



ROOM DOCUMENT NO. 3

DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

**DAC EVALUATION REPORTS INVENTORY
2000 INTERIM ACTIVITY REPORT**

Submitted by CIDA, Canada

Agenda item 10

**33rd Meeting
22-23 November 2000**

Background

The DAC Evaluation Reports Inventory is now in its eleventh year of operation. Over this time it has evolved from a simple bibliographic reference tool designed to let members know about evaluations that have been carried out by other development organizations to a mechanism that contains:

- the findings and lessons of evaluation reports;
- report methodologies;
- contacts of contributing members; and,
- a window to other development agency's home pages.

Current Status

Access

The principal means of accessing the Inventory is through the World Wide Web where a "private" DAC Evaluation Reports website has been set up at minweb.idrc.ca/dacplog.htm. A public site is also available at minweb.idrc.ca/daclog.htm. The "p" in dacplog distinguishes the two sites. Visitors require a password to enter the private site. Once you have accessed the site you should bookmark the site for ease of access.

The CD-ROM of the Inventory was canceled pursuant to the development of the website which was found to be a much more efficient and effective means of sharing the information contained in the Inventory. Besides, the version of the software previously used to produce the CD-ROM is no longer supported by the vendor because it was found to be Y2K non compliant, and the high cost of the new version is difficult to justify given that we will only be using it for one more release.

Management

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) continues to manage the Inventory in conjunction with the International Development Information Center (IDRC) which hosts the website on their server. Doncor Information Systems Inc. continues to be responsible for updating the website and carrying out any enhancements to it that are requested. Doncor can be reached at doncor@fox.nstn.ca or you can email Don Paul directly (Don_Paul@ACDI-CIDA.gc.ca) should you have any questions or comments regarding either the site or the Inventory.

Contributions

Over the summer months there was an extensive cleanup of the Inventory. As a result of the cleanup, where duplicate records as well as the evaluation plans from previous years were removed 8,232 abstracts now remain on the private site and 2,213 on the public site. As new abstracts are received and our cleanup is completed these numbers will change.

In total thirty-three organizations have contributed at one time or another to the Inventory although there are only about 10 members that contribute on a regular basis. Members are encouraged to submit abstracts of their reports in the format requested. Although these guidelines have been made available to all members in previous years, copies of the guidelines can be requested from Doncor.

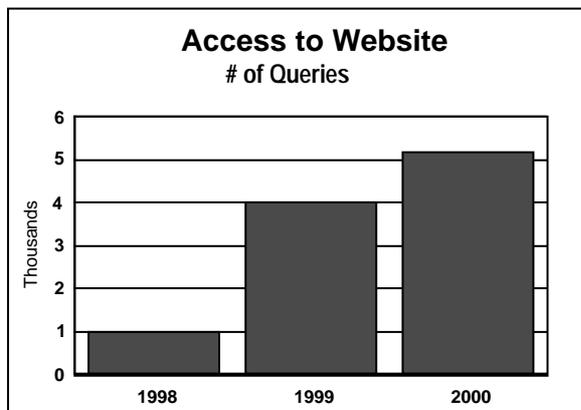
Planned Evaluations

DAC Inventory 2000 Report

Since no organization has sent their evaluation plans in recent years these have been dropped from the Inventory. Should members request that their plans be added to the website, however, this can easily be accomplished.

Use of the Website

The table below shows that over the past three years, the number of people visiting the site has continued to grow. Although the growth has slowed, the number is still impressive given that there has been no advertising or promotion of the website.



This interest in evaluation findings and lessons is indicative of the value the donor community places on evaluation and the information it can provide. It is likely that additional submissions would result in even greater use since more information would be available. Members are encouraged, therefore, to submit abstracts of the evaluations they have carried out.

Planned Improvements

The following management and content improvements to the Inventory are being considered. CIDA would appreciate your input into each of them.

Participation

In order to increase the participation of members and hence improve the usefulness of the Inventory individual members who have not contributed in the past year will be contacted to see whether steps can be taken to ensure their ongoing participation. CIDA recognizes that it is not always easy to respond to its call letters given other demands. As a result, submissions will be accepted at any time during the year as and when they are produced by members. This can be done by simply emailing the abstracts to CIDA.

Evaluation Plans

In order to encourage joint evaluations between donor organizations we would like to try to obtain the evaluation plans of members. These will be placed on the Inventory and categorized by organization, the sector in which they are being carried out, and within which country. It is hoped by doing so that members will be able to get together and carry out joint evaluations rather than separate ones.

Homepages

DAC Inventory 2000 Report

Additional links to the homepages of members will be made as they become available. Almost all members are now creating these and the Inventory can become a portal through which users can easily go to donor organization homepages. We will be asking you if you have a homepage that we can link to when we call you this fall.

Coding

Although it is not within the mandate of the inventory to change or question the DAC sector table used some contributors have mentioned that the coding does not reflect their subject areas and have suggested other codes. Should contributors wish we can add a field (specialized sectors/subject areas) to the Inventory which users can search. Along with key word searching which is already available this might improve the usefulness of the Inventory.

Linking Abstracts to Full Text of Evaluation Reports

Technically it is now quite easy to link individual abstracts within the Inventory to the full text of an evaluation (residing on a contributor's own homepage). However, maintaining these links and ensuring that the full report is available when someone tries to access it is more problematic (although there are tools that assist in this regard). Members would have to ensure that the links are maintained (notifying CIDA of changes to their site and the content of it). There is also a cost associated with maintaining these links. Despite these issues CIDA is willing to carry out a pilot project to see whether such an enhancement is worthwhile. It will also explore how such an initiative fits within the proposed "Development Gateway" being explored by the World Bank.

Statistics

By this time next year we hope to be able to provide members with additional statistics on the use of the website including which abstracts are most requested; from what geographic region is the Inventory being most accessed; and, which organizations are accessing it the most. We will also be putting a comments field directly onto the website and will share these comments with you.

Appearance

To accommodate the above planned changes CIDA will be updating the website in terms of its appearance over the coming months. These changes will not impact access to the site. Should you have any additional ideas please contact us. Together we can make the site more useful.