointness at all stages of the evaluation process, i.e.

- Deciding to conduct the evaluation, incl. date, scope, main purpose;
- Establishing the cooperation arrangements, e.g. involved donors and country organizations / institutions, sharing of roles;
- Raising and channeling financial resources for the purchase of evaluation services;
- Establishing the management structure, e.g. management group / reference group / steering group, internal vs external tasks, type and location of meetings;
- Referring to evaluation standards;
- Developing the terms of reference, incl. evaluative questions and methodological requests;
- Procuring the evaluation services, incl. procurement rules, selection of bids;
- Setting contractual relations, incl. consortium, sub-contracting, fee level;

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<sup>8</sup> e.g. Feinstein (2003), OECD (2006)

<sup>9</sup> The PDE is specific in the sense that several partner countries were actively involved. Such large international exercises may occur again in the future.

<sup>10</sup> A pending issue is the extent to which the various types of evaluations (donor-led, collaborative, and country-led) may contribute to satisfy donors’ needs for accountability.

- Setting the composition of the evaluation team, incl. team leader, core team, quality assessor, and other members;
- Developing the evaluation method, incl. data collection tools, analysis approach, work plan;
- Formulating draft evaluation results, i.e. findings, conclusions, lessons, recommendations;
- Assessing evaluation quality;
- Discussing draft evaluation results incl. seeking feedback from stakeholders;
- Finalizing the contents of the report;
- Disseminating results, incl. layout, language, printing, Internet version, seminars, media release;
- Assuring the follow-up of utilization.

This note provides two examples of partner-donor profiles in Appendices 5 and 6.

### 2.1.2. Defining 'country evaluation system'

21. Ideally an **evaluation system** is composed of: (1) a sustained evaluation demand at various levels in various sectors<sup>11</sup>; (2) a supply of competent evaluation services; (3) a practice of utilizing evaluation results in the public sector and in the public arena; and (4) an institutional framework securing public confidence in evaluation. The term 'system' suggests that the four above components are integrated into a web of virtuous circles which maintain evaluation culture, institutions, practices, markets, and capacity over the years. The system includes individual actors, organizations, networks, and mechanisms.

22. Far from being an end in itself, a sound country evaluation system is assumed to generate large scale and frequent utilization of sound evaluation results, to raise interest in using evaluation evidence in public policy making, to contribute to better and faster learning from experience in the partner countries, and then to improve the effectiveness of country policies<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, a sound system makes country-led evaluations trustable by donors.

23. In this note the term **country individual actor** applies to staff and managers of country organizations involved in a collaborative evaluation on the side of demand, supply, or utilization. Individual actors on the supply side also include country-based free-lance evaluators. The term does not apply to stakeholders or individual informants who are consulted during the evaluation process. Individual actors are country-based if their main working place is in the country.

24. **Country-based organizations** may be located on the three sides of a triangle: (1) demand side of the market of evaluation services, i.e. public sector bodies or foundations commissioning external evaluations; (2) supply side i.e. universities, consultancy firms, internal evaluation units in governmental or non-governmental organizations; (3) utilization side such as headquarters of horizontal or line ministries, regional or local authorities, parliamentary commissions, political parties, or the media. Consultancies and NGOs are country-based if their management is located in the country.

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<sup>11</sup> Altogether, the first and fourth points (evaluation demand and institutional framework) are also referred to as an enabling environment.

<sup>12</sup> Segone M. ed. (2009), UNDP/PSC (2011).

25. **Country evaluation networks** are professional associations, research networks, or less formal communities devoted at least in part to evaluation (e.g. a national evaluation association, a temporary research project on health policy evaluation, a monthly gathering of the heads of evaluation units from several ministries).

26. **Country evaluation mechanisms** consist of rules, standards, coordination arrangements, or regulatory bodies (e.g. a set of guidelines on how to establish an evaluation function, an expert committee in charge of assessing evaluation quality, an annual meeting dedicated to evaluation coordination, a law enabling the Supreme Audit Office to carry out evaluations). The existence and proper functioning of such mechanisms are important drivers to the quality, independence, and / or utility of evaluations. The term 'evaluation mechanism' does not apply to the own internal routines and culture of an organization. It should rather be understood as cutting across organizations, policy areas, and levels of government. Such mechanisms are established by public authorities and/or professional communities.

### **2.1.3. Using collaborative evaluation for strengthening country systems**

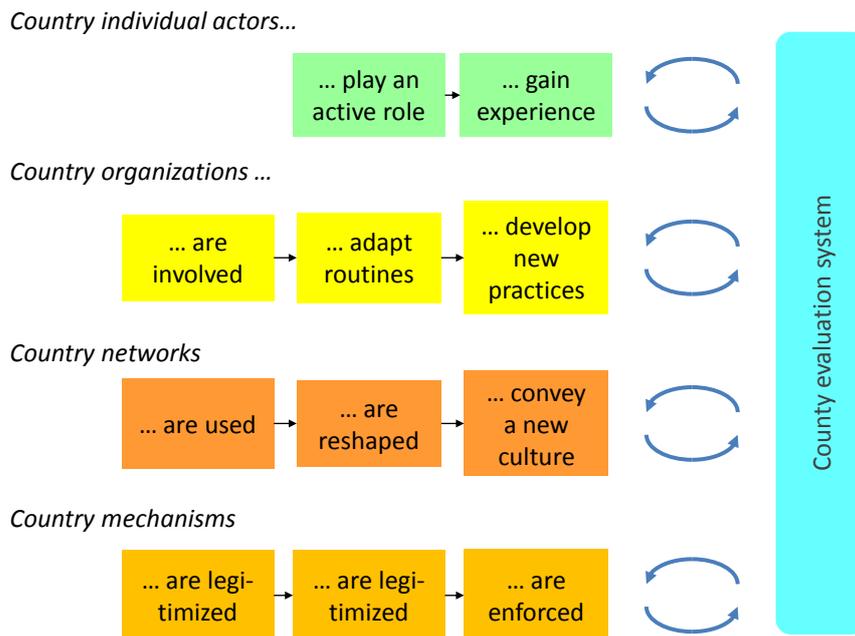
27. Strengthening country evaluation systems is just another term for building evaluation capacity at country level. There are indeed several approaches for achieving that goal such as evaluation training programs, technical assistance to evaluation commissioners, evaluation commitments in country strategy documents, and learning-by-doing. In the later case, learning may occur by doing country-led evaluations or by doing collaborative evaluation. Overall, this study on collaborative evaluation pertains to just one among many capacity-building approaches, or rather to one among many components of an integrated capacity-building strategy.

28. Figure 1 suggests that partner-donor evaluations may induce some learning-by-doing process at four levels by: (1) involving country individual actors who learn from their participation, (2) involving country organizations which are then brought to adapt their routines and their practices, (3) using and reshaping country evaluation networks, which then convey cultural changes, and (4) using country evaluation mechanisms (rules, standards, checks and balances) that are then legitimized and better enforced. These various processes of learning-by-doing are further explained in Appendix 4.

