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

## **DAC Network on Development Evaluation**

### **Summary Record of the 27th Meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation**

17-18 November 2021, Virtual Meeting via Zoom

The 27<sup>th</sup> EvalNet Meeting took place virtually on the 17-18 November 2021. Over 150 participants attended the meeting, from 35 organisations. Key topics for discussion included independence and utility of evaluation systems, the impacts of the pandemic on education and inequality, and evaluating climate finance. A joint session on lessons from Afghanistan was held with the OECD/DAC International Network on Conflict & Fragility (INCAF).

A list of participants is available on EMS or upon request from the Secretariat.

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## Summary Record of the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation

*This meeting was held virtually via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**17 November 2021**

### Item 1. Opening session

1. The Network Chair, Jörg Faust (DEval, Germany) opened the meeting by welcoming all participants.
2. Megan Kennedy-Chouane (EvalNet Secretariat) confirmed that members had approved the draft annotated agenda [DCD/DAC/EV/A(2021)2] and the summary record for the 26<sup>th</sup> EvalNet meeting [DCD/DAC/EV/M(2021)2] via the written procedure.
3. The Secretariat introduced and welcomed the newly selected EvalNet Bureau to the meeting: Chair Jörg Faust, Executive Director, German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), Germany; Vice-Chair Isabelle Mercier, Director of Evaluation, Global Affairs Canada, Canada; and Vice-Chair Romana Tedeschi, Head of Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland.
4. The Chair also warmly welcomed the following new Heads of Evaluation to the meeting and the network:
  - Henrik Larsen, Deputy Director of Evaluation, Learning & Quality, Danida, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.
  - Véronique Salze-Lozac'h, Chief Evaluator, Evaluation Department, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development.
  - Siv J. Lillestøl, Acting Director, Evaluation Department, Norad, Norway.
  - Yolanda Santos, Head of Evaluation and Knowledge Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, Spain.
  - Peter van der Knapp, Managing Director, Policy & Operations Evaluation Department (IOB), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands.

### Item 2. EvalNet Work Updates

5. Rob van Poelje (Netherlands) updated members on the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition meeting that took place on 15 November 2021. This was the third workshop held jointly with Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) and COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition. It helped build positive momentum for collaborative work and supported the development of a work plan for a range of evaluation activities. Planned work includes synthesis and evidence sharing in areas such as gender equality and women's empowerment, gender-based violence, and humanitarian assistance. Participants agreed to continue convening the Working Groups on Equitable Access to Vaccines, and on Building back greener/building back better, and to develop plans in the areas of cash transfers and social protection.
6. The workshop saw COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition participants express interest in joint evaluative work at the country-level, with Switzerland, Netherlands, Ireland, and GEI committing to the development of a short concept note based on the discussion. Participants also expressed strong interest in a high-level joint evaluation focused on the impact and coherence of the overall global response to

COVID-19 that could tackle questions not easily addressed by individual institutions. This evaluation will draw on a range of other evaluations conducted by the Coalition participants, synthesizing findings, and conducting primary research and analysis to answer key strategic questions. The Secretariat committed to developing a more detailed proposal for the Coalition to provide feedback.

7. Gottfried von Gemmingen (BMZ, Germany) provided an update about BMZ's new evaluation policy that aims to support the design and implementation of high quality, timely and useful evaluations. Sven Harten (DEval, Germany) noted DEval's work to develop a Community of Practice and facilitate learning about evaluation criteria across the global evaluation community. DEval is leading this work in its role as the Evaluation Criteria Champion.

8. Maya Vijayaraghavan (Asian Development Bank) shared ADB's new evaluation principles, designed to support thoughtful, timely, and relevant evaluation activities. These principles complement ADB's organisational evaluation policy.

9. Andrew Fyfe (representing the United Nations Evaluation Group) updated members about UNEG's activities. Key achievements during 2021 include the completion of Peer Reviews of the evaluation functions of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). UNEG is also developing new principles based guidance for embedding environmental considerations and incorporating disability inclusion in evaluations.

