

**DAC NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION**

***Workshop on Joint Evaluations  
Challenging the Conventional Wisdom - the View from Developing Country Partners***  
Nairobi, 20-21 April 2005

**WORKSHOP REPORT**



## WORKSHOP REPORT

### Introduction

The DAC Evaluation Network Workshop on *'Joint Evaluations - Challenging the Conventional Wisdom; the View from Developing Country Partners'*, was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 20-21 April 2005. The Workshop was Chaired by Professor Samuel Wangwe of Tanzania on Day One and by Mr Kwesi Abbey Sam of Ghana on Day Two. Hans Lundgren, Head of OECD/DCD Evaluation Section, served as co-Chair.

### Rationale

The DAC asked the Network on Development Evaluation to review and analyse past experiences and options for the future for joint evaluations. A literature review and consultations with over 100 representatives of donor agencies (bilateral and multilateral), civil society, and consultants were undertaken in 2004/05. The Nairobi Workshop constituted a vital stage in this consultation process; and solicited the view from developing country partners. The Workshop had two overall objectives: (1) To review past experience of joint evaluations and to analyse their benefits and challenges; and (2) To develop recommendations on how joint evaluations should be planned, implemented and followed-up for the maximum benefit of all partners. National consultants and representatives of developing country governments and civil society were invited to participate (Annex 2: Participant List).

### Context and Background

Joint evaluations have been on the development evaluation agenda since the early 1990s. The 1991 *DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance* state, "joint donor evaluations should be promoted in order to improve understanding of each others' procedures and approaches and to reduce the administrative burden on recipients". The principles also underline the importance of involving the aid recipients.

Some, but not all, aid agencies have made significant efforts in delivering joint evaluations. In 1998, the *Review of the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance* concluded that the 16 DAC members who had participated in joint evaluations, "found them highly – or, more often occasionally – satisfactory". The report stressed that joint evaluations "have proven to be satisfactory as they allow first-hand learning from each other, give greater results, facilitate feedback, mobilise knowledge, improve follow-up and save resources". However, respondents also voiced reasons for concern, namely "higher costs, since [joint evaluations] require more time and resources to assure co-ordination and foster mutual understanding. Hidden agendas, different approaches, too general and diplomatic conclusions as they have to combine different interests, increased complexity and delays and different political objectives, also work against effective joint evaluations".

In 2000, the DAC Network on Evaluation published a guidance booklet; *Effective Practices in Conducting a Joint Multi-Donor Evaluation*. The study currently being undertaken aims to build on and update this earlier guidance; and to prioritise the perspective from developing country partners. The report, *Joint Evaluations, Recent Experiences, Lessons Learnt, and Options for the Future*, which will integrate the workshop outcomes and recommendations, will be presented to the DAC Network on Development Evaluation in June 2005 and published thereafter. This work is expected to have significant influence on the way that future evaluations are undertaken.

## Workshop Summary – Day One

1. Hans Lundgren welcomed all participants to the meeting on behalf of the DAC Evaluation Network and presented an outline of the workshop and its aims and objectives. All participants introduced themselves. A series of short presentations were then made on the benefits and challenges of some past joint evaluations: Juan Carlos Gutierrez of Nicaragua gave a presentation on the ongoing evaluation of General Budget Support; Joyce Mapunjo of Tanzania gave a presentation on the monitoring and evaluation systems in Tanzania; and Oumoul Khayri Ba Tall of Mauritania gave a presentation on the perspective of a national consultant. The meeting then divided into breakout groups, to discuss the benefits and challenges of using joint evaluation approaches, before reporting back and holding a plenary discussion. The key issues raised include:

2. Definition of Joint Evaluations

Participants felt that joint evaluations should be defined as any evaluation undertaken with the active participation of more than one agency. A typology was proposed with four categories of joint evaluation: (1) Donor + Donor; more than one donor agency working in partnership; (2) Donor + Partner Country; a donor and a partner country working in partnership; (3) Multi-Donor + Multi-Partner; more than one donor and more than one partner country working in partnership; and (4) Partner + Partner; more than one aid recipient country working in partnership on an evaluation.