29. The terms 'individual actor' and 'organization' should be understood widely as being on the demand or supply side of the evaluation market, or also on the side of the users of evaluation results. This means that the concerned organizations may be public authorities at various levels of government, public agencies, foundations, universities, NGOs, private sector organizations, political parties, or the media. The same applies to the members of these organizations.

30. Some cause-and-effect assumptions are relatively linear while other ones take the form of loops (virtuous circles). For instance, the individual actors having learned by participating in a collaborative evaluation need professional opportunities for applying their new capacities, but they may also push their organizations to develop new practices that create such opportunities.

Figure 1 - How collaborative evaluations may strengthen country evaluation systems



#### 2.1.4. Capacity-friendly features of a collaborative evaluation

31. If a collaborative evaluation work is launched with an intention to strengthen country systems then it should have adequate capacity-friendly features such as:

- Launching an evaluation at a time which fits the needs of the partner country;
- Involving relevant country organizations on the demand side;
- Using country financing and procurement systems;
- Defining the main purpose of the evaluation (learning common lessons and/or mutual accountability) in a way that fits the needs of the partner country;
- Focusing the evaluation questions on country priorities ;
- Entrusting country organizations with clear and balanced responsibilities;
- Involving country individuals in the key positions of the evaluation management structure;
- Involving country individuals in the key positions of the evaluation team;
- Including a country perspective in the quality assurance process;
- Using country evaluation networks and mechanisms;
- Discussing draft evaluation results with country stakeholders;
- Using country language(s);
- Disseminating results through country channels;
- Including a country perspective in the monitoring of and reporting on utilization.

## **2.2. Factors that may affect the learning from partner-donor evaluations**

### **2.2.1. Risks, mitigation, and trade-off**

32. Partner-donor evaluations are probably at risk of:
- Matching the agenda of one side at the expense of the other;
  - Requiring additional time and resources;
  - Diluting responsibilities;
  - Multiplying the number of evaluation questions with negative consequences on the quality of the answers;
  - Being exposed to difficulties arising from two sides instead of one;
  - Being trapped in diplomatic conflicts.
33. It may be also assumed that these risks can be mitigated to a certain extent by e.g. a prior evaluability assessment, a prior agreement on the rules of the game, and/or the use of videoconferences. It remains that a collaborative partner-donor evaluation is likely to require some kind of trade-off between its expected capacity building benefits and its specific risks.

### **2.2.2. Factors that may affect the learning from partner-donor evaluations**

34. The learning processes and the strengthening of country systems, as they are displayed in Figure 1, may be affected by the presence or absence of external factors such as:
- Aid modalities involving several donors and the partner country such as budget support;
  - Parallel efforts in terms of evaluation training and evaluation capacity building;
  - Parallel advocacy efforts in favor of evaluation;
  - Parallel strengthening of monitoring, statistics, and audit;
  - Evaluation requirements in the partner country's policies and strategies;
  - Effective anti-corruption mechanisms;
  - Institutional stability.

## **2.3. Unintended negative effects that may arise from donor-led evaluations**

35. Partner-donor evaluations may be justified by their own merits in terms of strengthening country evaluation systems, but also because donor evaluations may have negative unintended consequences. By considering this issue, the present note applies the "Do No Harm" principle<sup>13</sup> in the field of evaluation. Donor-led evaluations may, in some circumstances:
- Undermine the legitimacy of country evaluation networks and mechanisms by implicitly distrusting them;
  - Impede the establishment of evaluation mechanisms in the partner country by relying too much on donors rules, guidelines, or standards;

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<sup>13</sup> Donor interventions "do no harm" if they have positive or at least neutral consequences on: (a) the country political processes, (b) the legitimacy of the state in society, (c) the relations between state and society, (d) the expectations society has of the state, and (e) the capacities of the state to perform its basic functions (OECD, 2010).

- Distract evaluation activities from the needs of the partner country by focusing too much on donor accountability;
- Push country actors to undertake peripheral activities rather than core tasks such as writing mandates, designing methods, formulating recommendations, or feeding policy reforms with evaluation results;
- Overburden country systems by conducting too many evaluations at a time;
- Distort the market of evaluation services by setting higher than average wages and fees;
- Fail to strengthen country organizations by relying too much on free-lance evaluators or evaluators based in donor countries.

### 3. Strategy and objectives of the study

36. The study has modest short-term objectives that are part of a long-term strategy.

37. First, it will revive and possibly enlarge the partner-donor collaboration which succeeded in the PDE process. In line with the PDE spirit, the study will be initialized, managed, and finalized through partner-donor collaboration while the country level tasks would rely on volunteering country coordinators using their own contacts and resources raised locally. The coordinators will be invited to present their results at an international synthesis workshop in June 2014. They will receive advocacy and/or financial support from EvalNet members through their representatives in the country. It goes without saying that the project includes no commitment to carry out any joint partner-donor evaluation.

38. The **objectives** of the study consist of:

- Understanding the capacity building potential of collaborative evaluation work;
- Drawing new lessons about capacity building strategies<sup>14</sup>;
- Paving the way to a multi-annual collaboration.

39. The first two objectives are retrospective and will be achieved by reviewing previous collaborative works (PDE and other stories of partner-donor evaluations). The third objective is prospective and exploratory.

40. After a stop-or-go decision to be taken in June 2014, the project might be followed by the establishment of a sustained collaboration between key governmental evaluation actors from partner and donor countries in order to promote collaborative work intended to strengthen country evaluation systems.

### 4. Road map

41. The project should be seen as a step in a far reaching road map including:

- Past pioneering experiences of partner-donor evaluations, since 2008 as exemplified in Appendices 6 and 7;
- Phase 2 of the PDE as the first large scale partner-donor evaluation (2010-2012);

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<sup>14</sup> For instance on how learning-by-doing may add value in a mix of capacity-building instruments or may increase the return on training investments.

- This study in 2013-2014;
- A partner-donor collaboration to be initiated in 2014 and to be continued over the following years, with the mission of formulating, monitoring, and capitalizing on a rolling multi-annual program of partner-donor evaluation work;
- A phasing-out process where some partner countries quit the collaboration on a case by case basis when their evaluation system becomes mature enough and unlikely to benefit from further learning-by-doing.

42. The roadmap includes a series of milestones at which stop-or-go decisions might be taken:

- September 2013: confirming that a critical mass of volunteers has been reached on both partner and donor sides;
- March 2013: confirming the international workshop if a critical mass of good country studies has been reached;
- June 2014: mandate for (1) setting the working arrangements of an international collaboration on partner-donor evaluation and (2) launching a rolling multi-annual program;
- June 2015 and every subsequent year: adjustment of the working arrangements as far as relevant and updating of the multi-annual program.

## 5. Components of the project

43. The project includes a series of **country studies** that are structured in three parts:

- Review of the PDE process in terms of its contribution to building evaluation capacity;
- Collection of positive stories<sup>15</sup> of partner-donor evaluation works (in addition to PDE);
- Exploration of opportunities for future collaborative work having a good potential for strengthening country systems.

The project includes an **international workshop** aimed at synthesizing country studies and proposing steps forward.

