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**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE**

DAC Network on Development Evaluation

Summary Record of the Eighth Meeting of the DAC Evaluation Network

18 - 19 November 2008

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING
OF THE DAC NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION**

I. Opening session

i) The Secretariat opened the meeting by thanking the previous Chair, Mr Finbar O'Brien, Ireland, for his contributions over many years to the Network and his excellent chairmanship of the Network during the past years. Following an invitation for nominations for a new Chair, Denmark and Canada put forward Nick York, Head of the Evaluation Department at DFID, who was unanimously elected as Chair of the Network.

ii) Nick York expressed his thanks to members for their support and invited first-time participants to introduce themselves in a tour de table.

iii) The draft agenda [DCD/DAC/EV/A(2008)2] was adopted with the addition of "election of vice-chair" as an item before other business.

iv) The summary record of the 7th meeting [DCD/DAC/EV/M(2008)1] was adopted.

v) The Secretariat briefed members on the DAC programme of work and budget (PWB) for 2009-10, the voluntary contribution situation, and other DAC matters. A detailed description of the Network's programme of work can be found in room document No. 1.

Action: The Secretariat will keep members informed on the evolution of the PWB situation, and alert them in case further action will be needed. The Secretariat will also inform members when the DAC Facilitator has been confirmed and when the mandate has been formally approved by the DAC.

II. Follow up to the Accra High Level Forum and the evaluation of the Paris Declaration

1. Niels Dabelstein, Co-Chair of the reference group for the evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, provided reflections on the outcome and process of phase I of the evaluation of the Paris Declaration and its use at the High Level Forum in Accra in September 2008. It was suggested that the structure and organisation of phase II should build on the positive experience of phase I. A briefing note, based on the "Thematic Study on the Paris Declaration, Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness", was presented as room document No. 2. This work would feed into preparations for phase II. It was further suggested that the second phase would need to include a larger, and more purposefully selected, number of country studies. There were already good indications of interest among partner countries. A kick-off meeting will be held in Auckland 11-13 February 2009. An indicative time table was presented for the work ahead up to the HLF 4.

2. There was broad support for the evaluation and a number of members indicated their interest in participating. The Netherlands confirmed that it will fund the evaluation secretariat from July 2009 up to HLF 4. A similar pooling arrangement as used for phase I will be set up for phase II to fund the evaluation studies.

Action: Members are requested to provide indications of their interest in participating in phase II. Partner country interest will be scoped at the WP-EFF meeting and subsequently. Members should confirm participation in the kick-off meeting to be held in Auckland 11-13 February 2009. Work will now advance on the composition of the management and reference groups, the evaluation scope, framework and sampling ahead of the February meeting.

III. Evaluation systems – exchange on reforms and developments

i) Recent development in UNEG/DAC peer reviews and in the ECG planned reviews

3. Ted Kliest, co-chair of the DAC/UNEG task team, reported on progress to date. Belgium and Switzerland informed members on the ongoing reviews and recent missions to GEF and OIOS. The OIOS and GEF reports will be finalised in March and April 2009 respectively. UNIDO has confirmed that they would like to be reviewed in 2009.

4. During the discussion it was suggested that the Network should take stock of experiences with the professional peer reviews and the framework when further experience had been acquired. It was also noted that a number of members were interested in the broader issues of multilateral effectiveness, including ongoing work by Cida. The issue of links with the MOPAN processes was also raised.

5. The ECG Chair reported that work is ongoing on a revised framework for reviews of the evaluation function at the multilateral banks. The reaction among the Boards to the idea was mixed, and it was noted that the timing issue was also an important factor. IFAD was likely to be the first case in the ECG group.

Action: Members to inform the Netherlands of interest in taking part in the peer review of UNIDO. The Bureau will consider how to structure a session on multilateral effectiveness at the next meeting.

ii) Results of a system review of evaluation in German development cooperation

6. Michaela Zintl, BMZ, presented the results of a system review of evaluation in German development cooperation. The review highlighted issues of institutional learning and capacity issues as well as dissemination weaknesses. It was noted that certain changes were triggered by the review and most organisations have taken some follow up measures.

7. The discussion that followed evolved around how agencies can foster learning and follow up from evaluations. Belgium informed members of its interest in a peer review of its evaluation system.

Action: Members to indicate to Belgium if they are interested in contributing to a peer review of Belgium's two evaluation offices.

IV. Harmonising, aligning and sharing

8. The session was introduced by DFID, current task team leader on the new context for evaluation, by framing development evaluation in the context of the change processes implied by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. SADEV presented the main recommendations of the study on joint programming of evaluations (“Challenges Opportunities and Approaches for Increasing Joint Donor Programming of Evaluation”). The study builds on previous work on joint evaluations and seeks to promote further action on joint evaluation practice among network members. The study makes seven recommendations to the Network in order to encourage joint evaluations. The recommendations include, for example, that joint evaluations should be introduced in the agencies’ evaluation policies; multi-annual evaluation plans should be shared; a global market place should be considered; and joint evaluations should be considered where joint policies and programmes exist.