Some participants argued that all evaluations should be undertaken with the active participation of the aid recipients while others felt that not all evaluations should be undertaken jointly. However, all agreed that a greater proportion of evaluations should be undertaken jointly than has been the case in the past.

3. Benefits

Key benefits of working in partnership on joint evaluations were identified as:

- Increased potential for objective and independent review; as the terms of reference and recommendations are not directed by one sole agency. This can increase the legitimacy of the evaluation. However, there will be less legitimacy where there is not real partnership and the evaluation remains donor driven.
- Joint evaluations provide the means for developing more systematic evaluation processes, and the evaluation process can be as important as the results.
- Cost savings for the developing country partner; as joint evaluations should reduce the overall number of evaluations and country reporting requirements.
- Joint evaluations facilitate mutual learning, sharing of best practice and capacity building. It was noted that capacity building must also take place at the level of institutions.
- Joint evaluations encourage more harmonised and aligned programming, and can enhance coherence and coordination between different development actors.

4. Challenges

The workshop also noted a range of challenges in implementing joint evaluations. It was stressed that joint evaluations must be carefully managed in order not to let the challenges outweigh the benefits. Key challenges of joint working were identified as:

- The larger number of participants increases the chances that competing or conflicting interests will frustrate the evaluation. For example, some partners could have political and/or other agendas that negatively influence the process.
  - Development aid which is not implemented with a coordinated, harmonised and/or aligned approach may be difficult to evaluate with a joint approach.
  - Risk of increased cost for the funder(s) of the evaluation as a result of large and complex evaluation teams and processes.
  - Risk of lengthy evaluation process; as each step needs to be agreed by multiple partners.
  - Joint evaluations may tend to become overly reliant on external consultants.
  - A low level of commitment and participation, on the part of some stakeholders, may frustrate attempts at joint working.
5. Participants felt that joint evaluations have strong potential to empower developing countries. However, it was felt that when joint donor evaluations exclude developing country partners, they can increase the donor influence and disempower the aid recipients. It was also stressed that when a joint evaluation Steering Committee includes representation from several developing countries, those countries should be facilitated to meet together to coordinate their inputs. It was noted that in the case of the Evaluation of General Budget Support, the developing country representatives had not met without the donors. It was also recommended that Steering Committee meetings should be held in developing countries as well as in donor countries.
6. The workshop agreed that while joint evaluations have most commonly been donor-driven, the modality has the potential to lead to real partnership and country ownership. The experience of Tanzania was outlined as a strong model for national ownership of monitoring systems. The Independent Monitoring Group has played a strong role in coordinating M&E work and in putting the country partners in the driving seat. However, it was noted that full partnership and ownership will not be achieved when all the partner countries do not participate from the outset of the evaluation process and when they are not taking an active role in all stages: agreeing the initial terms of reference, the inception report and the recommendations. Participants stressed that developing countries need to themselves initiate and take the lead on joint evaluations. All agreed that ownership is vitally important and that even heavily aid-dependant countries should demand participation in and ownership of evaluation processes. It was also noted that a joint evaluation can be undertaken when a programme has not been implemented jointly; the evaluation team should be independent of the programme managers and a joint approach can help build both partnership and objectivity.
7. The participation of civil society organisations also needs further consideration. It was noted that society has a role to play in demanding government accountability. Evaluations were seen as one way of meeting accountability requirements, but it was also noted that lighter-touch and faster approaches such as PRA and small-scale reviews also have an important role to play.

### **Workshop Summary – Day Two**

8. Kwesi Abbey Sam welcomed participants to the second day of the workshop and presented a summary of the first day of the workshop. The second day looked forward to the future, and asked how joint evaluations should be planned, delivered and followed-up for the maximum benefit of all partners.

