

# The Sixth ODA Evaluation Workshop

October 2006

1. The Sixth ODA Evaluation Workshop took place as evaluation sessions at the 2006 Asian Regional Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held from October 18 (Wednesday) to October 20 (Friday), 2006 at the Asian Development Bank headquarters located in Manila, the Philippines.

## 2. Co-organizers

The Asian Regional Forum on Aid Effectiveness was co-organized by Japan, the United Kingdom, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank (DAC/OECD cooperated)

## 3. Evaluation Session Participants:

Donors included Japan, the DAC EVALUNET, UNICEF, AusAID, and NZAID. Partner participants included Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, the Solomon Islands, and Pakistan etc. Sessions 1 and 2 were each attended by approximately 40 people.

## 4. Co-Chairs

The workshop consisted of two sessions: "Linking Evaluation and Policy" (Session 1) and "Evaluating Aid Effectiveness" (Session 2). Session 1 was co-chaired by Professor Ryokichi Hirono, professor emeritus at Seikei University, and Rolando Tungpalan, Assistant Deputy Director General of the Philippines' National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). Session 2 was co-chaired by Professor Hirono and Hidah Misran, Principal Director of the External Assistance Section of Malaysia's Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department.

## 5. Major Points of Debate

### (1) Evaluation Session 1: Linking Evaluation and Policy

The discussion on the status quo and challenges of evaluation capacity development in developing countries centered on: (A) modality of enhancement toward results-based evaluations; (B) measures and challenges toward evaluation capacity development; (C) modality of joint evaluation to overcome challenges in partner countries and issues surrounding evaluation capacity development; and (D) establishment of an evaluation network in Asia.

Regarding (A) modality of enhancement toward results-based evaluations, participants discussed what is important to implement result-based evaluations and what kinds of challenges exist.

The discussion was followed by a presentation by a participant from the Philippines on systematized monitoring and evaluation efforts as government initiatives to realize results-based aid.

During the discussion, participants agreed that a culture of results-based evaluation needed to be nurtured not only in the public sector but in the private sector as well. The participants highlighted that approach to influential policy level is highly effective for nurturing this kind of evaluation culture, and also stressed that emphasis should be placed more on formative evaluation than ex-post evaluation, in order to effectively implement management for development results (MfDR). When conducting monitoring and evaluation, conflict can be manifested between the ensuring of accountability and the management of aid implementation. However, participants agreed that accountability on the donor side should not be overemphasized during the policy formulation process. Rather, taking into consideration the negative factor that policymakers tend to turn their backs on poor evaluation results, equal emphasis should be placed on verifiable, qualitative, comprehensive evaluations in addition to quantitative evaluations.

Regarding (B) measures and challenges toward evaluation capacity development, a participant from Sri Lanka gave a presentation on the state of implementation of a system for monitoring the progress of aid projects and the initiatives of the Ministry of Plan Implementation, which has overall responsibility for aid programs. The Sri Lankan participant pointed out the importance of publishing evaluation results on the Internet and of partnership with academic institutions. The participant also raised the issue of insufficient demand for evaluation and inadequate cooperation between evaluation and policy divisions.

A participant from the DAC EVALUNET gave a presentation of a mapping survey results on the present state of evaluation capacity development (ECD) in partner countries by donor countries/organizations. While many donors conduct ECD activities, such as holding seminars and workshops, primarily for government officials in partner countries, the lack of incentives in partner countries was indicated as a challenge.

During the discussion, participants agreed that there is a need for ongoing effort to strengthen ECD, that partner country-led evaluations based on demand in the partner country are important for improving aid effectiveness, and that evaluation capacity development in partner countries still needs to be strengthened further, though the necessity of linking evaluation and policy is widely recognized.

The participants shared recognition of the need to provide incentives to increase demand for third-party evaluations while placing greater emphasis on accountability in order to nurture an evaluation culture. Their common perception was that accountability can be further strengthened through the involvement of NGOs and legislatures.

The co-chairs stated systematization in partner countries is the key to evaluation capacity development and that, while the continuation of financial support for ECD activities such as seminars and joint evaluations is important, partner countries should demonstrate ownership and exercise leadership in ECD activities. In this regard, emerging donors in Asia can contribute to the ECD activities of partner countries. The identification of ECD areas and approaches based on the comparative advantages of donors was raised as the agenda for a future Workshop.

Regarding (C) modality of joint evaluation to overcome challenges in partner countries and issues surrounding evaluation capacity development, participants discussed the importance and challenges of joint evaluations in relation to ECD. The discussion was followed by a presentation by a participant from Malaysia on the importance of joint evaluations as a means of evaluation capacity development. Maintaining that joint evaluations are beneficial not only for ownership on the side of partner countries and for their harmonization with donors in evaluations, the Malaysian participants indicated that the lack of monitoring and evaluation systems in partner countries and the insufficient demand for evaluations are challenges. During the discussion, participants shared a forward-looking recognition that joint evaluations contribute to the strengthening of evaluation capacity development and also promote the harmonization of evaluation standards and implementation methods.

