AGENDA ITEM II.

Focus session on Agenda 2030 and evaluation

Implication for evaluation capacity development

This note has been prepared by Stephen Porter, DFID, chair of the task team on evaluation capacity development for discussion at the 19th meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network.

Contact: Stephen Porter, s-Porter@dfid.gov.uk

19th Meeting
26-27 April 2016
Update on Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) Task Team: Influence of the SDG Outcome Document

Building on the ‘bee-hive’ discussion at the last EVALNET meeting a study is proposed that will focus on approaches to support country-led evaluation systems and processes for the SDGs. This study will be the focal piece of work in the coming year for the ECD task team. This study is intended to inform EVALNET members around what kinds of ECD efforts are likely to be effective.

Alignment with SDG processes is an important issue for new ECD efforts. The SDG outcome document defines why donors need to undertake support to ECD. The SDGs require action on the part of donors; namely that the follow-up review processes of the SDGs:

- be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations…and…
- require enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programmes

Previous work by the EVALNET ECD Task Team has informed how assistance should be provided. For capacity development to be successful there needs to be political will and local ownership of the effort. This has been recognised in the EVALNET meeting in June 2015, the EVALNET working consensus on ECD and various studies from across the globe. This means how ECD is undertaken - whether at individual, institutional or enabling environment levels – needs to give due regard to an understanding of the demands, opportunities and entry-points for evaluation within the relevant political context.

The study outlined in the accompanying paper is proposed to focus on:

1) Supportive practices – Defining the helpful and unhelpful practices of supporting country-led evaluation processes.

2) Partner government demands – Identifying where and how support to country-led evaluation could be provided based mainly upon available studies and literature

3) Civil Society Practice – Describing where work is being undertaken by civil society that can support country-led evaluation of the SDGs.

The proposed study will be discussed further in a breakout session following the plenary session.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Country-led evaluation and evaluation systems are important elements of the follow-up and review processes for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The indicators that support ongoing measurement of progress towards the SDGs have been agreed within the UN statistical commission. The SDG outcome document, meanwhile, also defines a range of principles that require action on the part of donors. Namely that the follow-up review processes of the SDGs:

- be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.
- require enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries, including the strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programmes, particularly in African countries, least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and middle-income countries.

Providers of development assistance have a role in supporting projects to implement country-led evaluations and in so doing realise these principles. The terms of reference presented here defines a process to help develop a shared understanding of current issues around supporting country-led evaluations within the SDG processes.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A country-led evaluation process responds to national demands for information rather than being required by external actors. Country-led evaluations are not exclusively conducted and supported by governments, other organisations amongst civil society, foundations, donors and the private sector can play a key role in evaluating or supporting the evaluation of the performance of programmes related to the SDGs.¹

**Aim** - It is proposed that a process is implemented that involves a range of stakeholders to inform the approach of donors who seek to strengthen country-led evaluation processes for the SDGs.

In order to achieve this aim, three strands are envisaged that seek to produce knowledge on:

1) **Supportive practices** – Defining the helpful and unhelpful practices of supporting country-led evaluation processes.

2) **Partner government demands** – Identifying where and how support to country-led evaluation could be provided based mainly upon available studies and literature²

3) **Civil Society Practice** – Describing where work is being undertaken by civil society that can support country-led evaluation.


² This will initially be focused of DFID priority countries, but can be expanded based upon further contributions from development partners.
Proposed questions

Guiding Question: What approaches by donors will support good quality country-led evaluation systems and processes that can feed into SDG follow-up and review processes?

Sub questions:

Strand 1:
1. What are the good practice approaches\(^3\) for supporting country-led evaluation systems and processes that can be identified within current evidence?
2. What practices are unhelpful in nurturing country-led evaluation systems and processes based on the current evidence?

Strand 2:
3. What are the different configurations of demand for country-led evaluation systems and processes in partner countries that can be identified in current studies?
4. What responses to these demands can systematically strengthen country-led evaluations?

Strand 3:
5. What are international civil society organisations doing or planning in relation to country-led evaluations that aim to feed into SDG follow-up and review processes?
6. How could the work of civil society in relation to country-led evaluations be systematically strengthened?

3. EXISTING EVIDENCE BASE

All of the above questions can be answered to a useful degree by interrogating existing evidence.

