

Phase 2 of the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration

Terms of Reference for

Evaluation Core Team

Introduction

In response to the Paris Declaration commitment of conducting an independent cross-country evaluation, it has been decided to conduct a two-phase evaluation, commissioned and overseen by an International Reference Group, comprising representatives of donors and multilateral agencies (chiefly members of the DAC Evaluation Network), partner countries and representatives of civil society. Day-to-day management of the evaluation is entrusted to a small Evaluation Management Group supported by an Evaluation Secretariat.

The evaluation complements the monitoring of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, undertaken through the Cluster D of the OECD DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness “Assessing Progress on Implementing the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

The first phase of the evaluation¹ ran from March 2007 to September 2008 and aimed at providing information on the “HOWs and WHYs” of the implementation process of the Paris Declaration to deliver practical lessons and help take stock of implementation performance at the 3rd High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Accra, Ghana in September 2008. The emphasis of this phase was on input and output levels, through a series of partner country, development partner² headquarters, and thematic evaluations. These evaluations were of a formative nature, capturing the incremental and incidental behavior changes associated with the Paris Declaration.

The second phase of the evaluation will run from the 3rd High Level Forum in 2008 up to the 4th High Level Forum in Korea in 2011. This second phase will examine whether the intended long-term effects of the Paris Declaration are being achieved with an emphasis on outcome and results. The evaluation’s primary focus will be at the level of country studies (that assess donors/agencies as well as country stakeholders), with a few supplementary “studies” where essential to ensure adequate coverage of important issues. 21 partner countries have expressed a strong interest in conducting country-level evaluations and four donor countries have indicated that they would undertake a headquarters-level study to complement those conducted in Phase 1 by other 11 donors/agencies.

The substance and the nature of the evaluation and its conduct are presented in the Approach Paper which is an integral part of the present Terms of Reference.

Other source documents referred to should also be consulted by potential contractors as they too contain important and additional background information³.

¹ Wood, B; D. Kabell; F. Sagasti; N. Muwanga; Synthesis Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration, Copenhagen, July 2008. The report can be found at: http://www.diiis.dk/graphics/Subweb/paris_evaluation_web/index.htm.

² By Development Partners is meant donors, multilateral agencies, IFIs and other organisations engaged in development assistance.

³ The source documents can be found on the OECD/DAC Website at: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork.

The Terms of Reference are organised into seven sections:

1. *The Paris Declaration and this evaluation.* This introduces the Paris Declaration and the governance structure for the evaluation.

2. *Objectives of the evaluation.*

3. *Approach and methods.* The overall evaluation model and approach that recognises the distinctive methodological challenges of evaluating the Paris Declaration.

4. *The role of the Core Team.* This locates the Core Team within the architecture of the Phase 2 evaluation. It relates the Core Team’s work to that of country-level teams. It also identifies the specific responsibilities of the Core Team over the course of the Phase 2 evaluation.

5. *Timetable and deliverables.*

6. *Profile of the Core Team.*

7. *Expected level of input.*

1. The Paris Declaration and this Evaluation

1.1 The Paris Declaration

The Paris Declaration⁴ was endorsed at the 2nd High Level Forum held in Paris in 2005 by 52 donor and partner countries and 30 other actors in the development cooperation field (UN and other multilateral agencies & NGOs). It aims to strengthen “partnerships” between donor countries and countries receiving aid in order to make aid more effective and to maximise development results. The Declaration consists of 56 “Partnership Commitments” grouped under five overarching ‘principles’:

- **Ownership** by aid-receiving developing countries of their own development strategies and plans
- **Alignment** of donors by using country systems and procedures in support of country plans
- **Harmonisation** of donor actions to minimise administrative burdens and transaction costs on partner countries
- **Managing for Development Results** by partner countries and donors becoming focused on results and using results oriented information to improve decision-making
- **Mutual Accountability**, such that both donors and partner countries take on a joint commitment to achieve development results both to each other and to their own constituents and publics.

⁴ The full Declaration can be found at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>.

The Paris Declaration expresses a broad international consensus developed in the 15 years that preceded 2005 stipulating that new partnership relationships and ways of working between developed countries and partner countries are essential if development results are to be assured, aid well spent and aid volumes maintained.

1.2 Evaluation Governance

Considerable thought has gone into ensuring that the governance of this evaluation will be consistent with Paris Declaration partnership principles and entail appropriate involvement, cooperation and ownership by the main stakeholders in the Paris Declaration. This is intended to ensure that the evaluation will be relevant to stakeholders, its results will be used and that evaluators will be able to access needed information. There is also a prior expectation that all stakeholders will be committed to the independence and professional credibility of the evaluation.

