

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

**Cancels & replaces the same document of 23 May 2023**

**DAC Network on Development Evaluation**

**Summary Record of the 29th Meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation**

22-23 February 2023, OECD Conference Centre

Following no further written input from EvalNet on a DRAFT, this summary record is issued as FINAL.

The 29<sup>th</sup> EvalNet Meeting took place at the OECD Conference Centre in Paris, France (with an option for virtual participation) on 22-23 February 2023. Sessions were open to all registered staff from participating EvalNet units/departments, and to guests by invitation. EvalNet members were joined by counterparts from the OECD DAC International Network on Conflict & Fragility (INCAF) for the afternoon session on 22 February to discuss the work of the Joint Temporary Task Team on Afghanistan.

A special session on climate evidence on 23 February was open to the broader DAC community. The meeting was attended by more than 150 participants spanning 41 organisations (virtually and online). A list of participants is available on EMS or upon request from the Secretariat. A virtual option for participants was available throughout the meeting, including for the informal session.

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## Summary Record: 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation

### Summary of key outcomes and next steps

- The meeting brought together 150 participants from 41 delegations.
- The Secretariat presented a new study of evaluation systems, and members discussed questions related to resourcing of evaluation; the different approaches to classifying decentralised and centralised evaluation; types of independence and systems for supporting independence; and whether an increasing focus on learning has reduced responsiveness of evaluation systems to meeting accountability needs. There was general support for the suggestion to develop an approach to benchmarking evaluation resources. *Next step:* Members will validate their profiles and the study will be finalised with minor revisions. The Secretariat asked for interested members to volunteer to support the further analysis of resourcing.
- SAMA Consulting presented emerging key messages from work examining learning and barriers to learning from evaluation in Afghanistan and other crisis contexts. *Next step:* A draft report will be shared with the Reference Group for input before finalising the work.
- There was a lively exchange on ethics and evaluating with integrity, with guest speaker Nicoletta STAME and presentations by World Bank IEG and Canada. *Next step:* Members agreed to continue making space for discussion and reflection on this important topic, regularly including it on the agenda.
- Japan, Germany, and the Secretariat updated members on the dissemination of the updated evaluation criteria. *Next step:* Members were invited to continue to share updates on the roll out of the criteria, and the Secretariat asked for support on producing Hindi and Ukrainian translations of the criteria. The trilingual 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management will be published shortly. The criteria guidance is available in English and members are supporting validation of French and Spanish versions to be published later this year.
- Spain, Canada, and Germany presented new guidance on applying a human rights and gender equality lens to the [OECD/DAC evaluation criteria](#). *Next step:* The guidance will be circulated for final comment to EvalNet and GenderNet members, before publication by the Secretariat.
- The Climate Crisis Working Group met to plan work for the current biennium and identified several projects to be pursued: methodological work on climate mitigation impacts and attribution; syntheses on priority policy topics to diffuse lessons to broader audiences; and learning events to support evaluation units as they develop institutional evaluation approaches.
- Other updates were provided to the network with the following *Next steps*:
  - GOVNET has invited EvalNet members to identify existing evaluations/documents in relation climate change adaptation governance (how governance system processes facilitate/ obstruct adaptation, especially at local level); and public interest media and information ecosystems. Please email relevant work to: [Marc.DETOLLENAERE@oecd.org](mailto:Marc.DETOLLENAERE@oecd.org)
  - Benjamin KUMPF (OECD) presented a proposal to develop DAC scaling principles to improve scaling effective interventions, and an invitation to EvalNet members to work on mainstreaming scaling in evaluation. Interested members should contact [Benjamin.KUMPF@oecd.org](mailto:Benjamin.KUMPF@oecd.org).
  - Following an update on the work of the SDG Synthesis Coalition, the Secretariat noted that there may be scope to support sharing of findings from the five studies, and that updates will be provided to the network in due course.
  - The Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) will meet in March in Abidjan, and several other upcoming events were announced to members (see para 61).

