



ROOM DOCUMENT 8

REPORT ON MISSION TO TANZANIA

This report has been prepared by the Chair of the DAC Evaluation Network and the Secretariat for consideration at the 7th meeting of the Network on 20-21 February, 2008.

Report on mission to Tanzania

Background and purpose

Finbar O'Brien, Chair of the DAC Development Evaluation Network and Hans Lundgren, OECD/DAC Secretariat visited Tanzania on the week of November 5th 2007. The purpose of the visit was to meet and discuss with Government officials, development partners (DPs), civil society representatives and research institutes in order to obtain a better understanding of the current thinking on evaluation needs and priorities in the new aid environment in Tanzania, and to explore the potential for joined up efforts.

In the context of the change agenda for donor behaviour agreed on in the Paris Declaration commitments, the DAC Evaluation Network is exploring how evaluation needs and priorities at the country level can be squared with donor headquarters accountability needs.

The DAC Evaluation Network has actively promoted harmonisation in evaluation activities and has developed guidance and norms to enable joint evaluation work. The Network has also facilitated a number of major joint evaluations conducted by the Network, or by lead groups of members and partner countries.

Aid in the development context of Tanzania: The institutional setting

Tanzania developed an overall National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction (the Mkukuta) for the five-year period 2005/6 to 2009/10. This builds on the Poverty Reduction Strategy which was developed five-years previously. Attempts have been made to tie the Mkukuta more closely to the MTEF and annual budgetary processes. Many review processes are in place under the Mkukuta and within various sectors that contribute to the overall Mkukuta.

The Joint Assistance Strategy for Tanzania (JAST) is the current comprehensive framework for managing development co-operation in Tanzania. It focuses on aid effectiveness and support to the implementation of the Mkukuta. A Joint Programming Document attempts to explicitly link Development Partners Assistance to the Mkukuta.

The Ministry of Finance leads the coordination of development co-operation and the budgetary processes while the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment (MPEE) is the lead in relation to the coordination of the implementation of the Mkukuta.

Initial observations and findings

As noted in Richard Manning's summary in his letter of 7th October following his visit to Tanzania, "Interesting times, as donors reflect on how far the Tanzanian Government is delivering results, and the Tanzanian government reflect on how far aid is predictable and scaling up a reality".

Expectations are high on both sides, and the stakes are important both for the Government of Tanzania and for the donor community in terms of being able to demonstrate a clear contribution to development progress. Clearly, domestic accountability for results is the most important dimension from an evaluation viewpoint but in view of the scale and implication of donor inputs, there are also legitimate donor evaluation needs.

Our discussions with stakeholders concerning independent evaluation could be very briefly summarised as follows:

- **Government:** Considerable work is taking place on the harmonisation of monitoring systems and there is a recognition of the importance of demonstrating results and of the importance of independent evaluation but there is limited experience to date in planning and managing independent evaluations. The capacity to manage evaluations may be limited and the roles and responsibilities for evaluation are not totally clear.
- **Development Partners:** There has been a strong engagement in review and dialogue processes. Partners have a strong wish to demonstrate results, but there are some concerns about the quality of data. There is a recognition of the value-added that independent evaluation could bring. A number of partners also pointed to a perceived gap in communication and understanding between HQ evaluation functions and field processes.
- **Civil Society:** There is a strong desire for independent evaluation to serve domestic accountability needs. Capacity exists within civil society organisations to translate policy and analytical documentation to user-friendly versions and this could be useful for the dissemination of evaluation findings
- **Research institutes:** There is a recognition of the importance of institutionalising an evaluation culture and building capacity for evaluation appropriate to the Tanzanian situation.

