

DAC 東京ワークショップ

「効果的な学習と説明責任のためのフィードバック」

配付資料集

開催期間：平成12年9月26日～28日

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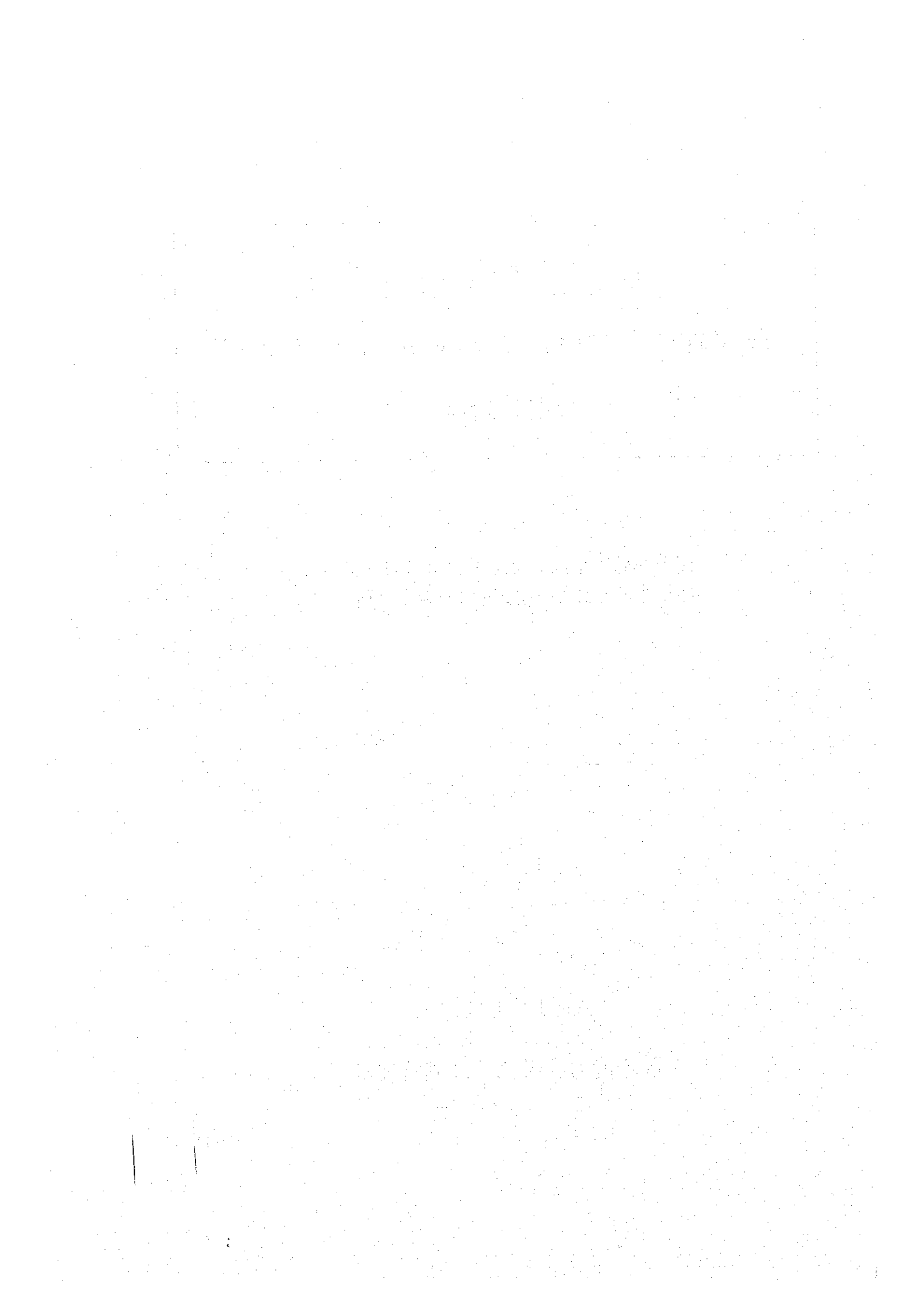
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OECD開発援助委員会(DAC)東京ワークショップ
「効果的な学習と説明責任のための評価のフィードバック」
(平成12年9月26日~28日)

9月26日(火)

09:30 歓迎のあいさつ: 飯村豊外務省経済協力局長

ニール・デーベルスタインDAC評価作業部会議長

09:45 オープニング・セッション

テーマ:「評価の改善に向けての課題: 成功例、困難な点、問題点についての検討」

12:00 昼食

14:00 第一セッション

テーマ:「組織内部へのフィードバック(学習): より効果的・効率的な援助に向けて」

トピック: 1) 学習のプロセスとしての評価(独)

2) より良い政策決定のための評価のフィードバック(ノルウェー)

3) 成果のための管理におけるパフォーマンス・モニタリングと評価の役割(米)

4) 評価担当部局の役割と責任(日本)

15:30 グループ討論

9月27日(水)

09:00 第二セッション

テーマ:「外部へのフィードバック(学習及び説明責任): 国会、メディア、国民への評価結果のフィードバック」

トピック: 1) 国会、メディア、国民への評価結果のフィードバック(蘭)

2) 外部への説明責任(英)

3) 公表のための手段(インターネット、報告書、ビデオ等の活用)(デンマーク)

4) より効果的な途上国関係者の関与(ラオス)

5) 途上国の評価結果の活用(スウェーデン)

10:30 グループ討論

12:30 昼食

14:00 第三セッション

テーマ:「より効果的なフィードバックに向けて」

トピック: 1) 評価結果の公表: 教訓の集約の確保(加)

2) より効果的なフィードバックに向けて(仏)

3) 評価結果からの学習: 世銀の事例(世銀)

4) 成果重視型運営・評価(UNDP)

15:30 グループ討論

9月28日(木)

09:00

テーマ:「より良い評価結果の活用のための評価システムの改善への提言」

コンサルタント、廣野良吉成蹊大学名誉教授、ニール・デーベルスタインDAC評価作業部会議長

閉会のあいさつ: 高島国際協力事業団理事

12:30 閉会

DAC Tokyo Workshop on
"Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability"
26-28 September 2000

Tuesday, 26 September

09:00 Registration

09:30 **Welcome Addresses:** Mr. Yutaka Iimura, Director-General of the Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
Mr. Niels Dabelstein, Chair of DAC Working Party

09:45 **Opening Session** **Plenary**

Prof. Ryokichi Hirono (Chair): Workshop Aims and Objectives

Theme: "Challenges- Sharing experiences to identify good practices, difficulties and problems"

Mr. Geoff Barnard and Ms. Catherine Cameron: Key Findings from the Synthesis Report based on the Questionnaire and Interviews

12:00 Lunch

14:00 **First Session** **Plenary**

Theme: "Internal(learning): Feedback to improve effectiveness and efficiency of aid assistance"

Topics:

- 1) Evaluation as a learning process (Germany: Mr. Axel Borrmann)
- 2) Feedback for Better Decision-Making (Norway: Mr. Jan Dybfest)
- 3) Role of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in Managing for Results in USAID: Lessons Learned (USAID: Ms. Jean Du Rette)
- 4) Role and responsibility of central evaluation unit (Japan: Mr. Mitsunori Shirakawa)

14:40 Discussion

15:00 Tea/Coffee

15:30 **Discussion in Working Groups** **Working Groups**

Topics:

- 1) Feedback for better policy
 - 2) Feedback for better practice
- *two working groups for each topic (4 working groups)

17:30 Brief reporting back to Plenary

18:00 Close

19:00 Reception hosted by Mr.Yutaka Iimura, Director-General of the Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the "Ume" room (Hotel New Otani)

Wednesday, 27 September

09:00 Second Session

Plenary

Theme: "External(learning and accountability): Feedback of Evaluation results to parliament, media and the public"

Topics:

- 1) Feedback to Parliament, Media and the Public(Netherlands: Mr.Rob D.van den Berg)
- 2) Reporting Performance for External Accountability: DFID's Public Service Agreement(UK: Dr.Colin Kirk)
- 3) Dissemination Vehicles(internet, report, video etc.)(Denmark: Mr.Niels Dabelstein)
- 4) Involving Partners more effectively(Lao PDR: Ms.Khempheng Pholsena)
- 5)Partner's Use of Evaluation Results (Sweden: Ms.Ann Marie Fallenius)

09:50 Discussion

10:00 Tea/Coffee

10:30 Discussion in Working Groups

Working Groups

Topics:

- 1) Feedback to parliament, the media and the public
 - 2) Feedback to partner countries
- * two working groups for each topic (4 working groups)

12:00 Brief reporting back to Plenary

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Third Session

Plenary

Theme: "Making Feedback More Effective"

Topics:

- 1) Dissemination: Ensuring Integration of Lessons (CIDA: Mr.Robert C. Jones)
- 2) Making Feedback more effective: the Case of France(France: Mr.Michael Ruleta)

3) Learning from Evaluations: the World Bank's Experience(World Bank:
Mr.Gregory K.Ingram and Mr.Osvaldo N.Feinstein)

4) Results-oriented Management and Evaluation(UNDP: Mr.Sukehiro
Hasegawa)

14:40 Discussion

15:00 Tea/Coffee

15:30 Discussion in Working Groups

Working Groups

Topics:

1)New challenges in the changing aid landscape

2)New tools for improved feedback (e.g. Effective use of the internet and other
channels)

* two working groups for each topic (4 working groups)

17:30 Brief reporting back to Plenary

18:00 Close

Thursday, 28 September

09:00 Closing Session

Plenary

**Theme: Overall Summary and Recommendations to improve feedback system for the
better use of evaluation results: Mr.Geoff Barnard and Ms.Catherine Cameron**

09:30 Discussion

10:30 Tea/Coffee

11:00 **The way forward to Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning
and Accountability: Prof.Ryokichi Hirono, Mr.Niels Dabelstein
Mr.Hans Lundgren,DAC Secretariat**

**Concluding address: Mr.Yushu Takashima,Vice President,Japan International
Cooperation Agency**

12:30 Close

SESSION 1 – INTERNAL LEARNING

Working Group Topics:

- *Feedback for better policy (Working Groups 1 & 2)*
- ✓ • *Feedback for better practice (Working Groups 3 & 4)*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Learning & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do the dual goals of learning and accountability overlap or conflict in practice? • Do learning and accountability need to be treated separately, and what would that mean in practice?
Obstacles to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the obstacles preventing more effective learning? • How can they be overcome?
Communicating lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can evaluation feedback be made more relevant and timely? • How can evaluation feedback be more demand led?
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the status and reputation of evaluation units a barrier to encouraging more effective learning? • How can this problem be addressed?
Institutionalising lesson learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What approaches have proved most effective in institutionalising lesson learning? • How far does it make sense to go in formalising these approaches?

SESSION 2 – EXTERNAL LEARNING

Working Group Topics:

- *Feedback to parliament, the media and the public (Working Groups 1 & 2)*
- *Feedback to partner countries (Working Groups 3 & 4)*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Target audiences	<p>Categorise target group in terms of relative importance for lesson learning & accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which key audiences are being most obviously missed?• What could be done to reach them?
Disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater openness & disclosure widely seen as desirable. What are the problems and how can it be encouraged in practice?
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can the media be encouraged to play a more effective role in enhancing public accountability?
Stakeholder involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater stakeholder involvement and buy-in are widely seen as desirable. What are the problems and how can it be encouraged in practice?
Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (PM&E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What have agencies learned from their experience so far?• Is this a realistic route to greater learning & accountability?

SESSION 3 – MAKING FEEDBACK MORE EFFECTIVE

Working Group Topics:

- *New challenges in the changing aid landscape* (Working Groups 1 & 2)
- *New tools for improved feedback - e.g. effective use of the internet, and other channels* (Working Groups 3 & 4)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION	
Changing aid landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the new challenges for evaluation feedback in the context of the changing aid landscape (SWAPS, PRSPs, CDF, etc)?
Knowledge Management & Results Based Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can/should evaluations units take the lead in pushing forward these initiatives? • How can evaluation units develop their role as 'core junction boxes'?
Internet/intranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the pros and cons of internal intranets versus publicly accessible web sites as a communication tool for evaluation departments? • How can web sites & intranets be made more useful for users? • What is need to make these come alive as learning and accountability tools?
Inter-agency data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the future for the DAC Inventory?
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the resources being invested in evaluation feedback adequate? • Are big changes needed in the emphasis and resources invested in feedback – or is it a case of fine-tuning?

