



ROOM DOCUMENT

Agenda Item VII, ii

NONIE – the way forward

Summary of comments by NONIE members

This document has been submitted by the Chair of NONIE for information at the 9th meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 15-16 June 2009.

9th meeting

15 - 16 June 2009

Should NONIE continue?

The consensus seems to be that, yes, NONIE should continue - it fulfils a useful function and should be kept very much alive. All of the member networks expressed this view in one form or another, although with differing views on the options. Specifics include that UNEG are in the process of developing their own impact evaluation task force, while various people have commented that how 3ie develops is an important factor to bear in mind.

What should be NONIE's overall aims and focus? Which option to pursue? Of the options I put forward in my paper, there were votes for all 3 of the possible ways forward, but on the whole what the majority of members seem to favour is something in between options 1 and 2. Quite a number of comments favoured something close to option 2 but in practical terms no-one can at the moment offer to take on the responsibilities that entails, still less provide the capacity to pursue anything more ambitious. There was of course a range of views around that. IOCE expressed a clear preference for option 3 and also suggested that UNEG should perhaps be able to lead to provide the capacity for this. If UNEG are able to take the lead it will at a later stage, however, and there were several others who expressed a strong preference for option 1.

In looking at people's specific suggestions it was clear that the network wants to go slightly further than just having the meetings, if possible. I propose therefore that the main focus should be a developed version of option 1 consisting of a) learning from each other through network meetings, with; b) some work in between meetings by interested members, to help us keep the brand awareness and to commission papers in key areas; c) a clear mechanism for ensuring that developing country participants can still be sponsored to attend meetings, so that we do not lose the presence of the 4th network which has been one of the rich benefits we have enjoyed; d) leaving the door open for moving back to a wider range of activities in future if capacity becomes available.

Who should lead NONIE and who would provide a secretariat? There were no formal offers to take the lead in the immediate future as chair, let alone to do this as well as maintaining the secretariat. Many people suggested a rotation of the chair between the member networks. Several members (such as the UK, Germany, France, Belgium, Denmark, South Africa and WB) have offered to put some resources into keeping NONIE going in a more focused way, by hosting meetings or seminars. Others may be interested in picking up the leadership of NONIE at a later stage once capacity allows. In the meantime, I suggest we no longer need a formal chair, steering committee or secretariat but we do need a handful of partners to keep offering to help in kind, from time to time. I am happy to play an active role in that to help things along.

How to proceed - in broad terms I propose the following pragmatic approach. It is based on option 1 i.e.; a) Network meetings hosted by volunteer members every 9-12 months, plus the following; b) funding for developing country participants at meetings and conferences, to allow IOCE, AfrEA and other developing country reps to continue to participate actively if they wish; c) invite experts to write papers for the meetings which contribute to our knowledge on impact evaluation in any way we find useful, and make the meetings as useful as possible to keep our knowledge developing. We have to bear in mind that members are busy and unlikely to be able to put time into detailed work

on papers specifically for NONIE, but will obviously be able to present work they are doing already;
d) continue to maintain the website as a repository for the guidance and sharing examples of impact evaluations and papers on methods, to keep the NONIE brand awareness.

NONIE would operate as a decentralised network with meetings organised in the way that is usual in the DAC and Nordic Plus evaluation groups. DfID and the WB would stay actively engaged over the next 12-18 months to help keep things moving. Germany would lead on the next meeting, then France. From the end of 2010 UNEG (or a nominated UN agency) would be expected to take over the 'leadership' role, but still in a relatively informal way focused on organising the next meeting and keeping things going. We could, at the point when UNEG pick up the baton, also review whether a more ambitious approach is possible or desirable, more like option 2, or whether to wind down NONIE altogether and let other mechanisms such as our own member networks or 3ie cover the ground.

How would this work in practice?

The DAC network members would agree to take the lead in keeping NONIE going for the next 18 months by organising two meetings,

- one full NONIE meeting hosted by Germany early in 2010
- a second full NONIE meeting about 9 to 12 months later hosted by France, possibly working with Belgium.
- Denmark or other partners may host smaller seminars as well during this period.

DfID will put significant resources into this and will work with these countries to help organise these meetings and to commission papers from members and from external experts. For each meeting, the host country will determine the agenda and provide the venue, consulting with members in the way that we do with ad hoc task forces for joint evaluations or other network collaborations in the DAC, Nordic Plus, DACH etc. Chairing of the meeting will be shared between members, but obviously with a big role for the host country.

The WB IEG should continue to maintain the NONIE website, but this will simply mean uploading documents and text onto the site without any major content management. There will be no major investment in ongoing development or resources for responding to external queries. The website would be a simple repository for the guidance and working papers or item put forward by the members, with some up to date links to member sites, etc.

The WB has developed a NONIE Google group

(http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie/ie_peer_reviews.html) to form a NONIE discussion forum on the web. In a couple of months time this feature will be reviewed and, if it is found useful, a more advanced discussion group can be developed by contracting it out to a suitable firm. I think this could be an exciting and useful development to allow convenient exchange of views among members but without a secretariat.

The NONIE email address will not be used in future, as we do not have a secretariat to field and respond to queries. External queries can be directed through members who can either deal with them and/or raise them at meetings if they raise major issues. The remaining NONIE funds (around \$50k) will be used for funding consultancy/expert work on papers for meetings and, when possible given the WB's restrictions on how trust funds are used, they can be used also for funding parts of scholarships for attending meetings (but these will be administered in a simple way, see below). When the current funds are exhausted donors and members who have resources, such as the UK, NL and others with programme budgets for IE capacity building, can make individual contributions to NONIE when desired. Any new funds will not be held in a WB trust fund but will be paid directly for financing of agreed NONIE activities. Some papers will be provided by members in reporting on their own experiences with impact evaluations - so we can learn from each other. Some resources may go direct from donors to developing country members to lead specific pieces of work that are useful to NONIE. These funding arrangements will be agreed bilaterally on an ad hoc basis by members to suit their needs and interests, but might include a donor such as DfID funding developing countries in taking forward innovative examples of impact evaluation design, or to further our knowledge on specific issues covered by the guidance (or not covered in enough depth).

Administration of scholarships would be radically simplified as we will not need or have a secretariat for NONIE. IOCE and AfrEA will simply be asked to nominate suitable candidates for each meeting (about 10-15 attendees). DfID and the WB will arrange between them to administer and fund scholarships at a fixed level and a standard letter of invitation. Participants will deal with their own visa and travel arrangements and will not receive logistical support. Major conferences would no longer be a NONIE activity.