*This meeting was held at the OECD, Paris, France with a virtual option.*

## 22 February 2023

### Item 1. Opening Session

1. The Chair, Jörg Faust (DEval, Germany), opened the meeting by welcoming all participants.
2. The Secretariat noted a minor modification to paragraph 12 of the Summary Record of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting and members approved the updated record [DCD/DAC/EV/M(2022)1]. The Secretariat flagged several adjustments to the Draft Agenda for the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting [DCD/DAC/EV/A(2023)1]: Item 2 shifted to after the coffee break, and Item 3 came after the opening session. To allow broader participation, Item 7 was opened to the public. Due to time constraints, the informal Introduction to EvalNet session was postponed and will be provided virtually later. Members approved the agenda with these modifications.
3. The Secretariat advised members that the OECD Council had approved the updated Development Assistance Committee (DAC) mandate in December 2022, including the revised DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) mandate and list of participant observers for 2023-27 [DCD/DAC(2022)12/FINAL].
4. The Chair welcomed the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), whose status as observers of the network was approved by the DAC as part of the mandate renewal process. The Chair welcomed representatives from the two new observers:
  - Hamid SHARIF (Managing Director of Compliance, Effectiveness and Integrity Unit) and Irene BAIN (Senior Learning and Knowledge Specialist), representing the AIIB.
  - Zakaria HANAFI (Head of Evaluation Learning and Outreach Section, Independent Evaluation Department) and Ehtisham UL HASSAN (Evaluation Specialist, Independent Evaluation Department), representing the IsDB.
5. New Heads of Evaluation were introduced:
  - Finland – Antero KLEMOLA, Director, Development Evaluation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
  - Norway – Helge OSTTVEITEN, Director, Evaluation Department, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).
6. The Secretariat updated members on the EvalNet Bureau composition for 2023, which was confirmed on 22 December 2022 following written procedure on 27 November 2022: 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.
7. Rahul MALHOTRA (Head of the Reviews, Results, Evaluation, and Development Innovation Division, DCD, OECD) described strong interest in evaluation across the DAC and growing recognition of the need to build a strong evaluative evidence base to inform decision making. Due to increased budgetary pressures, he advised that assessed contributions have been reduced, resulting in a need to raise EUR 1.5 million over the next two years in earmarked voluntary contributions for EvalNet to maintain the continuity of the work programme and staff. Luxembourg and other members responded by expressing support, and encouraged participation in the fundraising effort, recognising the valuable contribution of EvalNet and the need for staff to focus on delivering the work programme.

8. Megan KENNEDY-CHOUANE (Head of the Evaluation Unit, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD) provided an overview of highlights from 2022 and updates on the work programme, including how EvalNet has:

- **Served as a forum for multi and bilateral learning and exchange:** This includes EvalNet meetings and convening the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition, as well as a session with the DAC Community of Practice on Poverty and Inequalities, the Evaluation Systems Study, and the launch of ‘Protecting People Involved in Evaluation’ EvalNet position paper.
- **Supported the development of norms and tools:** Including the second edition of the *OECD DAC Glossary and Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management*, the development of good practice guidance on Applying a Human Rights and Gender Equality Lens to the DAC Evaluation Criteria, and translations of the *Better Criteria, Better Evaluation* (OECD, 2019) document involving strategic partnerships with a range of countries and institutions. This has served, as a way of translating the criteria and, in the longer term, as an entry point to discuss evaluation practice and needs.
- **Promoted collaboration:** Including active dissemination of DAC evaluation norms at key events hosted by Asia Pacific Evaluation Association and the European Evaluation Society Conference; presenting at an evaluation training for government stakeholders in the Asia Pacific region; and a workshop and sessions at the National Evaluation Capacities Conference in Turin, Italy.
- **Served as a voice for evidence in policy discussions:** Including a rapid synthesis on refugee hosting in collaboration with other OECD directorates to inform the response to Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine; a rapid review of climate finance presented at COP 27; dissemination of the “Joint Evaluation of the Protection of Rights of Refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic”; and the ongoing work of a joint task team on Afghanistan with the International Network on Conflict and Fragility.
- **Convened the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition** and advanced collaborative work, notably kicking off the Strategic Joint Evaluation of the Collective International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

9. Looking ahead, the main Network workstreams for 2023 are: finalising the Evaluation Systems Study, Afghanistan learning work, and publishing the guidance on human rights and gender equality; the Climate Crisis Working Group; and the Strategic Joint Evaluation under the auspices of the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition, through collaborative and co-ordinated efforts with Coalition participants and with the guidance of the Evaluation Steering Group.

## Item 2. Evaluation systems study

10. Megan KENNEDY-CHOUANE (Secretariat) presented the draft Evaluation Systems Study, which covers 49 distinct organisations, to understand their use of evidence in decision making, evaluation processes, follow-up, and learning. The study examines the role of evaluation across different policy contexts and, through its comparative view, allows evaluation units to benchmark themselves against others and understand how context affects evaluation practice and use.

