



ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 3

DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

DAC EVALUATION REPORTS INVENTORY

STATUS REPORT: NOVEMBER 2001

**Submitted by the Canadian International Development Agency
(CIDA)**

Agenda item 2 iv



**35th meeting
14-15 November 2001**

1. Introduction

This update provides a summary of current contributions; a brief analysis of these submissions, a summary of recent and planned enhancements (for your information), and suggestions for the group to consider in order to move the Inventory forward and realize the potential it can offer.

2. Current Contributions

There are now close to 8,000 abstracts contained in the Inventory. Table A attached, however, shows that there has been a steady decline in submissions over the years and in particular since 1997. While we do not know the exact reasons for this decrease we remain fully committed to the Inventory and the potential it offers to share evaluation findings and lessons learned in a more efficient and effective way. Members are encouraged, therefore, to provide submissions even if their reports are put on their own homepage.

Table B provides a synopsis of the areas within which evaluations were conducted and is quite revealing. It shows that evaluations were more likely to be undertaken within the "production sectors" (e.g., agriculture, forestry and industry - almost 9000 references) than either the "social infrastructure and services sectors" (e.g., education, health and water & sanitation - 5,637 references) or "economic infrastructures and services sectors" (e.g., energy and transport - 4,345 references). However, the pattern seems to have changed recently. The data shows that there has been a significant increase in coverage of the social sectors since 1997 (there are more of these in the Inventory than the production sectors since that time). This is perhaps a reflection of the strong emphasis put on social sectors and related issues such as governance and civil society in recent years (i.e. International Development Goals, Shaping the XXI Century, etc). It should be noted that the total exceeds by far the number of evaluations actually undertaken because an evaluation can relate to more than one sector.

3. Ongoing and Planned Improvements

At the last meeting, we indicated that we were hoping to put in place the infrastructure that will build and support the website within CIDA by the fall of 2001. Unfortunately, some of the issues proved to be more challenging than we thought, and we have not as yet been able to bring the site in-house as planned. Nonetheless, we were able to undertake a few enhancements as indicated below:

- Members are now able to submit executive summaries of their reports rather than providing them in a pre-defined format (this should make providing submissions easier);
- The most recent evaluations from searches are now listed in descending order by date and steps are being taken to simplify searches and allow users to provide feedback; and
- A pilot is being conducted on linking individual abstracts to the full text of the evaluation report on the home pages of contributors.
- Over the coming months the site will be brought in house, and the following additional enhancements can be undertaken:
- Name Change for the Inventory: This will be done once the site is brought in-house. Your suggestions are most appreciated.
- Links to full text: linking the abstract to the full text of the report found on member`s homepage, or a pdf file of the report within the Inventory (where these are provided), is being worked on.
- New searching methods: We are currently looking at different ways to simplify the searching within the Inventory. This could include the introduction of predefined searches for specific types of common subject areas; hierarchical searching, or the introduction of new tables.
- What's new area: a news area will be created within the Inventory where new evaluation summaries and other evaluation news could be highlighted.
- Introduction of Multi-donor evaluations: multi-donor evaluations constitute great opportunities to gather substantive amounts of evaluation material on current development issues of high interest. This is a certainly a product that the public and users of the Inventory would highly value. CIDA, therefore, is ready to create a new category for "Multi-donor evaluations" and incorporate the interim and final results into the Inventory.
- Other improvements to the Inventory have been or are being undertaken for which previous decisions of the DAC-WP-EV had already been made. These include: the ability to make contributions all year long at any time; the possibility to make contributions on line (a submissions area will be made available by the end of November this year); the listing of reports starting by the most recent, definitions of key words so that searches can be understood more easily, a user feedback area, and a use tracking system.

4. Issues for Consideration by the WP-EV

There are a number of decisions that will need to be made with regard to the improvements proposed. At this point, it may be worthwhile to get your input on the following three issues:

- **Private and/or Public Site:** The Tokyo meeting on evaluation feed back, learning and accountability stressed the importance of transparency and the need to provide evaluation information to the various publics and clienteles as widely and timely as possible. The maintenance of both a public and a private site is also more expensive. While CIDA is willing to continue to support both sites, it wonders whether the Group would consider having only the Public site instead of both.
- **Pro-active Approach:** If acceptable to the group, CIDA could identify, import, code and insert in the Inventory evaluation summaries that are currently being made available by individual members of the WP-EV on their particular web sites. We consider that the Inventory would bring a value-added to the members by being an entry point which provides a one-stop shopping and search mechanism to help locate documents of interest produced by other members. We have identified more than 300 summaries that could be placed in the Inventory if members were comfortable with such a pro-active approach.
- **Informal Advisory Group:** In order to guide us in the process of management and monitoring of the Inventory, CIDA would appreciate having an advisory group that could be consulted in the case of adjustments or modifications needed to improve the system on an ongoing basis. We would consider a group of three to four WP-EV members reasonable.