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DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

EXPERT GROUP ON AID EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

(Note by the Delegation of Germany)

At the meeting of the Expert Group held on 23rd-24th January 1986, it was agreed that the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany should present a paper on the problems of evaluating country programmes. The attached paper has been prepared by the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation (BMZ), and is presented as a starting point for discussion at the meeting of the Expert Group scheduled for 12th-13th June.

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EVALUATION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMMES1. Background and Purpose

At the meeting of the Expert Group on Aid Evaluation of the DAC on 23 and 24 January 1986 it was agreed that the German delegation should present a paper on the problems of country evaluations for the meeting planned for 12/13 June 1986 (see Doc. DAC/EV/M(86)1 (Prov.) of 5 February 1986).

Set out below is a brief account of the experience of the Inspection Division of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation in this field. It is followed by some reflections of a more general nature on country evaluation procedures.

The account does not purport to be exhaustive. It is intended only as a basis for discussion.

2. German experience

- a) In July 1980 the Inspection Division presented a report entitled "Inspection of Country-Related Aid Measures in Senegal". This was the first country evaluation to be conducted by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ). The evaluation set out to study the use of aid funds in almost twenty years of cooperation "in respect of their importance for the development of the recipient country, and to examine the effectiveness of the methods, instruments and forms of German bilateral aid".

The inspection was carried out between 17 November and 20 December 1979 by a group of 14 consultants and ad hoc experts headed by a member of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation. The work was prepared and carried out jointly by the Inspection Division of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and the Senegalese Ministry of Planning. It was based on detailed evaluation guidelines which were adapted by each expert to suit the sectors under review. The method chosen was a scaled down version of the appraisal procedure which allowed a choice of study focus on either a project or programme while addressing a number of important aspects (e.g. target analysis and management).

The inspection covered 77 individual measures equivalent to about 76 % of aid provided to Senegal up until the time of the inspection.

The summary report is based on 11 separate volumes. At the end of the inspection mission a preliminary report was discussed with the Senegalese Government. The criticism and additions which emerged from the discussions were incorporated in the individual reports which were themselves the subject of several rounds of discussion in the Ministry with the working units concerned.

The individual reports formed the basis of the summary report mentioned above.

One of the reasons for choosing Senegal was that the European Community had commissioned a German economic institute (IFO, Munich) to conduct a general review of its cooperation with this country. At the end of 1981 the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) presented a comparative analysis of the two studies in the hope that "each might learn from the other". At the same time the cost-benefit ratio of country evaluations was examined: do the results justify the relatively high cost?"

The comparative analysis concludes that both country analyses suffered from "a poor application of the results of the analysis to a concrete programme of future development cooperation". Furthermore: "In both evaluations the analysis of the internal (development) political structures, administrative constraints and national price, sectoral or regional policies of the recipient country was inadequate to allow an identification of suitable support measures necessary for the success of future aid programmes and the tailoring of aid to the frame conditions of development policy."

- b) After internal deliberation in the Ministry, it was decided at the highest level that a general evaluation of German cooperation with ZAIRE should be undertaken.

In the preparation of the Zaire country evaluation the experience acquired during the Senegal evaluation was applied to the extent that from the outset an effort was made to apply past experience to the formulation of future focal programmes. No attempt was made to conduct a comprehensive evaluation. The evaluation covered only projects in previously identified sectors.

Three sectors of cooperation were selected:

1. Transport: since in the past it had been an important focus of German cooperation and it was clear that there would continue to be a need in this sector.
2. Agriculture: though this sector had proved very difficult in the past it was obvious that the better use of Zaire's agricultural potential should be an important development priority.

3. Primary health care: the aim was to study whether the intended continuation of support by private agencies should be backed up by official bilateral cooperation. The need for improvements in the field of primary health care was undisputed in terms of development policy.

