



ROOM DOCUMENT 10

Synthesis of Responses to the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support Survey

This report has been prepared by DFID for consideration at the 7th meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 20 – 21 February 2008.

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Introduction

1. May 2006 marked the publication of the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support (JEGBS). It was commissioned by a consortium of over twenty donor agencies and seven partner governments under the umbrella of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation. This evaluation examined to what extent, and under what circumstances, Partnership General Budget Support (PGBS) is relevant, efficient and effective for achieving sustainable impacts on poverty reduction and growth.

2. It was probably one of the largest joint evaluations ever undertaken by donors under DAC and has been widely seen as an important addition to the evidence base on budget support. It took over two years to complete, cost approximately USD \$ 4 million and evaluated spending of nearly USD \$4 billion in seven partner countries over a period of ten years.

3. At the fifth meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network it was agreed that one year after the publication of this major evaluation a survey of donors and governments that participated in the evaluation should take place to enable the Evaluation Network to learn from one another with respect to how the JEGBS was received and disseminated and to gauge the level of impact the findings have had and will have on our organisations.

4. This brief paper provides some highlights from this survey a more detailed matrix of the findings will be made available on the OECD DAC Evaluation Network website alongside the full survey responses.

Who was asked to fill out the survey?

5. The survey was primarily filled out by the people responsible for aid instruments/budget support policy and guidance in donor agencies; and by people from policy analysis departments or aid co-ordination units in partner country governments.

SECTION 1 - What were the main findings from the donor survey?

Who responded to the survey?

6. Eighteen donors responded to the survey. Bi-lateral respondents included: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The multi-lateral respondents included the AfDB and the EC

7. How did the donor organisations disseminate the evaluation and its recommendations?

8. A multitude of different dissemination methods were employed by the donor organisations¹. The reported methods included:

Exhibit 1

Method employed	No. of Donors	Pct
Presentation/Dissemination to relevant staff	15	83%
Internet/Intranet dissemination	14	78%
Official memo/Presentation to senior management	10	56%
Presentation/Dissemination to heads of country offices	7	39%
Presentation to Parliamentarians	6	33%
Dissemination to other government ministries or departments	6	33%
Presentations to NGOs/CSOs	5	28%
Presentations included at training courses	3	17%
Press briefings	2	11%
Tailored briefing papers	2	11%

9. As can be seen from exhibit 1 “presentation and dissemination to relevant staff” and “Internet/Intranet dissemination” were the most commonly employed dissemination methods with 83% and 78% of the respondents reporting using these particular methods. The eight donors that reported employing a minimum of five of these methods included: Sweden, Canada, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the EC.

10. Of the 31 recommendations stemming from the evaluation which did the donor organisations report as the most important?

11. All of the donor respondents reported finding the majority of the recommendations useful. Nonetheless, when asked to prioritise which five recommendations were deemed the most important by their organisation five from the list of 31 proved to be the most popular. These included:

Exhibit 2

	Recommendation	No. of Donors	Pct
6a	Develop aid strategies to optimise complementarity between aid instruments, including budget support at country and sector level. (6.59)	11	61%
1c	Do not overload PGBS with unrealistic objectives or with too many reform tasks (6.30)	6	33%
2c	Strengthen the policy analysis, budgeting and expenditure management capacities of line ministries as well as finance ministries. (6.28)	6	33%
3a	Focus more on income poverty and growth implications of public policy and expenditures, and on how PGBS can complement other modalities in that area. (6.14)	6	33%
1d	Keep a focus on its central role in strengthening public expenditure management (6.30)	5	28%

¹ Over and above the OECD DAC dissemination conference held in Paris in May 2006

12. The rationale behind why 6a was deemed one of the more important recommendations varied. One donor reported that optimising the complementarity between their other aid instruments (especially projects) and budget support was something that they needed to improve on; another found that it helped reinforce their organisations understanding of the importance that budget support plays within a set of complementary activities; whilst one donor found it a useful recommendation as they are currently in the process of phasing in PGBS and it will help them define their approach (mixing it with SBS and noting how other donors are providing their support).

13. Of the recommendations stemming from the evaluation which did donor organisations find not to be useful or reject?

14. Of the donor respondents to the survey only three rejected or found some of the recommendations not very useful. These were primarily related to the recommendations on performance assessment and conditions.

Exhibit 3

	Recommendations rejected or found not to be useful	No. of Donors
4d	Decisions to increase or reduce levels of PGBS support should mainly be based on medium-term assessments of overall performance. (6.54)	2
4c	Performance assessment systems should track the implementation of strategies as well as the achievement of results. (6.54)	1
5a	Retain the IMF’s role in monitoring, reporting and advising on macro-economic performance, but do not link all PGBS funds to the IMF’s own conditions. (6.75)	1
4e	Take a pragmatic, country-by-country approach to supporting cross-cutting issues through PGBS. (6.16)	1

15. The two donors that rejected recommendation 4d cited the fact that their organisation deems PGBS as highly sensitive to political and fiduciary risks and should therefore be linked to performance-based incentives and disbursement decisions made on an annual basis rather than on medium term assessments.

16. Overall what did the donor organisations think about the *usefulness* of the recommendations?

17. Six (33%) of the donor respondents found the recommendations “very useful” whilst the remaining twelve (66%) donors classified the evaluations’ recommendations as “useful”.