List of Participants to the DAC Tokyo Workshop

1	Chair	Mr.Ryokichi Hirono	Professor Emeritus of Seikei University
2	Assistant to the Chair	Mr.Kimihiko Kaku	Professor of Toyo University
3		Mr.Ryujiro Sasao	Consultant

4	Chair of the DAC Working Party	Mr.Niels Dabelstein	Head, Evaluation Secretariat, Danida, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
5	Vice-Chair of the DAC Working Party	Ms.Ann Marie Fallenius	Director, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, Sida, Sweden

Member Countries

6	Australia	Ms.Elizabeth C.Brouwer	Director, Performance Information and Assessment, AusAID
7	Belgium	Mr.Etienne de Belder	Special Evaluator for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8	Canada	Mr.Robert C.Jones	Evaluation Manager, CIDA
9	Denmark	Mrs.Ellen Buch-Hansen	Advisor, Evaluation Secretariat, Danida, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
10	France	Ms.Anne-Marie Cabrit	Head of Development Activities Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Economy and Finance
11		Mr.Michael Ruleta	Charge de Mission, DGCID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
12	Germany	Mr.Axel Borrmann	Senior Economist, Hamburg Institute of International Economics
13		Mr.Sigfrid Schroeder-Breitschuh	Senior Policy Advisor, Evaluation Department, GTZ
14		Mr.Horst Breier	Head of Evaluation, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
15		Mr.Ruediger Hartmann	Division Chief, Evaluation Department, KfW
16	Netherlands	Mr.Rob D.van den Berg	Director, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
17		Mr.Ted Kliet	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
18	New Zealand	Ms.Jackie Frizelle	Economist Specialist, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
19	Norway	Mr.Jan Dybfest	Assistant Director General, Head of Evaluation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
20	United Kingdom	Mr.Colin Kirk	Head of Evaluation Department, Department for International Development
21	United States of America	Ms.Jean Du Rette	Chief, Program and Operations Assessment Division, USAID
22		Mr. Constance A. Carrino	Embassy of the United States of America
23		Ms. Rie Yamaki	Embassy of the United States of America
24	European Commission	Mr.Simon R.J. Robbins	Evaluation Manager, Evaluation Unit, Service Commun Relex

Non-Member Countries

25	Republic of Korea	Mr.Taejoo Lee	Director of Legal Affairs, Korea International Cooperation Agency(KOICA)
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26	Bangladesh	Mr.Kamrul Hasan	Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations, Ministry of Finance
27	China	Mr.Jin Xide	Research Professor, Institute of Japanese Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences(CASS)
28		Mr.Chen Dajiang	Division Director, Office of Key Project Inspectors, State Development Planning Commission
29		Mr.Liu Shi-hu	Assistant Inspector, Office of Key Project Inspectors, State Development Planning Commission
30		Ms.Feng Xiang-hua	Assistant Inspector, Office of Key Project Inspectors, State Development Planning Commission
31	Indonesia	Mr.Syahrial Loetam	Bureau Head for Financing Monitoring and Evaluation, BAPPENAS
32	Lao P.D.R.	Ms.Khempheng Pholsena	Vice-Minister to the Prime Minister's Office
33		Mr.Bounnheuang Songnavong	Counselor, Embassy of the Lao P. D. R.
34	Philippines	Mr.Rolando G.Tungpalan	Director, Project Monitoring Staff, National Economic and Development Authority

International Organizations

35	World Bank	Mr.Gregory K.Ingram	Director, Operations Evaluation Department
36		Mr.Osvaldo N.Feinstein	Manager, Operations Evaluation Department
37	UNDP	Mr.Sukehiro Hasegawa	Director, Tokyo Office
38		Mr. Hidenori Miyama	Assiatant to Director, Tokyo Office
39		Mr. Mattew Thornington	Programme and External Relations Assiatant, Tokyo Office
40	ADB	Mr.Peter C.Darjes	Manager
41		Mr. Jungsoo Lee	Resident Representative of Tokyo Office
42	EBRD	Mr.Fredrik Korfker	Director of the Project Evaluation Department
43	IADB	Ms.Julie Feinsilver	Evaluation Officer
44	FAO	Mr.John Markie	Senir Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Service
45	IFAD	Mr.Luciano Lavizzari	Director, Office of Evaluation and Studies
46		Mr.Ashwani Muthoo	Evaluation Officer

47	DAC Secretariat	Mr.Hans Lundgren	Adviser on Aid Effectiveness
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48	Consultant	Mr.Geoff Barnard	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
49		Ms.Catherine Cameron	

Japan

50	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Mr.Yutaka Iimura	Director-General of the Economic Cooperation Bureau
51		Mr.Yukihiro Nikaido	Director of the Development Cooperation Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau

52		Mr.Mitsunori Shirakawa	Director of the Evaluation Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau
53		Mr.Michio Harada	Deputy Director of the Evaluation Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau
54		Mr.Naoki Mitori	Evaluation Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau
55		Ms.Shoko Kimura	Evaluation Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau
56		Mr.Ryo Sasaki	Evaluation Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau
57	JICA	Mr.Takanori Kitamura	Managing Director of Planning and Evaluation Department
58		Mr.Koichi Miyoshi	Deputy Managing Director of Planning and Evaluation Department and Managing Director of the Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department
59		Mr.Mitsukuni Sugimoto	Senior Assistant to the Managing Director of Planning and Evaluation Department
60		Mr.Katsuhiko Haga	Deputy Director of Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department
61		Mr.Yoshitaka Sumi	Deputy Director of Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department
62		Mr.Takuo Karasawa	Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department
63		Ms.Haruko Kase	Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department
64		Mr. Muraoka Keiichi	Director of Planning and Coordination Division, Planning and Evaluation Department
65		Mr. Eiji Iwasaki	Planning and Coordination Division. Planning and Evaluation Department.
66		Mr. Robin Ruggles	CIDA-JICA Exchange Officer, Planning and Evaluation Department.
67		Ms.Yumiko Tanaka	Managing Director of Social Development Cooperation Department
68		Ms.Yoko Konishi	First Research and Development Division, Institute for International Cooperation
69		Mr.Nobuaki Kouguchi	Second Research and Development Division, Institute for International Cooperation
70		Mr.Shinji Yoshiura	Planning Division, Forestry and Natural Environment Department
71		Mr.Masao Yoshida	Development Specialist
72		Ms.Yoko Suwa	Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department

73		Ms.Keiko Muramatsu	Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department
74	JBIC	Mr.Yoshihiko Kono	Executive Director
75		Mr.Ikuro Sato	Director-General, Development Assistance Operations Evaluation Office, Project Development Department
76		Mr.Hachiro Ida	Director of Evaluation Division, Development Assistance Operations Evaluation Office, Project Development Department
77		Ms.Yuki Todoroki	Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Division, Development Assistance Operations Evaluation Office, Project Development Department
78	Management and Coordination Agency	Mr.Katsuhisa Shimakura	Deputy Director of the Office, Task Force for Introducing Policy Evaluation
79	Ministry of Finance	Mr.Takashi Kihara	Director for Development Issues, International Bureau
80		Mr.Kintaro Makioka	Special Officer for Development Finance, Development Policy Division, International Bureau
81	Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture	Mr.Masaru Osanai	Director of the Educational and Cultural Exchange Office, Science and International Affairs Bureau
82		Mr. Takayuki Seike	Senior Specialist, Development Cooperation, Educational and cultural exchange office
83		Mr. Kazuo Anazawa	
84	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Mr.Masanori Kozono	Deputy Director, International Cooperation Planning Division
85	Ministry of Construction	Mr.Ryosuke Kikuchi	Director for International Construction Engineering, International Affairs Division, Economic Affairs Bureau
86	Others	Mr.Hiromitsu Muta	Professor of Tokyo Institute of Technology
87		Ms.Yuriko Minamoto	Consultant
88		Ms.Yoko Ishida	Consultant
89		Mr. Yasunaga Takachiho	Tamagawa University
90		Mr.Motoki Kusaka	The International Development Journal Co., Ltd.
91		Mr. Makoto Tashiro	The International Development Journal Co., Ltd.

Welcome address
by Mr. Yutaka Iimura to the DAC Tokyo Workshop

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to open the DAC Workshop on "Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability."

We are very pleased to have here today many evaluation experts from DAC Member countries and international organisations. I am equally happy to have here, together with us today, representatives of those involved in development assistance in Asia. Our colleagues from six countries, namely Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines and South Korea are with us.

In particular, I would like to thank Vice-Minister Khempheng^{ケンペン} Pholsena^{ホルセナ} for attending this Workshop and sharing her opinions with us.

The increasing need for effective aid to developing countries is obvious, when we think about the enormous development challenges we face at the beginning of the new millennium. In order to achieve our common goal of eradicating poverty, development assistance should play a crucial role, together with

activities of the private sector. Aid effectiveness should be pursued for domestic reasons as well. Particularly, given severe budgetary constraints, the public is even more concerned with the quality of aid and asks for more transparency and accountability. All donors share similar problems at home.

Evaluation can play an important role in improving our economic aid. There is no doubt that both the role and importance of evaluation are steadily increasing. This Workshop focuses on evaluation feedback and discusses ways to improve our feedback systems from various angles. I believe that "feedback" is the key to improving our evaluation system. Without proper feedback, "evaluation" loses its life and value. In other words, the real judgement should be based on how much impact and influence the evaluation results have on the improvement of present projects and on future aid policies.

This workshop's programs are timely for our country, as we have just embarked on the reform of an evaluation system. We are presently making various efforts to improve our system which include, particularly gradual shifting to policy and programme evaluation. I am sure that this Workshop will offer a lot of insight to our colleagues at MOFA, JICA, JBIC and other government agencies involved in the area of economic aid to developing

countries.

The improvement of our evaluation system requires close cooperation with developing countries. Their opinions and comments are crucial in evaluating projects or policies, and their cooperation in collecting necessary information is equally important. Without the cooperation of developing countries or effective "feedback" to them, our evaluation becomes less useful.

We hope to hear frank comments from Asian partners, on this subject.

I hope that during this Workshop, we can share our experiences and learn from each others' good practices, thus benefiting multilateral and bilateral donor agencies as well as developing countries in our common efforts toward more effective economic aid programs.

Let me close my welcome remarks by thanking Prof.Hirono who agreed to chair this workshop. He is an important and active member of the Aid Evaluation Reviewing Panel that advises me on how to improve Japan's evaluation system.

Thank you very much for your attention.

DAC Workshop on Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability
Tokyo, 26 – 28 September 2000

Opening address by Niels Dabelstein

Mr. Iimura, Professor Hiromo, Colleagues and Friends

First of all let me express my sincere gratitude to our hosts, the govt. Of Japan – MOFa, Jica etc. for organising this workshop on evaluation feed-back. In principle, I, as an evaluator, should reserve my praise until after the event –at the ex-post evaluation. But to take the lead, and to organise this workshop is no little feat, and the welcome we have received, and the setting here at JICA argues well for the success of the workshop.

I also congratulate Japan on occasion of celebrating “Evaluation Week” a whole week devoted to evaluation starting with creating the Japanese Evaluation Society yesterday, continuing with this seminar and culminating on Friday with a public seminar.

Over the past 13 years when I have been involved in evaluation – and in the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation – we have developed and refined evaluation methods, we have produced excellent syntheses of evaluations, we have conducted joint evaluations, and we have attempted to build evaluation capacity in our partner countries.

Most of this with reasonably good results.

One question has always stood out: do we (evaluations) have any impact on the way development assistance is delivered, and on the way assistance is perceived.

Whichever impact we have depends first and foremost on the quality of the evaluations, but for the sake of simplicity, I shall leave that subject aside.

Equally important, to be useful evaluation results have to be communicated to those we intend to reach and influence – our constituencies.

To professionals – those who design and implement projects and programmes
To managers –those who make strategic decisions
To boards – those who set policies
To politicians – those who give general directions
To the public – those who foot the bill

Each have different needs and we have to tailor both the messages and the means to individual audiences. That is common sense. But most evaluation reports are written by experts for experts and thus of little use for communication.

The EFELA report which is the basis for this workshop provides a good overview of how agencies organise feed back, but it does not give us much information about the art of communicating to the five groups just mentioned. And it does not give us much information about how different agencies go about reaching their most important target groups.

I believe that the Banks, the UN agencies and the bilateral agencies prioritises the target groups differently, and therefore have different feed-back strategies. I also believe that each agency, multilateral or bilateral, works in specific cultural settings, and therefore needs to develop specific communication tools and skills. Combine these two factors and we have a multitude of ways and means of feeding back evaluation results.

What works in one setting may not work in another setting, and there is no universal "feed-back mechanism".

Nevertheless we can learn much from each other. And this workshop can do what no report can do: participate in a forum for exchange of methods and experiences - a forum for learning from each other. This is, after all, the most important function of the Working Party on Aid Evaluation.

