



ROOM DOCUMENT 4

DAC Network on Development Evaluation

Discussion note on alignment, harmonization and donor evaluation practice

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Paris declaration and current evaluation practice

The purpose of this note is to introduce a discussion on evaluation practice among donors in development cooperation and the new demands arising from current trends, notably the Paris Declaration. The starting point is that the principles of the Paris Declaration: partner country ownership, managing for results, mutual accountability, alignment and harmonisation also hold implications for evaluation.

Concurrently with the demands of the Paris Declaration there exist a variety of “drivers” of evaluation including the policies and institutional arrangements of donors. There are also forces that would seem to encourage donors to intensify evaluation activities. One such factor would be the increased demand on donors and recipient countries to account for the results of development cooperation. This is in part due to the real and projected increases in aid allocation but also to a concern about the efficiency and effectiveness of development cooperation linked to an increase in programme based funding modalities and budget support.

The CGD report “Will we Ever Learn” may also contribute to more evaluation work being carried out by proposing more and better rigorous impact evaluations.

The independence and impartiality of current evaluation institutions have been questioned along with concerns about accountability to tax payers in donor countries. The establishment of a new institute for evaluation of development cooperation in Sweden is in line with this. A few years back there were similar discussions in Denmark and discussions in the same vein are ongoing in the UK.

Challenges:

The Paris declaration directs donors to:

- ❖ align with partner country systems, including monitoring and evaluation.
- ❖ harmonize procedures and requirements, including monitoring and evaluation.
- ❖ Increase aid effectiveness and focus on results
- ❖ share analytical work, including evaluation.

Discussion points:

1. What are the implications of the Paris declaration for evaluation practice among donors?

2. Do we need to rethink current evaluation practice, and structures, to enhance partner country ownership and mutual accountability?

3. Are there mechanisms that can be used to reduce transaction costs and deal with redundancies? How does coordination at country level affect evaluation programming? What guidance do donors provide to field staff on use of the evaluation instrument?

5. How do we use joint evaluations? Are joint evaluations being given the same status and weight as evaluations for single donors? Do we have response systems in place? Are joint evaluations effective for joint learning? What other mechanisms can be used for learning and results?

6. What should be the role of the network in this area?