11. Highlights included the following points:

- **The role of evaluation:** Accountability and learning are seen to be the dual objectives of evaluation. Both contribute to improved results.
- **Policy and institutional arrangements:** Evaluation units tend to be functionally and structurally independent, which is often cited as an invaluable trait that supports impartiality and credibility, avoiding undue influence. While spending on evaluations has increased in general, human and financial resources dedicated to this function vary widely across members, and the slight increase

in evaluation resourcing pales in comparison to the much larger increases in development co-operation budgets covered by member evaluation units.

- **Mainstreaming:** Over the past ten years, efforts to mainstream gender, human rights and inclusion have advanced considerably, with a majority of members integrating one or more of these topics into policies, and organisations are increasingly providing detailed evaluation guidance.
- **Evaluation processes:** Evaluations tend to align well with organisational strategic priorities, with members increasingly using utility-based approaches that involve policy/ programme units in evaluation planning and design. Quality assurance has taken the form of increased oversight in the early stages of the process, and other functions such as peer review, validation workshops, and formal structures to validate findings have also been used. While there is enthusiasm to build partner country engagement and several members are investing significantly in evaluation capacity development, partner countries are often relegated to engagement in the data collection phase.
- **Evidence for learning:** While all organisations disseminate findings and the majority support learning through a variety of strategies and mandate management response and action plans, issues remain with target audiences' absorption capacities to act on recommendations, even when they are devised in ways that are concrete and tailored.
- **Resources:** The Secretariat described challenges around comparing evaluation resources across members, given the variety in mandates and evaluation set ups, and proposed to form a small group of interested members to explore developing a better approach.

12. In response to the presentation, members congratulated the Secretariat and had a range of reflections on the Study and suggested several areas for further consideration:

- Members discussed an important question arising from the study: if 'learning' from evidence is emphasised more than 'accountability', what are the implications? As much as learning is important, the focus on learning could (in some cases) take attention away from the accountability, reducing the overall effectiveness of the function.
- Members noted that it might be useful to have aggregate costs for different types of evaluation, rather than overall systems as such, to understand real costs. Having some level of transparency around costs may be useful for evaluation units to reflect on their respective spending and to facilitate some internal appraisal about whether that is appropriate or sufficient.
- Members noted that it would be useful to better define systems and to group them in a way that allows for comparisons with those that are structurally similar. This might help make comparisons more meaningful. Likewise, members agreed on the difficulty of developing an international benchmark, in relation to resourcing and boundary issues of what is/is not included.
- Members would be interested in compiling more information on how members report findings and raise awareness about evidence, including how to support users to distinguish between different types or sources of information.
- The network could explore further developing a typology of evaluation systems, with different examples of each, to allow for easier comparison between similar systems. Within this, members are interested in continuing discussion to unpack what is meant by 'independence' and what standards or benchmarks might be considered for analysing the different approaches.
- Members suggested it is useful to better understand resourcing, and that various elements could be taken into account, including the costs associated with different kinds of evaluations, but cautioned against developing an overly-complicated approach, considering the wide variety of set-ups.

13. In conclusion, the evaluation systems study will be completed with some minor adjustments to the description of trends and input from members on the profiles, and information provided on resourcing will be retained in current form. In the future, the consensus was that the Secretariat, with support from interested members, should further explore the analysis of evaluation resources.

### Item 3. Applying the adapted evaluation criteria

14. The Secretariat provided an overview of the adapted criteria, which were approved in 2019 following extensive consultation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and the new criterion of coherence. This adapted set of criteria include two principles to guide their use:

- **Principle One:** The criteria should be applied thoughtfully to support high quality, useful evaluation. They should be contextualised – understood in the context of the individual evaluation, the intervention being evaluated, and the stakeholders involved.
- **Principle Two:** The use of the criteria depends on the purpose of the evaluation. The criteria should not be applied mechanistically. Instead, they should be covered according to the needs of the relevant stakeholders and the context of the evaluation. More or less time and resources may be devoted to the evaluative analysis for each criterion depending on the evaluation purpose.

15. Guidance published in 2021 expands on the principles for use, provides concrete examples, and supports deeper understanding of the concepts underlying each criterion. Canada, France (AFD), Germany (BMZ, DEval, GIZ), Spain and UNDP/UNEG have been working with the Secretariat to develop guidance on using the criteria in the context of prioritising human rights and gender equality. The Secretariat shared information about how it is supporting the uptake of the criteria, including participating in an advisory group for ALNAP’s revision of humanitarian guidance on the criteria; responding to queries on the criteria; and undertaking trainings and workshops in English, French and Spanish.