44. The project is framed as a collaborative study rather than a ‘survey’, in the sense that (1) some results will take the form of narratives rather than questions and answers, (2) the synthesis will emerge through a workshop rather than through a purely analytical process, and (3) the outputs will take the form of a series of thematic papers rather than a single survey report.

### 5.1. Review of the PDE experience in terms of strengthening country systems

45. This component aims to capitalize on what has been learned from the PDE experience as regards the enhancement of country evaluation systems.

**Objective:** To understand how and why country PDEs have contributed (or not contributed enough) to enhancing country evaluation systems. To assess the extent to which the lessons of the PDE experience are transferable in the context of future partner-donor evaluations.

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<sup>15</sup> This term applies to collaborative evaluations that are positively assessed on both partner and donor sides, even if they cannot claim to be “success stories”.

**Design:** Developing a common template for describing and analysing the country PDE experience (Part 1 of the country studies), including the collection of views and factual information on:

- The PDE process, and especially the partner-donor profile (see page 8), its capacity-friendly features (see 2.1.4), the presence or absence of external factors (see 2.2);
- The presence or absence of unintended negative effects of donor led evaluations (see 2.3);
- The intended and actual learning at the level of country individual actors, organizations, and networks (see Figure 1 and Appendix 4);
- The recent evolution of the country evaluation system in terms of demand, supply, confidence and utilization.

... and an analysis of the contribution of the PDE to strengthening the country evaluation system, plus an assessment of the extent to which the PDE exercise may or may not prefigure future partner-donor evaluations.

#### **Country coordinator's work:**

Country coordinators will be responsible for conducting the country studies, of which the Part 1 will include:

- Commenting on the common template (see above) from the standpoint of their country;
- Identifying the relevant actors in country organizations and among donor representatives;
- Conducting interviews, gathering factual information, and analyzing gathered evidence following guidance from the project coordinator;
- Preparing the draft PDE review;
- Submitting the draft review to concerned country organizations and donor representatives;
- Finalizing the review on the basis of received comments and quality assessment by the project coordinator;
- Disseminated the review together with Parts 2 and 3 of the study or separately.

#### **5.2. Positive stories of collaborative partner-donor evaluations**

46. This component aims to promote the practice of partner-donor evaluation on the basis of real life positive stories which are complementary to that of the PDE.

**Objective:** To produce a series of narratives of collaborative partner-donor evaluation works having helped strengthening country evaluation systems.

**Design:** Developing a common approach and template for analyzing partner-donor evaluations (Part 2 of the country studies). The works will be similar to that of Part 1 as described above, although lighter in terms of investigation and analysis. It will focus on partner-donor profile, capacity-friendly features, and actual learning at the level of country individual actors, organizations, and networks. This second part of the country study will take the form of narratives as exemplified in Appendices 6 and 7<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Appendix 6 and 7 describes the joint Evaluation of Development Cooperation between Ghana and Denmark and the joint evaluation of Benin 10-year education plan by Benin, AFD, and Danida.

**Country coordinator's work:**

- Identifying one or more positive stories of partner-donor evaluations undertaken during the last five years;
- Gathering information from relevant individual actors in country organizations and donor representatives;
- Preparing the draft narrative(s);
- Submitting the draft narrative(s) for inputs and comments to concerned country organizations and donor representatives;
- Finalizing the Part 2 of the country study on the basis of received comments and quality assessment by the project coordinator.

**5.3. Opportunities for collaborative partner-donor evaluation works**

47. This third component will pave the way to a lasting partner-donor collaboration on evaluation work intended to strengthen country systems.

**Objective:** To produce a list of promising collaborative works that could be launched within the next years.

**Design:** Developing a common questionnaire (Part 3 of the country studies) covering:

- Organizations that could be interested in commissioning collaborative evaluations work;
- Country evaluation networks and mechanisms;
- Policy areas with the best potential for partner-donor evaluations;
- External factors that may strengthen / weaken the benefits of partner-donor evaluations;
- Unintended negative effects arising from donor-led evaluations;
- Specific opportunities for partner-donor evaluation works.

**Country coordinator's work:**

- Reviewing available information on evaluation country systems<sup>17</sup>;
- Establishing a long emailing list of relevant informants on the basis of those involved in the country PDE. The list should cover country organizations and donor representatives in the country. The list might be similar or identical to that of Section 5.1;
- Adapting the standard questionnaire to the context of the country;
- Sending the questionnaire by email and carrying out face-to-face interviews;
- Synthesizing the findings at country level;
- Identifying one or more promising opportunities (credible, realistic, and justified demand from relevant partner country organizations, interest and actual support from relevant donor representatives in the country);
- Establishing a short list of country-based actors and donor representatives who are concerned with the identified opportunities and asking them to comment;
- Finalizing the Part 3 of the study.

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<sup>17</sup> Work done by e.g. CLEAR, Evalpartners, UNDP, UNICEF or the IEG.

#### **5.4. International workshop**

48. The workshop aims to draw lessons from the country studies in a collaborative and inclusive manner, to convert the identified opportunities into a multi-annual collaborative program, and to pave the way for a lasting and open partner-donor collaboration.

**Objective:** To discuss the findings of the country studies among partners and donors; To write and disseminate several synthesis papers drawing on the country studies and the workshop discussions; To formulate a first multi-annual collaborative program; To propose the working arrangements for an open partner-donor collaboration.

**Design:** Establishing the workshop agenda and the capitalization plan covering:

- Choice of the discussion themes and list of the synthesis papers to be produced;
- Adjusting the level of ambition of the proposals to be presented at the workshop.

#### **Project coordinator's work:**

- Finalizing the logistic arrangements of the workshop with the host country;
- Selecting the country studies to be presented and inviting country coordinators to prepare short visual presentations;
- Preparing the agenda, including parallel thematic sessions;
- Inviting one or two persons from all countries of the PDE Network, plus potential newcomers;
- Identifying, inviting and briefing session moderators;
- Inviting, briefing, and coordinating the authors of thematic synthesis papers;
- Having the draft synthesis papers quality assessed by senior members of the PDE Network;
- Coordinating the finalization and dissemination of synthesis papers;
- Finalizing the rolling multi-annual collaborative program;
- Finalizing the proposed working arrangements for lasting and open partner-donor collaboration.

### **6. Work plan**

49. The study will be implemented in ten steps which are described hereafter in terms of tasks (what?), responsibilities (who?), and timeline (when?).

#### **6.1. Contacting PDE coordinators**

50. What? – To confirm that a critical mass of partner countries are likely to participate in the project.

Who? – France.

When? – June-September 2013

## **6.2. Establishing a Management Group**

51. What? – To identify two EvalNet members and two PDE coordinators who volunteer for managing the project on a rotating basis. A special attention should be paid to the balance of partner-donor responsibilities within the Management Group.

Who? – France<sup>18</sup>

When? – June/July 2013

## **6.3. Setting the project working arrangements**

52. What? – To take early contacts in order to: (1) maintain the platform which was used for coordinating PDE works<sup>19</sup>, (2) to identify a project coordinator or two project coordinators with a partner/donor balance (3) to set the main arrangements for the international workshop.