The evidence on country-led evaluations in international development has been expanding over the past decade drawing upon work undertaken in the late 1990s and early 2000s.\(^4\) Current literature that can be drawn upon for this study includes:

- Academic literature related to evaluation capacity development in journals of evaluation and public policy, for example, the new African Journal of Evaluation;
- World Bank, OECD and UNICEF publications on national monitoring and evaluation systems and country-led evaluation; and
- Other literature from think tanks, evaluation associations and research institutions, for example, studies published by the Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results.

A range of diagnostic and country study reports have been generated that help to understand existing demands for country-led evaluations, such as:

- Studies produced by the Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR), the World Bank and the Study on Collaborative Partner-Donor Evaluation (CPDE) that was presented to the OECD DAC.
- Existing donor support to country-led evaluation processes. DFID supports, for example, a range of projects that help to clarify and meet demand for evaluation in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Rwanda and the Twende Mbele programme working in Benin, Uganda and South Africa.
- Work by 3ie and by Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) and the Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund (SIEF) at the World Bank. It has been noted that in response to some of this work partner countries are starting to fund their own evaluation studies.

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\(^3\) This includes consideration of a variety of implementation models, activities, programmes and policies

Knowledge generated by Evalpartners, especially their working group on the SDGs and the parliamentarians’ forum.

Meanwhile, the practices of civil society in conducting evaluation processes related to the SDGs are only partially captured in existing literature. There is a growing and diverse body of practice. For example, there is data, research and evaluation already initiated aimed at follow up and review processes of the SDGs: Civicus’ Datashift project (here); the Big Idea from Restless Development (here); and Measure What Matters of the Green Economy Coalition (GEC) (here). A second set of initiatives are still at the planning stage, examples of these are: EvalSDG and engagement of parliamentarians for evaluating the progress of the SDGs (here); the Open Society Foundation of Southern Africa’s (OSISA) plan to develop an SDG barometer; the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) is piloting a grassroots monitoring systems in Bangladesh to collect data relevant to several international agreements, including the SDGs; and the online website deliver2030.org facilitated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (here).

There are also a range of activities that engage citizens in evaluation processes of government programmes, although these have not yet, specifically been linked to the SDGs. For example, there are monitoring reports developed by human rights organisations like Human Rights Watch (here). DEval has also been supporting an evaluation capacity development project in Costa Rica that has explicitly involved civil society in a range of evaluation processes.

4. APPROACH

It is anticipated that there will be one overall contractor that will manage the three strands of work, with separate products. A final synthesis based on all three strands will be brought together into a final discussion paper and consultation process. The overall process should seek to utilise ongoing low cost opportunities for engagement and input of a range of stakeholders throughout the process. Some of the respondents should include, but are not limited to: The EvalSDG working group, the OECD DAC Evalnet members and international civil society organisations that are seeking to input to SDG follow-up and review processes and partner governments.

**Strand 1:** It is anticipated that a Rapid Evidence Assessment or similar process will be used to help identify evidence on helpful and unhelpful practices for supporting country-led evaluations. Rapid evidence assessments provide a structured and rigorous search and quality assessment process of the evidence on an issue. In terms of rigour it sits between a literature review and systematic review.\(^5\)

**Strand 2:** It is anticipated that existing studies would be reviewed and synthesised as the main base for evidence. There could then be some follow-up to clarify issues with members of partner governments and others. It is expected that the literature identified Strand 1 will also be of assistance for Strand 2. Although the focus of Strand 2 is on evaluation demand it is expected that there would be some comment on how this demand is currently being supplied. It would also be of interest to know the level of demand for evaluations that seek to enhance programme quality through enabling their ongoing adaptation.

**Strand 3:** It is anticipated that an initial dialogue is launched with existing international civil society projects that are conducting processes that have the potential to feed into the SDG follow-up and review processes. The sample will not be exhaustive and the scope will be determined based on the initial scoping exercise. Linkages between these projects and the Leave No One Behind agenda of the SDGs should be identified. The products of Strand 3 are intended also to be a starting point of ongoing discussion with international civil society around efforts to evaluate the SDGs.