16. Members have been working within their own institutions to roll out the criteria and improve the ways in which they are applied. The criteria have also been taken up across the global evaluation community. A series of interventions from members followed, to give specific examples of how criteria are being used:

17. Berthold HOFFMANN (Germany) noted that it was useful for Germany to participate in the criteria adaptation process because doing so helped to clarify what each criterion means and its relevance to the evaluation process. BMZ had a parallel process, resulting in a guidance paper that operationalises the criteria through dimensions and questions and aims to harmonise evaluation practice to improve comparability and quality of German evaluations. Comparability is important, as Germany wants to draw conclusions that go beyond individual projects. Preliminary results suggest that this has improved harmonisation and comparability of evaluation results and is serving as a good basis to start work on an analysis framework of evaluation quality, based on quality standards. Germany will share further findings at the next EvalNet.

18. Shinji SATO (Japan) shared their experience of the roll-out of the criteria, which includes the creation of an Annual Evaluation Report, a Knowledge Co-Creation Program, and engagement activities, such as presentations at academic conferences and explanations to evaluation consultants. JICA has also introduced an annual Evaluation Feedback Seminar and briefing of staff stationed overseas, as well as training programmes for those based in Japan and for partners. The application of the adapted criteria (which are scored) has included the introduction of non-score items (such as performance and additionality), which allows for a focus on project implementation process as well as generating aggregate information on performance across projects.

19. Valérie STURM (Switzerland) noted that the adaptation of the criteria was welcomed. In SECO they are supplemented with ‘assessment grids’, which guide the use of the evaluation criteria and have proven especially useful in the context of decentralised evaluations, to ensure uniformity (and hence comparability) and to improve the quality of decentralised evaluations by asking evaluators to provide a rating for each criterion, with a clear justification.

20. Members were invited to offer their reflections; several points were made including:

- *Further reflection*: There was a request for further consideration of the concept of ‘decolonisation’ and related discussions, and how these apply to the criteria and the glossary to improve common understanding; there is an opportunity to emphasise ‘relevance,’ as it translates to performance, and questions of who determines relevance.
- *Operationalising the criteria*: Members shared how the development of guidance has been useful to support design, management, and delivery of credible and useful evaluations using the criteria, which are more explicit on how interventions contribute to realising human rights and gender equality, and to foster an intersectional approach that is inclusive with respect to epistemology and methods.

21. Mayanka VIJ (Secretariat) provided an overview of the process of developing a *good practice guidance on applying a human rights and gender equality lens to the criteria*. A joint EvalNet and GenderNet working group embarked on developing this guidance in 2021 responding to a need for additional guidance on integrating gender equality across the criteria. Members of the joint working group provided feedback on the guidance in 2022, with a core reference group comprised of Germany (DEval), Spain and Canada substantially involved in the drafting and feedback.

22. Daniel JACOBO-OREA (Spain) highlighted common challenges faced by different EvalNet members in applying a human rights and gender equality lens to the criteria such as lack of technical expertise, practical guidance, and data issues. The guidance focusses on how each of the evaluation criteria can be interpreted with a human rights and gender equality lens and the fundamental concepts underpinning these. The presentation looked at three criteria (relevance, coherence and effectiveness). To illustrate how the coherence criteria had been applied using a human rights and gender equality lens, the example of the evaluation of Spain’s Humanitarian Action Strategy was provided.

23. Silvia GRANDI (Canada) presented how Global Affairs Canada has been integrating a human rights and gender equality lens in their evaluations, highlighting the relevance and effectiveness criteria. When applying a human rights and gender equality lens to the relevance criterion, it is important to consider whose needs and voices are centred in the evaluation and unpack all intersecting factors. The evaluation of the Women’s Voice and Leadership Formative Evaluation was discussed as a practical example. When evaluating effectiveness with a human rights and gender equality lens, the Gender Equality and Empowerment Measurement (GEM) tool was presented as another practical example.

24. Martin BRUDER (Germany, DEval) shared that existing guidance documents on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations, both on content (subjects of evaluations) and process (how evaluations are conducted) lack specificity and practicality. The new EvalNet guidance is expected to fill a knowledge gap on how to apply a human rights and gender equality lens to the *content* of evaluations as it offers concrete evaluation questions for readers to adopt or modify, addresses common challenges and illustrates theory with real-life examples.

25. Anne-Sophie KERVELLA (France) noted that evaluations are a powerful vector for operationalising feminist diplomacy as they highlight positive and negative effects and point to missed opportunities. This guidance will be useful on two counts. First, it will be an important tool to disseminate technical capacity and build awareness with different partners on the various approaches and methods to applying a human rights and gender equality lens to the criteria. Second, it will support actors in understanding their roles in relation to common challenges.

