



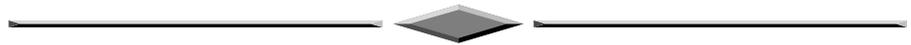
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DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUPPORT OF
PARTNER COUNTRY EFFORTS TOWARDS THE
PROMOTION OF DECENTRALISATION AND THE
STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

**Submitted jointly by
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
&
German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation
and Development (BMZ)**

Agenda item 8



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

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUPPORT OF PARTNER COUNTRY EFFORTS
TOWARDS THE PROMOTION OF DECENTRALISATION AND THE
STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

**PROPOSAL FOR WORK
TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE DAC WORKING PARTY ON AID EVALUATION**

1. In April 1999, the Evaluation Offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) agreed to conduct a joint evaluation of UNDP-supported programmes and projects in the area of decentralisation and local governance. Both institutions agreed that this sector was one of the key areas for assisting partner countries in promoting governance issues. At the same time, they considered it crucial for progress in this sector to work towards more and better co-ordination and co-operation among donors, and therefore hoped that a joint evaluation might contribute towards this end.
2. In the years 1996 to 1998, BMZ had already carried out a series of evaluations of 20 projects supporting decentralisation and the strengthening of local governance in 12 countries. Based on these case studies, a synthesis report had been prepared that identified a number of key issues to be addressed in future work in this sector. Thus, BMZ had obtained some valuable experience in evaluating donor efforts in this sector from a bilateral point of view on which the joint evaluation could capitalize. At the same time, UNDP would contribute the multilateral dimension of support to this sector which had been identified as crucial, particularly in advocacy work and in conducting a policy dialogue and moving it much more upstream than bilateral actors would usually be able to do.
3. Based on these considerations, joint Terms of Reference were developed and agreed upon. Furthermore, UNDP and BMZ nominated (and financed) two independent consultants each to form the core team. Both institutions also agreed on a team leader who happened to have a solid background both in UNDP work and in bilateral development co-operation. Thus he was able to act as an “interpreter” between the two “bureaucratic cultures”. Furthermore, UNDP provided significant logistical support to the team throughout the evaluation process, including the preparation of documentation, establishing and managing a special website to facilitate communication among evaluators, and appointing a manager for this evaluation in the Evaluation Office.
4. The evaluation was launched in New York on 20 September 1999. In a two-day workshop, BMZ, UNDP and the full evaluation team discussed the concept of this evaluation, the ToRs and the choice of methodological approaches to be followed. It was also on this occasion, that the selection of countries to be visited for the case studies was made (Guatemala, Mali, the Philippines, Thailand, and Uganda). The workshop was followed by desk studies, discussions and interviews by team members in UNDP headquarters and then the field studies in November and December. The first of the five field trips to the Philippines was carried out by the full team to test the evaluation method selected and adapt it as necessary. For the four remaining visits, the team split into two groups, each covering two countries.

5. After the country studies had been carried out, the full team met again in Bonn on 20-21 December 1999, to discuss their preliminary findings and to identify major orientations for the synthesis report. The draft of the synthesis report was then presented in late January 2000, discussed in New York in early February, and published in early May (“The UNDP Role in Decentralisation and Local Governance”).
6. On 17 May 2000, the report and its findings were presented to participants in a one-day workshop in Berlin. Participants came from a wide range of backgrounds (aid agencies, practitioners from the North and South, academia, etc.).¹ They welcomed the report, and emphasised the need for further and broadened analysis of the issues involved for donors and partner countries in supporting national efforts towards decentralisation and local governance. More specifically, it was suggested that, an additional effort should be launched to identify the lessons learned in this sector on as systematic a basis as possible. Such effort could start from the existing evaluations carried out by Germany in 1996/98 and now jointly by UNDP and BMZ, but would need to be broadened to include the additional material and analysis from the evaluations done by other aid agencies in this sector. It was felt, that such a study by itself would be a valuable input into the work of aid agencies in this sector. However, participants in Berlin did not rule out the feasibility that such study could also become the first step towards identifying good practices for development co-operation in the area of decentralisation and the strengthening of local governance that would deal, among others, with issues such as complementarity, synergies, division of labour, upstream – downstream co-ordination, balancing policy advice and operational activities, critical mass of resources, etc.
7. *It is therefore proposed to include in the work programme of the Working Party on Evaluation an item which would allow to identify the lessons learned from past experience in supporting decentralisation and local governance, as suggested above. For practical purposes, it is suggested that the Secretariat should be invited to hire a consultant to collect and analyse all existing relevant evaluation material and to draft a report, including lessons learned and proposals for next steps, to be considered by the meeting of the Working Party on Evaluation in autumn 2001. Members may also wish to establish a small Reference or Steering Group to work with and guide the consultant. Both UNDP and Germany would be willing to contribute to this work by supporting the cost of a consultant and by organising a meeting of a Reference/Steering Group.*

¹ The Summary Report of this workshop has been made available to participants in the meeting of the Working Party on Aid Evaluation on the documents table.