9. A series of short presentations were made on future directions for joint evaluations: Sebastian Ling of the OECD gave a presentation on the context in which the DAC Evaluation Network is undertaking the ongoing study on joint evaluations, including the Paris Declaration commitment for donors 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”. Horst Breier, the report consultant, gave a summary of the findings and recommendations identified so far in the draft report, ‘*Joint Evaluations: Recent Experiences, Lessons Learnt and Options for the Future*’; Vu Dai Thang gave a presentation on present and future directions in Vietnam; and Sharmala Naidoo on present and future directions in South Africa. The meeting then divided into breakout groups, to discuss (1) Upstream planning of joint evaluations; (2) Management and Governance of joint evaluations; and (3) Participation and Ownership.

The key issues raised included:

10. Upstream Planning

- The group recommended that all development interventions should have a joint evaluation embedded from the initial design phase. The decision to undertake an evaluation jointly should be made at the initial planning stage of every project or programme. This would increase ownership by developing countries and improve lesson learning and capacity building.
- It was felt that the key stakeholders in the evaluation process should be identified jointly by the donors and the aid recipients.
- It was noted that where donor programmes are harmonised within SWAps and/or are aligned with government planning, especially through GBS, it will be easier to plan and undertake joint evaluations.
- It was recommended that developing countries need to show greater initiative in planning and scheduling which evaluations will be undertaken – a possible tool could be an annual or bi-annual planning matrix coordinated by a central government ministry.
- The group recommended that the following ground rules should be agreed at the outset of every joint evaluation: (1) That the evaluation should be undertaken independently and objectively; (2) That the Steering Committee should have an agreed joint management and decision-making structure and that all partners should share accountability for the evaluation; (3) That the evaluation should have a clear and agreed purpose; and (4) That the ToR, procurement arrangements, management structure, implementation, timeframe and dissemination policy should all be agreed jointly.
- Countries should review and build on the experience in Vietnam, where the Government has made internal M&E a legal requirement in the Decree on ODA Management.

11. Implementation: Governance and Management

- The group noted that multi-agency joint evaluations will normally need both a larger Steering Committee and a smaller Management Group. Both groups must, however, be of a functional and workable size and should include participation from developing countries. The roles and representation on both committees should be agreed between the key actors.
- In general, the Steering Committee should be responsible for the following areas: defining the scope of the work; agreeing the MoU and ToR; overseeing the evaluation process;

approving the budget; selecting and appointing consultants; resolving conflicts; approving reports; and advising respective partners on recommendations and action plans.

- While the Management Group should be responsible for the following areas: managing, supporting and facilitating the evaluation process on a day-to-day basis; preparing draft ToR and other documents for the Steering Committee; providing technical and administrative support to the consultants; and reporting to the Steering Committee on progress and problems. The Management Group should normally be composed of evaluation professionals.
- The role of the consultants should also be agreed up-front. In general, they should be responsible for: implementing the ToR; developing the evaluation criteria; and writing the inception report and the final report and recommendations. It was recommended that local/national consultants should be contracted where possible and that innovative forms of funding should be made available to developing country governments to enable them to themselves contract national consultants.

## 12. Participation and Ownership

- The group stressed that participation is easier to realise than ownership.
- It was felt that the agency that has the idea for and initiates a joint evaluation is likely to take the initial lead and therefore have the greatest ownership. It was recommended that developing countries must themselves take the lead and initiate more joint evaluations.
- However, the group also noted that sufficient capacity is needed in order to take ownership. It was therefore recommended that the IPDET evaluation training should be expanded and rolled out in a broader range of countries. However, capacity building should not be limited to training of individuals, but must encompass institutional capacity building. Developing country partners may lack capacities in time and resources as well as in technical knowledge. M&E units should therefore be built and developed within partner country governments, possibly within a central ministry or at the Office of the Auditor General. All partners need to look at innovative ways of providing funding for aid recipients to build their own evaluation capacities.
- Strong participation of local consultants can also build national ownership.
- M&E networks and professional associations need to be built and developed within developing countries.
- Some developing countries may find it more practicable to take ownership of evaluations that have a stronger focus on lesson learning than on accountability.
- Procurement rules need to be harmonised within developing countries; eg all the donors should agree to a common set of Public Procurement Rules (PPR) and all evaluations should follow that common country guidance. Participants also commented that where aid remains tied, this can reduce the developing country capacity to make spending decisions and take ownership.
- Countries should review and build on the South African experience; where the National Treasury has initiated a series of seven joint evaluations in partnership with different donors and has also led a Development Cooperation Report; evaluating total country ODA from 1994-1999.