26. The Chair closed the session by informing members that a draft of the guidance will be circulated to EvalNet and GenderNet for final feedback before publication, and encouraging members to continue sharing updates on their criteria work.

#### Item 4. EvalNet Helpdesk: Solving problems together

27. During the helpdesk session members worked together to answer participant questions (selected from responses to the pre-meeting survey). Small group discussions around two questions yielded the following suggestions, which will be compiled into the EvalNet Helpdesk on the Community Site.

28. **Problem one:** *How best to build a culture of evaluation in an organisation?*

- Convince leadership of the importance of evaluation and seek their buy-in to the process from the beginning. Leadership sets the tone.
- Inclusion of stakeholders from the outset, ensuring deep involvement of all those who will be evaluated or will use the evaluation once completed.
- Have a good ‘product’ to sell, so that everyone is clear on what the evaluation is for, what articulated needs it meets, and what it can help people do better in the future.

29. **Problem two:** *How best to balance between specificity and generalisability?*

- Ensure that there is a high level of transparency with indicators, so evaluators know how to move from ‘top-down’ to ‘bottom-up’ when developing recommendations. Ensure also that there is a follow-up system in place for recommendations.
- Be cognisant of the audience for recommendations and how they are likely to read and use them. For example, it is possible (even desirable) to have detailed recommendations for more operational things and more open language for strategic issues that require the exercising of professional judgement. Attend carefully to the language of the recommendations and, as an evaluator, put yourself in the position of the reader.
- Be clear on what your mandate is as an evaluator, which is not necessarily to make political recommendations per se, but to make policy relevant recommendations. Therefore, be cognisant of the broader political environment and how these would be read, without overstepping the mark.

#### Item 5. Conducting evaluations with integrity

30. The session explored concepts such as ‘responsible evaluation,’ and credibility and integrity, including compliance with professional standards.

31. Nicoletta STAME (academic) presented her work on the role of evaluation with the frame of moving from ‘doing no harm,’ to ‘preventing bad,’ and ‘doing good.’ Stame elucidated some precepts that evaluators would do well to bear in mind: consider the possibility of adverse unintended consequences; look at what happens and how change happens even if in unexpected ways; treat everyone with respect and dignity, foster democracy, and create space for dialogue; and acknowledge target populations’ innovations. These will increase the usefulness of the evaluation beyond its immediate recommendations.

32. Janice GRYCHOWSKI (Canada) spoke about how Global Affairs Canada orients their ethics discussion around three core questions: What are the rules and guidance we should follow as a minimum? How do we know if we are being ethical in our normal, everyday evaluation work? And in which ways can we make the sharing of information reciprocal, safe, and a respectful and trusting exercise? These questions allow for better planning for risks, ensure informed consent, and provide better clarity on expectations and requirements related to data collection.

33. Stephen PORTER and Mila FONROUGE (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group) spoke about professional values and the need to better attune to risks, which requires practices to be changed, especially those that relate to imbalances of power in the international development staff and local population relationships.

34. During the discussion, members made several points, summarised below:

- *Value neutrality*: While value-neutrality is enshrined in professional conduct standards for evaluators, the issue of evaluators being value-critical instead of value-neutral is contested, and there are increasing pressures on evaluators to do more than what is in their mandate and within the scope of resources bringing in their own agendas or values. More capacity needs to be built on being a ‘reflective’ evaluator, with some specific consideration about what that means in practice. Members expressed interest in further debates and exploration of the trade-offs and implications of different approaches.
- *Evaluator competencies and behavioural attributes*: Members discussed the perennial issue of hard-to-achieve evaluator accreditation and the scope to explore the role of ‘visiting competencies’ for the ongoing professional development/ supplementation of the evaluator workforce and the potential usefulness of something like an Evaluator’s Charter (modelled on auditor professional standards).
- *Disseminating existing approaches*: AIIB shared that the International Accountability Mechanism network, as part of the US International Development Finance Corporation, has developed good policies on how to deal with retaliation, which might be useful for evaluators. Australia also has an updated approach to ethical evaluation and integrity that might be of interest to members.

35. In conclusion, the Chair thanked the speakers and members agreed that the network should continue to provide space for discussion and debate on these important topics.