Since the European Community had, by coincidence, commissioned a team of experts to evaluate cooperation with Zaire at the same time, we tried to make use of the EC team's results for the German inspection mission. This proved possible to a remarkable extent even though the final report for the European Community had not been drafted when the German team left Germany.

Like the Senegal country evaluation, the Zaire evaluation was headed by a member of the Inspection Division of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation.

Seven independent experts were in Zaire from 19 January to 10 March 1986. The principal findings and recommendations were set out in a summary report before their departure from Zaire and discussed with representatives of the Zaire Government. The study of an agricultural extension project in Kivu province was conducted in conjunction with two experts from the Kinshasa office of US-AID putting into practice long-standing plans, endorsed at the highest level, for collaboration between the Inspection Division of the BMZ and the US-AID offices responsible for evaluations.

The analysis of selected sectors and the evaluation of individual projects is preceded in the report by an analysis of the general economic, social and political environment.

As principles for future cooperation at the project level the Report recommends continuity as well as regional and sectoral concentration. Very simply this means: only longer-term cooperation can be expected to bring about the necessary structural changes in a few fields which have been accorded priority. And continuity means setting priorities. The report advises in particular against yielding to the priorities of day-to-day politics in Zaire and, above all, against becoming drawn into large, expensive projects. The Zaire country evaluation took place with the consent of the Government but no measure of the responsibility was vested with the Zairian authorities.

A comprehensive French version was sent to the Zairian Government in July 1984. In May 1985 this report was considered by the Committee (Comité restreint) of the large mixed German-Zairian Commission and accepted as the basis for planning future German-Zairian cooperation.

- c) With certain limitations the study of the cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany and Mauritania in the agricultural sector can be termed a country evaluation. This is legitimate to the extent that this sector, food aid and an associated food security programme made up the bulk of cooperation with that country.

This study was conducted with the assistance of four independent experts, again headed by a member of the Inspection Division of the BMZ. The mission was in Mauritania from 31 January to 1 March 1985. The basic findings of the report led to controversy both with the Mauritanian side and with the project-implementing units within the Ministry. An official hand-over of the French version, which was to have taken place during the visit to Mauritania of the Parliamentary State Secretary in the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation in December 1985, was therefore deferred.



The report's first major conclusion was uncontroversial: that cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany and Mauritania should give priority to raising production within traditional farming and, in irrigation farming, to concentrate on small units since the question of operation structures was still unresolved. The suggestion that new large units with artificial irrigation should be dropped in the foreseeable future already met with resistance in some quarters in view of plans to make the two major dam investments in Diama and Manantali economically viable.

No agreement has yet been reached within the Ministry on a basic issue raised in the report. It is proposed to support in the long term the operation of a large irrigation unit requiring subsidisation in the medium term because the alternative in this country is food aid. While the Mauritanian side agrees in principle with this thesis, it opposed more far-reaching proposals pertaining to the structure of the irrigation complex and a significant decrease in the influence exercised by central government. The German side is opposed to long-term subsidisation as a matter of principle.

- d) The evaluation of the agricultural sector in Malawi could also be included in the country evaluations. Its findings are to be included in a study by the Research Department of the World Bank entitled "Managing Agricultural Development in Africa" (MADIA-study). The evaluation is to look in particular into the question of how far project policy coincides with or may even be influenced by macro-economic policy recommendations.

### 3. Targets

While the SENEGAL evaluation was concerned primarily with the global overview so that planning components were more in the background, the Zaire evaluation was forward-looking from the outset.

The focus of the MAURITANIA evaluation was very much on a question raised by a previous German ambassador: whether the concept and design of German projects was appropriate to the country's state of development. The MALAWI evaluation, on the other hand, is more concerned with applying experience in the formulation of an agricultural strategy which can also be turned to account in the policy dialogue in general. This evaluation is strongly influenced by the targets of the MADIA STUDY.

