

EVINFO

Evaluation of the Commission of the EU's co-operation with Ethiopia ref. 1301

Abstract

The European Commission's support to Ethiopia during the period 2004-2008 has been found relevant to the country's needs in fighting poverty. The alignment of its support to the Government's policies and programmes bore fruit in strengthened ownership and therefore ensuring sustainability. The government adopted innovative approaches in the context of social accountability and Civil Society involvement. But this huge effort was at cost of policy dialogue. Yet, impact on democratic government and related capacity building remained limited. This hampered the effectiveness of EU support particularly in emerging regions. Also, it is felt that support to food security in comparison to agricultural development is still too dominant.

Subject of the evaluation

This evaluation assesses the European Commission's support to Ethiopia during the period 2004-2008. The period covered is characterized by recovery from the war with Eritrea and by the violent 2005 post-electoral crisis.

Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide an overall independent assessment of the EC's past and current cooperation relations with Ethiopia and to identify key lessons in order to improve the current and future strategies.

Methodology

The evaluators examined a huge range of relevant documents covering the more general to the most specific project linked information; they conducted 112 interviews with key stakeholders at different levels both on the EU and the Ethiopia side and they visited 9 EU-financed programmes and projects in the field. Information from documents, interviews and field visits was cross-checked as far as possible, in order to arrive at solid, evidence-based findings.

Main conclusions

Despite the difficult political situation the EU succeeded in keeping its contribution focused on the needs of the population in three main sectors of intervention: basic services, food security and road infrastructures. This accompanied significant MDGs achievements by the government.

In the particular geostrategic situation of Ethiopia, these significant contributions to development, peace and stability were at the cost of policy dialogue (global and sector-wise) and empowerment of the civil society.

After the 2005 post-electoral crisis, the EU rebuilt progressively a privileged relation of mutual confidence with GoE. This may be an opportunity to re-enter in an overall policy dialogue.

C1: In general, by aligning most of its support on government policies and programmes through various types of budget support (global, sectoral, targeted), the EU was

particularly effective in fighting poverty. This approach contributed also to reinforcing an already strong degree of ownership, thus ensuring sustainability.

C2: But those gains were not equally matched in areas such as democratic governance and decentralisation which are fundamental to the long-term development prospects of Ethiopia.

C3: The performance evaluation framework agreed with the government for the bulk of EU budget support was too aligned on five-year sectoral programming documents to be a true incentive for policy reform or even significant operational restructuring.

C4: Local government capacity shortcomings remained out of EU reach, either directly (PSCAP) or indirectly (PBS, Road SPSP, PSNP). They impeded the effectiveness and impact of EU-supported programmes, particularly in emerging regions.

C5: The effectiveness and inclusiveness of policy dialogue have been limited even in EU focal sectors.

C6: The balance between EU support to food security and agricultural development, although improved, still predominantly leans towards food security.

C7: EU-sponsored innovative approaches in PBS and PSNP implementation (essentially social accountability and CSOs involvement) were adopted by the government, even though it provided only a limited financial contribution.

Recommendations

- **ad C1, C5 and C7:** Prescribe the **policy dialogue organisation** best suited to EU objectives and instruments.
- **ad C1, C3, C5 and C7:** Modify the allocation structure within sectors to **strengthen EU advocacy capacity and involvement in regional integration and sectoral institutional reforms.**
- **ad C2, C4, C5 and C7:** Adjust the strategic framework and the **content of policy dialogue** to overcome limits currently faced in **promoting institutional reform and democratic governance.**
- **ad C6:** Reconsider the overall **balance in EU financial support between food security and agricultural development** by focusing progressively on the graduation process and on the subsequent phases of households' accumulation of agricultural assets.
- **Ad C1, C3, C4 and C5:** **Prepare for the resumption of GBS** while reducing its lack of predictability by defining a fixed tranche that is both more robust in the face of politically-induced uncertainties and also more closely linked to development outcomes.

Donor: European Commission

Region: ACP

DAC sector : various (multi-sector, cross-cutting issues)

Evaluation type: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, Coherence, Value added

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