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DAC Network on Development Evaluation

EVALUATION NETWORK FOLLOW UP TO THE PARIS DECLARATION ON AID
EFFECTIVENESS

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This note has been submitted by the Secretariat for discussion at the third meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation. This meeting is to be held at OECD Headquarters in Paris.

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EVALUATION NETWORK FOLLOW-UP TO THE PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS

Introduction

1. In March 2005, at the second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF), over 100 DAC members and partner countries, as well as development institutions, agreed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (See Room Document 1: DCD/DAC/EFF(2005)1/REV3). The Paris Declaration contains some 50 commitments on ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability. These are to be monitored by 12 indicators. Participants agreed to preliminary quantitative targets for 5 of the 12 indicators, and agreed that the remaining targets should be finalised by the time of the UN MDG Review in September.

2. This discussion note outlines the implications of the Paris Declaration for the DAC Network on Development Evaluation and for its members. Section 1 explores the need, and some possible options for, an evaluation of the aid effectiveness agenda. Section 2 refers to the monitoring arrangements for the Paris Declaration, and Section 3 looks at the wider implications for evaluation practice – for Network members individually and collectively. Annex 1 details the sections of the Paris Declaration that are of key interest for members of the Evaluation Network.

Section 1: Evaluation Follow up

3. The Paris Declaration has a strong focus on monitoring arrangements, but also states the importance of exploring an independent cross-country evaluation process. The Declaration states that this process should provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives and that the process should be applied without imposing additional burdens on partners.

4. The Evaluation Network is already undertaking several workstreams of relevance to evaluation of aid effectiveness. The general budget support evaluation is assessing a central and important modality within the wider harmonisation, alignment and aid effectiveness agenda. The work launched at the November 2004 Network Meeting on evaluating the development effectiveness of total ODA at country level is also relevant. In addition, the Nordic+ group is considering a single-country evaluation of harmonisation and alignment, possibly in Zambia. We need to consider how we can build on these initiatives and develop an evaluative process for the broader aid effectiveness agenda. This raises a range of questions:

- **Scope and Purpose**

What would be the likely purpose and scope of an evaluation of the aid effectiveness agenda? Would its primary purpose be accountability or lesson learning or both? Is an evaluation likely to generate new and relevant knowledge in addition to what will become known from the monitoring? Does the Network feel it is feasible to undertake an outcome and/or impact evaluation in this area?

- **Participation**

Should the entire Network participate in the evaluation follow-up to the Paris Declaration? Or should we delegate lead responsibility to one member or to a Task Force?

Ownership and country leadership are key principles of the Paris Declaration. It is imperative that an evaluation of the aid effectiveness agenda is conducted according to those principles; with the full involvement of partner countries at the earliest stage. The Paris Declaration also states that the evaluation process must not impose additional burdens on partners; we will need to create ownership without burdening partners. We also need to consider the role of, and relationship with, the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

- **Modalities**

Would individual evaluations of aid effectiveness in one or two developing countries be useful building blocks from which to develop a broader cross-country evaluation process? Should we be working towards an evaluation of aid effectiveness across a range of partner countries or towards developing a common framework to be applied within individual country contexts? Or, should the Network consider restricting itself to a desk-based meta-evaluation; drawing on existing materials such as thematic, sectoral, PRSP and project evaluations?

- **Timeframe**

The meeting to review progress on the monitoring is scheduled for 2008. Should we, by then, have completed the development of a framework, and/or a pilot evaluation, and/or a full evaluation?

Possible Next Steps

- The Evaluation Network agrees to establish a small Task Force, which will consult with partner country representatives and take forward an evaluation of aid effectiveness. Members are invited to volunteer to participate in such a Task Force.
- The Task Force schedules a workshop in 2006, with Network members and partner country representatives, to review and endorse its initial plans. The Secretariat is willing to coordinate such a workshop, preferably in partnership with an interested Network member.
- Network members are asked to indicate their initial interest, in principle, in providing funding to launch the evaluation process.

Section 2: Monitoring Follow up

5. The HLF agreed that two rounds of monitoring will be undertaken by 2008. The monitoring will make use of appropriate country-level mechanisms, and will monitor against non-country-specific global targets. The HLF agreed that the outstanding targets for the monitoring indicators will be agreed by September 2005. The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) is meeting on 30-31 May 2005 to take this work forward. At this meeting, the WP-EFF will review the baseline information, the recommendations for further targets, and discuss proposals for the future work programme, a suitable structure to carry it out, and broader partner country participation.