A diverse International Reference Group made up of both participating partner countries, donors and multilateral institutions together with international civil society observers will oversee the Phase 2 evaluation. Operational management will be the responsibility of a smaller Evaluation Management Group, also made up of donor and partner country representatives. The Management Group reports to the International Reference Group. It is explicitly responsible for ensuring the quality and independence of the evaluation, including, among other things, selection of the Core Team. There will also be a Country Reference Group for each country-level evaluation to guide country-level evaluation teams, the country evaluation design, and country-specific evaluation questions; monitor progress, review report drafts and ensuring that country-level evaluations are relevant and well integrated. Similar Reference Groups will be established for the donor/agency headquarters-level evaluations.

2. Objectives of the Evaluation

The overall aim of the Phase 2 evaluation is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the Paris Declaration and its contribution to aid effectiveness and ultimately to development effectiveness, including poverty reduction.

To this end the evaluation will document and analyse the results of the Paris Declaration in terms of improving the effectiveness of aid and the contribution of aid to development results.

The evaluation design as outlined in the Approach Paper, acknowledges the importance of country-specific differences and other differences in policy, history, and resources both among donors and the recipients of aid. The evaluation is therefore expected to analyse results in context, taking into account preconditions or enabling conditions that may lead to or inhibit positive development results supported by aid.

Specific objectives include:

- To document the results achieved through implementing the Paris Declaration.
- To enable country-based “partnerships”, partner countries and donors/agencies to clarify, improve and strengthen policies and practice consistent with the Paris Declaration in pursuit of aid effectiveness and development effectiveness.

- To highlight barriers and difficulties that may limit the effectiveness of the Paris Declaration and its effects and impacts – and how these barriers and difficulties may be overcome.
- To strengthen the knowledge-base as to the ways in which development partnerships can most effectively and efficiently help maximise development results through aid in different development contexts – including various degrees of “fragility”.
- To enable sharing and exchange of experience among stakeholders, countries and partnerships so as to facilitate reflection, lesson-learning and policy improvement.

This evaluation will therefore be summative *and* formative – allowing judgements to be made about what has been achieved whilst at the same time also supporting policy development and improvement across different constituencies and stakeholders.

The political support for the Paris Declaration as a development strategy that was evident at the High Level Forum in Paris in 2005 remains strong. This was underlined at the most recent High Level Forum held in Accra in September 2008. The Accra Agenda for Action further specified some of the Paris Declaration’s commitments with the aim in particular of strengthening country ownership; building more inclusive partnerships; and sharpening the focus on development results. The Phase 2 evaluation will therefore need to pay particular attention to implementation of these commitments. These address the concerns of many stakeholders – including policy makers in partner and donor governments; Parliaments, other tiers of government including municipalities; development agencies and IFIs; civil society including the private sector, NGOs and citizens in both partner and donor countries. The Core Team will need to be responsive to this complex multi-stakeholder environment.

3. Approach and Methods⁵

An overall evaluation model and approach has been developed that recognises the distinctive methodological challenges of evaluating the Paris Declaration.

The evaluation is expected to provide answers to evaluation questions that stakeholders and constituencies want answers to and can then use to strengthen policies that will improve the effectiveness of aid and the achievement of development results. These questions are detailed in the Approach Paper (paragraphs 42-52).

The *main elements of the evaluation approach* include:

- Several (15-20) country-level evaluations focusing on country-donor partnership functioning and their development outcomes at country-level, thus including consideration of the effects of donor policies as well as country-level actors on country development prospects.
- A few (four-five) donor/agency headquarters studies to supplement those undertaken in Phase 1.
- Addressing all the five main principles: mutual accountability and managing for development results as well as ownership, alignment and harmonisation.
- Attempting to explain and attribute results to the Paris Declaration, despite predictable difficulties – hence the importance of comparative elements in the proposed design.

⁵ See Approach Paper chapter II, Scope and Focus.

A mix of suitable methods for this evaluation has been identified including:

- Syntheses of existing evidence (e.g. secondary sources), evaluations and research in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Comparative case studies that address common themes and sectors – important because more information may be available for some sectors and comparative findings require a focus on common themes.
- Comparative studies, for example between Paris Declaration and non-Paris Declaration type policies (e.g. different aid modalities, global funds etc.) in order to disentangle the contribution of Paris Declaration related and other strategies.
- Backward tracking to past Paris Declaration-like initiatives and their results so as to demonstrate effects over longer periods of time.
- ‘Theory based’ (longitudinal) studies that are forward looking (i.e. anticipate development results that are in formation but have not become fully evident) by mapping out the plausible links in the causal chain from aid to development results and measure as far as possible “direction of travel” and “distance travelled”. This is especially important for some of the longer term effects of the Paris Declaration that will not be evident by 2011.
- Given the intentions of this evaluation to support improvements in policy and practice as well as document/measure achievements and failures, there will need to be a focus on mechanisms of change⁶ (i.e. those causal factors that help *explain* results in context) so as to be able to make credible recommendations.

