



ROOM DOCUMENT 11

STUDY ON EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING IN WEST AFRICA

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Study on Evaluation Capacity Development in West Africa

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Introduction

Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) is of growing importance in the new development and aid context, both to meet domestic and mutual accountability needs. The DAC Evaluation Network has, as part of its mandate, a role to “promote and support ECD in partner countries”. At the 6th meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network, recent experiences in Vietnam and China were discussed, building on the earlier completed fact finding survey. It was suggested that further practical insights from experience in the field should be sought to inform the work. A study on ECD experiences in West Africa has recently been launched.

Objectives of the study on ECD in West Africa

The study aims to put together the current knowledge on ECD initiatives in West Africa; to learn from what has been done or tried and; to explore the reasons of success or failure, in order to provide insights based on practical experience. It is envisaged that the study will feed into an expert meeting on the topic to take place in the first half of 2008, and for results to feed back to the Evaluation Network and actors in the region.

Methodology and Expected outputs

The study will aim to provide an overview and analysis of the existing experiences in selected African countries, mainly francophone. It will primarily be based on a limited number of field surveys and interviews with key actors involved in the process in their countries. The study will also examine current knowledge on capacity building in general, and ECD in particular, from literature and documentation available, in order to analyze how the situations and processes described in the field relate to theory.

The review will be based on a survey using a questionnaire and a literature review. We will call on resource persons in selected countries where information is available on attempts to build a national M&E system, or where country-led evaluations are being experienced. The survey will be conducted by telephone and e-mail interviews, and complemented by a couple of cases studies on selected countries. Interviews will be held with selected high level officials involved in the M&E policy design and implementation. We will also contact members/leaders of evaluation networks where they exist. Given the time of the study, we are looking at no more than two countries for more in depth case studies (possibly Niger, Ghana, and/or Senegal, and possibly also Uganda or Tanzania as a comparison from another region, with interesting experiences to assess and learn from). The final choice will be made on the basis of questionnaire responses received and additional research.

The literature review part is not intended to be a thorough and detailed report on the situation and resources available, rather, it is designed to have a forward-looking focus and help in the assessment of the field reviews. The following studies have been identified as key inputs in the ECD debate and will therefore be explored for selective scanning to see what lessons are

important to retain, with regard to their practical value in the evaluation agenda of the countries selected: (i) the DAC paper on “the Challenge of Capacity Development - working Towards Good Practice; (ii) the francophone study on Evaluation Training and in particular in francophone countries in 2005; (iii) the pilot project of Evaluation of Evaluation capacities in francophone Africa jointly undertaken by the OIF, UNDP, and UNICEF covering Niger, Senegal and Congo, in 2005-2006; (iv) the Evaluation Training Needs Assessment conducted by the Evaluation Department of the ADB, OPEV in late 2006 and the Results of the seminar organised by ADB/IEG and the JAI on “Building Results-Based M&E Systems in PRSP Countries in Africa”, Dec 4-8, 2006; (v) the study conducted by AfrEA and ACBF on ECD in 2006; (vi) lessons from the AfrEA07 Conference in Niamey, Jan 07; (vii) documents from the DAC Evaluation Network’s workshops and its active participation in evaluation associations events such as AfrEA, IDEAS and EES; the fact finding study led by Japan; Vietnam experience related at the 6th meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network; and IOCE report on the study cases; (viii) IEG recent report on building M&E capacity and; (ix) DAC Secretariat notes and publications such as the Guidance for managing joint evaluations.

Finally, the study will incorporate the ongoing debates in the Evaluation networks and listservs, to add the latest thinking in the ECD question in particular, and in capacity development in general.

Basic content and structure of the report.

The report will be structured as follows:

1. Introduction (1/2 page)

The changing paradigm in the development agenda and the evaluation agenda. From donor driven to country-led; participatory and partnership approaches; the Paris Declaration; the growing role of civil society in development and in evaluation.

2. The objectives and methodology

Aims at putting together and analyse the current knowledge and practice in ECD (promising or successful elements to build on, practical and concrete experience, some main challenges – from TORs), in particular in West African countries, case studies, limited interviews and groups discussions and some literature reviews.

3. The concepts of capacity and evaluation capacity

Capacity is diverse and goes from the individual to the institution, and flows back into the community; various dimensions will be analysed: Human, Institutional, Organizational, ICT and Financial. Under these dimensions, we will discuss technical capacity; field expertise, hard skills such as statistics, data collection and analysis, qualitative and quantitative analysis, reporting skills, use of standards and guidelines, as well as the personal capacity, soft skills, behavioural, knowledge of the groups, interactivity.

4. The strategies for effective ECD

4.1. Assessing the current situation in selected countries

4.1.1. Current practices and ongoing experiences

This paragraph is an assessment of current practices, including a description of existing systems and the plans to improve them if any.

- What is the demand?
- Who undertakes the evaluations?
- What are the results?

4.1.2. The role of African governments, parliaments and donor community

Do African decision makers play a role in boosting demand for domestic evaluations designed to feed into the development architecture and the policy design processes? Do parliaments play a role as sources of evaluation demand or at any level/stage of the process? What is the current role of donors in the country? Do they evaluate jointly? Do they implicate other donors, the government, or civil society?

4.1.1. The role of civil society and evaluation associations/networks

Awareness building; encourage use of best practises versus contextualized approaches; norms and guidelines as a way to enhance good evaluation practice which will develop trust in evaluations; capacity building approaches within the networks: networking, community of practice, building and sharing knowledge; access to resources; link to academia and training institutions.

4.2. Different modalities

4.2.1. Training

Design of evaluation training projects/programmes; linking research to ECD; training and capacity development. Does training matter and what type of training: academia, professional development training; accreditation of training institutes and the limits/constraints/challenges in Africa.

4.2.2. Building institutional capacity

Overview of country cases: institutionalizing the evaluation function as a mean to foster national/indigenous demand. A review of different types of institutional settings, their strength and weaknesses, their sustainability (case of Niger, if information is available on the creation of a Ministry of Evaluation, who did not last; case of Senegal).

4.2.3 Other modalities: partnership evaluations, country-led, etc.

4.3. The way forward

What should donors do to strengthen evaluation capacity in West Africa? This section will also address different levels: the government, civil society actors, the level of national experts/evaluators, private sector and evaluation associations and networks. Should donors have clear capacity development strategies, with clear commitments and defined resources? What is the role of governments, as capacity development to be sustainable should ideally be driven from the inside? What is the best strategy for supporting greater ownership?