



ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 1

DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

**MANAGING THE JOINT EVALUATION OF
GHANA'S ROAD SUB-SECTOR PROGRAMME:
SOME LESSONS LEARNED**

Submitted by Denmark

Agenda item No. 5

**34th meeting
22-23 May 2001**

1. The initial steps

In April 1999 Danida presented the idea of a joint evaluation of the road sub-sector. At the local donor representatives' monthly meeting in Accra the pros and cons of joint evaluations were summarized and copies of the draft "Effective Practices in Conducting a Joint Multi-Donor Evaluation" were handed out to the participants. It was explained that it would be an added advantage if the Ministry of Roads & Transport (MRT) could participate making it a true joint evaluation. The idea was well received at the meeting.

The next step was to write to the evaluation units of the main donors. This was done in late April and referring to the meeting in Accra, Danida asked for views on the overall idea, the timing and the scope of work. We suggested that the evaluation should cover the road sub-sector only (more than 90% of all transport in Ghana) and that the evaluation could be ready for the annual donors conference in November 2000. Finally, Danida declared its willingness to take a leading role.

In July, after positive responses from the other donors, Danida officially wrote to the Ministry in Accra. If MRT accepted the idea of a joint evaluation, it was suggested that the drafting of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and time schedule should take place in Accra in co-operation with the key staff of MRT in late August 1999. It was pointed out that this procedure would ensure that the Ghanaian points of view and interests were included from the very beginning. This was a strong selling point and MRT quickly accepted the proposal.

2. The Scope of Work

During the late August discussions in Accra the entire top management of MRT participated in an initial brain-storming session on the Scope of Work, even the Minister participated for some time. It was agreed that the framework for the evaluation should be the Policy Letter of February 1996 (included as Appendix 2 in the evaluation report) with its 11 sub-objectives which was the basis for a Highway Sector Investment Credit. (The sector credit became the backbone of a unique sub-sector programme covering the five years 1996-2000. It was supported by all donors active in the sector.) However, issues of special concern to the Ghanaian side were added, the uneven regional distribution of road investments being the major one.

The very first draft of the ToR was then produced and was discussed at the monthly meeting with the local donor representatives and MRT staff. The following day, at another top level meeting in MRT, adjustments were made and a draft ready for circulation was finalised.

A major obstacle had thus been overcome in just one working week thanks probably to a prior detailed knowledge of the sub-sector and its key players. There is no doubt that the participatory approach secured full Ghanaian ownership of the evaluation from the start.

3. Approval by the Partners

The draft ToR and timetable were circulated to the evaluation units in early September 1999 giving an account of the meetings in Accra. It was proposed that the evaluation should be financed by voluntary contributions. The input was estimated to approximately 20 person-months and a total cost not exceeding 400,000 USD.

Many useful and constructive comments came in from the donors, but it took time and a second draft could not be circulated before 10 November 1999. It had been agreed to hold a first "Steering Committee (SC) Meeting" in Accra on 15 November, the day before start of the annual donors conference. At the SC meeting a few corrections were made, and the final ToR were then ready for presentation and approval at the conference. (The ToR are included as Appendix 1 in the evaluation report).

It had been decided that all participating donors: Denmark, Germany, UK, Japan, the Netherlands, AfDB, EU and the World Bank plus MRT should be members of the SC, which was formed to oversee the evaluation. A smaller Implementation Committee (IC) – Denmark, the Netherlands, World Bank and MRT – was formed in order to take care of the “day-to-day” management of the evaluation. MRT and Denmark co-chaired both committees.

In the presentation of the evaluation at the conference one main remaining problem was underlined: Who should carry out the evaluation study? Although efforts had been made in the months before to find consultants with relevant experience, most of the consultants proposed had been working on road assignments in Ghana in the period under evaluation. Finding independent and impartial consultants proved to be the biggest obstacle.

