

Evaluation of the European Commission cooperation with Ethiopia 2004-2008 Quality Grid on Final Report

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		
Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered			X		

Observations and Judgment

Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered:

GOOD

Elements leading to this assessment are in particular:

- the fact that the report also compares the EU policy and approach to the one of other development partners;
- the fact that the use and effectiveness of Budget Support as an unintended effect is analysed;
- the use and management of data and the initiatives taken to overcome data limits and gaps.

The inventory per EQ is well done.

1. Meeting needs:

GOOD

The evaluation addresses the information needs of the commissioning body. It fits the Terms of References (ToR) although "the use and the contribution of budget support before 2005" is not explicitly included in the analysis as requested in the ToR. Also, the ToR asked for a closer look at the regional aspect. This aspect was treated only marginally.

The evaluation questions are answered. The evaluation does take interest in the policies of other development partners and in several cases their approaches are compared to the ones of the EU. In some cases, the value added/not added of the EU cooperation in comparison to other development partners (DPs) could have been stated clearer (e.g. Evaluation Question (EQ) 7 – well succeeded in EQ 10). The policies of the Ethiopian Government are also analysed and convincing explanations for these policies are provided.

2. Relevant scope:

GOOD

The report deals with the whole intervention in its temporal, geographic and regulatory dimensions. More emphasis could have been put on the aspect of regional integration.

Specific unintended effects have been taken into account, in particular on the use and effectiveness of budget support (BS), which a part from its expected positive effects seems to involve a certain risk of aid fragmentation. The dialogue with the Government and its impact on the overall Commission strategy is analysed and concrete recommendations are given.

3. Defensible design:

GOOD

The design chosen is well explained. The team shows a good knowledge of and capacity to use the Commission evaluation methodology and tools. The evaluation is structured in different phases and makes good use of evaluation questions, judgment criteria, etc. The tools employed are: document reviews including a rough analysis of previous existing evaluations/monitoring reports, interviews and project field visits covering the core intervention sectors. The tool of doing surveys e.g. among the beneficiaries was not used. The team has put in place a good internal coordination method. Notably in EQ 10 the team made prove of having good knowledge of the different existing aid modalities as well as on their strengths and weaknesses.

4. Reliable data:

GOOD

Reliable primary and secondary data incl. non-EU and country based documents are used as much as possible and crosschecked. Quantitative and qualitative data is used. The types of documents and data used are listed very clearly, including for every evaluation question, adding to the clarity of the analysis.

The limits of data collection are explained and the team made significant efforts to respond to

these limitations by proactive and own initiative based measures/researches.

5. Sound data analysis: GOOD

Data analysis carried out is comprehensive and of valuable support to the understanding of the evaluation and its findings. The cause and effect links between intervention and consequences are clearly explained. Where possible and appropriate, comparisons are made, in particular for the period under question and the 10th EDF as well as to what other DPs are doing and the effects of their activities (e.g. EQs 1, 6, 10). External factors (environmental, political, budgetary) are taken into account.

6. Credible findings: GOOD

Findings are the logical result of data analysis and interpretation. In general, they are balanced and clear.

The perception of and results for beneficiaries is not covered on a systematic basis.

EQ 7: Although the EQ formulation does not ask for it the findings to the EQ and its relevant judgment criteria contain relevant information on fiscal and political decentralisation.

7. Validity of the conclusions: GOOD

Conclusions are logical consequences of findings and are linkable with the facts and data recorded in the evaluation leading to the recommendations. In some cases, the conclusions could have been expressed in clearer and more concise wording (e.g. cG7). Concepts are well summarized and the organization of conclusions into meta and specific conclusions helps making the relevant links to the strategic and operational recommendations respectively.

In certain cases the findings in the Annex sound less positive than the conclusion.

cG8 and cS1-5 give good conclusions on the discrepancy sector BS versus general BS.

8. Usefulness of the recommendations: GOOD

Recommendations focus on the main key findings of the evaluation and are linked to the conclusions. They are substantiated by findings and presented in a mostly clear and structured way (organized in three separate clusters). Recommendations are divided into strategic and operational recommendations addressing explicitly Headquarters and the EU delegation respectively. Operational recommendations prevail and they do provide practical and feasible steps to be taken to address the challenges highlighted through the evaluation.

A specific recommendation on how to strengthen cooperation with non-EU donors is missing. This challenge is highlighted at several points in the report, but no recommendation links to it.

9. Clearly reported: GOOD

The report is well structured. It offers complete and exhaustive information on the scope of the evaluation, the design and its results. Linkages between findings on the one hand and conclusions/recommendations on the other hand are comprehensible.

The summary presents the context as well as the main conclusions and recommendations in a balanced and unbiased way.

On readability and format: Long and complex sentences lead to difficult readability. Many graphs and tables in the Annexes are not readable. Several formatting and typo errors can be found.

The list of abbreviations is not complete (the explanation of at least 5 abbreviations is missing). Certain Ethiopian specificities should have been explained in the report (e.g. kebele vs. woreda).

It would be good to insert a list of the 10 EQ in outspoken format under chapter 2 "Methodology of the evaluation" for the sake of readability/understanding.