Who? – (1) France and (2) the Management Group.

When? – June/September 2013

## **6.4. Raising financial and in-kind contributions**

53. What? – To secure the financial resources for paying external contractors and coordination expenditures as far as necessary (see Section 8). In the spirit of partner-donor collaboration, some resources might be channeled through the organizations of PDE coordinators.

Who? – (1) France and (2) the Management Group.

When? – June/September 2013

## **6.5. Writing the inception note**

54. What? – To finalize the working arrangements with the volunteering PDE coordinators or the best alternative person in case a coordinator has moved. To help the volunteering participants (hereafter “country coordinators”) in the process of seeking support from country-based organizations and donor representatives. To confirm voluntary donor commitments. To report to the EvalNet Secretariat and to the ECD Task Force.

Who? – (1) The Management Group and (2) the project coordinator.

When? – July/September 2013

## **6.6. Coordinating country studies**

55. What? – To brief the country coordinators and to assist them in case of difficulty; To maintain the country study process in case of move of a volunteering participant; To monitor the progress of

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<sup>18</sup> France is willing to transfer the leadership of the management group in 2014.

<sup>19</sup> The project will make use of the existing IT platform that country coordinators are already familiar with and which is currently hosted by the UK based firm IOD-PARC.

country studies; To identify several quality assessors and to have the draft country studies quality assessed. To write the terms of reference covering the three parts of the country studies, to design the common templates and questionnaire for the country studies, in line with the above Sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, and to design a common template for the country study reports. To report to the EvalNet Secretariat and to the ECD Task Force

Who? – (1) The project coordinator and the (2) Management Group, assisted by (3) a contractor.

When? – September 2013 / March 2014

### **6.7. Carrying out country studies**

56. What? – To adjust the terms of reference and common templates to the country context; To identify and contact relevant informants; To carry out interviews; To draft the three parts of the country study; To finalize the country study after stakeholder consultation and quality.

Who? – (1) The country coordinators briefed, assisted, and monitored by (2) the project coordinator, under the oversight of (3) quality assessors.

When? – September 2013 / March 2014

### **6.8. Convening the international workshop**

57. What? – To set the logistics of the workshop. To allocate the tasks of opening, closing and moderating the debates. To establish the workshop agenda including the presentation of selected country studies; To prepare draft proposals for a partner-donor evaluation program and for the working arrangements of an open partner-donor collaboration; To invite all members of the PDE Network plus potential newcomers. To report to the EvalNet Secretariat and to the ECD Task Force.

Who? – (1) The project coordinator and the (2) Management Group, assisted by (3) a contractor.

When? – March/June 2014

### **6.9. Writing and disseminating synthesis papers**

58. What? – To write several thematic papers drawing on the presentations and discussions of the workshop. To have these documents quality reviewed. To disseminate the synthesis papers and the country studies through appropriate channels.

Who? – (1) The project coordinator and (2) the Management Group

When? – June/July 2014

### **6.10. Taking the next steps**

59. What? – To finalize the partner-donor evaluation program and the working arrangements of the partner-donor collaboration; To terminate the study; To transfer responsibilities.

Who? – (1) The Management Group.

When? – June/July 2014.

## 7. Organization

60. This section describes the role of the various players in implementing the above steps of the study.

**EvalNet** has set the mandate for launching and implementing the project. It is one of the addressees of the proposals for a future partner-donor collaboration.

The **ECD Task Team** monitors the project and ensures coordination with other ECD activities.

The **Management Group** is composed of two volunteering EvalNet members and two volunteering PDE coordinators. The Group members take a joint responsibility for all key steps of the project.

The **Chair of the Management Group** (i.e. France and then another Management Group member in 2014) takes early contacts and helps establishing the Management Group, liaises with the ECD Task Team and EvalNet.

The **PDE Network** is composed of the 21 PDE coordinators and the EvalNet members. It serves as a basis for implementing the project. However this informal network is not a 'player' in the sense of the present note.

The **PDE Coordinators** will be asked to undertake country studies on a voluntary basis.

The **Country Coordinators** are volunteering PDE Coordinators. In case a PDE Coordinator has moved, the best possible alternative person will be sought. They undertake the country studies and present their findings at the international workshop.

The **Donor representatives** in the country will contribute the country studies by providing coordinators with information and/or resources (in-kind or financial) on an ad hoc basis.

The **Partner-Donor Collaboration** is to be proposed at the end of the project. It is expected to include the person(s) in charge of coordinating development evaluation in volunteering partner countries<sup>20</sup> and volunteering EvalNet members. It is not a new network or a new structure but a group of key governmental evaluation actors from both partner and donor sides who collaborate on evaluation works with a long term perspective through the most appropriate working arrangements at a given point in time.

The **Project Coordinator** (or two coordinators from respectively the partner and donor sides), is identified at an early stage of the project and works in close contact with the Management Group. He/she contributes to identify volunteering country coordinators, to design the terms of reference of the country studies, to brief and monitor country coordinators, to set the logistics of the international workshop, to establish the workshop agenda, to deal with invitations, to ensure that thematic synthesis papers be written, to manage quality, and to deal with dissemination.

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<sup>20</sup> Possibly the coordinator of the country study within this project.

The Project Coordinator is assisted by **Quality Assessors** who are identified among senior members of the PDE Network. Quality Assessors comment on the draft country studies and on the draft synthesis papers.

The Project Coordinator is also assisted by **Contractor(s)** hired through financial or in-kind contributions of organizations/institutions participating in the project.

## 8. Cost, financing, and timeline

61. The following table displays the timeline, cost and financing of the main steps of the study. In the present version of this note, costs are still rough estimates and financing is not finalized.

Table 1 – Cost, financing, and timeline

|                                   | Steps        | Who            | When        | Cost (EUR)     | Financing |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>1. Initialization</b>          |              |                |             |                |           |
| Concept note                      |              | France         | 05-06/13    | 20 000         | France    |
| First steps                       | 5.1-5.4      | Manag. Group   | 06-09/13    | <i>in-kind</i> |           |
| Inception note                    | 5.5          | Manag. Group   | 06-09/13    | <i>in-kind</i> |           |
| <b>2. Partner country studies</b> |              |                |             |                |           |
| Coordinating country studies      | 5.6          | Project coord. | 09/13-03/14 | 100 000        | ?         |
| Carrying out country studies      | 5.7          | Country coord. | 09/13-03/15 | <i>in-kind</i> |           |
| <b>3. International Workshop</b>  |              |                |             |                |           |
| Organizing the workshop           | 5.8          | Manag. Group   | 04-06/14    | <i>in-kind</i> | ?         |
| Hosting the workshop              | 5.8          | Host country   | 06/14       | 150 000        | ?         |
| <b>4. Finalization</b>            |              |                |             |                |           |
| Disseminating synthesis papers    | 5.9          | Manag. Group   | 06-07/14    | 80 000         | ?         |
| Taking the next steps             | 5.10         | Manag. Group   | 06-07/14    | <i>in-kind</i> |           |
|                                   | <b>Total</b> |                |             | <b>350 000</b> |           |

## Appendix 1: Note on promoting partner-donor evaluation

EVALNET 14 meeting, November 18, 2012

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### Background

At the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Network, members discussed follow up to the workshop on joint evaluation hosted by France and continued engagement with the partner countries involved in the evaluation of the Paris Declaration.

