

Evaluation of the European Commission's support to Uganda – ref. 1270

Abstract

The European Commission's support to Uganda during the period 2001-2007 has been found highly relevant to the country's needs and priorities. Positive results and impacts were achieved in terms of macroeconomic stability, increased availability of social services, improved food security and increased outcomes for the rural population. The EC cooperation also contributed to the setting up of a reformed institutional framework in the road sector. EC support to the civil society did not and is not likely to produce any significant impact over the long term.

Subject of the evaluation

This evaluation assesses the European Commission's support to Uganda during the period 2001-2007. The analysis of actions taken as a result of the last country level evaluation (published in 2001) also falls within the scope of the evaluation.

Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation was to identify key findings and lessons of experience from its past and current co-operation with Uganda and thus provide an input into future decision making related to EC cooperation and relations with Uganda.

Methodology

The evaluation was based on 9 evaluation questions, relating to the five DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact), as well as coherence and EC added value.

Among the evaluation tools applied were the analysis of over 200 documents; interviews with over 75 key people; four group interviews in field settings; field visits to Kampala-based donor and GoU officials, rural districts and transportation hubs, and a detailed review of over 40 projects that were selected as the study sample.

Main conclusions

- (1) Overall, the EC's strategic response to Ugandan challenges and needs has been found **highly relevant**. EC's cooperation strategy has been flexible enough to meet the changing development needs of the country over time. The design of EC's development cooperation programme in Uganda has significantly improved since the 2001 country level evaluation, thus ensuring a good level of internal **coherence** among EC's planned interventions.
- (2) EC's interventions in the framework of **general budget support** have contributed to **Uganda's macroeconomic stability during the period** whilst allowing the government to maintain its poverty-oriented expenditures at a higher level than would likely have been the case. EC's budget support has thus also contributed to the **expansion of social services** in Uganda. However, increased availability of social services was **not accompanied with an improvement of the quality of the services delivered**, thus limiting their likely impact on the improvement of the conditions of life of the poor.

- (3) EC's interventions in the **rural development** sector had positive results in terms of **improved food security** and **increased incomes** for the rural population, although not benefitting equally to all segments of this population. Coverage of extension services has increased significantly during the evaluation period. However, the evaluation concludes that there is actually no strategy for promoting growth with equity for the rural sector while the government of Uganda's policies seem to have progressively moved away from a poverty reduction approach to promotion of economic growth in this sector.
- (4) In the **road sector**, the EC contributed to the setting up of a **reformed institutional framework** that provides better guarantees of sustainability of the national road network, while **improving the conditions of a regional transit corridor of major economic importance**. However, as EC interventions were more targeted to trunk roads and less to district and rural roads, they **did not result in well-balanced regional development**. The efficiency of EC investments in the road sector has been uneven. Progress in meeting road sector implementation targets has been slower than anticipated because of too optimistic estimate of time and cost in a country where EC road investment has a long history.
- (5) EC interventions aiming at the development of the Ugandan **civil society** are **overly spread out over too many recipients** and are thus unlikely to produce any significant impact over the long term.

Main recommendations

- (1) Of particular priority is the improvement of the **policy dialogue** effects of the Programme Based Approaches (PBA) supported by the EC in Uganda, principally by restructuring policy action items and triggers so that they are more rigorously defined and **more outcome and policy-change focussed**. At the same time, the PBA policy dialogue processes should be **more focused into priority areas** and should take place at both political and technical levels, with the latter enabling the former.
- (2) Continue the **strategic role that the EC plays in the transport sector**, but **re-assess the priority of the interventions** that will be undertaken (corridors, rural roads, district level, maintenance, etc.), taking into account the priorities of the government of Uganda but also poverty reduction objectives, rural development needs, strategic economic growth enablers, regional integration and the lessons learned over the past years in the sector.
- (3) **Intensify policy and political dialogue** on the necessity to focus policies for the rural/agricultural sector on poverty reduction and growth with equity. **New agriculture/rural development priorities** should be encouraged: (1) support to extension services should focus less on the introduction of profitable cash-crops with farmers with potential, and more on the promotion of integrated farms for small-holders; (2) the immediate access to agricultural inputs, small equipment and machinery should be assured (e.g. through the improvement of access to rural credit); (3) land titling should be promoted in order to reduce land conflicts and to promote investments, with a specific attention to land-titling for women (especially vulnerable women such as widows).
- (4) **EC support to Non-State Actors should be more focussed**, in particular in supporting CSOs that promote civic participation in governance, accountability, civic education and the reform of electoral processes.

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