#### Item 6. Afghanistan Evaluation and Learning Study

36. The Chair introduced the INCAF/EvalNet Joint Temporary Task Team (JTT) on Afghanistan, co-chaired by Ireland for INCAF and the Netherlands for EvalNet. A joint session of the two networks in November 2021 provided space for a frank exchange of views and kicked off three work streams, one of which is led by EvalNet: the *Afghanistan Evaluation and Learning Study*, focused on how to forge stronger links between evidence and programmes.

37. Arjan SCHUTHOF (the Netherlands) provided an overview of the task force work on these three cutting-edge work streams, which were presented and discussed at a recent joint session in Dublin.

38. Samandar MAHMODI and Raof MODAQQ (Sama Consulting) presented emerging findings from the Afghanistan Evaluation and Learning study, which draws on a survey and key informant interviews with people with experience in Afghanistan and other crisis contexts. The study examines how development actors are/ are not using learning from evaluation in crisis settings. The presentation elucidated two key challenges for evaluation uptake. Firstly, certain geographic areas and communities were consistently excluded from evaluations (due to security/ accessibility issues and low prioritisation), and secondly, political and security concerns can negatively affect the decision-making processes that govern whether evaluations are commissioned in the first place, or if their findings are shared and used. During the discussion the following issues were raised:

- *Use and translation of evaluations*: This presentation highlighted that evaluation findings are often not translated into relevant languages of the impacted communities, which reflects an emphasis on box checking for donors, and low prioritisation placed on community engagement. Many evaluations are conducted only in the capital and unfortunately have very little real involvement of impacted people. Among international organisations, there is not a lot of co-ordination, especially in evaluation. They all have their own interests and instruments that they want to try, which may be one of the elements that explain why findings were not used by a wider community of actors but remain within the agency that commissioned them. Evaluations are mostly done to tick the box to say that a requirement has been met, rather than really being used.
- *Politicisation of evaluation findings*: Politicisation of evaluation findings is frequently cited by key informants as a challenge. Some projects were undertaken for political reasons, rather than based on evidence-based considerations of what should be done.

- *Coherence of findings*: There were questions around coherence, including not just interventions, but of evaluation findings themselves and of the strategic intent and co-ordination behind evaluation activity. The research mainly shows that evaluators are focused on their own remit to deliver a complete evaluation, and do not necessarily work on the utilisation of their findings, suggesting that there is room to do more to inform decision-making.

39. The draft report on this work will be circulated to the Reference Group for feedback, before finalising in April.

**23 February 2023**

### **Item 7. Informing ambitious action on the climate crisis: Evidence from EvalNet**

40. In a special session open to the broader DAC community, EvalNet members presented recent evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations on climate change. The Chair welcomed DAC Delegates and introduced Pilar GARRIDO (OECD DCD Director).

41. Pilar GARRIDO reflected on the importance of evaluation and of EvalNet products, of which she was an avid consumer in her previous capacity as a Minister in Costa Rica. She noted countries' ambitions and expectations are increasingly complex and high and that currently development co-operation providers are not meeting the poly-crisis with the level of seriousness required. The role of the OECD is to provide credible and unbiased insights. Evaluation is a powerful tool to underpin effective action in line with this ambition. The work of EvalNet is critical and helps DCD as co-custodians of policy coherence to show, in tangible terms, what is working (and what is not).

42. Megan KENNEDY-CHOUANE (Head of Evaluation Unit, OECD) introduced the session, highlighting the role of EvalNet to amplify lessons from its members who are evaluating climate interventions. Presentations were made by Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands.

43. Eva BRANDT BROEGAARD & Henrik LARSEN (Denmark) described two major evaluations of Denmark's assistance from 2019/2020: one on adaptation and one on mitigation. In Denmark, 25% of all development co-operation is now focused on climate, 60% of that on adaptation. The mitigation evaluation focused on four countries. In three countries, there were good results in contexts where there is clear alignment with recipient country governments. In one country, South Africa, there were poor results due to underlying political issues relating to the transition from coal.

44. Key findings from the two evaluations include:

- Monitoring mechanisms are not strong
- There is a greater need for prioritisation and collaboration
- There is a gap between local and global level action, and communication between bilateral and multilateral levels has not functioned well

45. The presenters described how the evaluations influenced overall development strategies. They concluded their intervention by showing a video introducing Participatory Scenario Planning, an approach to weather forecasting for agriculture at local government level in Kenya that has been effective in increasing farmer's adaptability.