The challenge of attribution and causal inference is given particular attention in the Approach Paper. The challenges include:

- Different ways in which the Paris Declaration is being implemented.
- Importance of different political, economic and institutional contexts for implementation (“intervening variables”).
- Significance of key actors’ intentions and priorities.
- Possibilities of multi-directional causality between the main elements in the model.
- Iterative nature of policy implementation associated with the Paris Declaration.
- Limited availability of adequate and relevant data, especially for results and outcomes.
- The challenges are particularly daunting if development outcomes and results are to be explicitly identified, quantified and attributed.

⁶ Of the kind identified in paragraph 54 of the Approach Paper.

Despite the relatively detailed level of preparation and agreement about evaluation approach and methods, the difficulties of operationalising these aspirations and intentions across many countries should not be underestimated. This will be a challenge for the Core Team in particular. It is agreed that as part of the evaluation comparisons between experiences will be important. The purposes of these comparisons are also clear: to test attribution claims for the Paris Declaration. The particular form, focus, methods and techniques to be applied will be proposed and justified by the Core Team – both in their proposal and as part of the inception report once work has begun (see below in Section 5.2 for details of expected reports and outputs).

4. The Role of the Core Team

4.1 The Core Team within the Phase 2 Evaluation Architecture

The importance of the Core Team follows from the architecture of the evaluation.

The Phase 2 evaluation will focus on effects at the level of partner countries and their partnerships, i.e. the joint arrangements between donors and the recipients of aid that have been put in place to support the implementation of the Declaration. There will be country-level evaluation teams in each participating partner country responsible for undertaking independent evaluations of aid effectiveness and development results. These teams will address both:

- 1) Implementation or “process” – a continuation of Phase 1 investigations both in “old” and “new” countries. The “Core Questions”⁷ should be relatively few and precise concerning changes of behaviour of countries and donors while allowing countries to adapt these studies to their particular interests, and
- 2) Results or outcomes in terms of aid and development effectiveness. In order to allow meaningful aggregation and synthesis the “generic ToR” including the “core questions” needs to be rather precise, leaving limited room for variations in scope and methodologies.

Whilst most evaluative activity will be undertaken by country-level teams, there may also be a small number of “supplementary studies” where it appears that insufficient evidence will be available from the country studies to allow for firm conclusions to be drawn. These supplementary studies will draw from evidence provided by the country-level studies and on evidence from other countries drawn to the greatest extent possible from secondary sources.

A familiar problem in decentralised evaluations such as this is how to draw valid and defensible general conclusions once all country-level studies are complete. This problem derives from a number of technical reasons. For example, methods and data gathering may not be consistent; specialist skills may be weaker in some teams compared with others; and potential cross-cutting themes are identified too late in the evaluation cycle to allow for comparability.

The Core Team is expected to facilitate coherence and quality across country-level studies as well as donor/agency headquarters-level studies so as to ensure that these are reliable, authoritative and useful bases for synthesising.

⁷ The Core Questions should be drawn from the ToR for Phase 1 country evaluations.

4.2 Specific responsibilities of the Core Team

The Core Team will be expected to contribute to the Phase 2 evaluation at all stages: at planning and set-up; on an ongoing basis to ensure consistency and solve problems that may arise; and in the final stages when it will be expected to bring together all evaluation findings in a free-standing Synthesis Report. In order to fulfil these responsibilities the Core Team should be in place and working at least five to six months before country-level teams are contracted. The Core Team will report and be responsible to the Evaluation Management Group through the Evaluation Secretariat.

At ***planning and set-up*** the Core Team will:

Review and synthesise relevant existing research material and evaluations. There is a considerable body of research, evaluation, monitoring and data base material that pertains to the countries that will participate in the Phase 2 evaluation. This material needs to be reviewed and collated in a consistent and efficient fashion preferably in a database so that preparatory dossiers are provided to country-level teams when they begin their work.

