

**1990 REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING IN AFRICA  
REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
EVALUATION IN AFRICA HELD IN ABIDJAN FROM 2 - 4 MAY 1990**

(Note prepared by the African Development Bank)

This report is submitted for the consideration of the DAC Group of Experts on AID Evaluation to be held on 15 and 16 March 1994.

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Table of Contents

- INTRODUCTION
- Background and Context of the Seminar
- Objectives and Topics Covered by the Seminar
- Participation
- MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR
- Need to Strengthen Evaluation Capacity
- Regional Training Facilities in the Area of Evaluation
- What African Institutions can do
- Evaluation Systems in Industrialized Countries Lessons to be learnt
- Support for Strengthening Evaluation Capacities.
- What Donors can provide?

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Context of the Seminar

1.1.1 In March 1987, a seminar intended for beneficiary countries was held under the auspices of the Development Aid Committee of the OECD. The seminar, which offered donors and beneficiaries the opportunity to exchange views on the objectives, the means and experiences in the area of evaluation, helped to highlight the need to strengthen the evaluation capacities of development countries. At the end of the seminar, a summary report on the discussions entitled "Evaluation in Developing Countries: A Step Towards Dialogue" was published by the OECD in 1988.

1.1.2 As part of the follow-up actions, it was agreed among the DAC Group of Experts on aid evaluation to plan at the regional level, a series of seminars whose objective is to intensify the dialogue and discuss problems that are peculiar to a given region and recommend concrete and specific actions with the view to strengthening the evaluation capacities of developing countries. Consequently, a proposal aimed at organizing a seminar on evaluation in Africa, presented jointly by the African Development Bank (ADB) and the DAC was approved by the OECD in 1989. It was agreed that the ADB should host the first seminar in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 2-4 May 1990.

1.1.3 It should be pointed out that prior to the proceedings of the seminar the ADB carried out in 1988 and 1989 an analysis, through the use of a questionnaire, of the need for the constitution and establishment of central evaluation and monitoring units within some of its regional member-countries. The conclusions of this study were communicated during the seminar.

### 1.2 Objectives and Topics Covered by the Seminar

1.2.1 The objectives of the seminar were as follows:

- a) To promote a better understanding of the evaluation needs as perceived by the African countries themselves;

- b) To explore the ways and means of strengthening self- evaluation capacity of African countries;
- c) To sensitize African countries on the contribution of evaluation as an efficient development management tool;
- d) To identify the means of assistance to be put in place by donors for the strengthening of the evaluation capacity of African countries; and
- e) To evaluate the training capacity and explore ways of exchanging at the regional level, the experiences acquired by the countries of the region.

1.2.2 The seminar was centred on 4 main themes:

Theme 1 - Need for strengthening evaluation capacity - a perspective for beneficiary countries;

Theme 2 - Regional training opportunities in the area of evaluation. What African institutions can do?

Theme 3 - Evaluation systems in industrialized countries - Lessons to be learnt?

Theme 4 - Assistance for strengthening evaluation capacities - What the Donors can contribute?

### 1.3 Participation

1.3.1 The seminar was attended by 62 participants distributed as follows:

- Participants Number Observations
- 1 OECD and DAC members 24
- 2 African Countries 17 11 countries: Botswana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Zimbabwe
- 3 African Training Institutions 4 PAID (Cameroon)
- CAFRAD (Morocco)
- ESAMI (Tanzania)
- IDEP (Senegal)
- 4 Multilateral Agencies (including observers from DAC) 8  
World Bank, AsDB, UNDP, IFAD, ILO, BOAD
- 5 African Development Bank (ADB) 9

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Total 62

1.3.2 The seminar was jointly chaired by Messrs Klaus Winkel, Chairman of the DAC Group of Experts on Aid Evaluation and W. M. Girma, Director of the ADB Operations Evaluation Office.

## 2. MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR

### 2.1 Need to Strengthen Evaluation Capacity

2.1.1 Given the fact that the "evaluation and monitoring" activity was at various degrees of development within African countries, a consensus was nevertheless reached during the seminar on the need to strengthen the evaluation capacity of beneficiary countries and better integrate the development process. This could be done through the creation of a central unit within the Ministry of Planning or decentralized units within various technical ministries.