6. It is important for the Evaluation Network to continue to participate in the work of the WP-EFF and to offer support and advice to its work. Members can feedback comments on the monitoring arrangements through the Evaluation Network Chair, who is a member of the WP-EFF, or through their country representatives in the WP-EFF. It would not be appropriate, however, for the Evaluation Network to take the lead role in the design of the monitoring framework, including the setting of targets and baselines, because this would have a negative impact on our credibility for delivering a fully independent evaluation.

Section 3: Implications of the Paris Declaration for Future Evaluations

7. The Paris Declaration sets out a clear commitment to building and prioritising ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability. It calls for important changes in the delivery of development assistance, and consequently has broad implications for future evaluation activities.

8. Network members should consider whether substantive changes are needed within their own evaluation programmes in order to respond to and meet the commitments set out in the Paris Declaration. For example, Network Members might consider undertaking more joint evaluations and/or building stronger partner country ownership into evaluation programming.

9. We also need to consider, collectively, how we can make full use of the forum provided by the Evaluation Network to develop a more joined-up, harmonised and effective approach to planning and delivering evaluations. We need to promote and build on the relevant initiatives that we are already undertaking:

- Paragraph 45 of the Paris Declaration states that donors will harmonise formats for monitoring and reporting. The Evaluation Network has been, for some years, promoting joint evaluations as a tool for increased rationalisation of the evaluation process, reduced transaction costs for partner countries, improved quality of the work, and increased weight and legitimacy of the evaluation. In January 2004, the Network agreed to undertake a new study on joint evaluations which would update and broaden the existing guidance and incorporate recent experiences and evolving issues. The report, *'Joint Evaluations, Recent Experiences, Lessons Learnt, and Options for the Future'* (See Room Document 4), is expected to have significant influence on the way that future evaluations are undertaken.
- The Network's Knowledge Management initiative aims to improve communication and knowledge sharing among Network members. We have been developing the Network website into a key source of information on evaluation and a working tool for both Network members and for the wider development evaluation community (See Room Document 9).
- Paragraph 22 of the Paris Declaration states the importance of partner country capacity building for achieving development objectives – including in the specific context of evaluation work. The Network has taken an active role in supporting the IDEAS Conference (Delhi, April 2005) and is planning a workshop, to be hosted by France in 2006, on 'Partners in Development' (See Room Document 12). This will follow-up the 2003 workshop, organised by France in collaboration with the Evaluation Network, on 'Partners in Development Evaluation: Learning and Accountability'.

Discussion Points

- How should Network members ensure that their individual work programmes are fully reflecting the commitments set out in the Paris Declaration? Are substantive changes needed in the way that donor agencies are planning and delivering evaluations?

- How can we ensure that the DAC Evaluation Network responds to the Paris Declaration and leads a change process towards more harmonised, aligned and effective ways of delivering evaluations? How should we promote and build on the Evaluation Network's relevant ongoing initiatives?
- Should the Task Force proposed in Section 1 of this note also take a proactive lead in this area? This could involve developing concrete steps, both for members individually and for the Network collectively, to ensure that future evaluation practice reflects the Paris Declaration commitments.

ANNEX 1

KEY MONITORING AND EVALUATION CITATIONS IN THE PARIS DECLARATION

- Para 10:** Because demonstrating real progress at country level is critical, under the leadership of the partner country we will periodically assess, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, our mutual progress at country level in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness. In doing so, we will make use of appropriate country level mechanisms.
- Para 11:** At the international level, we call on the partnership of donors and partner countries hosted by the DAC to broaden partner country participation and, by the end of 2005, to propose arrangements for the medium term monitoring of the commitments in this Declaration. In the meantime, we ask the partnership to co-ordinate the international monitoring of the Indicators of Progress included in Section III; to refine targets as necessary; to provide appropriate guidance to establish baselines; and to enable consistent aggregation of information across a range of countries to be summed up in a periodic report. We will also use existing peer review mechanisms and regional reviews to support progress in this agenda. We will, in addition, explore independent cross-country monitoring and evaluation processes – which should be applied without imposing additional burdens on partners – to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives.
- Para 12:** Consistent with the focus on implementation, we plan to meet again in 2008 in a developing country and conduct two rounds of monitoring before then to review progress in implementing this Declaration.
- Para 22:** The capacity to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programmes, is critical for achieving development objectives – from analysis and dialogue through implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity development is the responsibility of partner countries with donors playing a support role. It needs not only to be based on sound technical analysis, but also to be responsive to the broader social, political and economic environment, including the need to strengthen human resources.
- Para 45:** [Donors commit to] Harmonise their monitoring and reporting requirements, and, until they can rely more extensively on partner countries' statistical, monitoring and evaluation systems, with partner countries to the maximum extent possible on joint formats for periodic reporting.