Again, Thank you to our hosts. I look forward to a genuine learning experience.



efela: evaluation feedback
for effective learning & accountability

synthesis report

July 2000

Prepared for the Tokyo Workshop of the
DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation
26-28 September 2000

Sponsored by Japan

Geoff Barnard
Catherine Cameron

Institute of Development Studies

Preface

The origin of this Report was the 1998 "Review of the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance". This highlighted a concern among central evaluation offices of DAC members about the adequacy of current practices for disseminating lessons from evaluations. In the subsequent document, "Complementing and Reinforcing the DAC Principles for Aid Evaluation" (1998), it was concluded that feedback and communication practises need to be improved to strengthen the use of evaluation results, with a view to improving present and future aid policies and programs.

To provide an opportunity to develop this thinking further, Japan is hosting a Workshop in Tokyo from 26th-28th September 2000 entitled '**Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability**'. Its overall objective is to share experience and problems, and identify good practices in efforts to make organisations more learning-oriented and accountable.

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) was commissioned by Japan to prepare a Synthesis Report to feed in to the Workshop. The Report draws on a Questionnaire sent to Working Party Members in late April. This was designed to provide background information on Members' current feedback practices, and an insight into the issues that DAC Members see as being most crucial in improving evaluation feedback. Despite the tight deadline set, the Questionnaire generated a swift and full response. A total of 29 agencies replied. The Questionnaire was followed up with more detailed face-to-face, or telephone, interviews with a cross-section of agencies.

An earlier draft of this Report was discussed at a meeting of the Tokyo Workshop Steering Group in Paris on June 9th. This revised version incorporates the comments received and includes a more extensive analysis of the Questionnaire results.

The Study Team would like to thank the many individuals who have contributed to this study. They would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance provided throughout by Japan, the DAC Secretariat, and the Workshop Steering Group.

This Report is available on the Internet, along with other related documents, at www.ids.ac.uk/efela.

The efela Study Team consists of:

Geoff Barnard (*Head of Information, Project Manager*)
Catherine Cameron (*Senior Consultant*)
Ben Powis (*Research Assistant*)

Institute of Development Studies
University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE
<http://www.ids.ac.uk>
Tel: +44 1273 678686 Fax: +44 1273 621202
E-mail: G.W.Barnard@ids.ac.uk

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1. Executive Summary

1. This report concludes that there are now excellent opportunities for development agencies to improve their evaluation feedback for effective learning and accountability.
2. It highlights the progress that has been made in the last decade and goes on to assess what is new in the context of the changing development assistance landscape in which agencies are now working.
3. Evaluation departments are alert to the need for better evaluation feedback, particularly given their changing and widening area of responsibility. Many agencies have taken steps to address this, but most recognise the need to do more, and to be enabled to do more.
4. Some of the key challenges facing evaluation departments include:
 - Resolving the contradictions between the dual roles of evaluation feedback - learning and accountability.
 - Responding to the shift from project evaluations to the new generation of broader-based evaluations focusing on themes or sectors.
 - Further improving dissemination strategies.
 - Finding better ways of institutionalising lesson learning
 - Reinforcing the reputation of evaluation units as a source of useful learning.
 - Increasing participation and stakeholder involvement in evaluations, without sacrificing core evaluation principles.
 - Responding to the growing problem of information overload.
5. The main opportunities identified were:
 - Harnessing the Internet as a means of improving transparency and facilitating lesson-learning within and between agencies.
 - Tapping in to the new organisational management agendas of "knowledge management" and "managing for results" to enhance learning and accountability.
 - Responding to the wider challenge presented to development agencies by the International Development Goals (IDGs).
6. All three provide important opportunities for improving evaluation feedback so it becomes part of the "virtuous circle" of organisational learning, rather than being seen the "end of the line".
7. Many agencies will have to step up a gear if they are to capitalise fully on these opportunities. However, if they are able to rise to this challenge, evaluation units have the opportunity to fulfil a much more central role within their organisations, and within the wider development process.

2. Introduction

The story so far

The challenge of how to ensure evaluation feedback for effective learning and accountability (hereafter 'efela') is not a new one. Development agencies have been alert to this for many years, and the DAC and other groups have considered these issues in detail on a number of previous occasions. As a starting point for its work, the Study team was directed to three particular reports produced in the last 15 years:

- The 1985 DAC report¹ on "Good Feedback Practices", which identified four priority areas relating to the *mechanisms* for effective feedback, the *audiences* for feedback, the *nature* of evaluation findings, and the need for *monitoring action* on feedback.
- The 1990 DAC "Review of Donors' Systems for Feedback on Aid Evaluation"², which gives a progress report based on a review of donors' feedback systems. It separated these into two categories, *dissemination mechanisms* and *institutional mechanisms*, and went on to discuss what impact feedback was having in terms of changes in policies and procedures, and satisfying the information requirements of senior management.
- The 1991 "Review of the Effectiveness of Feedback Mechanisms in Member States and the EEC Commission", which made fifteen recommendations, eight concerning feedback materials and seven concerning feedback mechanisms.

The main conclusions and recommendations of the 1990 and 1991 reports are summarised in Annex 1. They deserve rereading. Although progress has been made since they were written, most of the points highlighted are equally valid today.

The 1990 report also provides a working definition of the term "evaluation feedback", which has been adopted for the purposes of this Report (see Box 1).

Box 1: What is evaluation feedback?

Previous reports have varied in their approach to defining evaluation feedback. The 1990 DAC review (op cit.) states that:

"evaluation feedback has been broadly defined as a dynamic process which involves the presentation and dissemination of evaluation information in order to ensure its application into new or existing development activities... feedback, as distinct from 'dissemination' of evaluation findings, is the process of ensuring that lessons learned are incorporated into new operations."

This report continues with the use of this definition, as it recognises that feedback implies more than just dissemination of evaluation findings. It is about taking steps to ensure that evaluation lessons become part of a learning cycle within organisations.

¹ "Good Feedback Practices" - DCD/DAC/EV(85)

² "A Review of donors' systems for feedback on aid evaluation" - OECD/GD(90)

So what is new?

Feedback practices have moved on considerably since these reports were written. Most agencies can point to a whole series of improvements and enhancements introduced over the past few years, especially in relation to the quality of evaluation materials being produced, the recognition of the need for targeted information products, and the advent of the Internet as a new communication and information management tool.

However, as the broader landscape of development assistance has evolved, the context of evaluation feedback has also changed. This has opened up new opportunities. But it has also put extra demands on evaluation units and created new expectations.

In order to get a sense of how evaluation units regard these changes, and the challenges they now face, the **efela** questionnaire asked agencies for their views in two areas:

- What they see as the most important emerging trends relating to evaluation feedback?
- What they see as the areas of evaluation feedback most in need of improvement?

In each case, agencies were asked to score various options according to their importance, on a scale of one to four (1 = not important, to 4 = very important). The results are summarised in Figure 1, where the options are ranked according to the average scores given.

Two important general points stand out; firstly, that evaluation units have a lot to deal with in terms of the number of emerging trends that they see as being important, and which are competing for their attention; and, secondly, that evaluation units are far from complacent about the need to do better on evaluation feedback - they see many areas where improvements are necessary.

The **emerging trends** rated as being the most important were:

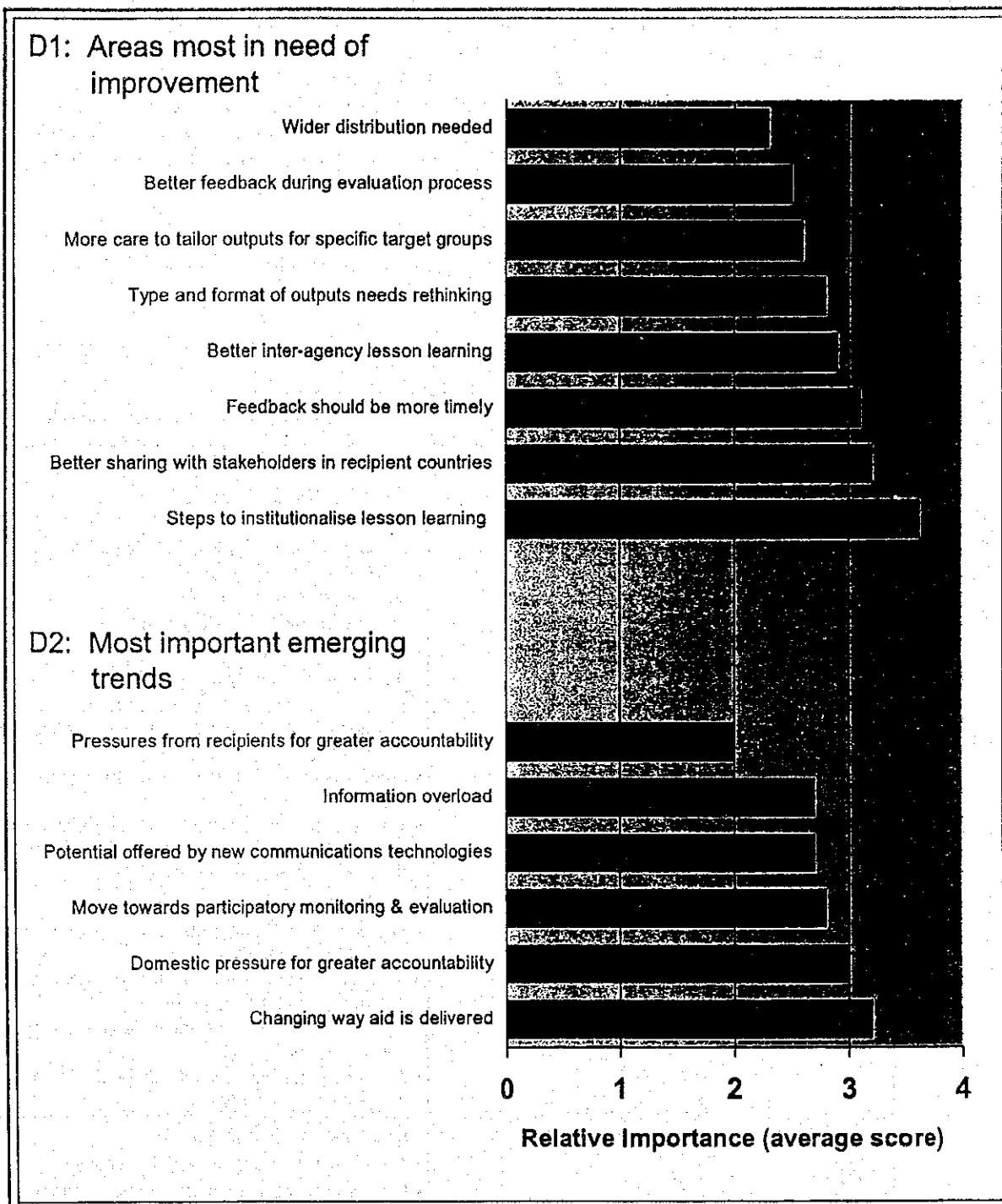
- The changing way development aid is delivered
- Domestic pressure for greater accountability.
- The move towards participatory monitoring and evaluation

In terms of the **need for improvement**, the areas rated as the highest priority were:

- Institutionalising the process of lesson learning within the agency
- Sharing evaluation results with stakeholders in recipient countries
- Timeliness

These were the top three responses in each case. Most of the other options were not far behind, however, reinforcing the view that evaluation feedback is an area of active debate and concern among most agencies.

Figure 1: Emerging Trends in Aid Evaluation and Feedback*



*The data presented here were collated from the responses to question D1 and D2 of the efela Questionnaire (see Annex 2). There were 29 respondents in total. The base for the averages was calculated from the total number of responses to each individual option within the two questions.

Current practices: the starting point

The efela questionnaire also yielded a great deal of useful information on current agency practices and thinking. The picture that emerges is complex. As well as differences in policies and approaches, it also reflects the diverse backgrounds and institutional contexts of the agencies involved in the survey. Agencies are not all starting in the same place in their approach to evaluation feedback. This makes a big difference in terms of the mandate and objectives of evaluation units, their lines of reporting and accountability, and their relative priorities.

A broad typology of DAC Working Party Members is presented in Table 1, along with some of the implications and issues arising in relation to evaluation feedback.