The Network agreed to serve as a hub to maintain the partner country network coming out of the Paris Declaration Evaluation and to identify opportunities for further joint work and capacity development. France and the Secretariat will consider how to move this agenda forward with interested members and partners. The Network will also work to encourage and be responsive to country-led evaluation proposals.

### Objectives

Building on the experience gained in the PDE evaluation and other large-scale joint evaluations,

1. Create an informal platform for exchange composed of members and partners that can encourage and respond to proposals for country-led evaluations and promote joint evaluations.
2. Keep donors and partner countries up-to-date on opportunities and practices.
3. Find opportunities for learning by doing.
4. Link with capacity building and learning initiatives.

### Outputs

What would we like to get? Partner- led evaluations, joint partner-donor evaluations, more insights on challenges and value added of partner-donor evaluations.

### Possible activities and next steps

Call for ideas on how to move forward and build-on experience and practice

PDE experience stocktaking: Should the PDE coordinators in developing countries (21) be asked to document the PDE process in their country (would this be useful at this stage?).

Partner countries survey: A survey could address the following issues: (1) Use of donor evaluations? (2) Practice of public sector evaluation and participation in joint evaluations? (3) Country awareness and visibility [?] of donor evaluation work? (4) Value-added of partner joint evaluation? (5) Constraints on partner-led joint evaluations? (5) Identification of new opportunities (evaluation agenda?)

Joint partner-donor evaluation plan sharing (could add partner plans to existing database)

Interested members should form a core group to take forward work, possibly as part of the task team on capacity development. A first discussion should be held at the task team meeting on evaluation capacity development.

### **Collaborative partner-donor evaluation**

An evaluation involving one or more organizations / institutions of the partner country and one or more donors.

### **Collaborative partner-donor evaluation work**

Includes partner-donor evaluations but also evaluation plans, evaluation syntheses (aggregating the results of several evaluations), meta-evaluations (assessing the value of a series of evaluations), and joint undertakings at any stage of the evaluation process, e.g. financing, assessing quality, or synthesizing results.

### **Country evaluation mechanism**

Country specific rule, standard, coordination arrangement, regulatory body ... aimed at ensuring the quality, independence, and / or utility of evaluations. The term does not apply the own internal routines and culture of country organizations. It should rather be understood as cutting across organizations. Evaluation mechanisms typically apply to a range of policy areas or to several levels of government. They are established by public authorities and professional communities.

### **Country evaluation network**

A professional association, a research network, or a less formal community based in the partner country and devoted at least in part to evaluation.

### **Country evaluation system**

A system that is ideally composed of (1) a sustained evaluation demand at various levels in various sectors, (2) a supply of competent evaluation services, (3) a practice of utilizing evaluation results in the public sector, and (4) an institutional framework securing public confidence in evaluation. The term 'system' suggests that the four above components are integrated into a web of virtuous circles which maintain evaluation culture, institutions, practices, and capacity over the years. The system includes individual actors, organizations, networks, and mechanisms.

### **Country organization**

Partner country organizations may be located on the demand side of the "market" of evaluation services such as horizontal ministries / departments, line ministries / departments, regional or local authorities, public agencies at all levels, or country-based NGOs. They may also provide evaluation services (supply side) such as universities, consultancy firms, or internal evaluation units in governmental and non-governmental organizations. A partner-donor evaluation may involve one country organization (typically a horizontal ministry / department) or several ones and these organizations may or may not co-operate on an equal footing. Organizations are country-based if their management is located in the country.

**Country individual actor**

Manager or staff member of a partner country organization or country-based free-lance evaluator. The term does not apply to stakeholders or individual informants who are consulted during the evaluation process. Individual actors are country-based if their main working place is in the country.

**Demand / supply sides of the evaluation system**

Country organizations on the demand side are concerned with the launching, financing, commissioning, and management of evaluations, as well as discussing, disseminating, and using evaluation results.

Country organizations on the supply side provide evaluation services, i.e. preparing and implementing data collection, analyzing information, formulating findings, conclusions, lessons, and recommendations, and writing reports.

**Do no harm**

Donor interventions “Do No Harm” if they have positive or at least neutral consequences on (a) the country political processes, (b) the legitimacy of the state in society, (c) the relations between state and society, (d) the expectations society has of the state, and (e) the capacities of the state to perform its basic functions.

**Joint evaluation**

An evaluation in which different donors and/or partners participate.

**Joint learning**

The fact that actual learning occurs at the level of individuals, organizations, and networks on both partner and donor sides.

**Jointness**

The degree of “jointness” depends on the extent to which the involved organizations / institutions co-operate in the evaluation process.

**Learning by doing**

The process through which individuals carry out activities first and develop the corresponding skills through that experience.

**Learning by changing**

The process through which an organization changes some its structures or procedures (e.g. creates an evaluation function) and then develops the practices associated with these changes.

**Learning by connecting**

The process through which networks are reshaped first (e.g. increased attractiveness and legitimacy of a professional evaluation association) with subsequent consequences on opinions and beliefs (e.g. consensus on evaluation standards).

**Mutual accountability**

Mutually reporting on achievements with regards to partner and donor commitments, and discussing these achievements in the framework of a structured dialogue.

**Partner-donor jointness**

The degree of partner-donor jointness depends on the extent to which country organizations / institutions and donors co-operate in the evaluation process.

**Partner-donor profile**

Degree of partner-donor jointness in all dimensions of the evaluation process from the decision to conduct the evaluation to the dissemination of and capitalization on results.

### Appendix 3: Bibliography

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#### Appendix 4: Learning-by-doing at various levels

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Table 2 explains how individuals, organizations and networks learn (in lines). The first column displays the standard learning process like “learning by training” in the case of individuals. The second column describes the alternative learning process like “learning by doing” in the case of individuals.

The three lines of Table 1 mirror the first three logical chains of Figure 1. The learning from collaborative partner-donor evaluations is more likely to follow the alternative process (second column) than the standard one (first column).

*Table 2 – Three levels of learning*

|                      | <b>Standard</b> learning process  | <b>Alternative</b> learning process   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| <b>Individuals</b>   | 1- Teaching / training<br>2- Doing activities that require the acquired skills        | 1- Doing activities<br>2- Developing the corresponding skills<br><br><i>(Learning by doing)</i>   |
| <b>Organizations</b> | 1- Gaining experience<br>2- Enshrining lessons in organizational changes              | 1- Introducing organizational changes<br>2- Developing the practices and culture associated with these changes<br><br><i>(Learning by changing)</i> |
| <b>Networks</b>      | 1- Exchanging ideas and information<br>2- Reshaping the configuration of network hubs | 1- Re-arranging network connections<br>2- Conveying cultural changes associated with the new connections<br><br><i>(Learning by connecting)</i>     |

Learning is an individual process which enables people to apply new skills and competencies. Usually **individual learning** proceeds by acquiring skills first, and applying these skills in subsequent activities. Learning by doing is the alternative process which consists of doing activities first and developing skills through that experience.

