

Asia Pacific Development Evaluation Experts Meeting

Kuala Lumpur, 13-15 September, 2012



**ODA Evaluation Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan**

Contents

1. Background.....	1
2. Points of Discussions	2
3. Reports by Participants	3
3.1 Mr. Benedictus D. Stepantoro, InDEC.....	4
3.2 Dr. Champak P. Pokharel, NES	6
Appendix 1: Program	11
Appendix 2: Event Photos	12

Asia Pacific Development Evaluation Experts Meeting

Kuala Lumpur, 13-15 September, 2012

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan hosted the Asia Pacific Development Evaluation Experts Meeting in Kuala Lumpur coinciding with related events held from 13th to 15th of September, 2012.

1. Background

As evaluation capacity building in developing countries gains importance in the international development community, MOFA has continuously strived for evaluation capacity building particularly in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific islands. One of the highlights of such efforts is MOFA's annual ODA Evaluation Workshop which is participated in by officials and experts from around 25 countries of the region and several international organizations each year since its inauguration in 2001.

Among the various meaningful topics, discussions at the recent workshops focused individual capacity building in development evaluation, fostering national evaluation societies in each country, and networking those societies and individuals in the aim of evaluation capacity development in the Asia Pacific region as a whole. There are now more than 10 evaluation societies and several informal groups of evaluation experts in the region but there has been no regional networking body to link those organizations. Therefore, the concept of Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA), the first evaluation network in this region, has been thus raised at several international fora by Asian evaluation societies including the Japan Evaluation Society (JES). In recognizing that the objectives of APEA accords to MOFA's efforts for evaluation capacity building in the region, it has supported the idea and provided opportunities for the governmental officials to discuss this matter during the recent ODA Evaluation Workshops.

With tremendous dedication for years by members of evaluation societies in the region, including several independent evaluation experts, the Interim Organization Committee of APEA (IOC/APEA) chaired by Prof. Ryokichi Hirono of JES, started drafting its constitution and work program. And it finally decided to hold a launch meeting in Kuala Lumpur in September 2012, under gracious support by the Malaysian Evaluation Society (MES), one of the most successful evaluation societies in the region, hosting its fifth biannual International Evaluation Conference.

Thus MOFA has decided to host a dinner reception and an experts meeting at

the same venue for the members of newly formed APEA and observing international organizations to continue discussions on various themes on development of evaluation capacity including instrumental recommendations to the efforts by Japan and other donor countries and organizations to raise aid effectiveness further in the Asia-Pacific region. The invitees of the experts meeting were also expected to actively participate in the related event by MES.

2. Points of Discussions

Dr. Ryokichi Hirono, professor emeritus of Seikei University, senior adviser to JES and chair of IOC/APEA assumed chairperson of the experts meeting. After his opening remarks and reports on APEA inauguration, the participants who were evaluation experts that belong to their national evaluation societies, academia or independent, actively engaged in round-table discussions on various topics and exchanged their views and experience regarding capacity building efforts in development evaluation in their respective countries. Their expectation for the donor countries and international organizations as well as the newly established APEA to cater to the needs of the developing countries in the region was also expressed in various aspects.

The points of discussions include;

- Strategic partnerships among national and international evaluation communities to conduct more concerted advocacy to the governments especially at high level to raise awareness of significance of development evaluation and internalization of financial resources and needs for evaluation capacity building;
- Further promotion of evaluation culture including dissemination of evaluation results and documentation of good practices to both donors and recipients of development assistance;
- Stimulation of demand side of evaluation;
- Establishment of evaluation criteria of its own by each country with consistency with international standards at the same time;
- Enhanced communication from citizen's viewpoints in national level evaluation in development;
- The Asia-Pacific regional level efforts in evaluation capacity development by cost sharing and division of labor and coordination with donors;
- Governments' and IGOs' assistance to APEA and each national evaluation society to fulfill their responsibilities to address the challenges discussed above.

3. Reports by Participants

After the meeting, selected and asked by the chair among the participants, Mr. Benedictus Dwiagus Stepantoro, Chair/President of the Indonesian Evaluation Community (InDEC) and Dr. Champak Prasad Pokharel, President of the Nepal Evaluation Society (NES) submitted feedback paper with a particular focus on future possibility of APEA.

3.1 Report by Mr. Benedictus Dwiagus Stepantoro

Participation at the Launch of APEA & Development Evaluation Experts Meeting

This is to report on my participation, representing InDEC (Indonesian Development Evaluation Community) at the Launch of APEA (Asia Pacific Evaluation Association) and Development Experts Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, 14-15 September 2012.