Table 1: Typology of DAC Working Party Members & Observers

Type*	Agencies	Implications & Issues Arising																		
Co-ordinating agency	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (DAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authoritative policy guidance ▪ Periodic critical reviews ▪ Centralised statistics & reporting 																		
Bilateral Donors	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Australia</td> <td>Netherlands</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Austria</td> <td>New Zealand</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belgium</td> <td>Norway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Canada</td> <td>UK</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Denmark</td> <td>US</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finland</td> <td>Portugal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ireland</td> <td>Spain</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Italy</td> <td>Sweden</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Luxembourg</td> <td>Switzerland</td> </tr> </table>	Australia	Netherlands	Austria	New Zealand	Belgium	Norway	Canada	UK	Denmark	US	Finland	Portugal	Ireland	Spain	Italy	Sweden	Luxembourg	Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary accountability to domestic parliament and taxpayers ▪ Usually grant financing ▪ Fewer commercial considerations ▪ Fairly stable unitary structure ▪ Disclosure not usually a major issue
Australia	Netherlands																			
Austria	New Zealand																			
Belgium	Norway																			
Canada	UK																			
Denmark	US																			
Finland	Portugal																			
Ireland	Spain																			
Italy	Sweden																			
Luxembourg	Switzerland																			
Bilateral donors with a tripartite split of Ministries & implementing agencies	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Japan – MoFA, JICA, JBIC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>France – MFA, MEFI, AFD</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Germany – BMZ, KfW, GTZ</td> </tr> </table>	Japan – MoFA, JICA, JBIC	France – MFA, MEFI, AFD	Germany – BMZ, KfW, GTZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foreign ministry, technical assistance, financial aid split three ways ▪ Primary accountability to domestic parliament and tax payers ▪ Tripartite structure can lead to longer reporting lines, need for increased co-ordination with varying objectives ▪ Mix of grant & loan funding ▪ Disclosure practices vary 															
Japan – MoFA, JICA, JBIC																				
France – MFA, MEFI, AFD																				
Germany – BMZ, KfW, GTZ																				
Multilateral agency	European Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountable to Member States, European Parliament and Court of Auditors ▪ Accession states issue and reform of Commission, so size and structure likely to change ▪ Grant funding (loans are channelled through European Investment Bank) ▪ Could be useful linkages with bilateral DAC members who are also EU members 																		
Observers: Multilateral Development Banks	African Development Bank Asian Development Bank EBRD IADB IMF World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loan based funding (hard/soft) ▪ Accountable to broad body of shareholders ▪ Disclosure issues, commercial considerations, can affect evaluation feedback policies 																		
Other agencies	UNDP, Czech Republic, Korea, Mexico																			

* DAC members' organisational structures are more fully broken down in DCD(99)6. The classification here has been simplified from an efela perspective.

Because of this diversity, it is difficult to draw generalisations that apply equally across all agencies. Instead, the emphasis in this Report has been on highlighting emerging issues, and contrasting different approaches and experience.

However, a number of broad headline messages did emerge from the Questionnaire, and these are summarised in Box 2. For a more detailed analysis of the results, including a synopsis of the comments provided individual agencies, see Annex 2.

Structure of the report

Evaluation feedback is a multi-faceted subject that impinges on many aspects of evaluation thinking and methodology, and cuts across into many other related areas. This was demonstrated in the questionnaire responses and reinforced in the interviews with individual agencies. Both showed the wide range of perspectives on the subject, and the rapid evolution of current thinking.

This makes it difficult to draw a boundary around the subject, or divide it into neat categories. For the purposes of this Report, which is intended as a stimulus for discussion at the Tokyo Workshop, the topic is considered under two broad headings:

- **Challenges** – the current issues and dilemmas that agencies face when seeking to improve their evaluation feedback practices.
- **Opportunities** – areas where new thinking is emerging and new possibilities are opening up for improving evaluation feedback practices and linking efela with other objectives and initiatives in the development policy arena.

In each case the report aims to draw out some of the main areas of thinking and learning and points to where good practice - or at least 'better practice' - is beginning to emerge.³

³ Relatively few agencies are ready to nominate their procedures as being 'good practice', since, despite the progress that has been made, most are very much aware of the shortcomings of their existing mechanisms and practices.

Box 2: *Headline Messages from the Questionnaire**

Strategy & responsibilities

- Fourteen of the twenty nine respondents have a formal strategy for dissemination and feedback of evaluation results, and most of the other agencies have elements of a strategy in place, or are currently working on one.
- Internal agency audiences (policy makers and senior managers) are seen as a somewhat higher priority than stakeholders in partner countries; the media and the general public are seen as the least important.
- Most evaluations units have prime responsibility for feedback for learning purposes within the organisation, whereas in the case of feedback for external accountability this responsibility is more often shared. Disclosure is an issue for some agencies.
- Relatively few agencies employ staff or consultants specifically for dissemination and feedback work - more often this is incorporated into general staff responsibilities.
- Only a few agencies have a specific budget for dissemination and feedback work.

Feedback & dissemination mechanisms

- Evaluation reports are seen by half the agencies as the main vehicle for disseminating evaluation results.
- All agencies now require that evaluation reports contain short summaries, although the length and format of these varies considerably.
- Separate summaries are now much more common, but only a third of agencies produce these on a systematic basis.
- Feedback of interim results during the evaluation process is seen as a priority by half the agencies.
- Two thirds of agencies take active steps to ensure evaluation reports are fed back to in-country partners and stakeholders
- Agency intranets and web sites are now being used by about a third of agencies for disseminating evaluation results; with another third have plans to do so.
- A wide variety of other channels are also used for dissemination and feedback of evaluation results. The most frequently mentioned were: annual reports; staff workshops, seminars & training events; and summary reports covering particular sectors/regions.
- Various mechanisms are in place to make sure that lessons from evaluations are taken properly into account. The most common of these is the requirement for senior management to respond to evaluation findings and recommendations.
- Arrangements for inter-agency lesson learning are quite patchy. Joint evaluation missions are rare, and tend to be contracted out to consultants. Although 15 agencies contribute to the DAC Evaluation Reports Inventory on a frequent basis, only 5 report that they use it frequently.

* see Annex 2 for a more detailed summary of the Questionnaire results

3. Challenges

Getting evaluation feedback right is not easy. Evaluation units face a whole series of challenges. And as they make progress in some areas, new demands and complexities open up in others. For small agencies and those with limited resources, this makes for a daunting agenda. Given the range of challenges to confront, and the pressures to perform, even the largest agencies are being fully stretched.

Dual objectives: learning and accountability

The title of the Tokyo Workshop encapsulates the dual objectives of evaluation feedback: learning and accountability. There are many crossovers between the two, both actual and potential. But they are *not* the same thing.

This point is now well recognised and has its parallels in other areas. The recent DAC Report on Results Based Management (RBM)⁴ notes that performance information serves two primary uses: improving internal management (managing for results), and external reporting (accountability for results). The report goes on to observe that as experience grows, the potential for conflict between its two intended uses is emerging, as they may not be entirely compatible. Information is required at different levels, with different data collection and analysis approaches. So there is a growing dilemma for donor agencies.

Box 3 illustrates how the target audiences for learning and accountability purposes differ. In both cases the range of audiences has expanded in recent years, especially with the new emphasis on accountability, partnership with recipient country stakeholders, and better coordination between agencies. But although there are some overlaps, for the most part the audiences are quite distinct. This has implications for the kinds of products and mechanisms needed to reach different target groups, and underlines the message that one approach cannot be expected to suit all audiences.

It also has implications for how the whole evaluation process is managed:

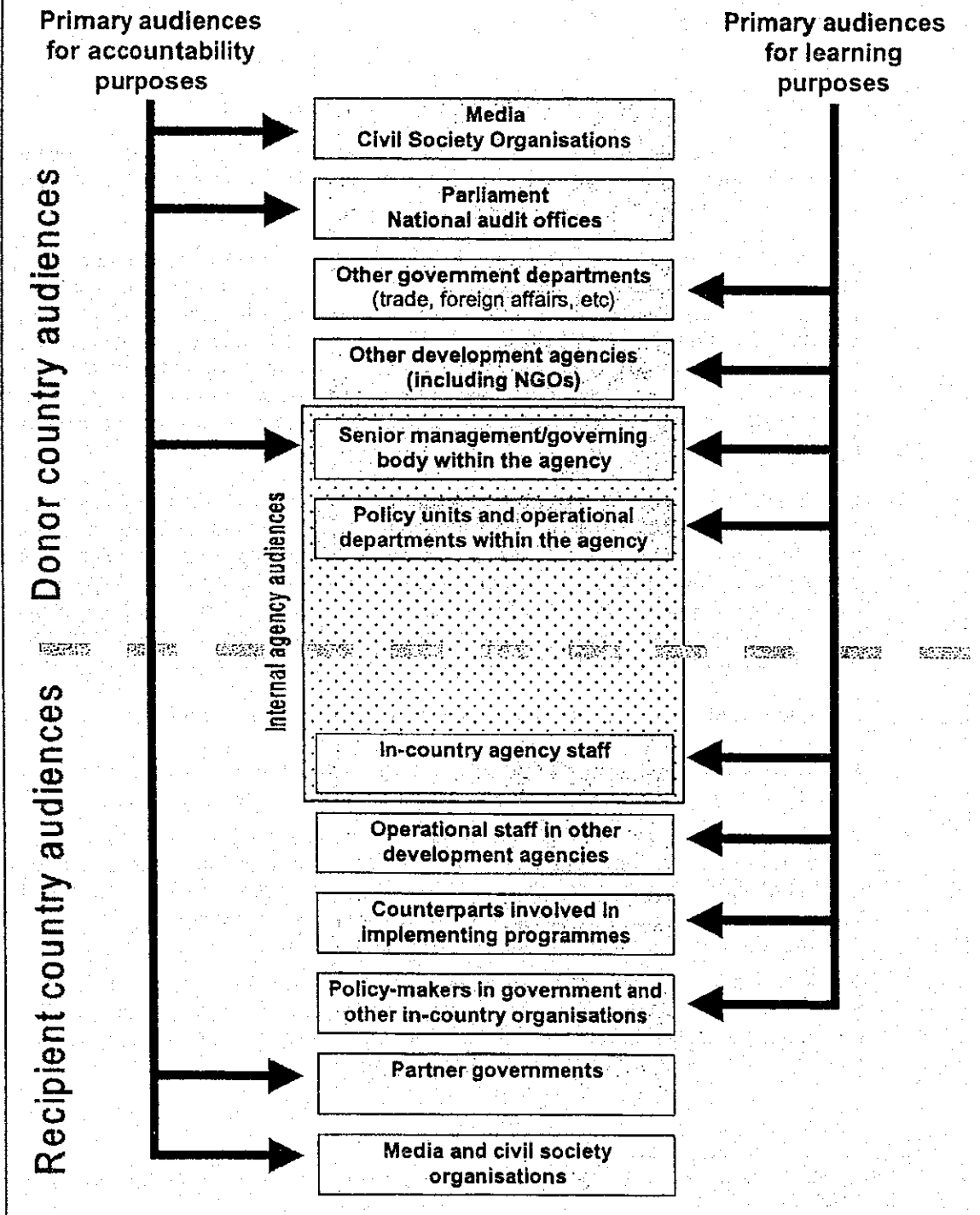
- Where **accountability** is the priority, the traditional virtues of rigour, independence, replicability, and efficiency tend to be the primary concerns.
- Where **learning** is the priority, the emphasis is more likely to be on achieving 'buy-in' from stakeholders, focusing on the process, and creating space to make sure that experience is properly discussed, and lessons drawn out. Timeliness is also a more important factor, since the desire is to pass on lessons now, not in a year's time when the final report is eventually published.

These two objectives are not necessarily incompatible, and many agencies are looking hard at how to find compromise methodologies that satisfy both sets of criteria. But they are sufficiently different to merit separate consideration. Feedback strategies that blur the distinction between the two run the risk of falling short in both areas.

⁴ Results Based Management in the Development Co-operation Agencies: A Review of Experience, DCD/DAC/EV(2000)3

Box 3: Target Audiences for Evaluation Feedback

In the last decade, as the scope and ambitions of evaluation have expanded, the range of target audiences for evaluation feedback has increased. The characteristics and demands of these audiences vary, as does their relative importance in accountability and learning terms.



The move away from project-level evaluations

Over the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the way development assistance is delivered and measured⁵. For many agencies, the traditional project-based approach is giving way to broader country programmes with thematic initiatives and sector-wide approaches⁶. This has had major implications for the way evaluations are conducted and for the methodologies and management approaches used.⁷ It also has changed the whole context for evaluation feedback, increasing its importance within the agency⁸.

From an evaluation perspective, individual projects have the advantage of being discrete and relatively easy to define. They generally have a reasonably clear boundary in terms of their geographic and sector focus, their timeframe, and the stakeholders involved. A well-managed evaluation has a good chance of identifying the most obvious direct outcomes of the project, and the lessons that have emerged from it. The process is relatively neat and contained. Results can be fed upwards to satisfy accountability requirements. If the necessary consultation mechanisms are in place, the stakeholders most closely involved in the project can contribute to, and benefit directly from, the lessons emerging.

