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**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE**

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Working Party on Aid Evaluation

2000 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

(Note by the Chair of the Working Party on Aid Evaluation)

This annual report is submitted for INFORMATION to Members of the Working Party on Aid Evaluation and the Development Assistance Committee to enable them to monitor progress in the implementation of the work programme.

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I. Introduction

1. The Working Party on Aid Evaluation held two meetings in 2000 (10-11 February and 22-23 November), and one workshop (Tokyo, 26-28 September). Two new publications were produced in the Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness series (*Donor Support for Institutional Capacity Development in Environment: Lessons Learned* and *Effective Practices in Conducting a Joint Multi-Donor Evaluation*). In addition, a number of significant notes and work-in-progress documents were prepared and discussed, and are currently available on the WP-EV website.

2. Starting off the year on a positive note, the DAC's Review of Subsidiary Bodies, held in February 2000, reached favourable conclusions about the relevance of the WP and the quality of its work, and a high level of Member interaction throughout the year helped ensure steady progress in implementing the WP-EV work programme.

II. Promoting and facilitating joint evaluations

3. Throughout 2000 the WP-EV continued its efforts to promote joint evaluations. Facilitating joint initiatives in evaluation is part of the WP mandate, as these reduce transaction costs and speed up evaluation efforts in response to demand.

4. Among the tools developed by the WP-EV to facilitate joint evaluations are the **Evaluation Portfolio** (document available on the restricted part of the WP-EV website), which outlines ongoing and upcoming evaluations by Members of the WP, and provides a unique overview of what is to be evaluated in the development co-operation field over the next few years. The **Sector Matrix** gives an overview of Members' commitments by sector and geographical location. Both documents have been further improved during the year, and were presented at the November 2000 meeting of the WP. Both contribute to a richer information base from which to identify areas for possible joint initiatives, and thereby complement individual efforts.

5. In the summer of 2000 a guide for joint evaluations was published in the "Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness" series: *Effective Practices in Conducting a Joint Multi-Donor Evaluation*. This publication is based on discussions and experience sharing by DAC Members in the field of multi-donor evaluations. It has been elaborated over several WP meetings, and earned final approval at the February 2000 meeting. Work was led by USAID. This publication is intended to serve as a guide on how to plan and conduct joint evaluations based on lessons learned through experience. It is hence a contribution on how to implement partnership principles in the field of evaluation in practical terms.

6. A number of ongoing, planned or proposed joint evaluations were discussed by the WP during the year. Among them were:

- Transport Sector in Ghana, led by Denmark and the Government of Ghana.
- Basic Education, led by the Netherlands.
- Evaluation of UNAIDS.
- Evaluation of the three C's: Co-ordination, Complementarity and Coherence in the context of European Union aid, led by Sweden.
- A first discussion concerning SWAps as a basis for joint initiatives was initiated. It was pointed out that donors are collaborating in the implementation of these programmes and that co-ordination is a cornerstone of SWAps, making them conducive to joint efforts.
- A multi-donor recipient led evaluation, with Mozambique, UNDP, World Bank, and the Netherlands.

7. A proposal on the upcoming multi-donor evaluation of the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) was also presented at the November meeting. It was suggested that an advisory group be established as part of the governance structure of this major evaluation. A number of Members expressed strong support for the initiative and several indicated interest in taking part in the proposed advisory group.

III. Feedback for accountability and learning

8. The 1998 "Review of DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance" brought to the fore the issue of dissemination and feedback of evaluation results in Member countries. In a subsequent document, "Complementing and Reinforcing the DAC Principles for Aid Evaluation", it was concluded that feedback and communication practices need to be improved, and that evaluation results could be used more actively in order to enhance current and future aid policies and programmes.

9. To take this work forward, the Government of Japan, together with the WP-EV, hosted a workshop in Tokyo on 26-28 September 2000 entitled "Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability". The purpose of this conference was to share experiences among WP Members and other participants and to draw lessons from current practices in the area of feedback mechanisms. The workshop lasted two-and-a-half days and covered a wide range of issues related to the subject of 'feedback'.

10. It was decided at the WP-EV November 2000 meeting that, given the relevance of the topic, coupled with the high quality of both Members' contributions and the reports contributed at the workshop, a publication should be produced in the "Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness" series.

11. The Workshop and the forthcoming publication will contribute to the overall objectives of the WP-EV to improve Members' feedback practices through exchange of experience, and will hopefully serve as a guide to countries undertaking innovative steps in this area. Notably, Japan reported at the November 2000 meeting that changes had been made within the Japanese aid system in the wake of the workshop.

IV. Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms

12. During 2000, the WP-EV continued the process of updating the 1986 *Glossary of Terms used in Evaluation*. The intention is to produce a revised glossary that can help reduce terminological differences and encourage appropriate harmonisation of terms. The objective is not to reach complete harmonisation, but rather to attain a certain level of consistency in terminology used throughout the development evaluation field. The new version, entitled "Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms", includes RBM concepts in addition to evaluation terms due to the increased tendency throughout member agencies to apply RBM systems to agency operations. The development of the glossary involved an extensive consultation process, and was based on an initial database of glossaries submitted by Members. In order to meet the twin objectives of highest possible quality and consensus, it was decided at the last meeting of the Glossary Task Force to allow for one final round of comments. It is planned to present the final version to WP Members at the May 2001 meeting.

V. Strengthening the DAC's Peer Review process

13. The idea of closer collaboration between Peer Reviews and the WP-EV emerged from two sources; a "Peer Review Retreat" intended to examine the PR process, and from the February Review of Subsidiary Bodies, when a number of delegates specifically suggested closer collaboration between Peer Review and WP-EV work, with the objective of providing support and advice to the PR process. The Review of Subsidiary Bodies concluded that "...the Working Party on Aid Evaluation should continue on its present basis, with a defined role in the peer review process" (DCD/DAC/M(2000)3/PROV). It was further agreed that precise modalities should be elaborated, in consultation with the WP-EV, by the end of 2000.