General view:

I was honored to be part of this important initiative in establishing a network of national or regional evaluation associations or community of practice in the Asia-Pacific Region for promoting evaluation value, good practice and theory. It has a huge potential. I, on behalf of InDEC, was very keen to join the network in the hope that this network provides a platform for sharing resources among the members, in terms of knowledge, human resources, material and financial.

Expected actions of APEA

I would expect APEA to consider the following actions:

- focus on strengthening the national evaluation associations.
- identify specific capacity needs of each national evaluation association for strengthening their organization to do evaluation policy advocacy and promotion or evaluation mainstreaming activities.
- do not focus only on technical capacity building at individual level, but should focus on capacity building at institutional level or of system. Those capacity building mentioned above would include the following topics:
 - how to plan and implement policy influence/advocacy activities;
 - how to develop evaluation communication or campaign strategy for evaluation mainstreaming;
 - how to do effective institutional capacity building, resource mobilization, knowledge management or motivation/incentive

- building;
 - how to do effective networking;
 - how to draw/facilitate local expertise and knowledge to emerge; etc.
- identify strengths of each national evaluation association that can be used for other members.
- explore different range of capacity building, not only just training, e.g.:
 - regional seminar or workshop;
 - youth evaluator internship or exchange or monitoring program;
 - journal or newsletter publication;
 - online forum for discussion;
 - giving awards;
 - inter-university project; etc.

Potential contribution /cooperation of APEA to evaluation capacity building in the Asia Pacific region

There are huge potential of APEA's contribution to evaluation capacity building in the Region. If APEA has successfully strengthen the capacity of national evaluation associations for conducting effective evaluation policy advocacy or influence as well as planning and managing capacity building intervention at national level , then it would give huge impact to the capacity level of the region. I believe, all national evaluation associations in the region are key players towards better evaluation capacity building in the region.

Suggestions to developing countries how to utilize APEA for their capacity building

The developing countries should be able to access knowledge and expertise from others to enhance their own expertise, knowledge and skills, especially to be able to identify their needs for capacity building and learn from what others in APEA network have experienced, so they can develop their own capacity building program tailored to meet their needs.

They can learn also from others in APEA network on how to mobilize or seek resources (financial, material, expertise) for their own capacity building.

Each developing country in the region should try to be represented in APEA. Then every individual and organization members of APEA should facilitate every stakeholder within their own country to access APEA's networks and potential resources.

Suggestions to donor countries and international organizations how to assist and utilize APEA to build evaluation capacity in the region

Donor countries and international organizations should assist and utilize APEA to build evaluation capacity in the region, with any means they have. They could assist APEA through:

- mobilizing funding and technical support at the initial stage for the national evaluation associations;
- providing expertise and facilitate lessons shared among APEA members (via seminar, workshop, and meetings) especially on the topics related to individual and institutional evaluation capacity building; and
- facilitating the APEA's networking to cooperate with different donor agencies or international organizations.

Donor countries and international organizations could also utilize APEA in many ways, such as:

- using APEA to get access to local evaluation experts in the region and the local knowledge belongs to the people in national evaluation association to inform their works (to get more understanding about local context for their development works and evaluation practice);
- using APEA to get access to people in the national evaluation association to promote and advocate good evaluation policy, theory and practice in the region to support their own development works and evaluation practice.

3.2 Report by Dr. Champak P. Pokharel

Future Possibility of APEA

An observation by an APEA Participant in Kula Lumpur Interaction¹

A. Broad Personal Observation of APEA Workshop/ Interactions and ECD Seminar

I had participated in Development Evaluation Experts Meeting hosted by the Japanese government, ECD (Evaluation Capacity Development) seminar organized by Malaysian Evaluation Society and the APEA inaugural meeting during 13-15 September, 2012 in Kuala Lumpur. It had been a great learning and experience sharing opportunity to me.

Major issues in the evaluation sector observed from interactions were the lack of adequate presence of evaluation culture caused by less awareness and advocacy of the importance of evaluation and lack of critical mass on both demand and supply side of evaluation in developing countries. This had led to weak budgetary provisions for evaluation activities in the member countries leading to a tiny scope for an effective evaluation activities and development of professional cadre in the sector.