The problem with project evaluations is that they can be too discrete. Lessons tend to be very specific, making it hard to generalise from them. And because evaluations are normally carried out at the end of the project cycle, the lessons learned may be too late to affect that particular case.

With broader-based evaluations the situation tends to be reversed. The boundaries are much harder to define, there are far more stakeholders involved, the focus is more diffuse, and it often harder to identify outcomes in a way that they can clearly be attributed to a particular donor's intervention. This makes the process much more complex, particularly when it comes to demonstrating aid effectiveness. It means that evaluations can take longer, and tend to be more staff and resource intensive.

The attraction of broader-based evaluations is that the lessons learned are likely to be more widely applicable, both in policy and operational terms. It therefore makes sense to invest more in repackaging them for different audiences, and in ensuring they are widely communicated. By involving a wider range of stakeholders there is also a much better chance of building lesson-learning into the evaluation process itself, and of sharing experience between donor agencies, governments and civil society partners.

This shift in focus is taking evaluation units into new territory where much is still to be learned. But it is also increasing the potential influence of evaluation work, and offering the prospect of a much more effective learning process.

⁵ The changing way aid is delivered was ranked as the most important emerging trend in the efela Questionnaire; it was rated as 'important' or 'very important' by 21 of the 24 agencies responding.

⁶ USAID, for example, no longer has projects, but plans its work around 'strategic objectives'.

⁷ See, example, OECD (1999) "Evaluating Country Programmes". Report of the 1999 Vienna Workshop.

⁸ Agencies are at different stages in their response to this shift. Some, such as USAID, are now putting all their emphasis on broader-based country-wide or thematic evaluations. But most are maintaining a mix of approaches, and see a continuing need for project evaluations.

The dissemination challenge

Making information available in an appropriate format for its intended audience is one of the most basic rules of good evaluation feedback. Progress has been made on this front in the last few years, and the standard of evaluation products has improved substantially across the board. In Annex 3, some of the main types of evaluation products are described, using examples from a cross-section of agencies.

Some agencies are further ahead than others in terms of the effort they put in to producing tailored evaluation products for different audiences. DANIDA, for example, on the basis of an evaluation of its health sector programme in Bhutan, produced a full report in English (150 pages); a 30 page booklet in Danish, a 4 page evaluation summary, and a video aimed at the general public⁹. Japan has also produced a video outlining the Japanese aid programme and explaining the evaluation process using examples from India and Fiji. Other agencies have a more standardised approach, and rely on the main evaluation report, usually with an executive summary, as the chief communication vehicle.

Producing well-edited and professional-looking evaluation products is an important step. But it is not enough, by itself, to ensure they are read and used. Agencies are becoming increasingly aware of other factors that come in to play:

- **timeliness:** a beautifully produced synopsis of a project which finished several years ago will be of little interest to most audiences. Any lessons that emerged have probably already been learned, or will be seen to be past their 'sell by date'.
- **relevance:** products need to respond to current agendas, debates and needs, otherwise they are likely to be dismissed as irrelevant.
- **marketing and distribution:** evaluation products are of little use if they sit in boxes (or databases), or get sent to out-of-date mailing lists. Though most agencies recognise this as an issue, relatively few are well geared up in this area. Some make special efforts and organise press conferences to 'launch' evaluation reports¹⁰. More commonly, by the time the final product emerges, the momentum behind the exercise has fallen away, and the staff involved have moved on to other tasks. Though a great deal of effort and thought may have been invested in producing the product, marketing and distribution is often left to chance or is treated as a routine exercise, with very little systematic attempt to target products intelligently.
- **credibility:** users judge information based on the credibility of the messenger, not just the quality of the message. Although they may have a good reputation in terms of their professional competence as evaluators, evaluation units generally have some work to do in establishing their status as good communicators, or as potential sources of cutting-edge new thinking.

All four of these factors pose challenges for evaluation units, challenges that can only be addressed through concerted action. The first two are perhaps the most critical,

⁹ The DANIDA video was produced by an independent film crew and tracks the progress of the multidisciplinary team that undertook the evaluation. It takes a frank and broad-based approach, looking at the cultural background to healthcare in Bhutan, and the relationship between the modern approaches being pursued through the project, and the traditional forms of medicine that exist in parallel.

¹⁰ This is the case in the Netherlands and Denmark, for example.

however. Evaluation products that are seen as both timely and relevant will generate their own demand, and are one of the best ways of helping build the reputation of the evaluation unit as a source of information that is worth tapping.

Institutionalising lesson learning

Influencing policy and practice is one of the key objectives of aid evaluation. The way this happens in practice, however, is far from being an exact science. Agencies are very different in their culture and the way they work, and have developed a range of internal mechanisms to try to institutionalise this. Some recent examples include:

- Following the recent reform of Japan's evaluation system it is proposed that explicit policy level evaluation will be introduced. This will include reviewing medium term policy, country assistance programmes and particular themes.¹¹
- DFID has introduced the concept of Performance Scoring and further developed its' Performance Reporting Information System for Management. In addition external reporting requirements for the Public Service Agreement have focused attention on the need for improved country level information.
- BMZ has a systemised follow-up approach to their evaluation work, where after a year evaluation recommendations are tracked to see whether or not they have been implemented. France did this as a one-off exercise in 1998 and may systemise this process. JICA and KfW have a five-year follow-up programme; JBIC conducts follow-up after two and seven years.
- In SIDA, the central evaluation and audit functions have been combined in an independent department, under a joint director who is responsible to the Board. The crossover between audit and evaluation functions has reportedly been helpful, as it has encouraged a more focused and targeted response to evaluation recommendations. Senior management, for example, is required to draft a specific response to evaluation reports¹².
- EC – the Quality Support Group is a relatively recent development and has attracted interest and participation at a senior level, significantly raising the profile of evaluation feedback work at a senior management level. With the recent expansion in the responsibilities of the Evaluation Group as a part of the DG re-organisation this has been useful. Ways and means of improving evaluation quality and feedback are under review, including an idea for a harmonised rating system.
- The World Bank continues to develop the concept of results based management, including the development of a Corporate Scorecard, and the recent production of Fast Track Briefs to inform senior management. It is in the process of revising its use of Management Action Records, a feedback loop whereby key action points for management emerging from an evaluation are identified. These are tracked subsequently to make sure they have been implemented.

Despite these and other efforts to systematise the procedures involved in making sure evaluation lessons are learned, there remains a substantial element of randomness in the process. Some evaluations prove to be much more influential than others and this

¹¹ Summary of the Report on Reform of Japan's ODA Evaluation System, March 2000

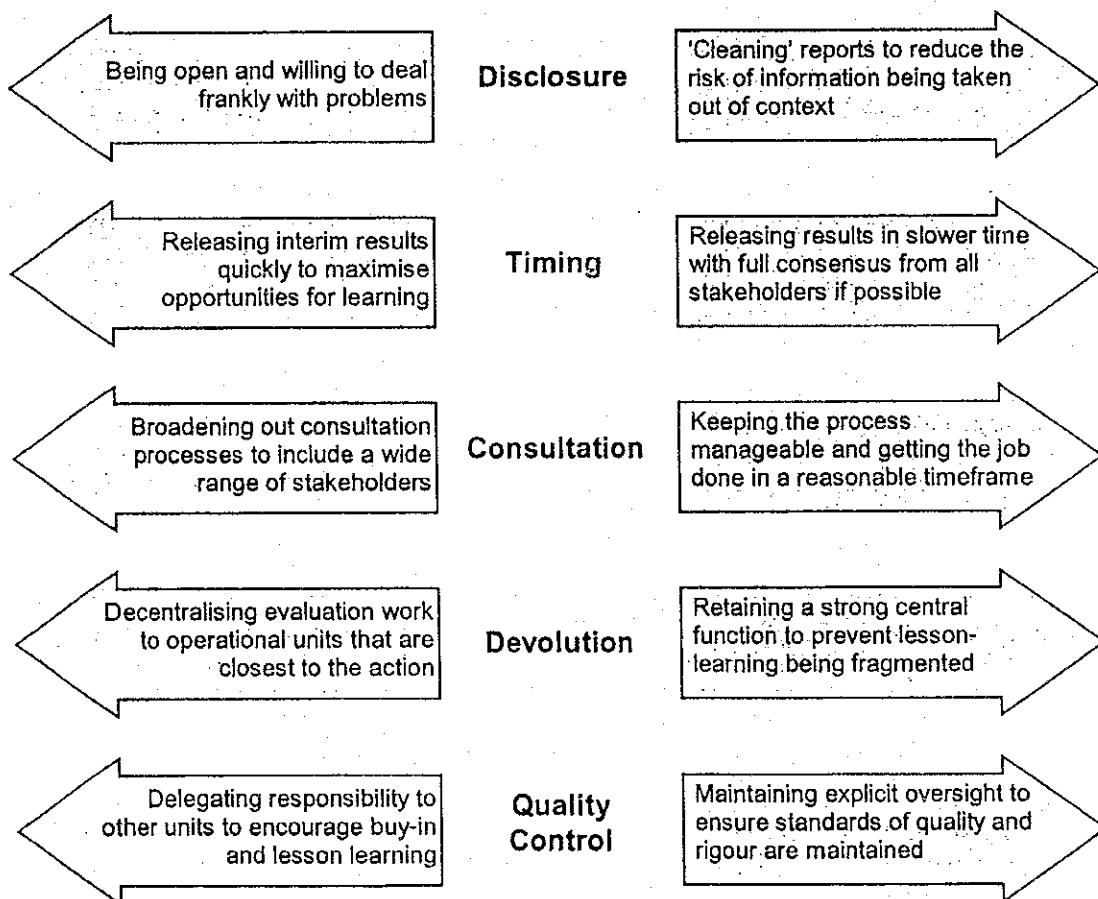
¹² This requirement is now quite widespread, according to the efela Questionnaire. 20 agencies indicated that senior management are expected to respond to evaluation findings in one way or another.

is often due to factors that are beyond the control of evaluation units. In this respect, evaluation is similar to development research, which also seeks to influence policy and practice, but is equally susceptible to factors outside the immediate control of the researchers themselves.

Some of the reasons for the divergence between theory and reality, and the implications for evaluation units, are explored in Box 4. While there are no easy solutions to this problem, recognising the complexity of the policy process is an important first step.

Process and politics

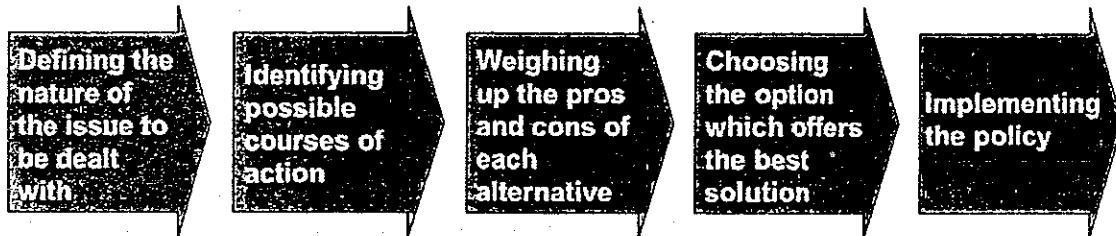
In planning feedback strategies, there are a whole series of dilemmas and internal tensions that evaluation units have to come to terms with, which are to do with the process and politics of dealing with evaluation information. At times, these can be quite sensitive, though their relative importance will vary depending on the specific circumstances. Some of the more important of these tensions are summarised in schematic form below:



None of these dilemmas are easy to resolve, and in particular circumstances agencies have come to different conclusions on what is the best way forward. These are all active areas of debate, however, where sharing of experience would be welcomed.

Box 4: The Feedback Fallacy

One of the primary aims of evaluation feedback is to ensure that evaluation work influences policy and practice. Given this objective, it is helpful to reflect on the process by which policies are set, and are converted into practice. Behind much evaluation work there is an implicit assumption that this process happens in a rational and broadly linear fashion, which, in a highly simplified way, this can be represented as a series of steps:



The implication is that by feeding in credible, well-expressed information, at the right point in this chain, evaluation findings will have a direct influence on policy and practice. The reality, of course, tends to be more complex. Evaluation lessons are just one of the ingredients in what has been termed the 'policy soup'. Despite management efforts to systematise lesson learning and feedback loops, there are a whole range of other factors which come into play that can have a big impact on how policies are determined, and whether or not they get implemented. Some of the most notable of these are:

- **political factors** - at every level, from internal agency power struggles to global politics
- **vested interests** - which can promote or block change, depending on who stands to gain
- **chance** - a report arriving at the right place at the right time, for example, can have a disproportionate impact
- **bureaucratic inertia and aversion to risk**
- **the persistence of conventional wisdom** - even when proved wrong
- **inspired leadership** - which at times can shift thinking dramatically
- **bandwagons** - which can have a major influence (good and bad), once they get rolling
- **pressure to spend** - which can result in evaluation lessons being heard selectively, given the pressures on staff to turn projects around quickly, and get funds disbursed

Evaluation Departments have little control over most of these factors. This helps explain why high quality evaluation results, even when they are well communicated, may not be enough to trigger significant change. This is fact of life within agencies; it is even more the case when the influence of evaluation results on recipient countries and the broader aid community is considered. This needs to be borne in mind both when planning feedback strategies, and in assessing their effectiveness.

