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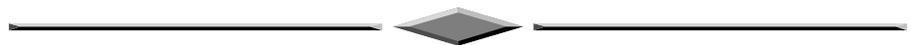
DAC Network on Development Evaluation

JOINT EVALUATIONS: RECENT EXPERIENCES, LESSONS LEARNED AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

First Progress Report

Item IV: a

This note has been prepared by Horst Breier, consultant, for consideration at the meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation on 9 – 10 November, 2004.



**2nd meeting
9 – 10 November 2004**

JOINT EVALUATIONS: RECENT EXPERIENCES, LESSONS LEARNED AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

1st PROGRESS REPORT

1. At its first meeting in Paris on 15-16 January, 2004, the DAC Network on Development Evaluation agreed to collectively proceed with a new study on joint evaluations. This study would build on previous work, especially on “Effective Practices in Conducting a Joint Multi-Donor Evaluation”, published in the Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness Series of the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation in 2000, and would update and broaden it to incorporate recent experiences and new issues. As the body of knowledge about joint evaluations grows rapidly, members of the DAC Evaluation Network argued, the need becomes more acute to review in a comprehensive and systematic way recent experience with joint evaluations, including emerging issues and new challenges. Also, the changing environment for international co-operation for development and new paradigms for development co-operation strategies and modalities, including new and innovative forms of aid (SWAPs, basket financing, GBS) lead to additional challenges for evaluation, imply more, rather than less joint efforts, and therefore increase the urgency to take stock of the current evidence with joint evaluations. Consequently, an in-depth analysis and a rigorous assessment of recent experiences in joint evaluations could contribute to a better understanding of the benefits as well as of the costs of joint evaluations.

2. On 12 May, 2004, Hans Lundgren of the Review and Evaluation Division of the Development Co-operation Directorate of the OECD informed the members of the DAC Evaluation Network, that the financing of the study had been secured through the generous commitment of contributions from Austria, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, and that work would start in the beginning of June. He also informed members, that Horst Breier, the former Head of Evaluation of the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation (BMZ) in Bonn, Germany, had been engaged as consultant to lead the work.

3. Work started in early June with a series of fact finding missions of the consultant to the OECD and to the capitals of a number of the members of the DAC with a view to obtaining a better idea of the range of activities, covered under the term of joint evaluations, recent developments in this field, and approaches to joint evaluations, both at the policy level of aid agencies and in evaluation units. So far, about a hundred interviews were conducted with representatives of ten member countries¹ and nine international organisations, including the UN and the MFIs.² These visits were also helpful in obtaining relevant documentation relating to questions of joint evaluations, including papers unpublished so far, or documents of a more informal nature and therefore purely for background information.

4. It was also decided that the consultant would widen the range of interlocutors beyond the representatives of official aid agencies and would include representatives of NGOs, research institutions and, not least, of consultancy firms which had been actively involved in the implementation of joint evaluations and could therefore contribute from a practitioner’s point of view. So far, these discussions have shown to be of significant value in adding to the knowledge of joint evaluations and their underlying processes; the interviews with the consultants contributed a number of pertinent observations on how to improve the working arrangements between groups of donors sponsoring a joint evaluation, and the

1. Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America

2. Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Monetary Fund, International Planned Parenthood Federation, OECD, World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA

consultants commissioned with the actual implementation of it, including critical reflections on consortia of consultants and how they are being established and perform.

5. A few more missions to member country capitals in the weeks to come have either already been firmly set up or are planned to round off the fact finding phase of the work carried out so far. Also, the possibility of a short and succinct questionnaire for all members of the Evaluation Network is currently being explored to help with the systematic collection of necessary, relatively basic data on the subject matter, which are not readily available at present. Questions would include: the number of joint evaluations; the composition of and the division of labour among groups of sponsors of joint evaluations; the process to use the results of joint evaluations in agencies (as compared to own evaluations) and the use actually made; joint evaluations or similar activities carried out at the partner country level, with or without knowledge of agency headquarters; administrative impediments to taking part in joint evaluations; etc.

6. As already underlined in the outline paper for the study distributed by the OECD Secretariat on 12 May, 2004, the inclusion of the views of representatives of partner countries who were personally involved in the conduct of joint evaluation activities, will be of particular importance for the value of this work. Therefore, one element of the fact finding phase for the study so far has been to obtain and collect the names of partner country representatives who could be invited to a workshop in the first quarter of next year to discuss key issues emerging from this work. Such issues would pertain to questions of ownership, including the early involvement of partners in the drafting of terms of reference and in the selection of consultants; innovative forms and new models of joint evaluative work at the country level, e. g. in the context of sector wide approaches; the harmonisation of procedures; transaction costs, including a thorough look at the political economy of joint evaluations; the roles of consultants, recruited internationally and locally; etc. A dozen names or so from 8 countries³ have been listed up to now, and more will be added as they come. Presently, opportunities to organise this workshop in a partner country are being explored.

7. It is clearly too early in the process for an attempt to presenting any tentative findings or conclusions. However, work so far has shown that there are a number of new or more pressing issues now, emerging from the interviews and the literature analysis, that warrant closer attention, additional in-depth analysis and further reflection. These include:

- The linkages between joint evaluations and the DAC agenda on harmonisation and alignment as well as on demonstrating developmental results of the common aid effort;
- Questions arising from a wide range of different definitions of joint evaluations and the need for a typology;
- The role of joint evaluations for accountability and learning, including the degree of commitment to evaluation results and to their implementation;
- The setting of standards for joint evaluations, including independence, impartiality, relevance, timeliness, etc;
- Governance structures for joint evaluations, their efficiency and effectiveness, delegation of power, silent partnerships, etc.;
- The political economy of joint evaluations, both from the donors' and the partners' point of view;

3. Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nepal, Romania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia

- The partner country level as a new arena of joint evaluation work, the types of activities emerging, and the linkages between country and headquarter level;
- The selection and management of consultants and their consortia.

8. It has obviously not been possible yet, to define, in any detail, the structure of the report to emerge from this work. However, there are four main chapters which are presently being envisaged, i. e.:

- a) Vital data on joint evaluations and a typology of them;
- b) Description of recent experiences, analysis of them, findings and conclusions;
 - i) Lessons learned, with particular emphasis on practical guidance and updating the previous study on Effective Practices in Conducting a Joint Multi-Donor Evaluation;
 - ii) Options for the future, with special emphasis on most of the issues mentioned under paragraph 7 above.

The introductory chapter would be used to contextualize this work, both in regard to the DAC agenda and to the changing environment and the new paradigms for development co-operation. Annexes would be kept to the absolute minimum necessary, such as a list of persons met, references, perhaps a summary record of the partner workshop planned, and similar.

9. The first full draft of the study will be ready in spring 2005 for consultation with and guidance from the sponsors of the evaluation and those members of the Evaluation Network who had expressed their interest at the meeting in January 2004 to play an active part in this work. Following the incorporation of any revisions necessary, the draft report could then be submitted to the June meeting 2005 of the DAC Network on Evaluation.