4. Selecting the Evaluation Team

In the original timetable it was planned to send invitations out immediately after the annual conference and get the bids in just before Christmas. However, finding and clearing the consulting companies took time. The nine companies on the long list were ranked according to the following criteria, quoted directly from the communication to the SC:

- Evaluation Experience: It is very important that the firm knows the field of evaluation and has produced evaluation reports of good quality.
- Wide Experience covering Scope of Work: To avoid small firms who form groups of free lance consultants to do the job.
- Lead Firm’s Capacity to establish Core Team from Own Staff: Almost the same philosophy, a homogeneous team was preferable.
- Impartiality and Independence of Road Sector Works in Ghana: It is crucial to a good evaluation that the firm is not involved in the activities that are going to be evaluated.
- Regional Experience: Essential knowledge of the region is important.

According to the Danida rules and regulations, which the SC had agreed to use since Danida would be the contract holder, only three firms could be invited. Three firms scored well on all five criteria: Netherlands Economic Institute (NEI), Nordic Consulting Group from Denmark, and Scott Wilson + ITT, UK. The rest of the firms were either too small or had not indicated any previous evaluation experience.

The Tender Committee met in Copenhagen 18-19 January 2000. The committee consisted of the four members of the IC minus WB – who participated by e-mail – plus a representative from Danida’s contracts department. The technical proposal counted 20 per cent, the consultants’ proposed staff counted 50 percent and the financial proposal 30 per cent. After two days of lively discussions the result was that the committee proposed that contract negotiations should be started with NEI having the highest overall score. The WB representatives’ independent evaluation of the bids gave the same result. The note from the Tender Committee was circulated to all SC members.

On 14 February Danida signed two contracts with NEI. The main contract totalled 2,746,533 DKK while a smaller one covering the trainee, a transport economist, amounted 50,423 DKK. In addition to the two contracts there were expenditures to be covered in relation to MRT officials participation in SC meetings outside Ghana plus printing and distribution of the final report. These costs were estimated not to exceed 150,000 DKK. The total estimated costs amounted to 2,950,000 DKK or slightly less than 400,000 USD at the exchange rate at mid-February (7.52 DKK/USD).

5. Financing the Evaluation

Dividing the total costs of the evaluation evenly between eight donors gave a figure of 50,000 USD per donor. However, not all donors were able to contribute financially or preferred to second consultants to NEI’s team. The IC therefore suggested that each donor who could contribute financially should pay between 50,000 and 75,000 USD according to budget and other constraints.

It was, however, more difficult than that. Donors have various degrees of bureaucracy when it comes to transfer of funds, and although the first contribution arrived in April 2000, Danida has not received the final one yet because that donor needs proof of Danida's final payments to NEI and the last invoice is still outstanding. Some donors required only a letter from Danida before funds were released, others had to have complicated agreements signed by both parties.

The final result will be that six donors have contributed with between 50,000 and 75,000 USD each, and one donor has financed the contract specialist attached to NEI's team because it was the only way it could contribute. (He was indeed a valuable addition, but it is definitely easier if donors contribute in cash instead of kind).

6. The Evaluation Study

In the evaluation report the consultants give a one-page presentation of their activities between the start of the desk study phase in February and the presentation of the final report at the 2000 Donors Conference in Accra nine months later. (Attached as Annex 1 to this paper)

The key staff on NEI's team had not worked in Ghana before and an initial fact-finding visit was therefore included in NEI's proposal. Packed with reports and written material the core team returned to the Netherlands where the desk study was initiated. During that phase visits were made to Copenhagen and Washington, the rest of the data collection was carried out during the field trips to Ghana.

In April the full NEI team started the field work and on 26 April their inception report was presented at a workshop in MRT in Accra. The attendance was good, 30-35 persons from MRT the three road agencies, the donors and the team itself. At the subsequent SC meeting the conclusion was that "the consultants were on the right track and had a good understanding of the task as well as a good rapport with the local stakeholders".

The SC meeting was attended by six persons of which only three were evaluation unit representatives, the rest being operational staff (who participated in a very constructive way). The next SC was scheduled to end of June where NEI should present their outline draft report and donors were urged to send evaluation staff for this meeting which was thought to be more crucial to the outcome of the evaluation than the April meeting.