If the objective is to maximise impact on policy and practice, a more sophisticated analysis may be needed of how change is likely to occur, and what factors may be blocking it. Looking back at their experience, most agencies can pick out cases where evaluation results were particularly influential for one reason or another. The challenge is to look forward, and identify where timely and targeted interventions can have a greater influence in future.

* this box draws on R. Sutton (1999), *The Policy Process: an Overview*, ODI Working Paper No. 118.

The role and status of central evaluation units

Underlying much of this analysis there are important issues relating to the role and status of central evaluation units. This varies enormously between agencies, and is shifting over time, not always in a helpful direction. Evaluation units are under pressure on a number of fronts:

Changing Role: Over the last decade, central evaluation units have shifted to do much more policy-focused, strategic level work. Project level evaluation and feedback are now increasingly the domain of departments doing the direct spending. The role of the evaluation unit in such cases can become unclear. Do they provide professional oversight? Do they respond to ad hoc queries? It is not always obvious where responsibility lies. There is a danger that evaluation feedback can become fragmented, with a tendency for gaps and duplication to emerge. There is also a risk that, in the absence of central evaluation unit benchmarking, a quality versus quantity trade-off may emerge.

Evolving trends: As the way of delivering development assistance has changed, so have methodologies to evaluate it. 'Blueprint' infrastructure projects, integrated rural development, structural adjustment, programme aid, sector wide approaches, medium term expenditure frameworks, humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution, the good governance agenda: in the last thirty years a whole series of different approaches have been tried. The aid delivery process has become ever more complex and evaluation units have been expected to deliver with each new approach.

Increased workload, same resources: The recent DAC report on Results Based Management notes that as evaluation units take on these broader functions there may be competing demands on staff time and resources. Evaluation units now talk the language of performance management and senior management has often delegated the role of supplying information for this purpose to them. But the extent of their existing responsibilities may not have diminished, so some evaluation units are finding themselves being stretched in a new direction without the resources to deliver effectively. There is also a risk of de-emphasising traditional evaluation work.

Status: Some central evaluation face additional challenges due their status within their organisation; the "Cinderella syndrome". This may be demonstrated by the usual resource constraints of both funding and staffing. It can combine with a reluctance to hear what evaluation departments have to say. The department may be perceived as the policeman or auditor within, an impediment to delivering the programme. Or it may be regarded as an academic ivory tower, remote from the real action. The problem can be self-perpetuating since the highest calibre agency staff may be reluctant to move to evaluation units, which are seen to be remote from the cutting edge of policy or delivery. Even the physical location of evaluation units can be an issue: those that are located at the 'centre' of the organisation are more likely to be taken seriously than those situated in remote offices.

These, too, are realities that cannot be changed overnight. They are areas where leadership from the top will usually be required in re-scoping the work of evaluation units, and raising its status and resourcing over a period of time, so it can perform more effectively as a focal point for learning and accountability.

Encouraging participation and ownership

At one time, the main function of monitoring and evaluation systems was to provide information for donor requirements, with the needs of recipient countries partners being regarded very much as a second order consideration. This balance is shifting. In the efela Questionnaire, twenty agencies rated partner country stakeholders as being 'important' or 'very important' target audiences. Although this group still came behind internal audiences in the priority ranking, some agencies did comment that their scoring reflected the reality, rather than the ideal situation.

Most agencies reported that they take active steps are taken to ensure that evaluation reports are fed back to in-country partners and stakeholders¹³, but the majority also accept that they are not doing enough. Part of the problem may be the perceived lack of demand within recipient countries. It is significant that pressure from recipient countries for greater accountability was ranked lowest amongst the emerging trends in the Questionnaire. So, for many agencies, increased involvement of stakeholders is being promoted because it seen as axiomatically a good thing, rather than as a response to specific demand.

At the same time, the new wave of participatory thinking is driving the process forward. With the increasing emphasis on the need to incorporate the perspectives of stakeholders, particularly the poor, participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) has emerged as logical next step. It involves local people, development agencies, and policy makers deciding together how progress should be measured, and results acted upon. Advocates of this approach argue that PM&E provides an opportunity for development organisations to focus better on their ultimate goal of improving poor people's lives. By broadening involvement in identifying and analysing change, a clearer picture can be gained of what is really happening on the ground. For those involved, it can also be a very empowering process, since it puts them in charge, helps develop skills, and shows that their views count.¹⁴

Though a lot of agencies are talking about PM&E, and have adopted it at the rhetorical level, relatively few have had any hands-on experience of applying it in practice¹⁵. Encouraging participation in the evaluation process is a natural next step for projects which have been planned and implemented in a participatory fashion; it is much more of a shift in thinking for projects that have been not been carried out in this way, and where the basis of trust and partnership is weaker.

A recent review of attitudes to PM&E among DFID advisers concluded that **"the concept of PM&E is broadly accepted but narrowly understood"**. It found that participation was usually limited to consultation with beneficiaries at particular stages in the monitoring and evaluation cycle. There was relatively little appreciation of the need to engage other actors, such as governments, the private sector, and trade unions, and there was few examples of PM&E leading on to genuine stakeholder participation in decision-making and change¹⁶.

¹³ JBIC now holds two in-country seminars a year to feed back evaluation findings. JBIC are also starting to feed back lessons learnt to third party countries. For a tourism development project in Jordan, for example, representatives from Thailand attended to explain the lessons they had learned.

¹⁴ An outline of the approach is provided in IDS Policy Briefing No 12, "Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation: Learning From Change" (1998).

¹⁵ NGOs and civil society organisations that have been the main pioneers in developing PM&E approaches.

¹⁶ See R.Hinton, Briefing Note for the DFID Workshop on an Assessment of Participatory Approaches and Methods in Monitoring and Evaluation, London, July 2000.

Much remains to be learnt about how PM&E approaches can be applied systematically, and how they can be integrated in an intelligent way with other monitoring and evaluation efforts. Some of the challenges that PM&E is creating from a communication and feedback perspective are reviewed in Box 5.

Box 5: PM&E: new communication challenges*

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) is posing a whole set of new challenges for development agencies. Some of these have an important communication angle.

- **Bridging communication gaps** – participatory approaches are all about communication between different stakeholders. This process can be difficult when the status and background of the stakeholders varies widely, and when they are speaking in different languages. Even if they share the same language and dialect, use of technical expressions or evaluation jargon can be a real turn-off for those unfamiliar with the terminology, and instead of encouraging buy-in, may be actively disempowering. These communication gaps can be bridged, given time and the right attitudes and behaviour. But if they are ignored, meetings can end up achieving little in terms of real dialogue.
- **Aggregating lessons** – successful PM&E can generate a great deal of locally relevant lessons. But how can this be aggregated to produce broader conclusions that stand up to analysis and can feed into policy, without losing the detail and diversity which is the essence of understanding individual situations? This dilemma was faced in the recent “Consultation with the Poor” exercise conducted by the World Bank, in which information from participatory work at 220 sites around the world was pooled in order to draw out some broad conclusions. New techniques are being developed to help with this, including databases designed to discern common patterns from large amounts of qualitative data, or from pictures and diagrams. Others argue, however, that trying to aggregate local data is misleading, and that the answer is to make policy more responsive to diverse local situations.
- **Reaching out** – where PM&E is generating new learning, questions arise as to who needs to know and how those messages need to be communicated. If they are to have any impact beyond the immediate stakeholder group, they will need to be communicated in a concerted way. This may require adopting an advocacy role. Or lessons may need to be given scientific respectability to be taken seriously. However it is done, an investment in skills and resources may be needed. If the process is generating controversial conclusions that challenge existing power structures, funding agencies may need to think carefully about how far their role can extend, and how closely they should be associated with the political forces that genuine participatory processes can unlock.
- **Communicating in reverse** – feeding information upwards from the local level poses one set of challenges. But there may be an equal need to communicate in the other direction. It is very common for stakeholders involved in evaluation exercises to have very little idea about why they are being consulted or even what the purpose of the project was in the first place. Without this knowledge, it is hard for them to engage in the process fully or offer a considered view. And once the consultation phase is over, stakeholders are rarely informed of the outcome of higher level decisions that are subsequently taken. Both are serious flaws that prevent real lesson learning and accountability.

* Based on personal communication with John Gaventa, head of the IDS Participation Group.

Two of the obstacles that prevent greater involvement by stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation, and helps explain the weak demand for it, are the lack of capacity in many recipient countries, and the absence of a strong accountability and learning culture. A number of agencies are beginning to focus on these. A joint African Development Bank and World Bank workshop on in-country capacity building was held in Abidjan in 1998, for example. The World Bank is also looking at options for developing regional "centres of excellence" in monitoring and evaluation.

As part of its partnership agenda, DFID has taken a first step in translating some new country strategy papers into the language of recipient countries, seeking to promote understanding and hence ownership. SIDA had worked to close the feedback gap in-country, for example, in Botswana and Namibia. Such measures are part of a long-term process. It is clear that a great deal of work needs to be done to turn the new rhetoric of stakeholder involvement into a reality. Even dealing with the very basic issue of translating evaluation materials into local languages will be a major task. But until this becomes a routine practice, it is hard to see how widespread stakeholder involvement can take hold.

Responding to information overload

This final challenge is perhaps the most mundane, but is nonetheless important. For development agency staff, and many of those they work with, information overload is a serious and growing problem. A decade ago it could be measured by the size of the stack of unread documents piling up in your office. Nowadays, although the piles of documents persist, it is the number of unread messages in your e-mail inbox that provides the most graphic (and alarming) reminder. Though few would doubt that the new generation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are part of the solution to better information exchange, they are also becoming part of the problem. Some of the manifestations of this contradiction are explored in Box 6.

Software packages and work practices are evolving to help deal with the problem. But most would agree that at present the overall problem of information overload is getting worse, not better. This is a reality that evaluation units need to deal with in planning their communication strategies.

One interviewee at the InterAmerican Development Bank referred to a more specific variant on this, "lesson overload". He was referring to the proliferation of development lessons, coming at operational staff from all directions: from policy departments, research organisations, pressure groups, and other sources. Amid this cacophony of messages, it is not always easy to make evaluation lessons heard.

Experience from a range of information management contexts¹⁷ suggests that some of the key lessons in combating information overload are that:

- **editing matters** - users appreciate information that is short, well drafted, and to the point, and are increasingly impatient with lengthy documents that have to be struggled through in order to extract key messages.
- **less is more** - bombarding people with more and more information can be counter-productive. It is better to be selective. Recipients are more likely to pay attention

¹⁷ These lessons are drawn from IDS experience (ELDIS, ID21, Bridge, Livelihoods Connect, CGAP Microfinance Gateway, etc.), and from others in the development information field.

to messages if the sender is seen to be responsible and thoughtful in what they send out.

- **highlights** - short e-mails and other bulletins flagging new information that is available, and showing people where they can find it, can be more effective than sending lengthy full text documents.
- **demand pull** - people are generally more attentive to information they have requested themselves, and which matches their specific needs. But demand needs to be stimulated through good publicity and clear signposting.
- **listening to users** - it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming you know what users need, or treating them as a uniform group. People's information needs and habits vary, and they change over time. Regular audience research is needed to stay in touch with users, and allow communication strategies to be fine-tuned to match their needs.

Box 6: ICTs - a double-edged sword

The introduction of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) has created problems, as well as offering solutions. For example:

E-mail is allowing cheap & almost instantaneous information sharing between individuals and groups



E-mail communication is often less systematic and well thought out than traditional paper-based approaches

E-mail makes it easy to copy people in when sending messages, just in case it is of interest to them



People are deluged with 'just in case' information, and cannot distinguish what is really important

E-mail lists and discussion fora are allowing groups with shared interests to exchange ideas easily



It is easy to get buried - deleting messages is quicker than sorting out what is relevant or un-subscribing

Web sites are providing an ever-growing wealth of information and data on almost any topic



How do you know where to start, and how do you assess the quality of the information that is out there?