Learning is basically an individual process and the term organizational learning should be understood as a metaphor. Several staff members of an organization may learn together but their organization has learned nothing if they move to another workplace. **Organizational learning** is independent from individual actors. It proceeds by first acknowledging the lessons drawn from experience and then

enshrining these lessons in changed organizational routines<sup>21</sup> (e.g. including an evaluation unit in the organizational chart, including evaluation capacity in the recruitment criteria, gathering periodic coordination meetings focused on evaluation, including an evaluation chapter in the annual activity report). The term 'learning by changing' is proposed in this note in order to reflect the alternative process through which an organization changes its routines (e.g. creates an evaluation function) and then develop the new practices associated with these changes.

Another metaphor is that of social learning whereby individuals update their beliefs and opinions as a result of interactions within various social networks<sup>22</sup>. Recent research on dynamic learning networks shows that social learning occurs where people are a short distance away from trustworthy hubs which receive and distribute a large amount of information<sup>23</sup>. Pushing the logic of this reasoning one step beyond, this note defines '**network learning**' as the fact that individuals change their beliefs and opinions and change their social connections accordingly, something which leads networks to adapt by reconfiguring their hubs. Again, the term 'learning by connecting' reflects the alternative process through which networks are reshaped first (e.g. increased attractiveness and legitimacy of a professional evaluation association) with subsequent consequences on opinions and beliefs (e.g. consensus on evaluation standards).

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<sup>21</sup> Levitt and March, 1988.

<sup>22</sup> Romano and Secundo, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Acemoglu & al., 2010.

### Appendix 5: Mapping of M&E country frameworks

|              | Region <sup>2/</sup> | GNI/Capita <sup>1/</sup><br>2012 | 2011 Paris Declaration survey |            |            |            |                             |            |            |            | Evaluation society<br>Ntl/Rgl |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------------------|
|              |                      |                                  | PRSP/NDP <sup>3/</sup>        |            |            |            | M&E framework <sup>4/</sup> |            |            |            |                               |
|              |                      |                                  | PDS ind.1                     |            |            |            | PDS ind.11                  |            |            |            |                               |
|              |                      |                                  | Overall                       | Criteria 1 | Criteria 2 | Criteria 3 | Overall                     | Criteria 1 | Criteria 2 | Criteria 3 |                               |
| Afghanistan  | SA                   | LIC                              | C                             | C          | B          | C          | C                           | D          | C          | C          | Yes                           |
| Bangladesh   | SA                   | LIC                              | C                             | C          | C          | B          | C                           | C          | B          | C          | Yes                           |
| Benin        | SSA                  | LIC                              | B                             | C          | B          | B          | D                           | C          | D          | D          | Yes                           |
| Bolivia      | LAC                  | LMIC                             | C                             | NA         | NA         | NA         | C                           | NA         | NA         | NA         | Yes                           |
| Cambodia     | EAP                  | LIC                              | B                             | B          | B          | B          | C                           | C          | B          | C          | No                            |
| Cameroon     | SSA                  | LMIC                             | C                             | C          | B          | C          | B                           | C          | B          | B          | Yes                           |
| Colombia     | LAC                  | UMIC                             | B                             | NA         | NA         | NA         | B                           | NA         | NA         | NA         | Yes                           |
| Ghana        | SSA                  | LMIC                             | B                             | NA         | NA         | NA         | C                           | NA         | NA         | NA         | Yes                           |
| Indonesia    | EAP                  | LMIC                             | B                             | B          | B          | C          | B                           | B          | C          | B          | Yes                           |
| Malawi       | SSA                  | LIC                              | B                             | B          | B          | C          | C                           | C          | C          | C          | Yes                           |
| Mali         | SSA                  | LIC                              | C                             | NA         | NA         | NA         | C                           | NA         | NA         | NA         | Yes                           |
| Mozambique   | SSA                  | LIC                              | B                             | B          | B          | C          | C                           | C          | B          | C          | No                            |
| Nepal        | SA                   | LIC                              | D                             | D          | D          | C          | B                           | B          | B          | B          | Yes                           |
| Philippines  | EAP                  | LMIC                             | B                             | C          | C          | B          | C                           | C          | C          | B          | Yes                           |
| Samoa        | EAP                  | LMIC                             | C                             | D          | C          | C          | C                           | C          | B          | C          | No                            |
| Senegal      | SSA                  | LMIC                             | C                             | NA         | NA         | NA         | C                           | NA         | NA         | NA         | Yes                           |
| South Africa | SSA                  | UMIC                             | B                             | C          | B          | B          | B                           | B          | C          | B          | Yes                           |
| Sri Lanka    | SA                   | LMIC                             | NA                            | NA         | NA         | NA         | NA                          | NA         | NA         | NA         | Yes                           |
| Uganda       | SSA                  | LIC                              | B                             | B          | B          | B          | C                           | C          | C          | D          | Yes                           |
| Vietnam      | EAP                  | LMIC                             | B                             | B          | B          | C          | B                           | B          | B          | B          | Yes                           |
| Zambia       | SSA                  | LMIC                             | B                             | B          | B          | B          | C                           | C          | C          | C          | Yes                           |

Notes: 1/ World Bank Atlas methodology: LIC: Low income; LMIC: Lower Middle Income; UMIC: Upper Middle Income; 2/ World Bank regional classification: SA: South Asia; LAC: Latin America and Caribbean; SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa; EAP: East Asia and Pacific; 3/ **Indicator 1**: Criteria 1 - a unified strategic framework; Criteria 2 - clearly identified priorities; Criteria 3 - well-costed policies (linking strategies to budget allocations); A minimum score of B is needed for a sound national development strategy; 4/ **Indicator 11**: Criteria 1 - quality of information generated; Criteria 2 - stakeholder access to information; Criteria 3 - coordinated M&E systems; A minimum score of B is needed for a largely developed results-oriented framework.

## Appendix 6 - Joint Evaluation of Development Cooperation between Ghana and Denmark<sup>24</sup>

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Denmark has provided development assistance to Ghana since independence in 1957. The evaluation covered the totality of the development cooperation between Ghana and Denmark from 1990 to 2006. It occurred at a time when bilateral development cooperation was being reframed in line with the Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy. The evaluation was carried out jointly with Denmark and Ghana being intended to work as equal partners. This exercise has shed light on key obstacles encountered in the development cooperation and increased awareness on both sides about what it takes for development cooperation to contribute to sustainable development in the partner country.