10. Wakana Kanikawa (Japan) thanked the Secretariat for publishing [Better Criteria for Better Evaluation](#). Japan is working with the Japan Evaluation Society to translate and strategically disseminate the guidance to evaluation partners in the Asia Pacific Region. In addition, Japan is complementing Germany's work as the Evaluation Criteria Champion. Japan will be hosting a workshop in partnership with the Asia Pacific Evaluation Society in February to share learning about the use of the criteria.

11. Sabine Bernabè (European Investment Bank (EIB)) updated members about the publication of EIB's new evaluation policy, which EIB's Board recently approved. The new policy outlines roles, responsibilities and priorities.

12. Oscar Garcia (UNDP) described a new evaluation criteria-rating system that the Independent Evaluation Office is introducing to assess the performance of UNDP's operations. The IEO piloted the system in 2021 and will roll it out across UNDP in 2022.

13. The Secretariat encouraged members to continue to share their evaluation reports and plans regularly. The Secretariat uploads all evaluation reports onto the DAC Evaluation Resource Centre ([DERec](#)), which is a free searchable evaluation database of members' evaluation reports. This platform aims to support effective knowledge management and learning across the network and with the broader development community. The Secretariat also manages an [Evaluation Plans database](#) to support collaborative work.

#### *Outcomes and next steps*

- An updated menu of collaborative work on evaluating COVID-19 response and recovery efforts is available and members are invited to join work on topics of interest to them. The Chair encouraged Members to engage in the Coalition.
- The Secretariat invited members to provide feedback on an EvalNet position paper on the use of personal information in evaluation reports by December 2021.
- Members should regularly share their completed evaluation reports and evaluation plans (including tentative plans) with the Secretariat by email: [dacevaluation.contact@oecd.org](mailto:dacevaluation.contact@oecd.org).

### Item 3. Balancing the independence and utility of evaluations: walking an evaluation tightrope

14. The Chair introduced the session, noting that the speakers will share experiences and lessons learned about how to design and implement organisational evaluation systems that are both independent and useful.

15. Isabelle Mercier (Canada) noted that independence and utility often complement each other and there are not necessarily tensions between the two. Global Affairs Canada has an independent Evaluation Department and a committee that provides independent oversight of international development and foreign affairs evaluations. The committee and independent status of the Department play important roles in ensuring the independence of all evaluation plans, its budget and its activities. The Department and committee also play important roles in ensuring the design and delivery of high quality evaluations that have high organisational relevance. In-house evaluation specialists lead evaluations, rather than externally contracted consultants, which supports relevance and use, while their independent status within the agency ensures that evaluations are credible and independent. Evaluation specialists have decision-making power over the design, content and budget of evaluations. Ms. Mercier described the importance of having sufficient human resources and budget to ensure credibility, independence, and utility of evaluations. A high level of understanding across the agency about the value of evidence for learning supports the use of evaluations. To ensure staff continues to perceive evaluations as valuable for learning, the specialists ensure their work is focused on topics that are highly relevant to organisational needs and frame evidence from evaluations as insights and lessons learned.

16. Ana Diogo (Portugal) described the mismatch between the highly decentralised structure of Portuguese Development Co-operation and the centralised Evaluation & Audit Unit. The limited human and financial resources (in 2021 there is one Head of Unit, 2 professional staff and EUR 257,000 budget) are major challenges to the Unit delivering high quality, independent and useful evaluations. Portugal's evaluation policy provides guidance to support independence, but it is not consistently applied and not all operational teams and senior decision-makers accurately interpret these principles. The Finance Department manages the evaluation budget – rather than the Unit. A further challenge is the relatively low level of understanding about the role and value of independent evaluation among some decision-makers, which makes it more difficult to ensure evaluation findings are acted upon. Ms. Diogo shared how she has focused on advocating for greater independence through control of the evaluation design and greater decision-making over financial resources for the Unit. Steps that have helped to strengthen credibility and use include focusing on themes related to organisational priorities, the Evaluation Unit developing evaluation plans (rather than Operational Units), and contracting skilled external consultants to lead evaluations. Ms. Diogo closed by reflecting on the useful role that EvalNet plays in sharing learning and supporting members and suggested exploring peer mentoring for members.