Result Monitoring had picked up over the last decade to different extent in various countries following the emphasis of Paris Declaration; largely support by multiple donors and desire shown by different countries in improving their monitoring system. However, the efforts remained either largely confined to national framework without being cascaded below or remained confined mostly at the project level with weak connection to national level. On the other side, the evaluation sector had remained shadowed. Most of the countries had created the monitoring and evaluation as a single unit. Given a very limited budget, attentions from the management were largely in the monitoring part by virtue of its immediate use to the management and due to the convenience of being softer in comparison to evaluation works which would give feedback much later, be more critical and would have demand for more disciplinary rigor. This had led to imbalance between monitoring and evolution activities in the member countries. On the evaluation side, a culture had developed to replace the evolution components mostly by reviews only, as it would be quick and less cumbersome. However, such analyses were unable to have significant impact on

¹ The views expressed in this note are personal observations of the author based on participation at ECD seminar and APEA workshop /meetings at Kuala Lumpur. It does not necessarily represent the views, findings or conclusion of the organizers and the seminars participants at large, or in group.

policy reforms and program improvement as, by nature, they did not have strong analytical backup to convince the policy level.

Weak monitoring with less focus to results and public feedback system were also the part of the weakness to strengthen evaluation. The results of the current weak evaluation culture were that reforms were weak and slow at the policy level; and the effects and impacts were weak at implementation level. While private sector has been moving faster with liberal approach promoted worldwide over the last two decades, policy reform in the regulation part are much behind to match the private sector growth resulting into the problems like ineffective and weak service delivery, environmental issues due to mishandling of public resources, deteriorating industry and labor relations, hindrance to private sector in timely catching the areas of comparative advantage due to lack of timely policy reforms, etc.

MIS were developing faster in the member countries largely with the support of donors. However, their utilization had been inadequate due to lack of analytical activities and development of feedback system to the policy level. Similarly, the monitoring and evaluations were less focused to priority national and regional problems like poverty alleviation, employment creation, commercialization, environment problems, disaster management, remittance utilization in productive ventures, credit delivery to lower level etc. Presently, the prioritization of monitoring and evaluation did not exist, in general. It was also realized that when the national stock of relevant knowledge and information base are poor, the donor program effectiveness also becomes weak as it is the country which implements the program. A result based monitoring and a broadened culture of evaluation can help steer the development priority and implementation framework in right direction.

Multiple evaluation associations existed even in the same country. Multiple donor supports were present also in a scattered way. The current standings of evaluation associations significantly varied across the country. Some where they are very effective and organized, somewhere they are too scattered, some where even the presence is not known to the government despite of them being much older, somewhere they are in infancy stage and in some countries they have not yet been created. The good point is that, in the countries where they exist in some form, there is potential of organizing them to bring to national and regional framework, at low cost.

Learning has also been that the current net works prevailing regionally or internationally on evaluation are generally linked with individuals in the monitoring and evaluation profession than with institutions. There is a need for creating an umbrella organization to develop and co-ordinate the national level evaluation associations to help develop evaluation culture in developing countries. Donors support to this would be beneficial both nationally and internationally.

Not enough dissemination of the evaluation work findings and working on

aloofness by the evaluators are other areas of weaknesses. Likewise, public and private sector participation in the evaluation were often overlooked. These have also contributed in making the evaluation findings less owned.

B. Suggestions for Future Potential Activities by APEA and Its Partners

In the above perspective of issues and potentials, I would point out briefly my suggestions in five areas: (i) expected actions of APEA (ii) possible future contribution /cooperation of APEA to evaluation capacity building in the Asia Pacific (iii) suggestions to developing countries on utilizing APEA for their capacity building (iv) suggestions to donor countries and international organizations in assisting and utilizing APEA to build evaluation capacity in the region.

i. Expected actions of APEA:

- Work as an umbrella organization in the region for the national evaluation associations by focusing activities on them.
- Promote result based culture of evaluation and result monitoring to strengthen the overall evaluation quality.
- Provide forum for professional interaction in evaluation, related practices, concepts and ideas.
- Facilitate research, development and publications for the advancement of evaluation to have impact regionally and globally.
- Promote capacity building by emphasizing on learning, doing and prioritized training.
- Initiate and help in the creation of Evaluation Associations by persuading professionals in APEA Countries where there are no Evaluation associations (EAs).
- Develop networking of formally established EAs under APEA framework for an effective voice and adequate awareness of the presence and activeness of such organizations in the respective countries to promote sustainable evaluation culture.
- Advocacy to evaluation works in the region, the government sector and the donor communities with focus on priority results, in harmony with the national priority.
- Create opportunity for exposure to advanced knowledge of evaluation tools to the practicers in the region for confidence building, encouragement of the evaluation culture and development of publications on knowledge base.

