



ROOM DOCUMENT

Agenda Item VII, iii

APPLYING THE DRAFT GUIDANCE ON EVALUATING CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING ACTIVITIES – ONGOING EVALUATIONS

This document has been prepared by the lead agencies for the various evaluations for information at the 9th meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 15-16 June 2009.

9th meeting

15 - 16 June 2009

Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities – working draft

Four Network-led evaluations are using or have used the *Draft Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities* (OECD, 2008) in the process and implementation of the evaluations. Two evaluations are near finalisation, Haiti and Sri Lanka, and two are ongoing, Sudan and DRC.

Evaluation of Norwegian support to peacebuilding in Haiti

The purpose of the evaluation of Norwegian support to peace building in Haiti is to assess whether Norway has, with its transitional assistance, contributed to increased security and stability in Haiti, and whether gains achieved are likely to be sustainable. The evaluation also looks at how the Norwegian assistance is carried out and what forms the basis of decision-making processes in the Norwegian MFA.

The period for the evaluation is from 1998-2008. It covers interventions in Haiti that are funded by Norway and that are implemented by Norwegian and international NGOs, national institutions, the UN and Norwegian research institutions.

The evaluation has been carried out with the request to apply the draft *OECD DAC Guidance on Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*.

Final report is expected towards the end of July/beginning of August.

Feed-back on the guidance from the evaluation team:

The OECD Guidance was very useful in helping the evaluation team think through many issues relating to Norwegian support to peacebuilding in Haiti. However, the usefulness of the Guidance does fall short in this specific case because it concentrates on *inter-state* coordination but offers little insight on the importance of coordination and maximization of expertise between national agencies in the partner country, both in the implementation and in the evaluation phases.

Section 3.3 of the Guidance offers the following advice:

- Identify the implementation logic and theory of change
- Deal with missing baselines and other gaps
- Gather data
- Examine the effort using various criteria
- Look at the big picture.
- Base the analysis on a conflict analysis

All of the advice were pertinent for the evaluation team and constitute sound technical and organizational indications for achieving evaluation results. The Haiti evaluation did however reveal how missing or weak elements either impose a considerable burden on the evaluation team or may jeopardize major evaluative processes, such as:

- Absence of a comprehensive and accessible overview of components of the recipient country's portfolio imposes a considerable burden on resources as implementation logic and theory of change are not readily apparent to external analysts;

- Non-traditional monitoring approaches may have had positive effects in producing expeditious decisions and actions, but they leave little information trails on which to build or recreate baselines or information gaps;
- In conflict prevention and peacebuilding, traditional evaluation criteria may not always apply. At least two factors in the Haiti study could document this position:
 - The urgency, real or assessed by decision-makers, of implementing actions and projects is not conducive to setting up all necessary tools for planning, monitoring and ultimately evaluating the projects. The burden of risk could be viewed as shared by decision-makers at the time of the implementation but rests solely on evaluators during the evaluation phase, especially when traditional criteria do not “fit”.
 - This is especially the case for the “impact” criteria which acquires a very different meaning when dealing with politically oriented interventions loosely tied to development objectives. Furthermore the short historical depth of projects after 2006 included in the Haiti evaluation could not yield significant information on results. So that not only should the guidance recommend mix-methods but it should also indicate the need for mix-approaches (classic evaluation and process analysis in this case).
- The most significant problem the evaluation team has faced during this evaluation is the apparent absence of a conflict analysis by any agency involved in Haiti. The existing methods that the evaluation team are familiar with (DFID and World Bank) are very demanding and time consuming. There was not enough time for the team to produce a conflict analysis.¹ Instead the evaluation team chose to produce a context overview that included major themes of a conflict analysis for significant dates (1998, 2004, and 2008): Political situation, security situation, socio-economic situation, state of international relations, and state of bilateral relations. The information gathered from reports and brought together in this context overview added depth to the evaluation as well as initiated new evaluation questions during the project’s timeframe.

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka evaluation is currently being finalised, following the completion of the field work in December last year. A second draft of the evaluation report is at present with the donor group in Colombo for final comments, and will be finalised by end-June for circulation.

Emerging lessons from the Sri Lanka evaluation:

- 1) In reality, very few donors address the structural political and governance problems that often are the root causes of “the conflict”. In the absence of significant efforts to address these political and governance-related causes of conflict, other efforts may have limited impact.
- 2) In some conflict situations there may be multiple types of conflict occurring: conflict at the level of the state, conflict among groups and even conflict within groups. In these cases, donors need to be clear about which conflict(s) their programs are addressing - and which they are not. For example, in the case of Sri Lanka, addressing local level inter-group conflict has merit, but it should not be conflated with addressing “the conflict” between the GoSL and the LTTE. Donors should be honest about both their own limitations to undertake sensitive conflict programming, and the potential impact of the programs they do undertake.