### 13 KEY WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 A greater proportion of evaluations should be undertaken jointly; with full and active participation of the aid recipients and other partners from the very outset. Further, developing country partners need to take ownership and must therefore take a more active role in initiating joint evaluations.
- 13.2 Developing countries should show greater initiative in taking the lead in planning, coordinating and scheduling which evaluations will be undertaken – a possible tool could be an annual or bi-annual planning matrix coordinated by a central government ministry.
- 13.3 Developing country governments should be supported to build their institutional capacity for initiating and leading joint evaluations. M&E units should be built and developed within developing country governments. All partners need to look at innovative ways of providing funding for aid recipients to build their evaluation capacity.
- 13.4 Better coordination and knowledge sharing is needed amongst the various partners within aid recipient countries. National M&E networks and professional associations need to be built and expanded.
- 13.5 When a large joint evaluation is undertaken with the participation of several developing countries, the developing countries should be facilitated to meet together to coordinate their views and inputs. Steering Committee meetings should also be held in developing countries as well as in donor countries.
- 13.6 Developing countries should review and build on the Vietnamese experience; where internal M&E has been made a legal requirement in the Decree on ODA Management.
- 13.7 Developing countries should review and build on the South African experience; where the National Treasury has initiated a series of seven joint evaluations in partnership with different donors and has also led a Development Cooperation Report, evaluating total country ODA from 1994-1999.

## ANNEX 1

## DAC NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

*Workshop on Joint Evaluations*  
**Challenging the Conventional Wisdom - the View from Developing Country Partners**  
 20-21 April 2005, Nairobi, Kenya

## PROGRAMME

	20 April	21 April
AM	<p><b>DAY ONE: EXPERIENCES OF JOINT EVALUATIONS (LOOKING BACK AND THE PICTURE TODAY)</b></p> <p><b>09:00 – 09:30: Opening</b></p> <p>a. Introduction to the workshop b. Roundtable introductions</p> <p><b>09:30 – 11:00: Informal Presentations</b></p> <p>a. The evaluation of General Budget Support b. Experiences in Tanzania c. The view of the national consultant</p> <p><b>11:00 – 11:30: Tea/Coffee Break</b></p> <p><b>11:30 – 13:00: Breakout Sessions</b></p> <p>a. Benefits and challenges of joint evaluations</p>	<p><b>DAY TWO: OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE (LOOKING FORWARD)</b></p> <p><b>09:00 – 09:30: Introduction</b></p> <p>a. Review of Day 1 and introduction to Day 2</p> <p><b>09:30 – 11:00: Informal Presentations</b></p> <p>a. The joint evaluations context b. Presentation by joint evaluations consultant c. The direction in Vietnam d. The direction in South Africa</p> <p><b>11:00 – 11:30: Tea/Coffee Break</b></p> <p><b>11:30 – 13:00: Breakout Sessions</b></p> <p>a. Ways forward and options for the future</p>
	<b>Buffet Lunch (13:00 – 14:00)</b>	<b>Buffet Lunch (13:00 – 14:00)</b>
PM	<p><b>14:00 – 15:00: Breakout Reporting</b></p> <p><b>15:00 – 15:30: Tea/Coffee Break</b></p> <p><b>15:30 – 17:00: Plenary</b></p> <p>a. Plenary discussion on the benefits and challenges of joint evaluations</p>	<p><b>14:00 – 15:00: Breakout Reporting</b></p> <p><b>15:00 – 15:30: Tea/Coffee Break</b></p> <p><b>15:30 – 17:00: Plenary</b></p> <p>a. Plenary discussion on ways forward and options for the future b. Workshop conclusions and next steps</p>
	<b>Informal Dinner (19:30)</b>	



**ANNEX 2: PARTICIPANT LIST**

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