



# THE DAC NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

## ILLUMINATING DEVELOPMENT RESULTS AND CHALLENGES

FACTSHEET

**T**he Network on Development Evaluation is a unique international forum bringing together evaluation managers and specialists from development co-operation agencies in OECD DAC member countries and multilateral development institutions. The network's goal is to increase the effectiveness of development co-operation policies and programmes by promoting high-quality, independent evaluation. It serves as a platform for learning and co-ordination, and enables members to work together to improve the quality of evaluations and harmonise evaluation processes.

As a subsidiary body of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the Evaluation Network develops guidance and standards for practical application. It also hosts the DAC Evaluation Resource Centre (DEReC), a user-friendly online database containing a significant number of evaluation reports by all major bilateral donors and seven multilateral institutions. The network actively supports joint and collaborative evaluations – evaluations that are undertaken by more than one agency or in collaboration with a developing country. Joint evaluations are encouraged because they have the potential to bring better harmonisation, lower transaction costs, a broader scope for understanding development impacts and greater opportunities for capacity development. The network meets every nine months, and its task teams meet in between as needed. Its work is supported by a secretariat, housed in the Development Co-operation Directorate of the OECD in Paris, France.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION NETWORK

- To help the evaluation community make vital contributions to improved development outcomes, strengthening member evaluation systems and improving the quality of development evaluations
- To improve harmonisation, alignment and co-ordination of evaluation work, especially by facilitating joint evaluations
- To share good practice and develop useful guidance, standards and norms to inform development evaluation policy and practice
- To support evaluation capacity development in partner countries

#### WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION?

Evaluation rigorously assesses the significance and worth of development projects, policies, and programmes. Evaluations explain how activities have affected people's lives and help us better understand how development goals can be reached. This evidence supports transparency and accountability and can be used to improve ongoing and future programmes.

#### NETWORK MEMBERS:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, and the United Nations Development Programme.

## THE EVALUATION NETWORK MEMBERS AND WHAT THEY DO

Members include evaluation departments in the development co-operation agencies of all 24 DAC members, as well as the evaluation units of seven multilateral development banks and institutions. Other partners, including developing countries and civil society groups, attend meetings as observers or participate on specific projects of mutual interest.

Although evaluation departments and their roles may vary, they all work to improve performance and support accountability by evaluating development co-operation initiatives. Together, members of the Evaluation Network produce nearly 700 evaluations per year, covering such diverse

topics as road construction, security sector reform and Guinea worm eradication. These evaluations often focus on major themes (such as gender equity or climate change) or look at a portfolio of activities in a particular sector (such as health or agriculture). Many member evaluation units also undertake evaluations of country programmes, which review efforts to support the achievement of development goals in a single country over several years. Some evaluation units are also charged with assessing the work of NGOs or multilateral institutions funded by their agency.

### LEARNING ABOUT WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T WORK AND WHY

Evaluation can help us better understand how to achieve development goals – how to get more children educated or improve access to clean water in rural communities. Evaluations provide useful information about which programmes work best and help explain what factors contribute to their success or failure. But it is not enough for evaluators to investigate these topics: their findings must be shared and used. To support the use of evaluation evidence, the Evaluation Network's online **DAC Evaluation Resource Centre (DEReC)** provides easy access to member evaluation reports and studies. On DEReC, evaluations can be browsed by topic, country or donor, and full texts can be downloaded for free. About 30 new reports are added each month – making DEReC an increasingly comprehensive source for the latest in development evaluation thinking.

[www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork/derec](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork/derec)

## RESOURCES FROM THE EVALUATION NETWORK

Based on a broad international consensus, the **DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation** (OECD, 2010) is a reference guide to good practice in development evaluation. With a view to improving the quality of evaluation processes and products, and facilitating collaboration, this guide lays out standards for each phase of a typical evaluation process: from defining purpose, to planning, implementing, and reporting results.

**Development Evaluation Resources and Systems: A Study of Network Members** (OECD, 2010) takes stock of how the evaluation process is managed and resourced in development agencies. It includes an analysis of current trends as well as individual evaluation profiles for each development agency and is part of the Better Aid series.

The **Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities** (OECD, 2008) features emerging best practices for evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding projects. This guidance seeks to contribute to knowledge about what works in these challenging fields and why, by providing direction to those undertaking evaluations in conflict-affected contexts.



To consult documents or for further information on our work, please visit the evaluation website:  
[www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork)