CORRIGENDUM: This document contains the final paragraphs of the document Managing Aid Practices of DAC Member Countries, distributed 18 November 2004, which were mistakenly omitted from the original document.

Contact: Hunter.Mcgill@oecd.org; Tel: +33 1 45 24 94 61; Fax: +33 1 44 30 61 47
An example: Switzerland

The Swiss Consultative Commission on international development and co-operation comprises members representing the parties in parliament, civil society including trade unions, NGOs, universities and the media, as well as the private sector. Its purpose is to advise the Federal Council on development co-operation and humanitarian aid. The commission has set up at least three sub-commissions to monitor more closely institutions and activities of special interest: the Bretton Woods Institutions, the WTO and co-operation with Eastern European countries. The commission provides a unique discussion forum that facilitates dialogue between the government and civil society and plays a considerable role in ensuring that the Swiss population continue to support development co-operation and Swiss policy in this area.

212. Some advisory bodies carry out a range of functions while others have more circumscribed roles. These functions may include discussion of overall policy issues and more specialised tasks such as reviewing country strategies, reviewing grant proposals, commissioning or approving research and drafting planning documents. A number of bodies provide input into programme evaluation, either through the review of audit and evaluation reports or through active participation in evaluation activities. Some advisory bodies are responsible for organising development forums or dialogue between civil society and government.

213. The effectiveness of advisory bodies is influenced by the structure and roles set out above. Broad membership, for example, can create difficulties in achieving consensus or lead to ambiguity, while the inclusion of members of a current government may undermine the body’s degree of independence. Advisory bodies also need to be adequately resourced to be effective both in terms of development agency staff time for management and consultation as well as provision being made for the time and costs of the members themselves. In some DAC member countries, the advisory bodies operate in an entirely voluntary capacity despite playing an important role in the development co-operation programme.

An example: France

The High Council for International Co-operation was created in 1999 as an advisory body under the responsibility of the Prime Minister. With the aim of involving civil society in France’s development policy by providing non-governmental actors with a forum, its responsibilities are to foster consultations between development co-operation actors and raise public awareness on development challenges. It has 45 members appointed for a three-year term, which include representatives of NGOs and other civil society organisations, officials from sub-national authorities involved in decentralised co-operation, as well as members of parliament. It has its own budget and a secretariat run by a team of about 10 persons. Its work is organised around a number of thematic working groups. Its major activities include the organisation of annual conferences around development topics as well as the preparation of reports and statements, sometimes in collaboration with Parliamentary committees or at the request of the government. Its independence is demonstrated by the exclusion of government officials in its own work.