46. Martin NOLTZE (Germany) noted that the German ambition has been to strengthen climate resilience through adaptation support. He shared lessons from Germany, derived from the Evaluation of Adaptation Related ODA in the years 2011-2020. The modular evaluation approach covering 2019-2023, entails portfolio and allocation analysis; investigating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) interventions in certain sectors; and dealing with residual climate risks after adaptation limits are reached. A key finding is that adaptive capacities have improved for dealing

with shocks and stressors. However, there is less evidence regarding effectiveness of support to the enabling environment (despite large amounts of funding to this area), and that there was limited systematic management of residual climate risks.

47. Rob VAN POELJE (the Netherlands) shared insights from the Evaluation of Dutch Climate Finance for Development and Climate Diplomacy. This was concerned with following the funding and understanding the additionality of ODA in public-private climate financing, and recommendations for future policy. Outcomes from this study found that blended finance projects, of which there are three main types (innovative, in-between, nearly commercial upscaling) need different types of assessments, as a one-size-fits-all approach does not best capture their relevance and effectiveness.

48. Karen ROT MUNSTERMANN (AFDB) provided an overview of the Evaluation of Mainstreaming Green Growth and Climate Change and how the African Development Bank sought to provide relevant evaluative knowledge on energy, climate change, resilience, and green growth, and to inform interventions in supporting regional member countries to foster climate resilience and a just energy transition. Overall, its investigation highlighted the need to address infrastructure financing gaps, better support enabling environments, address climate resilience through project quality at entry, give due policy and strategy consideration to increasing the use of non-lending instruments, and improve service delivery.

49. Oscar GARCIA (UNDP) provided an overview of the Evaluation of UNDP Support for Energy Access and Transition key conclusions including recommendations for multifaceted energy support, and to expand energy access in contexts that face major hurdles for adoption and scaling. The evaluation also recommends the need for more realistic (longer) timeframes to improve national energy sector transitions, the suggestion to promote better knowledge sharing, and for interventions to better consider gender equality and women's empowerment.

50. Following the presentations, several reflections were shared by members. Isabelle WITTOEK (DAC Evalnet Facilitator, Belgium) remarked that conversations at DAC level were ongoing regarding the declaration that commits donors to align development co-operation and climate objectives, which may have ramifications for evaluation, as this kind of sustainable development needs to be pursued in a coherent way. Eliane CLEVY (France) alerted members to a forthcoming Agence Française du Développement (AFD) evaluation on climate adaptation.

51. Rob VAN POELJE (the Netherlands) queried whether there is scope to pull together evaluations on climate adaptation and mitigation to build a more consolidated knowledge base. Hege RØTTINGEN (Norway) offered the idea that it would be useful to have a synthesis of this subject matter area, as a lot of evidence has been generated at national level but there is limited aggregation of findings at international level. It was suggested that this might improve the utility of recommendations and help reach an audience beyond evaluators.

52. As a next step, the findings from these evaluations, the synthesis and today's discussion should be shared widely, and will inform the Working Group meeting during the informal session.

### **Item 8. The DAC Evaluation Resource Centre (DEReC): Next steps**

53. The Secretariat described how EvalNet has served as a platform for sharing members' evaluation reports and disseminating the emerging evidence to the DAC and beyond. DEReC is the DAC Evaluation Resource Centre, the most current iteration of how information is shared among the membership and beyond. Members discussed how they currently use this online repository of evaluations and how it can best add value alongside other evaluation report repositories and evidence portals.

54. During the discussion, members shared how they find DEReC useful, particularly as a starting point when kicking off an evaluation to learn what others have done. One participant noted that while the evaluation unit does not use DEReC, colleagues in programme units do use it. It was remarked that the platform has value in providing greater transparency and accountability.

55. Members discussed the need for more advanced search functions, and the promise of tools such as UNDP's AIDA (using artificial intelligence). Daniel JACOBO OREA (Spain) noted DEREc's importance as a global space for evaluation systems and representation of different types of evaluations and different users, such as academia. Members suggested an annual survey to gather evaluations, instead of gathering them on a rolling basis. The Chair stressed the importance of DEREc as a global public good whose modernisation and enhancement should be pursued. The Secretariat will compile written feedback and develop a work plan.

### Item 9. Member updates and proposals

56. Mark DE TOLLENAERE (OECD) shared the work of GovNet and its two workstreams regarding learning from evaluations, into which EvalNet members may wish to contribute. First, there is the workstream on climate change adaptation governance (how governance system processes facilitate/obstruct adaptation, especially at local level). It involves case studies and review of ODA for climate adaptation governance. The second workstream is focused on public interest media and information ecosystems. GovNet requested input from EvalNet members in the form of existing evaluations/documents in relation to these work streams.