Design, subject to the approval of the Evaluation Management Group and the International Reference Group, a “template” for the common elements of country-level studies. It is important to ensure consistency in data gathering and fieldwork at country level for the common (shared) elements of country-level studies⁸. Consistency should be assured by applying a “Generic Terms of Reference” for the core evaluation questions, methods, types of evidence, quality standards and quality assurance systems that should be applied. Developing such a “template” will ensure that results will be comparable and that synthesis across country-level studies will be possible. The Core team will prepare detailed design to operationalise the Approach Paper’s evaluation framework, propositions and questions into a guide for feasible country studies and, as appropriate, supplementary studies. The Core Team will prepare and manage the four Regional workshops to facilitate this.

Provide professional input into the selection of country-level teams. Country-level Reference Groups will take many considerations into account when selecting and contracting their country-level teams. These may include the track-record of potential contractors, their understanding of country and development topics, and the value for money of the offer, as well as national competitive procurement procedures. The Core Team should provide an independent professional input into this process.

On an ***ongoing basis once the evaluations have begun***, the Core Team will:

Provide ongoing advice and support to Country Teams. In multi-method evaluations decisions always have to be made on an on-going basis once an evaluation begins. Problems of data availability will require substitution of data sources; choices will have to be made about sampling activities or interview respondents; and balance will have to be maintained across the different components of the evaluation. Impartial advice in the face of such decisions will assist country-level teams, facilitate sharing of knowledge, information and experience across teams and reinforce the coherence and comparability of the evaluation as a whole. An interactive web-site will be established by the Core Team to support these activities.

⁸ The same level of consistency will not be needed for country specific aspects of the evaluation.

Propose for the approval of the Evaluation Management Group, any additional supplementary studies and how they should be undertaken. As has already been noted whilst most evaluative activity will take place at country level some supplementary studies may also be needed. Once the design of country-level studies has been complete it will become clearer which topics may be adequately addressed in which countries and where additional data and targeted studies may be needed to reach firm conclusions⁹. Some of these supplementary studies may be conducted by the Core Team itself. They are likely to involve cooperation with some if not all country-level teams and (depending on the subject and skills required) they may also involve supplementing Core Team members with other experts as appropriate. The budget for such studies should not be included in the present bid. Each study will be negotiated and contracted separately.

At the *final stages of the evaluation*, the Core Team will:

Synthesize evaluation results and prepare a final overall evaluation Synthesis Report. Source material at this stage will have been generated at country level through supplementary studies; and through reviews of existing research, evaluations and data. Synthesis work in preparation of the final report will have to begin before all country-level evaluations are complete, underlining the importance of careful time planning of country-level activities. It will also require working closely with country-level teams to ensure that the overall conclusions of the evaluation are adequately founded on country-level evidence. The final synthesis report should meet the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.

Assist with the dissemination of evaluation results. A comprehensive dissemination plan will be prepared by the Evaluation Secretariat to ensure that the results of the evaluation are available well before the 4th High Level Forum, planned for late 2011, and to other constituencies and stakeholders. The Core Team will support and participate in these activities, for example by preparing targeted evaluation products and attending regional workshops.

5. Time table and deliverables

5.1 Timetable for Core Team activities

The proposed timetable for the work aims to ensure that the final synthesis report of the overall evaluation will be ready well in advance of the High Level Forum planned for the fourth quarter of 2011. The table below details the activities expected and the deliverables over the course of the evaluation.

⁹ It may be that one or more supplementary studies are judged by the Evaluation Management Group to be pressing and therefore need to be started closer to the beginning of the evaluation.

Period	Activity
Mid September 2009	Briefing meeting with the Evaluation Secretariat and the Evaluation Management Group.
Mid October 2009	Presentation by Core Team to Management Group of 1) detailed work plan for preparatory activities in support of country-level evaluations, 2) draft Generic ToR for country-level evaluations, 3) preliminary specification of Core Team information management system and 4) communication plan.
October-December 2009	Interaction/advice to Country Reference Groups by Core Team during preparations for country-level evaluations.
November 2009	One regional workshop each in Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa; Asia/Pacific and Latin America to discuss approach and clarify country-level ToR.
November 2009	Submission of 1 st routine activity report to the Evaluation Management Group. These will thereafter be submitted every two months in an agreed format.
Beginning December 2009	Approval by International Reference Group of generic ToR for country-level evaluations.
October 2009 to January 2010	Preparation of country-level dossiers of background material on each participating country.
February 2010	Submission of Inception Report to Management Group to include: 1) overview of activities to date; 2) Proposals following for prioritising, timing and approach for possible supplementary studies; 3) a revised work plan for the Core Team's activities; 4) report on implemented information management system.
March 2010	Meeting with Evaluation Management Group to discuss Inception Report and progress.
Ongoing 2010	Maintaining liaison with country and donor/agency headquarters-level teams including responding to queries from these teams, sharing experience/good practice/model instruments across teams.
June to December 2010	Conducting/coordinating possible supplementary studies.
October 2010	Submission of "emerging findings" note by each country-team and donor/agency headquarters-level team (to Core Team).
November 2010	Preparation of "emerging findings" briefing note based on country and donor headquarters studies' emerging findings and progress/initial outcome reports on supplementary studies.
October 2009 to January 2010	Preparation of country-level dossiers of background material on each participating country.
December 2010	Meeting/workshop of country and donor/agency headquarters study team leaders, Core Team, Management Group and International Reference Group to discuss emerging findings.
November to December 2010	Production of country and donor/agency-level reports.
January to April 2011	Preparation of draft Synthesis Report.
April 2011	Meeting of the International Reference Group to comment on draft Synthesis Report.
April-May 2011	Finalisation of Synthesis Report and preparatory inputs for High Level Forum and dissemination activities.
May -September 2011	Dissemination activities.