However, the workshop and the SC meeting in late June was attended by the same three "evaluators" and only one operational staff. Most donors had regretted that because of the holiday season or other missions they were not able to attend. The period from mid-June to early September is difficult when it comes to bringing together many people and to get response to draft reports etc. The ToR had not taken this into account.

In this particular case it was not as disastrous as it sounds as the consultants had not been able to deliver what was agreed. Instead of an outline draft report NEI had produced a Draft Annex Report containing the facts on which the Draft Report was going to be built. The task of collecting and analysing the data had simply been underestimated by NEI.

According to the contract the next SC was due to be held in November, just before the annual donors conference. The SC, however, did not favour the idea of not having a possibility to meet and discuss the Draft Report. It was therefore agreed to include an extra SC meeting in September where the Draft Report could be presented by NEI. It was agreed to cover NEI's extra costs in connection with the unforeseen meeting.

Mid-August the consultants delivered the Draft Report as agreed. Most donors (but not MRT and the road agencies) commented on the report which was presented at a two-day workshop in Accra on 26 and 27 September. The workshop was attended by around 80 persons including four "evaluators" representing the donor side. Most participants were from MRT and the three road agencies and if they have had difficulties in putting their comments on paper, they had no difficulties at all expressing their comments at the workshop. The discussion was lively, sometimes very lively. As had been the case at

previous workshops, MRT's Chief Director chaired the workshop. One of the main lessons learned is that written comments from the local authorities – even the SC member – are almost non-existent and the only way to get feed back is through workshops.

At the donors conference mid-November one of the many items on the agenda was the presentation of the Final Report by the team leader from NEI. The SC had met the day before the conference and approved the report with only a few comments. Many participants, including the Minister, expressed satisfaction over the successful outcome of the joint exercise. The Government of Ghana was in the process of formulating a new policy letter for the sub-sector and it was the expressed hope of several speakers that the findings of the evaluation would be used in the final formulation and that a follow up on the evaluation would take place at the 2001 donors conference.

7. Publishing the Evaluation Report

Originally, it was the intention that NEI should produce the evaluation report and each donor could then – if they wished – publish the report in their own series of publications. After the donors conference, it was proposed that Danida – being the lead donor in the process – published the main report in its own series of evaluation studies with the logos of all the donors plus the national flag of Ghana on the cover. The comprehensive annexes were included on a CD-ROM. However, as not all stakeholders were able to use CD-ROMs the consultants distributed a limited number of paper copies of the annexes.

8. Lessons learned

- It is important to have a strong “mover” in a joint evaluation process. Although the chairmanship was divided between Danida and MRT, Danida did most of the communication with donors and MRT from Copenhagen between SC meetings, while MRT arranged and chaired everything in Ghana: workshops, SC meetings etc. MRT's representative was, however, also a key figure in selection of the consultants.
- Preparing the ToR in close co-operation with the ministry's officials secured joint ownership from the start. Co-sharing the SC and IC added to this, and finally, holding all meetings and workshops in Ghana completed the picture.
- Good communication infrastructure is important. One of the reasons for this division of labour was the absence of internet access in MRT. Furthermore, faxing to and from MRT was difficult, so Danida often had to use the Danish Embassy in Accra as go-between. With one quarter of the IC partly incommunicado in Accra due to technical problems, the second quarter in Washington with a six hours time difference, the remaining half of the IC in the Hague and Copenhagen had a lot of informal exchanges of information and ideas over the telephone. The Netherlands also participated in all SC meetings in Accra, sometimes as the only other donor “evaluator”. This tandem work was very useful and can be recommended for similar situations.
- SC meetings should preferably be held in the partner country. Although it is fruitful to have operational staff attending the meetings, the majority of participants should come from HQs evaluation units.
- It is difficult to get written comments from ministries and agencies in the partner country. Well structured workshops supplemented with person-to-person interviews gave the necessary feedback to the evaluation team.
- Donors have various degrees of bureaucracy when it comes to contributing. It is indeed easier if all participation donors can contribute in cash instead of kind.
- The evaluation time was limited to one year between two donor conferences and furthermore the evaluation findings were needed as input to the negotiations on further sub-sector funding. It would have been more satisfying to have had more time for the study. The consultants could then have carried out more field studies to supplement the data already existing. Especially, data on poverty alleviation and gender aspects were very scarce.