57. Ben KUMPF (OECD) presented a proposal to develop DAC scaling principles to improve scaling development innovations with actionable strategies. Members are invited to join, or suggest colleagues to join this project which will be jointly developed by EvalNet, Innovation and Results communities.

58. Josef ORISKO (Czech Republic) shared reflections from work on undertaking evaluations in post-conflict and high hardship environments. Key takeaways from his experience include:

- Field research is more important than desk research
- Evaluators are highly visible in the field and should find ways to blend in as much as possible
- Common sense should prevail, and evaluators need to attend carefully to safety, security, and logistical matters
- Evaluators need to be very sensitive regarding 'no-go' topics and local traditions
- When undertaking cross-triangulation, six criteria is the maximum required to do this kind of work, and provide a useful lens to think about triangulation of different viewpoints
- Producing evaluative evidence in these contexts takes time and evaluators need to understand that these can be long lasting engagements.

59. Oscar GARCIA (UNDP) and Isabelle MERCIER (EvalNet Vice Chair, Canada) presented on the work of the SDG Synthesis Coalition, which seeks to put evaluative evidence around the realisation of the SDGs. This work utilises the '5Ps' structure of Agenda 2030: partnership, people, planet, prosperity, and peace, to synthesise evidence from evaluation reports. The Secretariat noted that there may be scope to support sharing of findings and requested that updates continue to be provided to the network.

60. Karen ROT-MUNSTERMANN (AfDB IDEV on behalf of ECG) provided an update that its last meeting in November 2022 focused on building a work programme, the topic of self-evaluations, and assessing country programmes. The next meeting will be held in March 2023 in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire.

61. Oscar GARCIA (UNDP on behalf of UNEG) provided an update on UNEG's ongoing work on identifying trends affecting evaluation in UN systems (e.g. the conduct of evaluation during crisis) and timely feedback as it relates to the climate crisis, as well as work on the disruptive role of technology such as artificial intelligence.

### Item 10: Closing Session

62. In other business, members shared the following events of potential interest:

- European Investment Bank (EIB), ‘Picking up the Pace: Evaluation in Rapidly Changing World’ conference, in Luxembourg, 6 March 2023.
- Global Evaluation Initiative, gLOCAL Evaluation Week, ‘The Future of M&E: Culture, Context, and Collaboration’, in person/ virtual around the world, 29 May to 3 June 2023
- Forum international francophone de l'évaluation (FIFE), International Francophone Evaluation Forum 2023, ‘Évaluation et révolution numérique’, in Luxembourg, 4 to 6 July.

63. The Secretariat announced that the team is looking for a secondment or staff loan from a participating evaluation unit to support the team during the coming year. This is a temporary position to cover core EvalNet work.

64. The Chair thanked all members and the Secretariat for the meeting and for the diverse contributions and robust discussion throughout all the sessions. The next meeting is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EvalNet and he looks forward to welcoming all members again for this special meeting, on 15 and 16 November 2023.

### **Informal Session. Meeting of the EvalNet Climate Crisis Working Group**

65. The EvalNet Working Group on the Climate Crisis looked over the draft work plan and terms of reference for the group and identified priorities for the 2023-24 period. Participants agreed on the scope and purpose of the group and explored work their respective organisations are undertaking. Adding a climate lens to the evaluation criteria was a key topic of interest. Peer-learning and exchange on methodology and supporting agencies with implementation of evaluation recommendations was another area of interest.

66. The meeting was attended by the following members: Alper DINCER (EBRD); Valerie STURM (SDC); Martin NOLTZE (Germany); Rob VAN POELJE (IOB, the Netherlands), Marit van ZOMEREN (IOB, the Netherlands); Vimund VIKJORD (Norway); Joseph MOUANDE (AfDB); Tonka EIBS (Austria); Cecilia de DECKER and Ivo HOOGHE (Belgium); Frank KIRWAN and Tom HENNESSEY (Ireland); Henrik LARSEN and Eva BROEGAARD (Denmark); Karen ROT-MUNSTERMANN (AFDB); Jozef Czech Republic (observing); Ellen LEDGER (Australia); Hamid SHARIF and Irene BAIN (AIIB) (observing); Isabelle MERCIER and Matthieu AUDET (Canada).

67. *Next steps:* Members identified capacities to contribute to this group, including staff time, consultation with climate colleagues to support prioritisation, and reviewing drafts. Norway and Germany (DEval) volunteered to take forward work on attribution of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions for mitigation projects. The Secretariat will recirculate an updated work plan.