14. In consultation with the Bureau of the WP-EV, the Secretariat developed a set of proposed modalities for collaboration based on earlier DAC discussions on peer reviews during the year, and these were presented and discussed at the WP-EV November meeting. The proposal for collaboration received broad support from Members and a number of them expressed interest in contributing to the initiative. A subgroup was established to take this work further in collaboration with Peer Reviews, and will report back to the WP.

VI. Results based management

15. Following the *Review of the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*, several follow-up activities were launched. One of these new areas of work is results based management (RBM) systems in the development co-operation agencies. The aim of the RBM initiative is to provide guidance, based on Members' experience, on how to develop and implement results based management in development agencies and optimise interaction with evaluation systems.

16. A draft of the first phase, *Results Based Management in the Development Co-operation Agencies: A Review of Experience* [DCD/DAC/EV(2000)3] was reviewed at the February 2000 meeting of the WP and subsequently finalised, incorporating comments from WP Members and the Secretariat. The second phase will involve the development of effective practices for establishing and operating RBM systems in agencies. This second phase will extend from October 2000 to November 2001 in order to take stock of ongoing experimentation in a rapidly evolving field.

17. A progress report will be provided at the next WP-EV meeting in May 2001, and the results of Phase Two will be presented at the November 2001 meeting.

VII. Partnership practices in evaluation

18. The DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance and the Review of the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance both emphasise the importance of partnership in evaluation. Most recently, the note Complementing and Reinforcing the Principles for Aid Evaluation: Follow-up to the Review of the DAC Evaluation Principles [DCD/DAC/EV(99)5] states that: "...to obtain more significant results, efforts to strengthen partnerships need to be promoted and guided by good practical experiences".

19. Part of the WP-EV mandate is to promote partnership in evaluation, with the aim of improving Members' evaluation activities through the sharing of experience and expertise. This principle applies to the involvement of partner countries as well as other donors. Involving partners in the evaluation process is important for promoting mutual learning and accountability, greater ownership of results and greater engagement in the development process. In addition, it helps build evaluation capacity in partner countries, another important part of the WP mandate.

20. The WP agreed in 1999 to undertake work on partnership in evaluation, and in early 2000 a project was initiated, aimed at distilling good practices for partnership in evaluation, based on the experience of Members and partners. A draft paper, *Overview of Partnership Practices in Evaluation*, was presented to Members at the February 2000 meeting. This initial study was based on a questionnaire sent out to both donor and partner countries, and a series of interviews. Members agreed that this was a useful start, but noted the need for more in-depth consultation with partners. It was also suggested that the work needed to be informed by recently-launched joint evaluation initiatives in order to reflect concrete and novel experiences.

VIII. Evaluation capacity building

21. Evaluation capacity building is an important area of work for the WP. When not directly involved in specific initiatives, the WP plays the role of facilitator by providing a forum for evaluation professionals to highlight and debate upon specific issues of concern, to form partnerships and establish contacts, and to receive feedback from their peers.

22. Three initiatives involving capacity building were presented at the WP November 2000 meeting:

- International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET); This initiative, led by the World Bank and the IFC in collaboration with Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, envisages providing evaluation training for professionals in the development field and other interested individuals. Scholarships for developing country participants have been made available to further encourage capacity building in partner countries.
- International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS); A joint initiative by the UNDP and the World Bank. Its key objectives are to foster evaluation as an instrument of public accountability and learning in development, and to promote the exchange of professional experience in development evaluation. It will be a voluntary organisation, open to individual professional evaluators and institutions as well as other interested parties from the social sciences more broadly.
- Regional Workshop and Seminar on Capacity Development for Africa (Johannesburg, 25-29 September 2000): these were organised by the African Development Bank, with the support of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the World Bank, INICEF, IDRC and the Swiss Development Agency (SDC). Fifty-six country representatives were present, as were

representatives of NGOs, universities and research institutions and the private sector, as well as 32 participants from multilateral and bilateral donor agencies. The workshop and seminar were seen as meeting their objectives to promote awareness of and demand for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of development outcomes and impacts, and to familiarise participants with the development of new approaches in M&E of human development issues.

IX. Evaluation Inventory

23. The CIDA-managed “DAC Evaluation Reports Inventory” underwent an intensive clean-up whereby duplicate records and evaluation plans from previous years were removed. A decision was made to discontinue the CD-ROM version, previously issued yearly, and rely entirely on the website as a database. A restricted section was established with access for Members only.

24. In an effort to continuously improve the inventory, CIDA is considering providing direct links between abstracts and the full texts of evaluation reports. Further technological upgrading, including expanded search facilities, are also being considered.

X. WP-EV website

25. Introduced in March 1999, the WP-EV website continues to be a useful tool for the WP. Members see it as a valuable instrument to share and disseminate WP output. The most recent stocktaking of the DCD web shows a high number of visits to the WP-EV site. In particular, WP documentation has been very popular, with two to three documents among the DAC top ten downloaded files every month since October 1999. In this category, the “Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness” series has been particularly popular since it was launched on the web in late 1999:

- *Evaluating Country Programmes* (7600 downloads).
- *Donor support for Institutional Capacity Development in Environment: Lessons Learned* (7500 downloads).

Other popular documents are:

- *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance* (2700 downloads).
- *Review of the Principles for Development Assistance* (1400 downloads).

26. The Secretariat will continue to update and improve the site. The forthcoming transfer of the OECD site to a new platform should facilitate this effort by simplifying the procedures for upkeep and updating.