Regarding (D) establishment of an evaluation network in Asia, co-chair Hirono stressed the significance of formally recognizing evaluation societies in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, and other countries as a knowledge network in Asia. During the discussion, the co-chair made a proposal regarding the importance of establishing an Asia-Pacific Evaluation Society as a knowledge network in the Asia-Pacific region as a part of the development of a system that can contribute to development effectiveness in the long term.

## (2) Evaluation Session 2: Evaluating Aid Effectiveness

The discussion on the measures for and challenges of developing an evaluation framework related to implementation of the Paris Declaration centered around: (A) which issues and points of discussion should be reflected when developing an evaluation framework in relation to the state of implementation of the Paris Declaration at the partner country level and the donor level; (B) what are the options for evaluating the state of implementation of the Paris Declaration; (C) what kind of questions should be established for the evaluation of each partner country and donor level; and (D) how the operation and management systems should be for implementing joint evaluations by partner countries and donors.

(A) Which issues and points of discussion should be reflected when developing an evaluation framework in relation to the state of implementation of the Paris Declaration at the partner country level and the donor level?

A participant from the DAC explained possible options for building an evaluation framework related to the implementation of the Paris Declaration based on a report that the DAC EVALUNET Secretariat commissioned a consultant company (ODI) to compile. A participant from Viet Nam gave a presentation on the state of Viet Nam's initiatives related to the evaluation of the status of follow-ups to the Paris Declaration.

During the discussion, participants agreed that evaluation is a comprehensive and important element that covers all facets of the Paris Declaration. In addition, the participants shared an understanding that the efforts by the DAC and others to develop a common framework for evaluating the state of implementation of the Paris Declaration will lead to the removal of various challenges that partner countries face when implementing evaluations and will provide a valuable opportunity for partner countries and donors to collaborate in promoting the implementation of country-level evaluations in partner countries, cross-sectoral evaluations and horizontal evaluations across the region. The participants also had a shared recognition that the relevant countries and organizations need to take prompt action, since there is limited time remaining for the evaluation community to prepare to make a real contribution at the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF 3) to be held in Ghana in 2008.

(B) What are the options for evaluating the state of implementation of the Paris Declaration?

Discussion produced a common understanding among the participants: when evaluating the state of implementation of the Paris Declaration, it should not judge the efforts of each country and organization as right or wrong, but should be the formative evaluation primarily aiming to draw on useful lessons and recommendations to promote the implementation of the Paris Declaration. Participants also shared the recognition that donors should pour their efforts into evaluating the impact of aid on the overall development targets of the partner country as a whole instead of evaluating only the impact of aid on the sector in which the donor is involved. Participants also confirmed the understanding that the partner country level evaluations of the Paris Declaration should not be led by donors.

(C) What kind of questions should be established for the evaluation of each partner country and donor level? (Case studies)

The participants shared an understanding regarding the fact that policies and strategies related to improving the effectiveness of donor aid should be evaluated at the level of the head office and that the viewpoints of the partner country need to be fully reflected in evaluations at the partner country level. Most of the participants also agreed that evaluation terms of reference (ToR) at the partner country level should be formulated at the level of the individual country.

(D) How should the operation and management systems be for implementing joint evaluations by partner countries and donors?

The DAC proposed to set up a Global Reference Group for partner countries and donors to discuss and determine a framework and direction for evaluations, and a Managing Group that would be in charge of the operation of joint evaluations.

(E) During Session 2, many participants shared the recognition that, while the principles of the Paris Declaration need to be adhered to, it should always be kept in mind that there is a diversity of evaluations and approaches to enhance evaluation capacity, reflecting the economic, social, and institutional diversity that exist among partner countries.

## **6. Results**

(1) The Sixth ODA Evaluation Workshop produced major developments in that the importance of the role of evaluation in enhancement of aid effectiveness was clearly recognized, by organizers and participants, as an element embracing all of the principles of the Paris Declaration.

(2) It is particularly worth noting that organizers and participants recognized that evaluation is a comprehensive and important issue that covers all aspects of the Paris Declaration, and that evaluation plays an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of aid geared toward the achievement of development goals.

(3) It is also noteworthy that throughout the evaluation session, the emphasis consistently placed on the importance of joint evaluations with partner countries as a means of evaluation capacity development and on the importance of formative evaluations as a means of contributing to results-based aid policy indicates the direction of future ODA evaluation.