



ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 9

DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

**IMPACT EVALUATION
PROPOSAL FOR A
PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

Submitted by the World Bank

Agenda item 3

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Background and justification

The ultimate aim of development is the reduction of poverty. This is the benchmark against which development operations ought to be measured. Accordingly, impact evaluations assess how the interventions of development assistance affect the lives of poor people. Evaluation units have shied away from impact evaluations. First, on account of their expense: evaluation managers have been reluctant to spend a large amount of money evaluating an isolated activity with limited scope for lessons learned. Second, because impact evaluations raise complex methodological problems. Instead, development evaluators have dwelled on goal-based assessments and process evaluations. These evaluations are useful. But neither can be relied upon to inform about the impact of development assistance on welfare outcomes unless the links between activities and outputs, and between outputs and outcomes, has been rigorously established. Joining forces across development assistance agencies would help overcome funding problems and make the problem of attribution easier to handle by focusing on the impact of the development system rather than the contribution of a single donor.

Proposal

In response to the above considerations, OED proposes a partnership framework agreement for impact evaluation. The agreement would lay out both the institutional arrangements and a proposed programme of work jointly agreed among the partners. This note tables some ideas for discussion.

Institutional arrangements

Partner agencies would work together on joint impact evaluations in areas of common interest. Agency staff (or the personnel they contract) would be members of each evaluation team. For a start, the core donor partners would be the evaluation departments of selected partners and OED. Government officials and other local staff (e.g. from research bodies) would also be included, financed by the donor agency contributions.

For any one evaluation a lead agency would be identified. The lead role would be fixed, or rotate between evaluations. Participating agencies would be required to commit a pre-determined level of inputs to each evaluation. The structure of the evaluation would ensure a process for lessons learned for all partners through a well-thought out dissemination strategy, including the commitment of team members to make presentations to agency and government staff and to assist in preparing briefing notes. It would be expected that the proposed evaluations would substitute for evaluations proposed to be carried out by participating agencies to help reduce evaluation overload on participating countries.

Agencies would share experience on internalising the messages from the evaluations, including the diffusion of impact evaluation tools to other studies. The work programme would explicitly allow for this.

Work program

An initial work programme would be agreed for a three-year period. A start-up workshop on impact evaluation would bring together partners, evaluation team members and relevant professionals. The workshop would be an opportunity to review methodologies relevant to the provisional work program.

Possible areas to be included in the work program are: community driven development; sector wide approaches, adjustment; and country or regional impact studies. Three studies would be conducted over a three year period, with each agency committing three person months to each evaluation, plus a contribution toward the costs of non-contributing partners and for an overhead for a central dissemination budget.