\(^5\) [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rapid-evidence-assessments](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rapid-evidence-assessments)
Synthesis

Based on the knowledge generated in the three strands an overall synthesis report will be generated. This overall synthesis could also involve a workshop with stakeholders either to help define the report or to test the synthesised findings. The synthesis report is expected to provide an overall framework that helps to steer actions to support good quality country-led evaluation processes that can feed into SDG follow-up and review processes.

5. RISKS AND CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

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<th>Risk</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
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<td>Insufficient evidence base to identify good practice and country demands.</td>
<td>The rapid evidence assessment approach is designed to implement systematic protocol for the evidence search and also assess the quality of the evidence. The parameters of the search can be increased to include grey literature to augment peer reviewed studies.</td>
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<td>Scope difficult to control - Although this is an initial process it is likely to encourage further discussion and exchanges that will lead to a widening scope.</td>
<td>The contractor will need to develop a sequenced delivery plan during inception so that there are limits on the sample. It is recognised that there might be a need for additional funding to continue the process initiated but this will need to come through different modalities. For example, a follow-up civil society meeting may be required after the discussion paper is produced.</td>
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6. TARGET AUDIENCES FOR THE DISCUSSION PAPERS

The primary audiences for these discussion papers will be the:

- OECD-DAC Evalnet Evaluation Capacity Development Taskteam – It is intended that the products of this process should inform Evalnet members and help to reflect on next steps for support to country-led evaluation and systems that feed into SDG processes.
- Civil Society Organisations that participated in process – It is intended that this group develops a shared understanding of activity taking place in the civil society space and that a space for ongoing dialogue is opened.
- DFID – It is intended that DFID will use the products to inform its ongoing work on supporting country-led evaluations that feed into SDG follow-up and review processes.

7. RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO CONTRACTORS

The Evaluation Department of DFID will provide to the contractors their known lists of materials and contacts around all Strands.

The manager from the Evaluation Department of DFID will stay connected with the process and seek to support contractors if there are any bottle necks.

8. OUTPUTS

It is anticipated that the Final reports should be available in December 2016. The organisation leading this study will be expected to prepare:
• **An initial inception report** for the process that presents the final agreed questions and sub-questions, an overview of the approach, methods, protocols and a work plan with timeline.

• **Regular updates** as agreed with the Steering Committee

• **Interim synthesis report** in time for the scheduled OECD DAC Evalnet meeting (probably in late 2016).

• At least one **workshop** with stakeholders prior to completion of the synthesis report to validate findings (additional workshops could be held throughout the process depending on the approach of the contractor)

• **A dissemination version of report for each strand of no more than 25 pages and a synthesis report of no more than 20 pages** that identifies actions that will support good quality country-led evaluation processes that can feed into SDG feedback and review processes

• A 1 page of synthesis of the report and a 3 page brief for each of the strands and synthesis report.

• A 2 page set of recommendations for further follow-up with civil society on conducting country-led evaluations of the SDGs

9. **GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS**

The process will be managed by a resource from DFID who will approve the work and will liaise with a Reference Group made up of civil society, DFID and members of Evalnet that will:

• Review the Terms of Reference for the process

• Review the inception report for the process and provide comments and recommendations for any improvements, if needed

• Review Strand and the final synthesis report and provide feedback for any improvements if needed

• Review the final report to ensure that it meets international quality standards and fulfils the methodology and approach agreed in the inception report

• Lead management response to the papers

• Advise on any workshops that may be related to the process.

10. **TIMEFRAME**

The consultancy is likely to start in May 2016 and finish by December 2016 at the latest. Bidders will be expected to outline a work plan and milestones in their proposal, and exact dates will be finalised as part of the inception phase.

11. **TENDERING PROCESS**

**Required qualifications and skills**

Contractors would need to have expertise in:

• Conducting multi-country studies on evaluation processes

• Synthesis of large amounts of secondary literature

• International development evaluation practice and systems

• Public sector governance

• Knowledge international development evaluation practice and terrain
• Participatory knowledge production processes that help to create connections between people

**Contract value**

The final budget for the consultancy is subject to negotiation with the successful contractor(s), and will be based on the approach agreed between the contractor and the project manager. However, the total budget for the consultancy will be no more than £85,000. This figure includes all related expenses (including international travel) and taxes.

To discuss this invitation further or to submit an Expression of Interest please contact....