### Key dates

- Launch: May 2007
- Reporting phase: mid-September - February 2008
- Publication: August 2008

### Partner-donor profile

Denmark was represented by the Evaluation Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EVAL) and Ghana by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). No other partner country organization has played an active role in managing the evaluation process. The partner-donor profile is described below:

- **Deciding to conduct the evaluation, incl. date, scope, main purpose:** The donor country organization took the initiative and developed an approach paper covering the scope and purpose of the evaluation. The paper was then discussed at the level of both partner and donor organizations. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in January 2007 in order to ensure similar expectations on both sides.
- **Establishing the cooperation arrangements:** The MoU laid out the roles and responsibilities of both organizations in a clear manner and established a joint evaluation management group. The chairperson was Danish.
- **Raising and channeling financial resources:** Financial resources were provided on the donor's side. The partner country provided staff and administrative support but faced practical difficulties because no budget had been secured for e.g. travelling
- **Establishing the management structure:** In addition to the joint management group, two reference groups were established, one in Ghana and the other in Denmark. The reference groups comprised individuals with insight into evaluation practices and methodologies as well as in matters related to (Danish–Ghanaian) development cooperation. They commented and provided inputs all through the evaluation process. Meetings and communication were face-to-face, in video-conference or by mail. Workshops with consultants and numerous reference group meetings were organized at inception and synthesis phases.
- **Referring to evaluation standards:** Both partners agreed to conduct the evaluation in accordance with the DAC's guidelines and quality standards.

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<sup>24</sup> This appendix is not finalized as comments from several involved actors are still expected.

- **Developing the terms of reference:** Key evaluation questions were discussed at a first management group meeting in Accra, based on the approach paper. The ToR for the evaluation were then developed and discussed in reference group meetings in both Ghana and Denmark. The ToR were finalized by the joint management group.
- **Procuring the evaluation services:** It was decided to use the Danish procurement procedures for the tendering of the evaluation exercise, partly because Denmark financed the evaluation and partly because it was considered too cumbersome to use the Ghanaian procurement rules. Tendering was conducted according to EU rules and the tender was open to EU and non-EU members alike. The selection committee was composed of Danida Contract Department and Evaluation Department and the NDPC representative, plus an observer from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Ghana.
- **Setting contractual relations:** An important criterion in the selection process was the involvement of Ghanaian consultants in the evaluation team. The evaluation was entrusted to a German consultancy firm (Particip) which had established sub-contracts with four Ghanaian experts. One of these experts was part of the permanent staff of a Ghanaian consultancy firm. Two had flexible connections with country organizations and one was free-lance.
- **Setting the composition of the evaluation team:** The selected team included four Ghanaian and three European members. The team leader was European and the deputy team leader was Ghanaian. A team-building meeting was held at the beginning of the work in order to establish a common understanding of the approach to be used in the evaluation (as the use of intervention logic and evaluation questions further developed from the TOR).
- **Developing the evaluation method:** The team leader developed the draft method which was discussed at length with Ghanaian team members. Then the evaluation team discussed their method and data collection work plan with both reference groups.
- **Formulating draft evaluation results:** As part of the analytical process, a total of eight thematic papers and working papers on specific sectors were drafted by the evaluation team members. The team leader drafted the general conclusions and recommendations with inputs from the team members. All draft documents were commented on by the members of the two reference groups.
- **Assessing evaluation quality:** An external European consultant made a quality check on the extent to which the evaluation conformed to the DAC quality standards. Several Ghanaian academic were also called to provide written comments.
- **Discussing draft evaluation results:** A stakeholder workshop was organized in December 2007 in Ghana to get feedback from (government) staff, advisers and other key stakeholders involved in the development cooperation between Ghana and Denmark on draft evaluation results. This workshop proved very useful as the oral culture in Ghana – as in many other places in Africa – is much stronger than the written culture.
- **Finalizing the contents of the report:** Written comments on the draft final report were received from members of both reference groups and the Danish Embassy in Accra.
- **Disseminating results:** The final report was discussed at the Danida Program Committee and presented to the Minister for Development Cooperation. It was then published on the Danida website. A link to the evaluation report was inserted on the NDPC website. A public meeting was held in October 2008 in Denmark. Hard copies with CDs were distributed in

Ghana and Denmark. Finally, the report was also presented at a meeting in Ghana in November 2008.

### Capacity friendly features

Some capacity-friendly features to the strengthening of country evaluation systems can be highlighted as follows:

- **Involving relevant country organizations on the demand side:** NDPC is a central evaluation body, with a responsibility for national evaluation. It is not as closely and directly involved in the implementation of the development cooperation as for instance the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Such an institution can help make externally induced evaluations more useful for the country itself and can, at a more practical level, provide support to evaluation consultants by arranging interviews and organizing workshops.
- **Responsibilities** entrusted to the partner organization were clearly defined, although the resources for playing its role were not fully secured. It played a key role at vital stages of the evaluation process, and a director of the NDPC was member of the management group, although not with a leading position.
- Ghanaian consultants were integral part of **the evaluation team** with major contributions, both related to the evaluation research and to the drafting of reports.
- **Draft evaluation results** were discussed with country stakeholders.
- The evaluation results were **disseminated** through country channels such as the NDPC website.

Other features of the evaluation process were not capacity friendly ones:

- The evaluation was launched at a time which matched the donor's needs mainly;
- The process used donor financing channels and donor procurement procedures;

### Learning

#### Individual learning

- **Ghanaian officials** involved in the evaluation management group and in the procurement procedure say they gained useful experience which has since been applied.
- **Ghanaian consultants** equally gained additional experience and insights into alternative methods of conducting evaluations for e.g. developing and structuring evaluation questions, impact diagrams, data collection tools and writing a report.

#### Organizational learning

- **NDPC** has not institutionalized the process for its involvement in donor or other institutional evaluations.
- **The Ghanaian consultancy firm** has subsequently to the evaluation adopted the joint methodology development approach with other partners.

## Network learning

- The Ghana Monitoring & Evaluation forum (GMEF) called upon one of the Ghanaian consultant involved in this evaluation to share experiences.

The Ghana-Denmark joint evaluation has strengthened capabilities at individual level for Ghanaian officials and consultants involved. It was also the case at organizational level for the Ghanaian consultancy firm and at network level. No learning was observed for the partner country organization.

## Sources

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, *Joint evaluation of the Ghana-Denmark Development Co-operation from 1990 to 2006*, August 2008.

Mensa-Bonsu, I. & Holm Andersen, M., Involving Developing Countries in the Evaluation of Development Cooperation: The Case of a Joint Evaluation of Development Cooperation between Ghana and Denmark, in *Evaluation*, July 2010, vol. 16 no.3 295-308p.

Comments by involved actors (5) on a draft version.

## Appendix 7 - Joint Evaluation of Benin 10-year Education plan (Benin, AFD, Danida)<sup>25</sup>

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In 2006 Benin defined a ten year education policy (2006-2015), the PDDSE<sup>26</sup>, with the aim of giving priority to the Education Sector in its strategy of poverty reduction. It comprised nursery school, higher education, research, literacy and vocational training. The PDDSE was divided in three phases: 2006-2008, 2009-2011 and 2012-2015. The implementation of the PDDSE was supported by donors from its beginning, following the harmonization and alignment principles. Mid-term evaluations were foreseen at the end of each phase of the PDDSE, but no independent evaluation was carried out until 2011, when the joint mid-term evaluation was launched. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation have informed the preparation and formulation of the third phase of the education strategy in Benin.