4. Opportunities

As well as challenges, there are also important opportunities opening up for evaluation units. These have the potential for substantially improving the effectiveness of evaluation feedback, and for integrating lesson learning and accountability into the heart of the development agency planning and thinking.

Taking advantage of the Internet

For evaluation departments, the introduction of Internet technologies is transforming the possibilities for organising, sharing and storing information. Although separating the hype from the reality remains a problem, the Internet is here to stay, and will be having an every more important influence on the way development agencies communicate and work. From an evaluation perspective it offers huge advantages in:

- providing secure **storage** of large amounts of data but in a form that is much easier to retrieve than conventional filing systems.
- **organising** and combining information in better and more useful ways.
- facilitating the **sharing** of data, both internally and between agencies, in a way that can be managed and controlled far better than paper-based system.
- offering a simpler way of providing external audiences with **access** to information, thereby improving transparency and accountability.
- allowing rapid **communication** across the globe at very low marginal cost.

Development agencies have made great strides in the past few years in harnessing the new generation of Internet technologies. A total of eleven agencies report that "most or all" evaluation reports or summaries are now available on their internal intranet, and the same number make this information available on their public web sites. Almost all agencies have plans for putting more information online, and only a handful have no plans of this kind at present.

Working out how to use these new technologies effectively has been a steep learning curve for most agencies. With new possibilities opening up almost every day, one of the problems is that the goalposts keep shifting. Web sites and databases that are state-of-the-art when they are introduced can quickly become outdated as the technology moves on and the expectations of users rise. Another problem is that of information overload. Systems that are introduced to ease information flows can succeed in some respects, but have the simultaneous downside of swamping people with more information than they can deal with. Putting more and more information up on the intranet or web site does not guarantee people will actually use it. As the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development put it in their questionnaire response, *"whatever means one employs to bring the horses to water, ultimately you have little leverage to make the horses drink"*.

The investment needed in gearing up to make full use of internet-based systems is substantial, both in financial and human resources terms. Some evaluation departments are better placed to respond than others. Much depends on agency-wide capacities and policies. In agencies that are already taking steps to improve their

information infrastructures and ICT systems, evaluation departments have been able to take advantage of this, and upgrade at the same time, in some cases taking a leadership role in demonstrating what is possible and pushing for improvements. But where the agency as a whole is moving more slowly, and the capacity within the evaluation department is limited, it is hard for the evaluation department to make progress. Indeed, for some, delays in getting even basic material posted on the agency web site or intranet, or in creating links from the agency homepage, has been a cause of frustration.

A comparison of where evaluation units have got to in their web and intranet developments is provided in Annex 4. Good practice lessons emerging from the first and second generation of web sites and intranets are highlighted in Box 7. Some of the key emerging issues are also flagged.

As the use of the Internet has developed, so too have opportunities for sharing evaluation information between donor agencies. The **DAC Evaluation Reports Inventory** set up in 1988, and hosted by CIDA and IDRC, was the first major initiative in this area. The Inventory now contains abstracts from slightly over 5000 reports, contributed by 17 organisations. Search functions allow the user to select reports by donor, country/region, sector, evaluation type, date and keyword. It is available through a CD-ROM (updated yearly)¹⁸ and a 'public version' is accessible via the Internet. The website gets an estimated 500 'hits' a week on average¹⁹.

Experience with the DAC Inventory has demonstrated both the potential for this kind of centralised system and the demands of operating it effectively. Some of the difficulties that have been encountered have been related to:

- having to depend on inputs from a whole range of donors, some of whom are much more diligent than others in keeping their contributions up to date.
- differences in cataloguing and indexing approaches among agencies.
- conflicting priorities between making documents public and maintaining a 'private' area where agencies can exchange information on a more confidential basis²⁰.
- the preponderance of older information on the site, and the perceived lack of up-to-date material.
- not being able to provide direct links through to original source materials, which limits the functionality of the system to users (plans are in the pipeline to introduce this facility).
- developing a search interface which is powerful but also user friendly.

¹⁸ Because of the spread of Internet access, the CD-ROM version of the Inventory is to be discontinued after the August 2000 edition.

¹⁹ Details on the Inventory are based on information available on the web site (<http://miniweb.idrc.ca/cida/dacloge.htm>) and from personal communication with Don Paul (technical coordinator).

²⁰ The advantage of having a 'closed space' for donor plans and 'non-public' documents has led to an agreement to establish a closed access web-site by September 2000, available to contributors only.

Box 7: Harnessing the Internet

Good practice for website and intranet design is developing fast. Some of the key lessons that are emerging, and the challenges now on the horizon, are as follows:

Basic lessons:

- **clear navigation** and signposting is essential, so users do not get lost.
- sites need to be kept **up-to-date**, and be seen to be so, otherwise users lose interest.
- over-complex designs with a lot of fancy graphics may impress at first, but slow down page loading and soon become a turn off. **Simplicity and functionality** are more important for regular users.
- it is often best to organise information in **layers**, so users see headings and summaries first, and can choose where to dig down further.
- web sites need active **publicity and promotion**, otherwise nobody knows they are there.

The cutting edge:

- as more information is added to websites and intranets, more sophisticated **databases** are needed to handle the volume of material being stored.
- better **search tools** are also required to guide users to the information they need. These need to be intuitive and user-friendly, since most people are easily deterred by complex looking search screens, or results pages that list hundreds of matches.
- information needs to be **classified and organised** in a creative and intelligent way. It may be better to structure information in a functional way, based around how people will actually use it, rather than along standard library cataloguing lines.
- long lists of documents or web links soon become unreadable, even if the material itself is of high quality. Additional text to introduce topic areas, put them in context, and highlight what is new, can help **guide users into the material**, and explain its relevance.

New challenges:

- **accessibility** is being recognised as an increasingly important issue, especially for developing country users. New thinking is going into finding compromise solutions that offer a high level of functionality but do not depend on having latest equipment or high-speed internet links. Since e-mail is a more robust technology, systems that can deliver web documents on request via e-mail are one promising route.
- as more becomes available online, new approaches are being developed for combining data held in different databases and locations. New **standards and protocols** are being proposed to facilitate this, notably, IDML (International Development Mark-up Language), a new tagging system designed specifically for development-related information.
- people are starting to think seriously about **how to evaluate** the effectiveness of web sites and intranets. 'Hit statistics' are a guide, but are notoriously difficult to interpret. Online surveys and face-to-face feedback are more likely to yield worthwhile results.
- the huge challenge of providing effective **multi-lingual access** to online information.²¹

²¹ JICA have identified this as a priority in improving the English version of their website.

It is clear that many agencies value the Inventory, and this is reflected in their responses to the *efela* questionnaire. This showed that 15 agencies contribute material on a regular basis. However, it also suggested that it has limitations as a practical tool, since only 5 agencies reported that they use the database regularly.

The DAC Inventory is twelve years old now, and a number of agencies have suggested it may be due for a review. Technology has moved on, and with agencies putting more and more material online on their own sites, fresh options are opening up for sharing information in new and potentially more interesting and powerful ways.

A new impetus for reconsidering these options may be provided by the new **Global Development Gateway** initiative being led by the World Bank²². This sets out a highly ambitious vision for global information sharing. Within the draft Business Plan for the Gateway there are outline plans for a section on "Policy Coordination and Lessons Learned". The Business Plan has been approved in principle by the World Bank Board, and initial seed funding has been released. The intention is to flesh out these plans over the next few months, begin discussions with the many partners who will need to be involved in making the Gateway idea a success, and develop a number of pilot initiatives to demonstrate what is possible. By the Tokyo Workshop in September, there should be considerable progress to report.

Using evaluation feedback to enhance learning in the organisation

Development agencies and the evaluation units within them are also being influenced by the latest generation of organisational management models, in particular:

- Knowledge Management (KM)
- Results Based Management (RBM)

Both are directly concerned with questions of organisational learning and accountability, and so overlap very closely with the objectives of evaluation feedback. Since they are usually driven by senior management, and require top level support to get off the ground, they provide an important opportunity for evaluation units to increase their profile and significance within the organisation, cross-fertilise ideas, and build evaluation feedback into broader, agency-wide, processes.

Most of this new thinking originated in the corporate sector, particularly in North America. But it is spreading fast to public sector organisations, and is beginning to be adopted by aid agencies²³. It has spawned a whole new terminology and sub-industry. Although some find the jargon off-putting, and regard it as "old wine in new bottles", these new management trends can be a powerful agent of change.

Results Based Management is already a part of the DAC agenda. The recent review highlighted twelve main lesson-learning areas and underlined high levels of synergy

²² See www.worldbank.org/gateway

²³ A summary of how this new thinking is affecting the development agencies is provided in the recent DAC report, "A comparison of management systems for development co-operation in OECD/DAC members", DCD(99)6

between RBM thinking and improved evaluation feedback²⁴. Indeed it is difficult to achieve the former without the latter. The review is due to be finalised by November 2001. There is thus a good opportunity to ensure that ongoing work in these two areas is coordinated in order to optimise progress in both dimensions.

The broad principles behind some of the new organisational learning models are summarised in Box 9. Rather than being an end-point in a linear process, evaluation work, including evaluation feedback, is at the heart of the organisational learning cycle. Evaluation departments do not have a monopoly on knowledge within an organisation, however through using evaluation feedback positively they can have a significant impact. In particular they can play a role in *acquiring* knowledge through evaluation work, and then *disseminating* it through evaluation feedback; this knowledge can then be *utilised* across the organisation more widely.

The private sector has been grappling with knowledge management issues long enough for a substantial body of literature and lesson learning to have built up. A recent survey of 431 corporate organisations²⁵ found that senior managers understand that an organisation's knowledge depends most on its people, but that organisations do not have the emphasis right so far, with the split between people, process and technology still needing to be reoriented in favour of people. The biggest obstacles to change that were identified were cultural and behavioural.

Within the development assistance community, the World Bank was one of the first agencies to embrace the knowledge management agenda²⁶. It has been pioneering new ways of sharing information and knowledge, though it faces particular challenges being such a large and complex organisation. KM has had the advantage in the Bank of having top-level backing, and a substantial investment of resources. Much has been learnt in past two years, both at a general level, and in relation to evaluation feedback specifically. Some of these lessons are summarised in Box 10.

Other agencies are now looking seriously at knowledge management and are at various stages in the development of new approaches and systems.²⁷ For example:

- GTZ has adopted a system of 'vertical teams'²⁸, for example, which are conceived along similar lines to the World Bank's 'thematic groups'.
- UNDP has created the SURF System, a series of ten "Sub-Regional Resource Facilities and Communities of Practice". These are designed to provide support to country offices, encourage networking between UNDP staff and partners, and identify, document and disseminate best practices in UNDP focus areas.

²⁴ Results Based Management in the Development Co-operation Agencies: A Review of Experience DCD/DAC/EV(2000)3 and summarised in DCD(99)6

²⁵ A Joint Survey by Business Intelligence and The Ernst & Young Center for Business Innovation, 2000. (see <http://www.businessinnovation.ey.com/research/knowledge/survey>)

²⁶ The term 'knowledge management' has been phased out by the World Bank in favour of the more organic term, 'knowledge sharing'

²⁷ A more detailed picture of current thinking is available in the background documentation prepared for two recent Workshops on "Knowledge Management: Implications and Applications for Development Organizations", held in Washington and Brighton, organised by Bellanet (see <http://www.bellanet.org/km>)

²⁸ As the GTZ interviewee commented, 'the person is the carrier of the know-how, the question is how to liaise with other people to capture the know-how'.

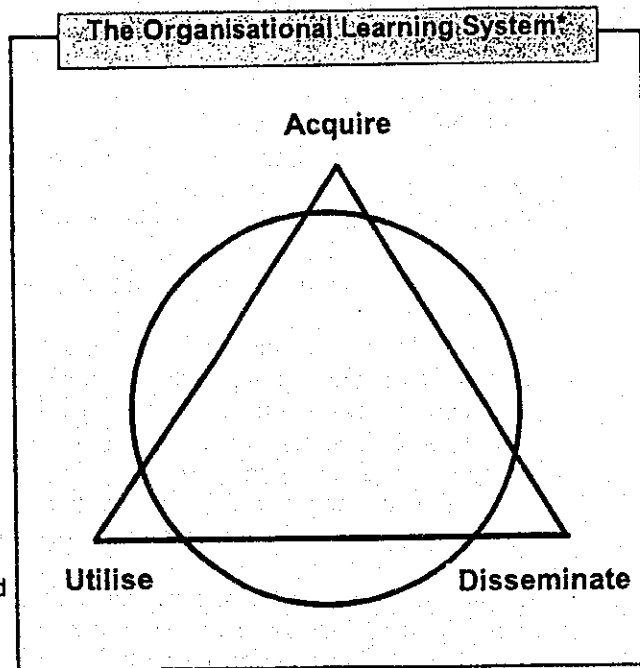
Box 9: Evaluation as a part of an Organisational Learning System

Far from being a discrete operation, evaluation can be seen as being at the heart of the organisational learning process. Developing the 'virtuous circle' of effective organisational learning demands that evaluation departments serve to make system connections between programme effectiveness and organisational effectiveness.