- Adopt/persuade the mixing of the government and evaluation association members in the regional and national interactions related to evaluations for enhancing mutual understanding and relationships between national EAs and principal government agencies.
- Persuade budgetary provision/financial support to carry out evaluation study in donor assisted and government projects to improve development effectiveness in priority areas and to enhance ownership of results.
- Conduct follow-up visits by experts to share knowledge and experience, encourage workers in the region by building their confidence and carry out advocacy of their activities at appropriate level.

ii. Possible future contribution /cooperation of APEA to evaluation capacity building in the Asia Pacific region

- Strengthen EAs in the region through multiple means like support, evaluation activities, persuasion, encouragement and opportunity for exposures to technical knowledge on evaluation and experience sharing.
- Support to national evaluation capacity building by focusing on learning by doing approach and selected trainings.
- Encourage EAs in grooming of emerging young generation in evaluation areas.
- Assist donors in improving aid effectiveness by promoting accredited standard of evaluation practice focused to results, inclusiveness, transparency and accountability to enhance development impact in priority areas in the region.
- Assist governments in improving program implementation effectiveness by promoting result based evaluation culture in national priority areas through partnership in activities.
- Organize seminar and interactions and promote knowledge based publications in evaluation sector in the region and the member countries.

iii. Suggestions to developing countries on utilizing APEA for their capacity building

- Consolidate multiple EAs, (if exist), under a common professional umbrella of NEA (national evaluation association) so as to make the support of APEA more focused.
- Use APEA forum for dissemination of evaluation findings to persuade policymaking.
- Use APEA for persuasion of support from donors for evaluation of priority

key outcomes related projects.

- Create relationship with APEA for enhancing evaluation activities in the country.
- Emphasize evaluation capacity building by creating a separate Evaluation division and emphasizing on result based monitoring.
- Establish partnership with APEA in evaluation works.

iv. Suggestions to donor countries and international organizations on assisting and utilizing APEA to build evaluation capacity in the region.

- Assist APEA in getting it established through support to creation and internal operation of the organization in the initial years.
- Use also APEA forum to disseminate evaluation findings to impart knowledge and to influence appropriate policymaking and implementation of development programs.
- Streamline multiple and scattered donor efforts of supporting EAs on evaluation capacity buildings in the Asia and Pacific regions by going through a common Umbrella of APEA.
- Assist APEA in promoting evaluation culture in the region by supporting in key areas like (a) creating and strengthening evaluation societies in Asia and Pacific countries, (b) knowledge dissemination in the member countries through training, interactions, publications, and workshops, (c) advocacy / awareness creation on key issues of evaluation of both the demand and supply side, (d) financial support to selected evaluation study in the region in the priority areas, (e) expert visits to assist and persuade EAs in the application of standard evaluation techniques/tools and organization of workshops/interactions.
- Utilize APEA to prioritize and persuade evaluation areas in the region to focus to key outcomes like employment generation, income generation, human and physical capital development, etc to bring improvement in aid effectiveness.

The importance of the level of penetration of a specific activity mentioned above may differ significantly among countries depending on their level of exposure in results culture and evaluation. Likewise, there is a need for prioritization of the activities depending on the budgetary resources available to APEA.

Appendix 1; Program

*All events took place in Melia Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

13 September

19:30-21:30 **Dinner Reception hosted by MOFA**

Speech by H. E. Mr. Shigeru Nakamura, Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia

Speech by Prof. Ryokichi Hirono, Chair, IOC/APEA

14 September

9:30-12:00 **Evaluation Capacity Development Seminar hosted by MES**

12:00-13:00 Networking Lunch

13:00- 18:00 **APEA inaugural meeting hosted by IOC/APEA, supported by MES, UNDP, ECDG, etc.**

15 September

8:30-12:00 **Asia Pacific Development Evaluation Experts Meeting hosted by MOFA**

- Opening remarks by Chairperson, Prof. Ryokichi Hirono, Japan Evaluation Society

- Report from IOC/APEA (Drafting APEA's Constitution)

- Round-table Discussion I

 - ~Individual and institutional capacity building in development evaluation~

- Coffee Break

- Round-table Discussion II

 - ~Future cooperation with APEA, donor countries and IGOs~

>>Appendix 3; Event Photos<<