18. Several of the respondents noted that the recommendations were very helpful when designing policy or operational documents. It was also noted by one of the respondents that the recommendations acted to endorse current thinking in the area and ensured certain elements were not overlooked.

19. Several donors thought that some of the recommendations were overly high level and would have benefited from being more specific – although other respondents noted that this would have been a challenging task.

20. Have any of the recommendations been incorporated into *policy* documents?

21. Eight donors (44%) have already incorporated several of the recommendations into their PGBS policy documents. Two respondents (11%) have incorporated some of the recommendations into related policy documents; for example policy papers on fiduciary risk and conditionality. Seven donors (39%) reported that they will incorporate several of the recommendations stemming from the evaluation at the next iteration of relevant policy documents. Only one donor reported not incorporating the recommendations into their policy documents – but did state that the recommendations are referenced in some of their grant assistance documentation.²

22. Have any of the recommendations been incorporated into *operational* documents?

23. Ten donors (56%) reported that they had already incorporated findings from the JEGBS into their operational documents – especially guidance on country strategy papers. Three donors reported that they will incorporate findings and recommendations from the evaluation when the operational documents are next due for review. Four donors responded that they would consider incorporating some of the recommendations when their policy documents are next due for review and one responded that they had no current plans to incorporate the recommendations into their operational documents.³

24. Have monitoring systems been put in place to enable the effective tracking of the implementation of recommendations by the donor organisations?

25. Three donors reported having specific monitoring systems in place to enable the tracking of the implementation of the recommendations to take place. Half of the donors (9) reported that their current M & E systems enabled the partial tracking of the recommendations. Two reported that they had no systems in place to do this at present and four reported that they did not plan on tracking the recommendations, either due to the size of the agency and their PGBS programme or because they did not find them overly relevant.

26. Additional comments relating to the evaluations' findings, the way it was disseminated, its relevance/impact or any other issues

27. Some of the additional comments included:

- Further evaluations of PGBS will be required in the future as public and parliamentary interest increases – especially examining its impact.

² For specific examples of recommendations incorporated into policy documents see the 'survey matrix' on-line.

³ Ibid

- The country specific recommendations were very useful and considered in detail by country offices.
- The wide dissemination of this in-depth study has assisted smaller donors with evidence to convince domestic stakeholders of the viability of new approaches (i.e. Treasury and audit departments)
- It was too early for the evaluation to make observations on poverty reduction.
- The DAC would be welcomed to lead developing more coherent portfolios - finding synergies between projects and GBS activities.
- The DAC should also be encouraged to follow up on PGBS reporting statistics
- This survey has acted as a useful reminder of the recommendations and their usefulness.

SECTION 2 – What were the main findings from the Country Survey?

Who responded to the survey?

28. The country case study respondents comprised of Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Vietnam.

29. How did the country case study respondents go about disseminating the evaluation and its recommendations?

30. Of the three respondents dissemination methods varied. One was highly active in its dissemination methods including a two day workshop with the consultants; the minister of finance and budget; as well as sector ministries. In addition to this they went on mission to Mozambique to discuss aid management methodologies.

31. One of the other country offices undertook direct government- donor discussions both face to face and electronically. The other country respondent noted that they were expecting a Video Conference with the consultants on the study, however, it never materialised – though they noted that they had had discussions with donors.

32. Did the recommendations from the Evaluation lead to any changes with respect to the PGBS programme or were any changes anticipated?

33. Two of the country respondents noted that they felt that the quality of donor government dialogue improved after the publication and dissemination of the JEGBS.

34. Were any of the recommendations deemed particularly important?

35. Each country case study was given a set of tailored recommendations. However, some overlap was evident. Two recommendations were found to be equally important by two of the country governments, these were:

- the “*Need to develop medium to long term commitments to PGBS*”; and
- “*Ensure full alignment of donor TA and support to PFM*”

36. The other three highest ranking priorities for the country governments included:

- “*Further develop the mutual accountability framework and tidy up the conditionality content and process*”;
- “*Define sector policies clearly as frameworks for aligning all aid*”;
- “*Prioritise analytical work to support linking PRSC policy activities to the Government’s Social Economic Development Plan*”.

37. Were there any recommendations that were questioned or rejected by the country governments?

38. None of the recommendations from the country studies were rejected – overall they were found to be useful

39. Did the country governments notice any change in the donors approach to delivering PGBS subsequent to the findings of the evaluation being published?

40. Two of the country government respondents noted that there had been a change in donor behaviour subsequent to the publication of the evaluations recommendations. These included:

- Increased consultation when defining the terms of disbursements.
- More flexibility in evaluations taking into account pressures on government.
- More regular and franker high-level dialogue on the question of corruption.
- Greater alignment to government regulations
- Longer term financial commitments – helping the governments planning processes.

41. Overall did the country case study respondents find the recommendations of the evaluation useful?

42. Overall two respondents reported finding the recommendations useful and one reported finding the recommendations very useful.

43. Additional comments relating to the evaluations' findings, the way it was disseminated, its relevance/impact or any other issues

44. Some of the additional comments included:

- Although the evaluation was necessary it would have been better if it could have been combined with other evaluations.
- A report disseminating best practice in PGBS would be well received allowing recipient countries to sidestep difficulties encountered in other countries.
- Are there plans for a follow up evaluation – will this evaluation act as the baseline to future studies?