2.1.2 To that end, part of the aid funds made available to African countries for project finance was to be set aside for the creation and establishment of monitoring/evaluation

units. However, with regard to a strategic function, African countries were to define clearly and objectively their needs in material, financial and organizational resources to facilitate the establishment of these units under the best conditions.

2.1.3 The ADB which had made investigations in certain African countries, was to pursue this action to cover all the countries of the region and assess their needs in assistance notably for those that had initiated the establishment of monitoring/evaluation units and for which considerable assistance was needed from all the donors.

## 2.2 Regional Training Facilities in the Area of Evaluation.

What African Institutions can do

2.2.1 Recognizing the role of African (national or regional) training institutions in the development of the exchange of experiences between African countries in the area of evaluation through the organization of training courses, seminars or workshops, it has been suggested that these institutions should be more innovative in their training approach by developing new methodological tools, manuals as well as studies and researches in this field. The aim here is to adapt their training courses to the specific demand of African countries.

2.2.2 A more significant financial support should be given to these institutions by both the governments of the countries concerned and the international donors. However, it had been suggested that the sources of income of these institutions should be diversified and that their financial situation should be improved by involving them more in activities of assistance and consultancy in evaluation to be carried out for governments or project implementation agencies. This had been perceived as a judicious mean of improving their professional skills and technical know-how.

## 2.3 Evaluation Systems in Industrialized Countries

Lessons to be learnt

2.3.1 Noting the complexity and diversity of the techniques used by the different evaluation systems in the industrialized countries, it had been agreed that this function was assuming much greater importance in the democratic environment characterized by the transparency and general information of the public on the use and allocation of public resources. However, this environment had not been considered as a prerequisite for the development of this activity whose evolution constituted a positive step towards the concretization of the democratic process within African countries.

2.3.2 On the basis of this observation as well as the structural adjustment since the 1980s, the suggestion had been made to assist these countries in the designing and establishment of simple evaluation systems using less sophisticated techniques, hence, less expensive, and which would especially not necessarily depend on State budget. Besides, in order to make optimum use of the resources at the disposal of these countries, the evaluation systems were to be geared towards decision-making and the dissemination of the results towards the adoption of corrective measures during project implementation or in the planning of future operations.

## 2.4 Support for Strengthening Evaluation Capacities

What donors can provide?

2.4.1 Aware that providing support for strengthening the institutional capacities of African countries in the areas of monitoring and evaluation has been a recent feature, there was reason to question ourselves on the effectiveness of such assistance and undertake an objective assessment of the achievements. The suggestion was therefore made to include the training of the staff of beneficiary countries and their project

implementation agencies in these fields as a component of aid projects. As a short-term measure, the participation of this personnel in joint aid evaluations also constituted a means of training which could take different forms through the use of resource persons from the universities, local consultancy firms or non-governmental organizations.

2.4.2 The different forms of support which donors could provide are as follows:

- (i) Exchange of information and experiences in the area of evaluation between donors and African countries;
- (ii) Assistance in the elaboration of case studies and exchange of pedagogical tools for training evaluators;
- (iii) Provision of technical assistance for strengthening or establishing evaluation units;
- (iv) Twinning between the different institutions concerned by evaluation within the beneficiary countries and donors;
- (v) Financial support for the training of evaluators and training of trainers as well as the acquisition of training tools and materials;
- (vi) Creation of a special evaluation fund part of which could be paid directly to African countries for the establishment of central evaluation units;
- (vii) Sponsoring a regional network of evaluators through regional or national training institutions, professional associations, annual conferences, etc...

2.4.3 As part of the long-term development aid to African countries, donors had had to strengthen the institutional capacities of these countries, notably in the analysis of development policies through programmes on the social dimensions of adjustment (joint initiative of the UNDP, World Bank, ADB) or evaluation of the long-term impact or sustainability of the projects, or finally through natural resource management projects which included an "evaluation" component. Other forms of assistance could be provided for the putting in place of statistical information systems for the reform of the legal systems.

2.4.4 However, this could not be effective without the commitment of African countries to greater transparency in the communication of the results of the evaluations of projects and development programmes.

2.4.5 Moreover, it had been suggested to donors to coordinate their evaluation activities and devote enough time and resources to these countries while limiting to the essential, the requests for information or reports from executing agencies. It was consequently suggested that donors should, on the basis of the evaluations made, hold discussions with the key-actors, notably the direct beneficiaries of development actions.