

Evaluation of EC aid delivery through development banks and EIB

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:	Unacceptable	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1. Meeting needs: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?			X		
2. Relevant scope: Is the rationale of the policy examined and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?				X	
3. Defensible design: Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions?				X	
4. Reliable data: To what extent are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?				X	
5. Sound analysis: Is the quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way?			X		
6. Credible findings: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?			X		
7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible findings?			X		
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?				X	
9. Clearly reported: Does the report clearly describe the policy being evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood?				X	
The overall quality rating of the report is considered				X	

Observations and Judgement

Taking into account the complexity of the evaluation of "EC aid delivery through development banks and EIB", the overall quality of the report is considered: very good

Overall, the evaluation report answers the requests of the ToRs; sometimes the evaluators went even beyond what was asked them in the ToRs. It provides credible findings deriving from a sound analysis. The conclusions and recommendations are well substantiated and prioritized, operational and useful to provide guidance and to assist in decision-making. There is a good balance between the main report and the annexes and the inventory provide with a variety of systematised data that were not available before. Considered the difficulty of the topic tackled we can perceive the great effort made by the consultants to make it clear and easy to read. Globally the report can be considered as very good.

1. Meeting needs: good

The information needs are satisfactorily addressed to in a global, comprehensive and complete manner. The evaluation questions are dealt with in a complete but at the same time schematic way.

2. Relevant scope: very good

The evaluation was conceived to give primarily a detailed analysis of the channeling of funds of EC trough development banks and EIB but nevertheless it went beyond the scope by looking at interrelations with other donors' interventions (e.g. in the multidonors trust funds and during the field phase), the partner governments' policies (e.g. in the dialogue with governments and as direct beneficiaries of the TFs) and a comparison with other International organizations (e.g. UN family). Despite the large difficulties encountered in finding all the necessary information (limited knowledge of the financial flows and the variety of sectors), the consultants carried out a good research and analysis and presented all the data in the inventory note.

3. Defensible design: very good

The evaluation method has been explained and applied throughout the evaluation process. The evaluators made clear why they preferred some methodological choices instead of others and they defended their choice (e.g. the need for the questionnaire, the choice of the HIPC case study). The limits of this method have been highlighted and explained. It is interesting to note that there has been an extended desk report in which the consultants sent a questionnaire to Commission representatives managing Commission's contributions to WB Trust Funds. The only critic may rely on the fact that the collection of data has been too much focussed on the use of the questionnaire and not on other sources and the restricted sample of case studies (case study on the HIPC initiative) analysed to assess the impact in relation with the wide scope and diversity of operations characterising this modality. The limitations inherent in the evaluation method have been specified, discussed and new options proposed, as the evaluation had an exploratory character.

4. Reliable data: very good

Data have been processed from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. Information has been cross checked and verified through different information sources and employing several tools (surveys, case study, interviews at the EC, WB, EIB headquarters, briefings with EC Delegation and stakeholders in the field, document and data analyses). All the difficulties encountered in finding the information have been indicated and explained (check paragraph "availability of information" page 44). Limitations pertaining to reliability of data or to data

collection tools (e.g. difficulties of retrieving information from Commission databases, not continuity of information among the staff dealing with the issues analysed) are made explicit.

5. Sound data analysis: good

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative information is rigorous and systematically done so that the evaluation questions are answered in a balanced and valid way, limits are presented and explained. Sometimes the analysis is unbalanced due to the choice of collecting data from a main source which is the questionnaire against the analysis of other data collection tools. Every answer is substantiated and backed by extensive yet to the point information in the annexes. Cause-and-effect links between the intervention and its consequences are explained. The analysis approaches are explicit; the validity limitations of comparisons are pointed out. The report systematically refers to the annexes which further develop the basis for the analysis and shows that the report is well-supported.

6. Credible findings: good

The findings are thoroughly demonstrated and presented in a logical and comprehensive way. Overall results reflect a reasonable compromise between realities described by data and stated facts. They appear to be reliable and balanced, extrapolations and interpretations made sound coherent. Internal and external validity are acceptable. The consultants demonstrated their findings and conclusions through tables, graphs and diagrams showing the links between answers to the evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators. The findings reflect the reality described not only through the data and evidence recorded but also through the stakeholders and beneficiaries. The limits of the analysis are often presented and explained (they are inherent to the structure of the interviews, of the questionnaire etc).

7. Validity of the conclusions: good

The 13 conclusions are clustered in 5 groups (rationale and evolution of the aid, added value of aid delivery for the different parties, effectiveness of aid delivery, implementation and follow up, visibility). The conclusions are clear, concise and useful. They derive and are clearly linked to the findings. The limitations to conclusions validity are explicitly presented and well grounded. A weighting of the different conclusions (from the most to the less important) would have been welcome.

8. Usefulness of the recommendations: very good

Recommendations are well structured, clearly expressed, useful and pragmatic. They are presented in a hierarchical way and result from the conclusions. They appear to be fair and unbiased. Recommendations provided the necessary strategic and operational guidance on how to best intervene. Very much appreciated is the schematic overview of the prioritisation of recommendations presented at the beginning of the section (diagram 5.1 page 98) in which the consultants rank the recommendations by importance and urgency and differentiate them for the WB, EIB or both. They are detailed and targeted in order to be useful for EC services e.g. (a): define the overall strategy behind the channelling and the objectives the Commission wishes to pursue through channelling *via* each specific organisation and the extent to which this should be part of a case-by-case approach or rather enshrined in longer-term strategies and partnerships, (b) make sure that the knowledge on channelling is readily available on a centralised basis.

9. Clearly reported: very good

The report is reader-friendly: particularly appreciated is the glossary (operational definition of key terms presented in the beginning). Sometimes the structure is heavy and there are too many references to the results of the questionnaire while many data come from other sources. Nonetheless the chapters follow logically on each other and the structure is coherent. It uses plenty of tables, graphs and summaries to present the information; particularly appreciated is the "answer summary box" at the beginning of each answer. Overall comprehensible answers were provided to each of the questions with a summary that provide self-standing answers to each evaluation question and that has been very much appreciated. It gives the flavours of the answer without going too much in detail. The recommendation chapter is adequately presented linking back to the concluding chapter, and the same is done for the findings chapter. The executive summary reflects the overall report. References to the annexes are explicitly indicated. Finally, it is a well balanced report in what concerns the main report and the annexes proving the technical data with clear references within the report.