The process of developing mechanisms for effective learning can be seen as a challenge that has three interrelated strands:

- acquisition
- dissemination
- utilisation

This interdependence implies that changes in one part affect other parts and call for a response throughout the whole system.



■ **Acquisition**

Evaluation has to be based on systematic data collection for the improvement and generation of knowledge about effectiveness. Clear, understandable targets which are shared throughout the organisation are the best basis for managing-for-results.

Acquisition can be improved by 'making the scanning imperative' – the ability to look outside ones own department – a part of the knowledge acquisition culture.

■ **Dissemination**

Underlying a dissemination strategy is the need to establish the nature of the information sharing culture. These include; the degree of openness with which issues and problems can be shared and conflict accepted, formal versus informal methods and their different role, function and effectiveness, and individual versus team orientated objectives for dissemination.

■ **Utilisation**

The process of evaluation is a highly dynamic, interactive one requiring engagement by all parties. This process demands effective facilitation and an organisational response. Establishing actionable 'lessons learnt' is a key requirement, but this cannot be achieved without feeding this process into leadership development. Changes in methods and strategy therefore need to arise from integrated linkages with the evaluation process.

A key conclusion: shared understandings emerge as evaluation logic pushes the senders of messages to be as specific as possible, and challenges listeners to reflect on and feed back to senders what they think they have heard.

**This box draws on two main sources: Patton (1999), 'Organisational Development and Evaluation'; The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, Special Issue pp93-113; and MIT (1994), 'Organisations as Learning Systems – a learning resource guide', The International Consortium for Executive Development Research.*

Box 10: Knowledge Management: lessons from the World Bank

General lessons

- Establishing "Communities of Practice" around particular themes has proved to be a good way of focusing information exchange and creating crosscutting networks. There are over 100 "thematic groups" in the World Bank at present, each drawing in members from across the organisation.
- Web sites and other online information channels can be useful tools, but they are only part of the picture. People-to-people networks have proved to be much more important, but these only work well when there is a real commitment and shared interest among the participants.
- Help desks and advisory services, staffed by information specialists, can play a very useful role as a focal point for answering queries and coordinating information.
- Developing trust between individuals, so people feel safe to share problems and queries, is the key to successful knowledge networks.
- Creating space for learning and knowledge sharing is essential, otherwise people are too busy to contribute. Time for KM and training activities is now written into job definitions at the Bank.
- Incentive structures are important, otherwise KM activities tend to slip down priority lists. But introducing direct financial incentives is not the best route. The respect of colleagues and the desire to 'do the job better' are more effective inducements.
- Simple, compelling stories are often the best way of getting new concepts across, and winning people over to new ways of thinking.

Lessons for Evaluation Departments

- By being part of specific thematic groups, evaluation staff can develop informal links with colleagues in operational and policy departments, and close the Feedback Gap.
- Breaking down the 'them and us' barriers that separate evaluation staff from other colleagues takes time, but is essential if healthy learning networks are to be established. Methodology workshops can be helpful here in 'demystifying' the evaluation process.
- Evaluation units can help to build their credibility and perceived usefulness if they develop their capacity to respond to specific information demands from colleagues, rather than relying on 'supply driven take the medicine' approach to getting information out.
- Evaluation reports may contain a wealth of relevant lessons, but by themselves be of limited use to operational staff because they are too numerous to plough through, or are seen as being too narrow or context specific. Using a specially created lessons database, OED is developing a capacity to sift through back-files to filter out key lessons, and present them in easy-to-read summaries, in response to specific requests.

** Based on interview with Patrick Grasso, Operations Evaluation Department, World Bank, and with Stephen Denning, Chair of the World Bank Knowledge Management Board.*

- SIDA has a system of mentoring as a mechanism for the exchange of knowledge (which is often held tacitly). Senior staff have a mentor outside the organisation and middle and junior staff are encouraged to have mentors within SIDA. Mentoring is seen as a useful way of exchanging learning, working across traditional vertical reporting lines or sectoral divisions
- DFID has developed a computer-based "Performance Reporting Information System for Management" (PRISM). This combines basic project management information with qualitative information on the nature and objectives of each project. A series of 'markers' are used to tag projects. This allows analyses to be easily extracted showing breakdowns of spending against different poverty objectives, trends over time, the geographic spread of funding, and other information.
- As part of CIDA's knowledge management approach, efforts are being put into creating and managing dedicated 'Extranets'. These are accessible over the internet using a password, and are being used to facilitate dialogue between communities of practice within the organisation, and with outside partners.
- In USAID, the central evaluation unit is part of a broader-based Centre for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE). This serves as the organisation's institutional memory and has become the focal point for knowledge management within the agency. As well as evaluation information, CDIE maintains extensive databases of economic and social data on partner countries. This is only available on the intranet at present, though discussions are underway to see if part or all of this can be put on the public website.

On a more modest scale, knowledge-sharing networks of various kinds are also proliferating, both within agencies and between them. Networks can form and un-form according to need. Recently DFID set up a cluster of networks around the process of drafting its new series of Target Strategy Papers. These groups cut across of traditional country and sector boundaries. At a more formal level, the Evaluation Co-ordination Group provides a forum where multilateral development banks can meet to share information, learn lessons and discuss procedures²⁹. The DAC Working Groups are also a prime example of knowledge networks - although they have not been referred to that way in the past. DAC Peer Reviews also create periodic nodes of learning which form and un-form, where the results are then disseminated to the wider DAC group.

Linking in with the International Development Goals

A third important area where opportunities exist for evaluation units to transform their role and significance is in relation to the International Development Goals (IDGs). The development partnerships strategy was adopted by the DAC in 1996. The strategy now has agreed goals with a working set of core indicators for measuring progress against those goals. All DAC Members are committed to these goals, and are collaborating with each other to measure them. Hitherto, this has more usually been at the level of their Statistics Departments with some input from Evaluation Units. Regular updates are issued, there is a DAC indicators website and donors now routinely refer to them in their annual reports. Emphasis to date has been on refining the indicators, concern over the quality of in-country data, and trying to address

²⁹ The ECG has recently produced a best practice paper for lessons learned in dissemination 'Good Practice in Lessons Learned - Dissemination & Application', Wolfgang Gruber, EBRD May 2000 submitted to the MDB ECG.

aggregation problems. However there is scope for evaluation units to harness the commitment to the IDGs by their agencies and governments, in order to raise the profile of efela within their agencies, and link evaluation feedback into the virtuous circle of a learning organisation working to improve its development policy and effectiveness.

The recent DAC Review of Results Based Management observes:

“... considerable progress towards performance harmonisation has already taken place among donors on another front. Broad sector development ('impact level') goals and indicators for measuring progress at the country and global levels have already been adopted by the donor community in the shared strategy, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Role of Development Co-operation*. The DAC Working Party on Statistics has been at the forefront of the effort to identify and seek agreement on a common or core set of indicators for measuring progress vis-à-vis the shared goals. A number of donor agencies have linked their own strategic framework goals and indicators to these international efforts. An even more ambitious form of harmonisation among donors and partners might be envisioned for the future. Donor agencies' performance measurement/management systems could be co-ordinated and tailored at the country programme level in a way that lessens the burden on partners capacities, builds ownership and enhances development of RBM systems within partner countries”.

The Review is quoted extensively as it links so explicitly with the efela agenda. The DAC Goals offer a significant opportunity for Members to accelerate their strategic thinking, moving towards a virtuous circle, rather than evaluation feedback being seen as the end of the line. Monitoring and evaluation systems, including feedback measures, could be seen as a part of the solution to the problem of ensuring that institutional level learning can be systemised, shortening the feedback loop, rather than as a way to measure outcomes in order to justify prior investments.

The IDG initiative could be an important step towards a more systematic approach to assessing the impact of donor's programmes and harmonising impact assessment. As donors increasingly move away from project-by-project assistance and towards sector wide approaches and medium term expenditure frameworks, the demand is growing for greater donor and recipient co-ordination in improving the performance monitoring systems that track results. It is already accepted in principle that donors need a common systematic rating to allow comparisons of results³⁰. It is also essential in order not to hinder the development and operation of evaluation capacity of partner countries through excessive and conflicting donor information requirements. Donors are now just beginning to use the IDGs as a part of the top-down performance assessment process. DFID, for example, has drawn on the IDGs for its Public Service Agreement with the Treasury (the UK Ministry of Finance) and for its more detailed Service Delivery Agreement. Importantly, reporting against these goals will (at least in theory) determine access to future levels of resources.

Working from the bottom up, from project to programme and sector delivery, donors are also beginning to look at ways to try to measure effectiveness at the country level. This process will be accelerated with the advent of the newly agreed IFI Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) instrument. The first wave of these is planned to be

³⁰ Donecker, J & Green, M 1998: Impact Assessment in Multilateral Development Institutions, DFID

in place by the end of 2000. The PRSPs are meant to be country driven, results oriented, comprehensive, long-term in approach and based on partnership. In other words, they exactly match the model agenda which evaluation departments have been trying to promote and follow. Some recipient countries are already pursuing this agenda independently. Uganda announced its own poverty reduction strategy last year, for instance, opting to set targets and report against the IDGs. There is thus already a high level of ownership in country, so participation and co-ordination problems should be much reduced.

So whether the methodological approach is from the bottom-up, or the top-down, it appears that there is an opportunity for synergy that evaluation departments are ideally placed to capitalise on, should they wish to. Evaluation feedback will not be the end of a process but part of an ongoing system of reporting against the goals and related indicators. If this is linked to access to future resources, there will be a built-in vested interest on the part of all parties to generate, obtain and use this information. The incentive structures will be systemic. Adopting from Charles Leadbeater's analysis of the role of companies in Silicon Valley³¹, evaluation departments could become the "core junction boxes" for agencies, through which information flows in and is generated out. By 2015 *if* the IDGs are worked towards and measured *then* evaluation feedback for internal and external learning and accountability could be part of the same inclusive process.

Looking ahead

The prospects for evaluation feedback can be looked at in a number of ways. The external pressures for greater accountability, including measuring and meeting the IDGs, could be perceived as a **strength**, improving the negotiating position of evaluation units within agencies. A recent report by the European Centre for Development Policy Management talks of "making evaluation the linchpin of the new management system".³² Evaluation feedback would play a key role in this.

At the same time, current levels of aid 'fatigue' or perhaps the misapprehension by the public that aid is only associated with famine, flood, war or other disaster, could mean that full reporting of aid agency experience may be interpreted as over exposure or **weakness**. To help counter this tendency, Japan has eleven teaching centres nationwide with a local community outreach and public education mandate. DANIDA and Japan have made evaluation feedback videos aimed at a public audience, while DFID has had a 'development bus' travelling around the UK, and France has a new consultation group including 60 members of civil society, academics, industry and commerce.

There is also the **threat** that evaluation feedback can be misused or taken out of context. The recent World Bank experience with the Meltzer Commission is a possible example of this, where evaluation findings may have been taken out of context³³. USAID may also be said to have suffered at times from extreme cases of 'micro-management' by the US Congress³⁴, though has recently been praised for their honest

³¹ Charles Leadbeater (2000), "Living on Thin Air" - The New Economy", Penguin

³² "Assessing Trends in EC Development Policy - An Independent Review of the EC's External Aid Reform Process", ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 16, May 2000.

³³ "Development Effectiveness at the World Bank: What is the score?", OED Reach No 14, Spring 2000.

³⁴ A Comparison of Management Systems for development cooperation in OECD/DAC members. DCD (99)6

and straightforward Annual Performance Reports, and for their open policies on disclosure of evaluation reports.

The overall conclusion emerging from this study, however, is that the **efela** agenda provides an exciting and important opportunity for all development agencies. There will no doubt be a range of views as to how possible or practical some of the opportunities outlined in this report may be, or how applicable they are to the agendas of the wide range of agencies concerned. At a recent meeting of the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation four areas of pressure for developing donor-wide evaluation policies were identified:

- The organisational demand to say something positive about progress towards poverty reduction targets, both internal and external (IDGs)
- Financial pressure
- Political pressure
- Administrative pressure

Improving **efela** can be seen as a win-win option addressing all four of these areas. The forthcoming workshop in Tokyo will provide an opportunity for as many stakeholders as possible to discuss how this might best be achieved.