¹ In the absence of a robust and reliable conflict analysis during an evaluation of this type there are two options: the first is to scale-up the level of effort to include the production of this analysis, the second is to scale-down the information requirements and work with an overview analysis of the situation, as a substitute.

- 3) Governments and donors tend to promote the goal of “creating a peace dividend” – which typically is equated with the accelerated provision of development projects and economic benefits. In the case of Sri Lanka it does not appear that donors seriously assessed (a) if any “peace dividend” could be large enough to alter the deeply held views and positions of key stakeholders, (b) what kind of “peace dividend” was desired by the key stakeholders, and (c) if different types of “peace dividends” had to be offered to different stakeholders.
- 4) Evaluations should be shared more among donors to promote the sharing of information and lessons about what does and doesn’t work.
- 5) In a hot conflict setting and where a government is not interested in measuring peacebuilding efforts, limits have to be placed on what stakeholders (and reviewers) can expect from an evaluation: the availability of evidence and the usability of the findings may be constrained. Holding workshops or other public meetings is not likely to be productive, and much of the evidence must be gleaned from documents and one-to-one interviews.
- 6) Conducting a complex multi-donor evaluation in a country with a disinterested or even uncooperative government partner will likely face delays and require patience and an appropriate degree of determination to complete, as well as sound management support arrangements provided by a donor committed to the process.
- 7) Flexibility with the TOR is necessary in order to allow them to be adapted to local conditions and the interests of the local donor partners, who may have more interest in obtaining useful lessons for future work in the country than in deriving generic lessons.
- 8) A mixed team of evaluators with complementary skills (including expertise in conflict, development, governance and in the country setting) can provide a balanced team that leads to a more rounded evaluation analysis.

Eastern Congo

The evaluation process started in the autumn of 2008 but was stopped due to the escalating conflict in Eastern Congo. A renewed tendering process began in May 2009 and the evaluation will take off in the second part of 2009. The final report is expected by the summer of 2010.

The conflict has calmed down a bit, but is still not resolved. To avoid being forced to stop the evaluation again without any evaluation result, an additional report on conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies of the participating donors and organisations is asked. This report should be feasible without going to the conflict zone itself and is a guarantee for a useful evaluation product for the participating donors and organizations.

After the analysis of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies, the themes/sectors that come out as most relevant will be evaluated more in depth in the field, if the security situation allows doing so.

The *Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities* has been used while drafting the ToR and the consultants are asked to do the same during their evaluation work as well as writing a feedback note on the usefulness of the guidance for this particular evaluation.

The evaluation is conducted jointly with following participants: Belgium, Canada, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, UNDP, UNFPA, OHCHR UNICEF and UNIFEM. The Special Evaluation Office of the Belgian Cooperation takes the lead.

Southern Sudan

This joint-donor evaluation is under preparation. On 6 May 2009, the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a consultative meeting for evaluation departments of interested donors and international organisations as well as the Government of Southern Sudan. The aim was to discuss the approach paper for the evaluation. The meeting involved representatives from eight donors, six international organisations and the Government of Southern Sudan.

The meeting resulted in the establishment of an Evaluation Steering Committee which is co-chaired by the Director of IOB and the Director of Aid Coordination of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of the Government of Southern Sudan. In order to make this evaluation as inclusive as possible, it was decided that other donors and international organisations may still join the Evaluation Steering Committee.

A small Evaluation Management Group was established to take care of the day-to-day management of the evaluation. The Management Group consists of the Evaluation Department of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of Evaluation of the World Food Programme and IOB (Chair).

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation is currently being drafted, taking into account the results of the discussion of the approach paper, and an international notification for expressions of interest in conducting the evaluation was issued on 26 May. The final Terms of Reference will be used to tender the actual evaluation work, which is expected to start in October 2009. The evaluation will be finalised in the summer of 2010.

Indicative timetable

Activity	Date
Approach paper	Mid-April 2009
Consultative meeting (donors, international organisations, Government of Southern Sudan)	6 May 2009
Pre-qualification	Mid-July 2009
Terms of Reference of the evaluation finalised	Mid-July 2009
Contracting evaluation team	October 2009
First stage of evaluation (conflict analysis, policy analysis and desk study existing evaluations)	October – December 2009
Interim report and detailed ToR second (= field) stage	December 2009
Second stage of evaluation	February – April 2010
Field study report	End of April 2010
Final report	July 2010