### Key dates

- Launch: February 2011
- Reporting phase: August 2011
- Publication: February 2012

### Partner-donor profile

The evaluation of the education sector was launched by the evaluation units of Danida (Denmark) and AFD (France), in partnership with the Beninese Social Change Observatory (OCS<sup>27</sup>). A wide range of stakeholders were associated with the evaluation process as part of the Local Reference Committee (CLR<sup>28</sup>).

The partner-donor profile is described below:

- **Deciding to conduct the evaluation, incl. date, scope, main purpose:** Development agencies from Denmark, France and Netherlands took a first initiative for the evaluation together with the government of Benin who appointed OCS as their representative. The evaluation was first launched but interrupted after the inception phase, due to a divergence with the selected evaluation team on the scope of the assignment. The development agencies of Denmark, France and the Benin Government decided to relaunch the evaluation with a more focused scope in light of the reduced timeframe. A procurement process was launched, a new consultant identified in December 2010 and the actual evaluation process relaunched in early 2011. This decision was taken by the Management committee with the agreement of the Local Reference Committee.
- **Establishing the cooperation arrangements:** A memorandum of understanding was signed between the OCS and the donors (represented by AFD) in order to lay out the roles and responsibilities of both sides in a clear manner.

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<sup>25</sup> This appendix is not finalized as comments from several involved actors are still expected.

<sup>26</sup> *Plan Décennal de Développement du Secteur de l'Éducation.*

<sup>27</sup> *Observatoire du changement social.*

<sup>28</sup> *Comité local de référence.*

- **Raising and channeling financial resources:** Financial resources were provided by the donors while OCS provided intellectual and administrative support.
- **Establishing the management structure:** The Management Committee (CGE<sup>29</sup>) was given the responsibility to take the main decisions in the evaluation process. It was composed of representatives of AFD, DANIDA, and OCS. It worked through emails and video-conferences. The Local Reference Committee (CLR) gathered individual representatives of a number of organizations / institutions in the Education Sector, e.g. ministries, federations, civil society organizations, etc. The Local Reference Committee commented on working documents and provided input all through the evaluation process. It worked through face-to-face communication and meetings.
- **Referring to evaluation standards:** The evaluation criteria were in accordance with the DAC's guidelines.
- **Developing the terms of reference:** The first ToR were developed by AFD who was leading the evaluation process in 2009. Danida (EVAL) took lead on the relaunched evaluation and developed the revised ToR. In both cases ToR were developed through interactions with the Management Group.
- **Procuring the evaluation services:** The Danish procurement procedures were used for the tendering of the evaluation exercise since Danida was leading the Management Group. The CGE played the role of selection committee.
- **Setting contractual relations:** The evaluation was entrusted to a European consultancy firm (COWI) which had established sub-contracts with one Beninese free-lance consultant.
- **Setting the composition of the evaluation team:** The selected team included three European members, including the team leader, and a Beninese consultant.
- **Developing the evaluation method:** The evaluation method was developed during the inception phase. The Beninese consultant was involved in the choice of the six sites visits and in the drafting of questionnaires. The evaluation team discussed their draft method and data collection work plan with the CGE and the CLR.
- **Formulating draft evaluation results:** Each expert wrote the section of the final report corresponding to his/her area of expertise. The Beninese consultant addressed the issue of budget performance and made recommendations on how to ensure a sustainable and balanced management of the sector in the medium and long term. His belonging to an independent team enhanced the accuracy of his recommendations. The team leader was responsible for coordinating the preparation of the final report, assuring coherence between the various inputs, dealing with stakeholders' comments. These draft papers were commented on by stakeholders, including members of the CLR and more than one hundred representatives of organizations of the Education sector.
- **Assessing evaluation quality:** According to COWI's Quality Assurance System, a Quality Assurance Plan was elaborated at the beginning of the assignment which described what should be assessed before the reports were delivered to the CGE. The team leader assessed the quality of the experts input related to the Terms of Reference. A Quality Manager in COWI assessed the inception report and the final report. The team leader approved all the documents elaborated by the evaluation team.

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<sup>29</sup> *Comité de gestion de l'évaluation.*

- **Discussing draft evaluation results:** A stakeholder workshop was organized in June 2011 in Benin to get feedback on draft evaluation results. The workshop gathered all members of the CGE and CLR, plus other education sector actors from civil society organizations and consultancies. The workshop began with a presentation of the evaluation results which was followed by discussions in four workgroups.
- **Finalizing the contents of the report:** The final report took into account the comments of the workgroups, plus written comments from the members of the CGE and CLR. These comments were taken into account after an exchange of views between the evaluation team and the CGE.
- **Disseminating results:** The final report was published by AFD that also sent more than a hundred copies to OCS that disseminated the report to all the members of the CLR. OCS also organized a presentation at the beginning of 2012. The final report was published on the AFD and Danida websites.
- **Assuring the follow-up of utilization:** After the publication of the report, two meetings with all the stakeholders were organized in order to operationalise the recommendations, especially that of establishing a management unit for the PDDSE. Currently, this unit is being created.

### Capacity friendly features

The joint evaluation had a few capacity-friendly features that can be highlighted as follows:

- **Involving relevant country organizations on the demand side:** OCS is a national evaluation body, with a responsibility for national monitoring and evaluation of development policies, in particular for growth, poverty reduction and the Millennium Objectives. It is not directly involved in the implementation of the development cooperation as for instance the ministries associated to education sector. Such an institution can help make externally induced evaluations more useful for the country itself, associating the whole range of stakeholders and can, at a more practical level, provide support to evaluation consultants by arranging interviews and organizing workshops.
- **Responsibilities** entrusted to the partner organization were clearly defined. The OCS was deeply involved in the whole process, co-leading the evaluation process. It played a key role at crucial stages of the evaluation process enabling dialogue and exchanges between the CGE and the CLR.
- A Beninese consultant was involved in **the evaluation team**.
- **Draft evaluation results** were discussed largely with country stakeholders.
- The evaluation results were **disseminated** in the country through the OCS.
- The evaluation was **launched timely** to prepare the third phase of the PDDSE.

Other features of the evaluation process were not capacity friendly ones:

- No Beninese organization was involved on the supply side.
- The process did not use country financing channels and procurement procedures

## Learning

### Individual learning

- **Beninese officials** involved in the evaluation management committees do not mention any specific learning.
- The **Beninese consultant** acquired new knowledge on how to set up an evaluation framework for a national policy.

### Network learning

- Beninese evaluation networks are not much developed and this joint evaluation had no impact in this area.

The joint evaluation of the Benin 10-year Education plan has strengthened capabilities on the supply side at individual level, but not at organizational level as no Beninese consultancy firm was involved in the evaluation. No capacity building was pointed out for the partner country demand side, neither for Beninese evaluation networks.

## Sources

AFD & Danida, *Evaluation à mi-parcours du Plan décennal de développement du secteur de l'éducation du Bénin (PDDSE 2006-2015)*, February 2012.

Comments by involved actors (4) on a draft version.