

**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE**

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THE DAC AND COMMUNICATION

Topics and Questions for Discussion

DAC Meeting, 7 March 2011

This document is submitted for DISCUSSION under Item 3.e. of the Draft Annotated DAC Agenda [DCD/DAC/A(2012)2].

It puts forward a number of questions for consideration by the Committee, related to the selection of DAC flagships, the planning of future Development Co-operation Reports, and enhanced dissemination and visibility. It seeks views about the creation of a DAC prize for research about the Committee.

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THE DAC AND COMMUNICATION:

TOPICS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE 7 MARCH MEETING

1. The DAC is seeking to enhance communication in the context of the new development landscape. While the DAC brand is very well known in the world of development, it is important to use all opportunities to promote it so as to achieve greater visibility in the crowded marketplace of development practice, while ensuring recognition of the continuing relevance of the DAC's work.
2. At the same time, DAC communication aims to contribute to effective development co-operation by helping change behaviour. This means delivering appropriate content to DAC priority audiences, focusing on what is useful to each of them and taking into account the amount of information they are prepared to assimilate, as well as how they prefer to receive that information. In this way, the relevance of the unique brand of the OECD DAC can be reinforced while heightening the impact of its work.
3. The Secretariat took steps to support these efforts by conducting a Communication Review in 2009. Based on the findings of the Review, in 2010, DCD put in place a Communication Policy to guide Secretariat staff in communicating more effectively:

Box 1. THE 10 MEASURES OF THE DCD COMMUNICATION POLICY

1. Communicate a common identity.
2. Focus on a few key messages.
3. Use clear language.
4. Improve web-based communication.
5. Engage with the development community through "new media".
6. Produce syntheses and fewer, leaner books.
7. Use professional editorial competence to improve communication.
8. Make communication planning an important part of regular work.
9. Make communication part of staff assessment.
10. Evaluate how effectively we communicate.

4. More recently, a special Bureau meeting on 18 January, followed by a short discussion at the 7 February DAC meeting¹, offered the opportunity to zero in on some key questions for discussion among members and the Secretariat:

DISCUSSION TOPIC 1: Integrating communication into the 2013-14 DAC PWB preparation process

5. To be effective in reaching key audiences and changing behaviour among them, these audiences must be identified at the time of programme design so as to ensure that the proper elements are in place to fulfil their communication needs and preferences. This means that strategic orientations, priorities and efforts in the area of communication need to be clearly identified in parallel with the preparation by the Committee of the upcoming PWB. This exercise will enable communication efforts to support the political priorities and strategic outcomes the DAC aims to achieve.

¹ DCD/DAC/RD(2012)1/RD6

6. In line with the DCD Communication Policy (see Box 1), the focus on producing fewer, lighter and more targeted publications and products, effectively timed around key international events and issues, could include the selection of a few major publications and other products that merit promotion as flagships, clearly identified in the PWB. This would enable the Secretariat to plan for effectively promoting these flagships through activities, events and outreach opportunities/efforts.

7. More open engagement and discussion around these products, in the early stages of their development, could also widen the relevance of the DAC's work among specialised audiences and academia, raising awareness upstream and securing earlier ownership of ideas while encouraging greater uptake once the products are finalised.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Should the discussion around the 2013-14 PWB seek to identify a set (3-4) of selected publications/products to be given flagship status in the upcoming biennium?
2. Should the Secretariat be encouraged to seek open debate/discussion on these key products in the early stages of their development?
3. How can members help to identify champions for these flagships/opportunities for their promotion in their capitals?

DISCUSSION TOPIC 2: The Development Co-operation Report (DCR)

8. To ensure the maximum possible outreach and impact of this DAC flagship, it needs to be clearly identified in the PWB and budgeted accordingly to reflect the full resource implications of producing, promoting and disseminating a publication of this status. This could involve developing a rolling, three- to four-year plan outlining the thematic emphasis of upcoming reports to ensure they are politically relevant to international discussions.

9. The DAC Chair suggests continuing with the system of invited authors to enable the DCR to showcase the best work of DAC members and partners on each particular theme. When appropriate, the relevant subsidiary body can be invited to take the lead on identifying potential chapters/contributors and reviewing contributions.

10. To maximise the opportunity offered by RIO+20, the theme chosen for 2012 is sustainable development; the ENVIRONET Secretariat is taking the lead, and commissioning and drafting of the chapters is already underway. A side event will be organised at RIO+20, along the lines of the debate held last year for the launch of the 50th anniversary DCR, and the full published version of the DCR will be released in October/November 2012.

11. In the future, it is important to continue to strategically time the launch of the DCR, both with relation to the ODA figures provided by members and used to anchor the evidence-based analysis in the report, and with relation to key international events and discussions. It was suggested that the 2013 report could be on the theme of the post-2015 development goals. This may involve considering a return to the February timeline of earlier reports. If this were to be done in 2013, it would imply beginning work on it almost immediately, in parallel with the preparation of the 2012 report.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What themes would members propose for the next three to four reports?
2. As in 2011, this year's DCR will be released in the fourth quarter of 2012. In the future, should we consider a return to the February timeline for issuing the report?

3. Based on the experience with the 50th anniversary edition of the DCR, the organisation of mini-launches by members worked well. How do we encourage members to organise these mini-launches for future editions of the DCR?

DISCUSSION TOPIC 3: Stepping up dissemination and visibility of the DAC's work

12. The DACnews is considered one of the best and most agile DAC communication products. It is a tool to raise the visibility of the DAC's work and strengthen the understanding and uptake of its findings and recommendations. The Secretariat has taken steps, as requested by the Bureau, to issue this newsletter more frequently. It will also continue to focus on means of extending its reach, as well as the reach of other key DAC products. In line with the Communication Policy, emphasis is being placed on producing short, easily digested and well targeted electronic communications that can readily be forwarded by members to the relevant staff in their capitals and in the field.

13. Involvement of members and delegates can contribute significantly to enhancing uptake of key DAC products and findings, not only among members but also in other audiences, such as civil society and parliamentarians.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How can members best contribute to enhanced dissemination?
2. Should key products/publications be translated into more languages to extend their reach?
3. How can members help to tap into the expertise of their communication experts in general and of the DevCom network in particular, building consensus in their headquarters behind the priorities of DAC communication?

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

14. Should we create a prize for research about the DAC? If so:
 1. Would this prize be for research regarding the DAC as an institution, or something else (e.g. research on a specific area of work of the DAC)?
 2. Would it be an annual prize for which the theme would change each year; or a one-time prize?
 3. Would we want to target submissions from certain academic institutions – maybe establishing the prize in co-operation with one/several institutions that focus on international development – or make it something more open?

A FEW NOTES ON ONGING EFFORTS:

15. As the website is an important way to increase visibility, the Secretariat continues to strengthen and reinforce the DAC brand on www.oecd.org/dac. Recent changes have been implemented and new opportunities will be explored with the migration to the new OECD-wide web platform. This will include a new set of country pages with comprehensive information on each DAC member; in the future, this will be expanded to include other OECD and partner countries, as well as other donor countries. Work is also underway to reinforce the DAC visual identity, communicating more effectively what the new DAC represents, e.g. not only a credible and recognised authority, a standard setter, but also a space for engagement and innovation and a confident, coherent and relevant source of valuable knowledge and experience.