17. During the discussion, Natasha Butler (France) agreed with the importance of using highly skilled external consultants to lead evaluations and highlighted the importance of organisational procurement processes that include relevant and transparent criteria to enable the selection of qualified people. France's Evaluation Unit includes a team of highly skilled Evaluation Specialists that provide technical services for all operational teams and country offices. Evaluations have independent reference groups that can include parliamentarians, technical experts, researchers, and representatives from NGOs. Each reference group includes people with different political views and backgrounds, and the groups play a crucial role in protecting the independence of evaluation activities as well as the utility of evaluations.

18. Cecilia De Decker (Belgium) noted the importance of considering independence and utility throughout evaluation design and implementation, and suggested discussing with stakeholders to understand their interests, needs and perspectives before developing evaluation plans and Terms of Reference. Independent evaluation departments play important roles in ensuring evaluations findings are shared in ways that maximise utility and protect independence. Demonstrating a clear line of sight between evidence and findings is crucial to ensuring that decision makers understand and accept the findings.

19. Henrik Larsen (Denmark) described the structure and role of Denmark’s Evaluation Team within a wider Quality Assurance Department. Working through independent evaluation contractors plays an important role in ensuring the independence of the evaluation function. However, it can be challenging to identify highly skilled and knowledgeable consultants who have not been involved in the design and implementation of programmes.

20. Jonghan Park (Korea) described how KOICA staff receive specialist training and support from KOICA’s Evaluation Unit to conduct internal evaluations and reviews. This ensures that staff with high levels of knowledge about programmes and organisational needs for evidence are leading evaluations. An independent evaluation panel assesses and reviews all evaluation reports before publication.

21. Sabine Bernabè (European Investment Bank) shared that in her view there are no tensions between the independence and utility of evaluations but rather that evaluations are credible (and therefore useful) *because* they are independent. A robust and independent evaluation policy, reporting lines, and sufficient financial and human resources safeguard the independence of EIB’s evaluations. She described tensions that arise between the role that evaluations fulfil in terms of organisational learning and their role in accountability, particularly in a rapidly changing global context – with a changing climate and the pandemic – where lessons from the past may not be directly applicable.

22. Tom Hennessy (Ireland) highlighted the importance of Ireland’s Evaluation Unit reporting directly to the Secretary-General and of having an independent evaluation committee that reviews all evaluations for independence and utility. He encouraged others not to assume that all stakeholders have the same understanding of key principles such as independence and utility, as groups often interpret these differently. He agreed with other speakers about the need for early and ongoing discussions with stakeholders to shape evaluation design and maximise the utility of evaluations. Working closely with decision-makers to ensure that evidence from evaluations is understood and available at key decision points also increases use.

23. Tonka Eibs (Austria) described the importance of independence being used as criteria to inform the location of Evaluation Units within organisational structures and reporting lines. In addition, working collaboratively with policy makers and decision-makers throughout the evaluation cycle supports internal Evaluation Specialists to balance independence and utility. To maximize utility, Austria’s Evaluation Unit facilitates participatory workshops to discuss outcomes of evaluations, works with colleagues to co-develop recommendations based on the findings and supports teams to develop management responses.

#### *Outcomes and next steps*

- The Secretariat will explore how to support members to continue sharing lessons on these issues.
- Members are encouraged to participate in the Secretariat-led review of EvalNet members’ evaluation systems, which will look at independence and use.

#### **Item 4. Impacts of COVID on Inequalities, Education and Children’s Well-being**

24. Eric Charbonnier (OECD) described how the pandemic has caused major and unprecedented disruption to education and learning for children and young people. He shared evidence from the OECD that shows that high-, middle- and low-income countries all continued to invest in education, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of GNI, throughout the pandemic. Many middle- and low-income countries have closed schools for very long periods, and have implemented a variety of strategies to support access to education during closures. These include organising catch-up classes in school holidays, extending the school year, and providing remote learning options such as radio classes. Countries are monitoring and evaluating the impact of these strategies.