9. The presentation by SADEV was followed by a presentation by the Secretariat on the new tool for sharing evaluation plans to promote joint and collaborative work and reduce evaluation fragmentation. The Secretariat underlined the importance of sharing work plans for transparency and for identification of possible collaborative work. This tool could facilitate the planning process in agencies, as plans by others would be easily available for consultation when drawing up work programmes. It was also stressed however, that the usefulness of the tool depends on members’ timeliness and willingness to update the information. The importance of including non-firm plans, as such plans have more scope for collaboration, was also noted. This tool is available on the restricted members’ site and it was agreed to expand it with more entries of firm and non-firm plans before taking a decision on whether to make it publicly available.

10. Members adopted the recommendations proposed in the study by SADEV. It was stressed that the recommendations need to be made operational and practically applicable, and to be tracked with a monitoring system. Members generally agreed that there is potential for more collaboration and welcomed the evaluation plan tool as a means to facilitate this, and to explore the use of the tool as a basis for developing a short list of topics for joint evaluation.

11. In the discussion, some constraints to joint evaluations were noted; the importance of human resources, and the lack of capacity by both field staff and partners. Some members referred to limited demand for joint evaluations from management and boards, and that joint evaluations needed to address the issue of individual agencies’ performance.

12. Ireland provided an update on a mapping exercise of planned in-country evaluations in Tanzania. The Secretariat reported on progress with DEReC, which now contains over 1800 reports. In order to improve the Network’s common database it was suggested that members should adopt the good practice of identifying key words in the introductory pages of the evaluation (as for instance done in ADB reports). This is commonly applied in other fields to facilitate referencing.

Action: The task team to translate the key recommendations into good practices for evaluation planning and to develop other recommendations to move forward practically. The results should be reported back for discussion at the next meeting. Members to provide the Secretariat with up-to-date evaluation plans in the spreadsheet format used in the tool by end-December. A more complete set would allow for a fuller discussion on evaluation plans and potential collaboration at the next meeting. Members to continue to send final evaluation reports to the Secretariat for inclusion in DEReC and to make this part of their dissemination. Members are encouraged to include key words in their evaluation reports as standard practice.

V. Developing methods, standards and guidance

i) Evaluation Quality Standards – planning of workshop

13. Following the decision at the 7th meeting to hold the Evaluation Quality Standards workshop in New Zealand in February 2009, Penny Hawkins invited members to participate. The workshop will take place in Auckland 9-10 February 2009, back to back with the kick-off meeting for the second phase of the evaluation of the Paris Declaration. The aim of the workshop is to review experience with the use of the standards and to identify which changes are needed to finalise the Standards, after the three-year test phase that was agreed in 2006.

14. The Netherlands and Finland indicated that they were willing to report experiences at the workshop, and Germany noted that the standards had been part of the review of the German evaluation system.

Action: Members who have not already done so to indicate their participation in the workshop to the Secretariat. Members should come prepared to report on experiences with the standards to inform the discussion on changes needed. Australia and New Zealand, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to further develop the content and agenda for the workshop. New Zealand to explore the possibility of organising a video link to the workshop.

ii) Impact evaluation

15. Nick York, as Chair of the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) reported on the results of the recent meeting held in Lisbon on 1 October 2008 and on its current work plan. Howard White, Executive Director of 3iE, presented the status of the 3iE initiative. 3iE has a work plan for a budget of US\$100 million in the first five years, allowing 50-60 new studies each year. Initial work has begun with the development of “enduring questions”, a live website, and a call for proposals.

16. It was highlighted that NONIE’s role is to raise awareness and capacity in the field of impact evaluation, while 3iE’s role is to finance, provide support services and conduct thematic reviews of impact evaluations. It was agreed that the two Network representatives on the steering committee of NONIE should continue to be Nick York and Henri Jorritsma.

Action: Members to give their views on a new NONIE Chair after the current Chair steps down in March 2009. Members to confirm their contributions to fund NONIE core activities and the upcoming impact evaluation conference in Cairo, 30 March – 3 April 2009, jointly sponsored by AfrEA, 3ie and NONIE.

iii) Evaluation methodology of budget support

17. The European Commission, leading the task team, reported on the status of the development of a methodology for evaluating budget support. It is envisaged that a methodological document and standard terms of reference will be agreed in early 2009. Testing of the methodological approach will take place during 2009. The Commission invited other interested members and multilateral agencies, including the World Bank, to participate in the work.

Action: The European Commission will host a second meeting of the core group on the 9th of December.

iv) Guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peace building

18. Norway, as co-chair of the task team, provided an update on the ongoing applications of the draft guidance which currently include Sri Lanka, Haiti and DRC and South Sudan. The evaluation in Sri Lanka is well underway with the main mission completed and the draft report to be finalised in the end of December. The report on the Norwegian evaluation in Haiti will be finalised in May 2009. The DRC evaluation, led by Belgium, is currently on hold due to the situation in DRC. The evaluation in South Sudan, led by the Netherlands, is under development, and members were invited to participate.