We have a number of observations on development processes in Tanzania from the evaluation viewpoint:

- **Mkukuta:** There is strong agreement on the importance of demonstrating results in the Mkukuta. While various arrangements for reviews have been integrated into the plans, independent evaluations of specific programmes have as yet not been prioritised and planned on a needs basis. A real opportunity exists to articulate and agree key priorities and to ensure that support is given to deliver on these priorities.
- **Joint Assistance Strategy for Tanzania:** The Independent Monitoring Group has played a positive role in the past in reviewing Development Partner/Government relations. There is an agreement to review the Joint Assistance Strategy mid-term and to have a final evaluation. It appears that no discussion has yet taken place on the proposed review and evaluation. It is likely that the Independent Monitoring Group structure will be used to deliver these but the planning has not yet started. The evaluation of the Paris Declaration is carrying out similar work in other countries and it would be useful for the Independent Monitoring Group to consider this both for methodological and comparative purposes.
- **Joint Programme Document:** It is recognised in this document that Development Partner supported programmes cannot be assessed independently of the Mkukuta implementation, hence the importance for Government and Development Partners to agree priorities for evaluation within the Mkukuta process.

To conclude:

During the discussions with senior and middle level officials in government as well as with development partners the terms “ad hoc and donor driven evaluation” were mentioned several times to describe the current approach to evaluation. This appears to be an accurate description of the current situation.

It is clear that the Ministry of Finance can play a role in relation to evaluation but in the context of the Mkukuta, the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment has also an important role to play. If future evaluation efforts are to be well planned and coordinated there would need to be clarification on the respective roles and responsibilities for evaluation between the various actors involved.

Among Development Partners and Government there is a strong emphasis on joint monitoring and review processes but less emphasis on independent evaluation. Some examples of independent evaluation including experience of joint evaluations (GBS, Health Sector) have taken place and while there seems to be agreement on the need for independent evaluation, at the point of the mission, concrete and clear plans for evaluation priorities were yet to be developed. There was also no obvious mechanism for Government and Development Partners to jointly discuss and agree evaluation priorities but this could possibly be done by a task team under the Mkukuta or JAST.

Many evaluations of Development Partner country programmes have taken place in the past and more are planned. Current programmes may have been planned individually but evaluations need to be more harmonised to reduce transaction costs on government and future programme evaluations will need to reflect the joint nature of the programming.

If we are to move from ad hoc and donor-driven evaluations to country-led evaluations a number of things need to happen.

Next steps

At the next DAC Evaluation Network meeting (20-21 February 2008), the Network will explore how evaluation needs and priorities at the country level can be squared with donor headquarters accountability needs. The issue of more harmonised evaluation planning, aligned to country level processes, will be on the agenda. In this context, the concrete application to Tanzania will be raised. Prior to the meeting, Members will be asked to identify their updated and tentative plans for evaluations due to take place in Tanzania over the next years.

As for processes in Tanzania, we suggest that the Government and Development Partners would initiate a discussion on the priorities and institutional arrangements for independent evaluation. Given the time limited nature of the Mkukuta and the Joint Assistance Programme it would be useful to identify priorities for evaluation over the next years that will feed into the final review of the Mkukuta. As a practical step forward, we suggest that a task force on evaluation should be formed by the Development Partners’ Group to follow up with the Government and to advance the discussion on priorities and needs for evaluation. Key Government partners in the dialogue would include the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment and the Ministry of Finance, and others may need to be involved depending on the topics selected. Evaluation work will need to be planned in and started in 2008 in order to be able to provide timely lessons for the future development strategy.

Moving from the current situation of largely ad hoc, donor-driven evaluation to country-led evaluations that are planned and prioritised in a way that addresses the needs in-country while also helping address the accountability needs of Development Partners is likely to take some time, as it involves considerable behavioural change on the part of a number of actors. However, there is an opportunity in Tanzania to make progress in that direction in view of the extent of collaboration and dialogue and mutual interest in results and evidence based information among the key stakeholders.

Evaluation departments at Headquarters will need to demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to assist in these processes in line with the harmonisation and alignment objectives agreed to in the Paris Declaration.

Evaluation capacity development in Tanzania is likely to become increasingly important in moving towards country-led evaluations and this should be considered within the context of any joint work that may be proposed.

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