25. Caroline Carney (United Kingdom) shared evidence from the UK’s Girls’ Education Challenge Fund. This fund includes 41 girls’ education projects in 17 countries. The project data and evaluations show that learning losses caused by pandemic-related disruption to education are real and significant. Many

children have forgotten what they had previously learned and the self-confidence of girls declined when schools closed. Initially, girls continued to study at home, but many quickly lost motivation as closures continued and they lost confidence in re-opening. Findings also showed worse learning outcomes for girls with purely remote models, highlighting the importance of engaging in discussions and collaborative learning exercises with teachers and peers. As schools have re-opened, the evidence suggests a holistic approach to well-being and education to support girls' motivation and self-confidence.

26. During the discussion, Erik Bloom (Asian Development Bank) shared economic forecasts of the impacts of the pandemic on financial prosperity, health and social outcomes for young people. For many young people in low- and middle-income countries, financial necessity and social norms mean they will not return to education. Consequently, it is essential that evaluations capture evidence to understand effective strategies to support the current generation of young people to access life-long learning opportunities and improve their social and health outcomes. Romana Tedeschi (Switzerland) shared a review of the response of the Education Network of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation to the pandemic, including the launch of a Special COVID-19 funding window 'Innovation meets Education'.

#### **Item 5: How to live our evaluation ethical values within our activities**

27. The Chair noted that to support open, confidential discussions, the Secretariat would not record the session, and the written record will not identify individuals or attribute comments to specific members.

28. Heads of Evaluation and their representatives shared experiences, lessons learned and on-going challenges about how to work in ways that are ethical and apply the principle of 'do not harm'. Participants suggested that there is broad support for ethical practices and the focus should be on how to *interpret* and *operationalise* ethical standards and the concept of "do no harm" within evaluation activities.

29. One member pointed out that ethical issues are sometimes inaccurately conflated with minimum legal requirements. Working ethically involves a much wider range of responsibilities, behaviours and actions beyond legal requirements. It involves evaluators and commissioners working with personal and professional integrity, respecting the rights of individuals, and behaving in ways that are sensitive to the beliefs and customs of all communities. All evaluators and commissioners are responsible for working in thoughtful and sensitive ways that respect rights and privacy, and consider duty of care. This involves examining and reflecting on assumptions that they hold. Commonly held assumptions include: it is always necessary to collect new data; evaluators always do good things; it is important to collect as much information as possible.

30. Commissioners, managers and evaluators should consider ethical issues throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, rather than only at the beginning or during data collection. This requires commissioners and evaluators working in ways that support regular reflection, feedback from participants, and adaptation. Systems should enable reporting and escalation of concerns if they arise.

31. It is crucial that evaluators and commissioners consider how to apply the concept of informed consent throughout the evaluation process. They should not assume that people have consented to participate in an intervention or an evaluation. All evaluation participants should have the ability to withdraw their consent at any point. Members shared examples of ethical practices, including the use of robust knowledge management systems that prevent sensitive information from being shared, blurring faces in publicly available photos, using tools that prompt critical reflection about our assumptions, and the use of privacy impact assessments. Members recognised that working within the context of the pandemic exacerbates certain ethical challenges, particularly in terms of ensuring remote approaches to data collection are ethical, and that an evaluation does not put evaluators in countries with a high prevalence of COVID-19 at risk when conducting fieldwork. Some described safeguards for evaluation staff and consultants, such as vaccine requirements for travel.

*Outcomes and next steps*

- Members agreed to work together to further share lessons on the ethical conduct of evaluations in different contexts. Interested members may contact Isabelle Mercier (Canada).

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**18 November 2021**


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**Item 6: Lessons from Afghanistan: What have we learned and how can we apply learning to our work in fragile and conflict-affected states**

37. A joint EvalNet–International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) session on Afghanistan was convened in response to the DAC’s request for both networks to explore how to capture insights and learning from over 20 years of development co-operation with Afghanistan. The INCAF Chair, Martin Schuldes (Germany) and EvalNet Vice Chair Romana Tedeschi (Switzerland) co-chaired the session. Members agreed that the notes of this session not attribute comments to ensure an open discussion.