ANNEX 1

Joint Evaluation of the Road Sub-Sector Programme in Ghana: The Timetable

April 1999:	The idea of a joint evaluation is discussed with donors' local representatives and Ministry of Roads & Transport (MRT) key staff at the monthly sub-sector donor meeting in Accra.
End of April 1999:	Letters are set to donors' evaluation departments proposing the idea and indicating that Danida is willing to take the lead.
July 1999:	With positive response from donors, MRT is approached officially with proposal of joint evaluation using arguments from DACs Joint Evaluation Paper: Main benefit to MRT: Only one evaluation, instead of seven.
August 1999:	Danida and MRT jointly formulates first draft of ToR during one week in Accra.
September 1999:	ToR and timetable circulated to all parties for comments. Danida's Evaluation Guidelines proposed as basis.
November 1999:	Final ToR approved on the annual donors conference in Accra. Biggest outstanding problem: to find independent consulting company. Steering Committee (SC) (8 members) and Implementation Committee (IC)(4 members) formed. GoG and Danida co-chairing both committees.
Mid-December 1999:	Letters of invitation to three companies.
Mid-January 2000:	Tender evaluation by IC takes place in Copenhagen. Netherlands Economic Institute (NEI) wins the contract (approx. 380,000 USD to be financed by voluntary contributions).
February-June 2000.	Field work in three stages and writing of background annexes. Visit to WB and Danida HQ only, rest covered locally. Two SC meetings in Accra.
August 2000:	First Draft Report circulated.
September 2000:	80 stakeholders – GoG, donors, private sector and NGOs – discuss draft report at workshop in Accra. Workshop followed by third SC meeting.
Early November 2000:	Final Draft Report circulated.
13. November 2000:	SC approves report.
15.-17. November 2000:	At the annual donors conference the findings of the report are presented.
End of January 2001.	Evaluation Report distributed to partners.

ANNEX 2

Joint Evaluation of the Road Sub-Sector Programme in Ghana

<i>Phases</i>	<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Brief description of activities</i>
Inception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Team mobilisation ▲ Develop work plan ▲ Initial visit to Ghana 	At the beginning of the project the Evaluation Team was mobilised and a work plan, including a detailed planning, was formulated. A first mission to Ghana took place (February) to make working arrangements with Government officials and local consultants, and to gather information.
Desk study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Review written materials ▲ Define evaluation indicators for field study 	The next step was to review all relevant and available written materials (February-March). Local staff has assisted in gathering relevant documents from February 1996 to date in close co-operation with MRT and the agencies.
Field study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Second and third mission to Ghana ▲ Inception Report ▲ 1. and 2. Steering Committee meeting ▲ Interviews with stakeholders ▲ Visits to regions and districts ▲ Draft Annex Report ▲ Workshop 	In April the field study started. This consisted of a review of all relevant materials in Ghana, interviews with relevant stakeholders. Two missions took place, one in April and one in June. In this phase the Inception Report and the Draft Annex Report were produced, followed by the first and second Steering Committee meeting respectively. In addition a workshop was organised in the start of the field study.
Analysis & reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Additional analysis ▲ Draft Evaluation Report ▲ Collecting comments ▲ Fourth mission to Ghana ▲ 3. Steering Committee meeting ▲ Workshop 	On return to the Netherlands all material was analysed. Based on the information from the Draft Annex Report a Draft Evaluation Report was produced. During the fourth mission (September) comments were collected and the second workshop was organised.
Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Evaluation Report ▲ Fifth mission to Ghana ▲ Final Steering Committee meeting ▲ Donor Conference 	Based on comments gathered at the fourth mission, a final Evaluation Report was produced. The Evaluation Report was presented and discussed at the Donor Conference (November). For this purpose a fifth and final visit to Ghana is scheduled. It is envisaged to organise a third workshops aimed at discussing lessons learned.