

International Reference Group for the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration Phase 2

2nd Meeting, OECD Paris 30 November – 1 December 2009

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and validate the Terms of Reference for the Country Evaluations and the Donor/Agency HQ evaluations as the primary building blocks for the evaluation. These will be positioned within the overall evaluation framework derived from the Approach Paper approved in May 2009.

In addition to these two sets of evaluations some supplementary studies are envisaged. At this stage the intent is to integrate as much as possible in the country and donor/agency evaluations and do cross country analysis of issues such as division of labour and (transaction) costs of implementing the PD (a “concept paper is attached for information). An analytical overview on “Development Resources beyond the Current Reach of the Paris Declaration” is being developed and will be presented at the Meeting.

AGENDA

Monday 30 November	
0900 – 0930	Opening by Co-Chairs
0930 – 1015	Progress report by Secretariat
1015 – 1100	Report from Regional Workshops by Hosts
1100 – 1130	Coffee break
1130 – 1230	Presentation and discussion of Overall PD Evaluation Framework
1230 – 1400	Lunch
1400 – 1445	Presentation and discussion of Donor/agency HQ TOR
1445 - 1530	Presentation of Country TOR
1530 – 1600	Coffee Break
1600 – 1800	Discussion

Tuesday 1 December	
0900 – 0945	Feed-back on discussion of TOR
0945 – 1045	Supplementary Studies
1045 - 1100	Coffee Break
1100 – 1115	Election of Co-Chairs
1115 - 1200	Next steps; (sub-regional workshops, other milestones in 2010)

Below is a brief background to each document, but first it is important to provide a brief overview report on the four regional workshops just completed, which have had a substantial impact in shaping the Evaluation Framework and Generic Terms of Reference for Country Evaluations.

1. Consolidated key points from the regional workshops

The workshops were held in Siem Reap, Cambodia (Asia-Pacific); Bogota, Colombia (Latin America); Mangochi, Malawi (Anglophone Africa); and Cotonou, Benin (Francophone Africa). These workshops included a total of 110 participants, including National Evaluation Coordinators (also IRG Members), potential reference group members, and development partner representatives from all but two of the 24 countries which had volunteered or were considering carrying out evaluations.

In each workshop, there was intensive discussion of the draft Generic Terms of Reference circulated in advance (drawn mainly from the Approach Paper approved by the IRG). The discussions focused particularly on: the draft Core questions and sub-questions; management and governance arrangements; and those for preparation and support of the evaluations. Before the end of each workshop, a feedback report by the Core Team was presented to the participants and validated by them as an accurate reflection of the key points raised. All of these reports (in PowerPoint form) have now been posted on the DAC website, together with summaries of participants' brief evaluations of the workshops. www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

The most important outcomes of the workshops, remarkably consistent across all four, were:

- a. A strong agreement on the need for as clear and simple an evaluation approach as possible, and for using consistent and straightforward language (“plain English” in Malawi) in order to make this evaluation understandable and feasible in the many different countries where it must be carried out;¹
- b. Very similar proposals for substantial amendments and re-orderings of the proposed common core questions and sub-questions, and the inclusion of other points of special concern to the participating countries. These proposed amendments and concerns have been consolidated in the revised drafts being presented to this meeting, and the changes can be checked as desired against the Workshop reports, and directly by IRG participants in the respective workshops. (See more details under point 3 below).
- c. With the focus on the common questions and sub-questions, most countries did not yet identify supplementary evaluation questions which they would plan to include, but a number indicated that they would be looking at this issue soon. National reference/advisory groups would normally be expected to decide on such supplementary questions.

¹ In addition to the substantial changes to the draft Generic ToRs, the Core Team's glossary of common terms for use in the Evaluation, in three languages, is designed as a practical aid for all.

- d. Readiness to get started as soon as possible, with a strong interest in receiving advice from the core team on appropriate qualifications to seek in individual national evaluation teams, the likely time requirements for their work, and leads on possible sources for strong candidates. As requested, the Core Team prepared a note of “Guidance for Contracting National Teams” (copy attached.)

2. The draft Evaluation Framework and Work-plan for the Phase 2 Evaluation

This umbrella document is intended to set out the framework for the whole Phase 2 Evaluation. It builds on the Approach Paper, the records of the IRG workshop in Auckland and the earlier preparatory documents. An earlier draft of this paper was discussed with the Evaluation Management Group on 14 October, and broadly approved as a basis for proceeding.

It has since been considerably refined, mainly to reflect the results of the four regional workshops in October and November, 2009 and inputs on the Generic ToRs from IRG members who were not at the workshops.

In addition to the essential background, approaches to methodology, accountabilities and responsibilities and work-plan, it includes an outline of the overall evaluation Matrix which sets out the core evaluation questions and sub-questions and the main elements or components of the Evaluation that will be used to answer each of them.