38. The session kicked off with introductory remarks by Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. Mr. Egeland painted a bleak picture of Afghanistan today, urging DAC donors and the wider international community to address three key issues: the resumption of financial transfers and banking services, the fulfilment of aid pledges, and the financing of Afghanistan’s public sector through instruments such as UN Trust Funds. He noted that risk aversion among development and some humanitarian donors was an obstacle, along with complex compliance rules and a lack of political leadership to change aid policy in these fragile contexts.

39. Christoph Zürcher (University of Ottawa), author of the 2019 BMZ [meta-synthesis of evaluations in Afghanistan](#), moderated a panel discussion on the links between learning and action. The panel, composed of Abdallah Al Dardari (UNDP), Muska Dagasteer (American University of Afghanistan), Jörg Faust (EvalNet - DEval Germany), Ashley Jackson (ODI), and Orla Kelly (INCAF - Ireland) reflected on the structural and political challenges facing development programming. Key themes emerged, including the role of political narratives and policy pressure limiting the space for learning and uptake that could have improved effectiveness, and misaligned priorities within and beyond the development sector. Interventions (and evaluations of these interventions) often focused too much on short-term results or specific project objectives, which obscured unintended effects and overall progress – or the lack of it – towards pre-requisites for longer-term development and peacebuilding.

40. Today, the role of a functioning banking sector and of core institutions, supporting a functioning economy, is critical to responding to humanitarian needs, stemming the loss of development gains and resuming longer-term approaches. For this, political leadership, with a ‘do no harm’ approach, would be central. Several members shared examples of their own learning exercises. Members highlighted the value of meta-reviews to consolidate lessons and capture useful insights.

41. Members welcomed the proposed focus of the Joint Task Team on applied learning and cautioned against generalisations or unrealistic retrospective assessments of two decades of work in Afghanistan. Participants suggested the task team also consider evidence in other fragile and conflict affected states that may be relevant to inform responses in Afghanistan. Members of both networks agreed that it would be important to consider carefully the applicability of evidence for and from Afghanistan (and other contexts).

*Outcomes and next steps*

- INCAF and EvalNet members approved the creation of a temporary Joint Task Team. The Secretariat invited Members to submit expressions of interest by 1 December. The Task Team will finalise the Terms of Reference and budget.

## Item 7: Small group breakout sessions to share learning and support collaborative activities

### Gender Equality & Empowerment Measurement (GEM) tool (Canada)

42. Isabelle Mercier and Arta Tahira (Canada) facilitated a small group session to show how the GEM tool is being used by colleagues at Global Affairs Canada to gather insightful and credible evidence and its potential for use by other EvalNet members.

43. The GEM tool uses a feminist methodology to capture qualitative and descriptive data on gender equality and empowerment outcomes. The tool gathers information about the enabling environment, including cultural, legal, and social factors that may have contributed to outcomes, and the extent to which women and other genders have experienced equality or empowerment. The tool allows researchers and evaluators to gather data on project participants' experiences of economic, psychological, physical, knowledge and social dimensions of empowerment. It builds on a growing body of knowledge about feminist methodologies, and on global commitments to feminist priorities, including feminist foreign policies adopted by several countries – including Canada. Global Affairs Canada tested the credibility and value of the tool through pilots and a robust peer validation process. The GEM Tool offers a flexible, process-oriented and reciprocal approach for data collection that puts the voices of women, other genders and marginalised groups at the centre. It complements data collection tools and evaluation practices with a feminist methodology focused on qualitative data, local knowledge and experiences.

### Developmental evaluations: A valuable tool to inform programme adaptation, agility and learning? (The United States)

44. Shannon Griswold, Danielle de Garcia and Sophia van der Bijl (United States) facilitated a small group session to share lessons learned about the design and implementation of developmental evaluations.