Action: Interest in participating in the South Sudan study should be communicated to the Netherlands. Continue wide dissemination of the working draft guidance by the Secretariat and by members internally. As the process develops, members should report back on experiences from the use of the guidance to help inform the final product. The feedback form is available on the Network's public website as well as in the hard copy of the draft guidance. A workshop will be held, possibly before summer 2009, to take stock of ongoing initiatives and to provide an opportunity for cross-fertilisation and learning.

v) Evaluating global and regional partnership programmes (GPPR)

19. IEG reported that the Sourcebook was in strong demand both in printed and online versions. The major focus of work was the Guidebook with good practice guidelines and examples for evaluating GPPRs. In order to obtain feedback on the guidebook, workshops are planned to be held with representative stakeholders when work has further advanced and depending on the availability of funding. Since the last progress report, IEG has completed two more global programme reviews, and seven others are ongoing, and cross-cutting findings are emerging as reported in the room document No. 8.

Action: IEG to report back on progress with the Guidebook early next year and inform interested members on the workshop plans.

VI. Election of vice chair

20. Penny Hawkins, Head of the Evaluation Department of NZAID and Benoit Chervalier, Head of the Evaluation Unit of the French Ministry for Economy, Employment and Industry, were both elected vice-chairs. The Chair noted that the expanded Bureau, now comprising four members and the Secretariat as support, responds to an increase in joint Network activities, and will permit a clearer sharing of responsibilities for work streams within the Bureau.

VII. Other business

21. The Secretariat made a brief presentation of the ongoing work by the Policy Reduction and Growth division on evaluating aid for trade. Members were invited to provide early indications of their interest in taking part in this work and in a possible workshop early next year.

22. The Secretariat informed the members of the upcoming IDEAS conference in Johannesburg on 17-20 March 2009, and on the work of Saferworld in developing guidance for evaluating security system reform interventions.

23. The next official meeting of the Evaluation Network is scheduled for June 2009, with informal task team meetings to be held on a needs basis, and open to interested members to join in work.

Action: Members to indicate interest in evaluating aid for trade to the Secretariat. Members to contact Saferworld directly if interested in working on evaluating security system reforms.

VIII. Informal session

i) Sharing experiences and information

24. The US delegation made a joint presentation of evaluation in the US foreign aid programme, including US State Department, USAID and MCC. Japan presented 'the new JICA' and its evaluation system.

25. IEG presented an initiative for regional centres for results based management and evaluation capacity development. (See room document No. 10.) The proposal is built on the fact that demand for evaluation knowledge is increasing and that the current supply of evaluation capacity development services is inadequate. It is proposed to establish multilateral partnerships to strengthen the capacity of existing institutions and help these centres to provide demand-based results-based management and evaluation capacity development services. Members generally indicated that they believed evaluation capacity development to be an important issue, and low capacity in partner countries a bottleneck for more joint and partner-led evaluations. The importance of advocacy for evaluation was noted and the link with the Network's experience and work on capacity development could be made clearer. Some members noted however, that capacity building was not part of the mandate of their units but rather for the operational departments which also have more budgetary resources. Members were invited to provide indications to IEG on their interest in participating in the initiative, and where appropriate, transmit information on the proposal to the operational departments.

26. The Secretariat drew members' attention to the study on evaluation capacity in francophone countries in Africa that was distributed at room document No. 9. Based on a questionnaire survey and interviews it provided an update on the state of evaluation in government and civil society in the region. While there were some recent positive developments, overall there seemed to be a clear need for reinforced action on several fronts, including on the demand side for evaluation as well as for institutional development.

27. Norway provided a brief update on the joint evaluation of anti-corruption efforts. It is envisaged that the final report will be ready in the first half of 2010.

ii) Open exchange on new ideas and suggestions for joint or collaborative evaluation work

28. During the informal session, members also shared ideas and indicated opportunities for further collaborative and/or joint work. Some of the topics mentioned for possible collaboration were: public financial management; wider public sector reform; 'rights of the child'; environment; vulnerability; capacity development; fragile states; multilateral effectiveness; and performance management. Individual members were invited to take forward the discussion with other interested members. It was also suggested that more time should be given to the open exchange at the next meeting, and a fuller set of evaluation plans (firm and non-firm) provided by members would help facilitate such a discussion.

iii) The global financial crisis and its implications for development evaluation

29. The issue was only briefly discussed at the end of the meeting. It was suggested that lessons from the 1990 Asian crisis could be reviewed and possibly synthesised, particularly by the financial institutions involved at that time. It was also suggested that it would be interesting to approach the current financial crises and its implications from a developing country vulnerability perspective.

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