5.2 Main deliverables

In summary the main deliverables of the Phase 2 evaluation for which the Core Team will be responsible are:

- Detailed design to operationalise the Approach Paper's evaluation framework, propositions and questions into a guide for feasible country studies and, as appropriate, supplementary studies. through consultations at a series of regional workshops.
- Background dossiers of information that will support country-level evaluation teams.
- Information and knowledge sharing system.
- Inception Report that includes review of progress, supplementary study/studies plan and revised work plan.
- Bi-monthly routine status reports to the Evaluation Management Group.
- Ongoing liaison with and support to country teams including quality assurance measures (mainly electronic including setting up an interactive web-site).
- Supplementary Studies reports (if so decided).
- Review of country and donor/agency draft reports.
- Overview of country-level evaluation findings (emerging findings) and other input to the workshop on emerging findings.
- Draft and final Synthesis Report.
- Targeted dissemination products leading up to 4th High Level Forum.

6. Profile of the Core Team

The Core Team will be based in an established institution or consulting enterprise with a demonstrated track record in evaluative research on international development cooperation. It will consist of a small group of evaluation professionals with experience of international development cooperation, led by a recognised and experienced expert. The organization of the team's work is the responsibility of the Team Leader and should be specified and explained clearly in the proposal.

Team composition

The evaluation team should consist of three to four international consultants as core team members and a number of associated team members for specific tasks. International consultants are defined as persons with an international background, e.g. with a substantial part of their professional experience from assignments in developing countries:

- The Core Team must be composed of both sexes;
- The Core Team must reflect regional diversity and include members from developing countries;
- The Core Team as a whole must have advanced knowledge of both French and Spanish.

Team Qualifications:

General qualifications for all core team members:

- Advanced academic degree (minimum M.A.);
- At least 10 years of experience with international development assistance;
- Experience with evaluation of development assistance at programme and policy level; (at least three references);
- Advance knowledge of and experience with aid and development effectiveness including of the Paris Declaration and current aid architecture;
- Advanced knowledge of evaluation methodology;
- Excellent writing and communication skills;
- Fluency in English.

Specific qualifications for the Team Leader:

- At least 15 years of experience with international development assistance;
- At least three references as Team Leader for multidisciplinary evaluation teams;
- At least three references of experience in evaluation of development assistance at programme and policy level;
- Experience with managing complex projects;
- Experience with conducting complex (joint) evaluations;
- Experience in synthesizing results of evaluations/studies.

Specific qualifications to be covered by one or more team members:

- Knowledge of development policies, strategies and management;
- Knowledge of gender issues;
- Knowledge of countries in fragile situation;
- Knowledge of evaluation design and methodology.
- General qualifications for associate team members
- Advanced academic degree (minimum M.A.);
- At least five years of experience with international development issues;
- Experience with evaluation/evaluation research.

Specific qualifications to be covered by one or more associate team members:

- Advanced knowledge of evaluation methodology;
- Experience with literature search and analysis;
- Experience with information management systems;
- Ability to do literature research in English/French/Spanish;
- Workshop facilitation.

It should be clearly stated which of the proposed team members cover which of the above qualifications.

7. Expected Level of Input

It is expected that the Team Leader will be available for about 20 months for the duration of the evaluation i.e. September 2009-September 2011 and that other team members including associated experts will provide some 36-40 person months of services with the bulk provided during the first six and the last six months of the evaluation. As different skills may be needed at different points in time a high degree of flexibility is needed. The total cost (fees and reimbursables) should not exceed DKK 7,500,000.