45. Developmental evaluations include an embedded evaluator working within an implementation team through a rapid cycle of learning and continuous adaptation. This is an interactive and flexible approach in using evidence to inform decisions. USAID's experience shows that the use of evaluation findings is higher with developmental evaluations compared to traditional evaluation approaches. Developmental evaluations support for adaptation, flexibility, and informed decision-making proved particularly useful in the pandemic context. Developmental evaluations require a trusted partner and a collaborative approach to problem solving. A back-up team or partner can help to validate findings and provide surge support.

### What is the theory of change for evaluation and how should we apply this to review evaluation systems? Reflections from Belgium's peer review

46. Anneke Slob (Ecorys) and Cecilia De Decker (Belgium) led a small group session about the current peer review of Belgium's evaluation system.

47. A Theory of Change for Belgium's evaluation system is informing the design and content of this peer-review. External consultants developed the theory through a series of participatory workshops and discussions with staff from Belgian's Special Evaluation Office and other stakeholders. The OECD/DAC Evaluation Peer Review tool and the United Nations Evaluation Group's guidance are also informing the approach. The internal contextual factors affecting the structure and ways of working include the political and legal context in Belgium. External international factors identified include the evolving global development agenda and pandemic, which also affect the evaluation system's structure and ways of working. The Theory of Change has informed the development of evaluation questions and review topics. Evaluation Specialists from Belgian's Special Evaluation Office have noted the value of this approach to the development of their own strategies, work plans and reviews. The review is in the early stage of implementation and an advisory group of peers from Germany, Portugal, the Netherlands and the OECD/DAC Secretariat is providing strategic advice and quality assurance.

## **Tracking COVID-19 Finance: Challenges and ways forward (The Independent Evaluation Group at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and Germany)**

48. Early reviews have identified challenges of accurately tracking financial support for the COVID-19 response and recovery. These challenges include understanding and measuring the proportion and amount of funding that is additional, as well as tracking re-allocated funding, and tracking ODA eligibility and the extent to which donors are meeting their financial commitments.

49. The World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) is leading work to understand the quality of early responses to the pandemic in terms of saving lives and protecting vulnerable people. IEG has developed a theory of action to support the Bank to track two types of expenditure: projects that include 100% of expenditure on the pandemic response and recovery, and expenditure that has been re-purposed. Germany, the IMF and other participants also shared the challenges they have faced and the approaches used to capture new and repurposed funding. The OECD DAC statistics systems call for the use of a “COVID-19” tag/key word when the activity would not have taken place without the pandemic. Discussions highlighted that there may be a need for evaluators to share experiences and solutions for tracking COVID-19 expenditure and working towards greater harmonisation across funders.

### **Item 8: A Call to Action: Using Evidence & Learning to Improve Future Climate Investments**

50. The Chair introduced the session, noting the importance of this discussion in the context of the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) and the need for urgent global action to address the climate crisis.

51. Mike Speirs (Denmark) shared insights from two major evaluations that have reviewed Denmark’s support for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Over the past 20 years, Denmark has provided significant funds to multilaterals including the Green Climate Fund and through bilateral programmes to support both adaptation and mitigation. Denmark’s evaluations highlight the relevance of these investments to the Sustainable Development Goals and to the UNFCCC commitments. The evaluations underlined the importance of supporting partners to define and develop informed action plans for their own Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the inclusion of credible baselines and indicators to monitor and understand progress. The evaluations also identify the need to mobilise climate finance in ways that reach the most vulnerable and marginalised people, as well as working with embassies, and engaging in global diplomacy to maximise the impact of climate-related investments. Evidence from these evaluations has informed the content and approval of Denmark’s new development co-operation strategy, which includes a focus on tackling climate change.