3. Draft Generic Terms of Reference for Donor/Agency HQ Evaluations

The only change so far from the version circulated on 16 November is the improved diagram on p.4. The draft was designed to maintain continuity with the Phase 1 evaluations while reflecting that the Phase 2 Evaluation will be proceeding and will incorporate these new donor/agency HQ evaluations. Comments on the draft circulated earlier have been registered by Japan, Colombia and Sweden. Since these comments bears on the schedule for the evaluations and on some key aspects of the approach carried over from Phase 1, the draft has not been amended, as discussion of these points will be needed by the International Reference Group.

As requested, the Core team has also prepared some suggestions for possible updating of some elements of the Phase 1 Donor/Agency HQ evaluations by those Donors/Agencies concerned. (Proposal attached)

4. Draft Generic Terms of Reference for Country Evaluations

The draft Generic Terms of Reference here have been shortened from the earlier draft of 20 October, recognizing that much of the background detail in the Evaluation Framework does not need to be repeated. At the same time, these ToRs should be able to serve as a self-standing guide for Country Reference Groups and Teams.

Some of the most important and widely-supported outcomes of the workshop discussions of the draft of October 20 were:

- i. Clear, straightforward and simple presentation, language and organization.

- ii. Confirmation of the strong emphasis to be placed on analysis of the specific contexts for the implementation of the Declaration, focussing on the most important contextual factors analytically, not descriptively.
- iii. Strong agreement to use the 11 original “expected outcomes” in Paras. 3 and 4 of the Declaration as the basis of the main sub-questions under core question 2 on contributions of implementation of the Declaration to aid effectiveness. One way of pursuing this assessment could be by examining changed activities, behaviour and relationships around each of the 11 expected outcomes. While an informed respondent survey was recognised to be the only feasible way to assess progress on these expected outcomes across the board, there was also confirmation and suggestions on the possibilities for fleshing out these assessments with indicators and other evidence from a variety of sources. These assessments should build in, where applicable, assessments of changes in “transaction costs” (and benefits) and who carries them, but without using that term, which causes confusion.
- iv. Agreement to assess possible contributions to capacity development mainly under Question 3, as development results, and some fleshing out of approaches to doing so.
- v. Agreement that the “counter-factual” questions about different or alternative approaches to the Paris Declaration were unclear and confusing – the separate core question has been eliminated, but the elements that received support have now been integrated into Core Question 3 and the Framework for Conclusions
- vi. Confirmation that the evaluations should not expect directly attributable results but plausible contributions and informed discussion on causal linkages (although they should obviously seek hard evidence of clear results wherever possible.)
- vii. Agreement that the evaluations should specifically examine unintended consequences, negative or positive, of implementation of the Declaration, and alternative ways to achieve the same objectives.
- viii. Concern that, in addition to their focus on outcomes and results, the Phase 2 evaluation/s should also assess the observance and implementation of the five guiding principles of the Paris Declaration and the priorities in the Accra Agenda for action.

All of the above points are now reflected in the revised Generic ToRs, together with additional comments and suggestions from six members of the International Reference Group and the Management Group.

5. Proposal for Supplementary Study: “Development Resources beyond the Current Reach of the Paris Declaration”

The Evaluation is placing critical importance on analyzing the diverse and changing contexts for the implementation of the Paris Declaration, in order to place the part of ODA that is affected by the Declaration in a realistic perspective. It is calling in each

Country evaluation, for careful examination of “other drivers of development in the country, other sources of development finance and development cooperation partners beyond those so far endorsing the Declaration?” Taking proper account of these factors, and possible trends, is also vital assess the future outlook for aid effectiveness internationally.

While each country study is expected to identify and assess these factors in the country, what to look for and the methods for doing so are not yet fully clear. A wider global assessment is also needed, going beyond the often anecdotal information and analyses usually available but not attempting to be the “last word” on these vast topics. It should serve both to help guide and validate the country work and also provide a solid foundation for the Evaluation Synthesis. This proposal is for such a commissioned study, to be launched early in 2010 and completed by April/May 2010 in time to help inform and cross-check the country evaluations and provide a foundation for the Evaluation Synthesis.

List of documents

1. Draft Agenda
2. Progress report by Secretariat (forthcoming)
3. Draft Evaluation Framework
4. Draft Generic TOR for Donor/Agency HQ evaluations
- 4.a Suggested “supplementary questions to Donor/Agency HQ Evaluations
5. Draft Generic TOR for Country Evaluations
6. Guidance for contracting country evaluation teams
7. Draft Proposal for Supplementary Study: “Development Resources beyond the current Reach of the Paris Declaration
8. Concept note on Transaction Costa
9. Critical Milestones 2010 - 2011