52. Marit von-Zomeren (Netherlands) shared findings from a recent evaluation of the Netherlands’ support for climate change programmes. Portfolio analysis led by the evaluation team showed that the Netherlands’ support for adaptation to climate change has primarily benefitted low-income countries. In contrast, support for climate change mitigation has primarily benefitted middle-income countries. Whilst the Netherlands’ policies clearly articulate the need to support the most vulnerable, these target groups were not always considered in project design, limiting the extent to which marginalised communities have benefited from climate finance. Similarly, though policies emphasise the importance of gender equality, this commitment did not consistently translate to inclusive programmes or results. The evaluation found that blended finance has the greatest impact when investments fill a clearly defined temporary niche and support additional private sector investment. The evaluation concluded that additionality, innovation and commercial viability are the criteria that should inform decisions about the use of blended finance. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of improving targeting to support vulnerable communities to build their resilience to climate change.

53. In response to the presentations, Véronique Salze-Lozac'h (European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD)) highlighted three key points. First, the importance of all climate investments and policies having emissions-related targets that can be monitored and evaluated, rather than only finance related targets. Finance targets alone negatively affect the achievement of tangible results and limit credible

assessments about investment impacts and value for money. Second, co-ordination across all partners is crucial to ensuring effective, efficient and impactful investments because climate adaptation is a complex and multi sectoral challenge. International Finance Institutions can play an important role in supporting collaboration through the development of country strategies, co-ordinated programmes of action and reporting frameworks. Third, more attention needs to be placed on understanding and investing in ways that support additionality. Concessional finance decisions require sufficient resources and time to support commercial viability.

54. Mike Speirs (Denmark), Marit von-Zomerén (Netherlands) and Véronique Salze-Lozac'h (EBRD) all supported the Call to Action for EvalNet members to take on this topic – individually and collectively. They suggested work streams to consider including sharing of learning, developing collaborative work plans, and designing common indicators, are areas to consider.

55. During the discussion, Erla Hjálmarsdóttir (Iceland) described the risks of increasing fragmentation of climate finance instruments and the influence of national political agendas informing action to tackle climate change. Within this context, it is essential that all countries maximise synergies and shared ways of working. She noted that blended finance requires a relatively developed market for investments and many low-income countries with high levels of vulnerability to climate change are not able to access or benefit from this financial instrument. Cecilia De Decker (Belgium) suggested that it can be useful for evaluations to treat climate both as a crosscutting issue and as a specific outcome area.

56. Gottfried von Gemmingen (BMZ, Germany) thanked the presenters and noted that there are different approaches to monitoring and evaluating if and how people are supported to build their resilience to climate change. Marit von-Zomerén (Netherlands) agreed that measuring resilience results is challenging. She recommended work by the World Resources Institute and the use of the relevant OECD indicators, which emphasise the ability to cope with and adapt to the negative impacts of climate change.

57. Mike Speirs (Denmark) emphasised the importance of evaluations analysing NDCs, which include a range of highly valuable and insightful data about plans to reduce emissions and support adaptation. Understanding the extent to which ecosystems are able to cope with the speed and scale of climate change is also a valuable area for evaluations to investigate when considering resilience. An initial analysis of evaluation reports on DEREc shows that there are more evaluations of programmes that support climate mitigation than those focused on adaptation, further highlighting the need for action in this area.

58. Sven Harten (Deval, Germany) noted four key points that are relevant to discussions about evaluating climate finance. Firstly, it is important for evaluations to consider residual risks, loss and damages as well as mitigation and adaptation. Secondly, evaluations of blended finance should build on previous EvalNet work in this area and recognise that blended finance is most applicable in more mature markets. Thirdly, the value of analysing NDCs and encouraging researchers to further explore these and lastly, evaluators should consider how different countries measure and report on their commitments. Building on this point, the Secretariat described a disconnect between Monitoring, Reporting & Verification (MRV) of national and international climate actions under UNFCCC, and mainstream development evaluation activities, including SDG reporting.

#### *Outcomes and next steps*

- Members expressed strong support for the Network taking further action on this theme, and agreed to convene a new EvalNet group focused on Climate Change to develop further work plans. The Secretariat invited Members to express interest in participating. The following members and partners expressed interest: Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Switzerland (SECO), EIB, EBRD, GEF, ILO

**Item 9. Other business and closing session**

59. The Chair thanked participants for their active engagement and the Secretariat for organising, and closed the meeting. The next EvalNet meeting will take place on the 13 and 14 June 2022.