4. Methodological questions

A problem common to all country evaluations is to analyse a range of individual projects in their overall political, social and economic frame of reference. Despite substantial inputs in terms of time and personnel, it is difficult to meet this requirement.

The analysis of each project is necessarily limited compared with the procedure for individual studies, but nevertheless takes up a lot of time which is then not available for the analysis of the general environment (individual studies are conducted according to the Project Evaluation Scheme attached in Annex I). Future planning must however be based on experience of individual projects and on an analysis of the general framework. Project and programme concepts must not be at odds with the analysis of the general frame conditions. One might call the method used in all country evaluations so far a plausibility analysis. It assumes that logical conclusions jump gaps in data. The more experienced the experts are in their particular field and the better the evaluation of local conditions, the more realistic will be the conclusions so obtained.

(For the methodological procedure, see annexes II-III)

5. Evaluation of the Results

It was concluded from the SENEGAL evaluation that to cover all the activities of bilateral cooperation with a country requires an enormous effort and is not essential for the formulation of development priorities. The prior decision to limit the evaluation to important sectors, as in the case of the ZAIRE evaluation, proved a wise one. The document enables both sides to agree upon priorities for future cooperation. We cannot yet tell what significance this will have in future. In a discussion of project requests deriving from the priorities of day-to-day politics, a frame of reference of this nature might prove useful.

The MAURITANIA evaluation might give rise to more realistic expectations as to the effects of investments in large units.

The MALAWI evaluation should assist in the formulation of a future aid strategy for that country.

Bonn, March 1986

Annex I: Excerpt from the main report on the country evaluation  
of Senegal (1980)

Method of Evaluation (Senegal)

The evaluation of the entire aid programme for a developing country is not merely the sum of detailed evaluation of individual projects. Rather, it is a critical long-term analysis of a planned or more or less arbitrary mosaic of various aid measures as a whole. It is determined as much by the concepts and administrative procedures of the donor country as by the particular frame conditions prevailing in the recipient country, its development targets and strategies as well as its concrete expectations of projects.

Such a "country evaluation" focuses on assessing the contribution of the aid to the development of the country (analysis of the significance), supplemented by an evaluation of the quality of the methods of project planning, project implementation and project management (analysis of the effectiveness) - the depth and breadth of this evaluation depending on the respective project. In the case of individual, particularly important and extensive projects, the efficiency was also measured if the available documents and survey results allowed such an assessment. The experts were given a general evaluation scheme (annexes II and IIa) which they had to supplement by adding specific questions pertaining to their respective fields. All measures of German aid in a sector, sub-sector or region had to be evaluated on the basis of this evaluation scheme. The measures had to be viewed in the context of the socio-economic development and the respective sector policies of Senegal as well as with regard to how well they fit into the administrative and cultural environment.

The evaluation scheme could be used in a flexible manner. Since the projects were at different stages of implementation, the respective expert had to decide in each individual case where the focus of the analysis should lie. In the case of older projects which had been completed and handed over, an in-depth assessment of the projects' impact was clearly appropriate. It was possible in this case to dispense with the description and analysis of the projects' planning, implementation and management (not, however, the target analysis), unless deficiencies in these phases had had a negative impact on the projects' success.

In the case of projects still in the implementation or even planning phase, the evaluation naturally focused on how well they had been fitted into the planning of the Senegalese Government and on whether the project planning and the modalities of implementation were designed in such a way that they could guarantee that the project would reach its target under the conditions of the project environment prevailing at the time of the inspection.

In no case was the scheme followed in all its points; in this evaluation it has proved sufficient to apply a reduced evaluation procedure concentrating on certain points of the target analysis, the project planning and management, the analysis of the project-executing agencies and the analysis of the project's significance in order to arrive at the most important findings on the project reality in a relatively short time and to deduce recommendations for the continuance of the project.

From the outset, the Senegalese side viewed the country evaluation as a pre-programming mission. In the view of the Ministry of Planning at least, the evaluation was a review of the developmental success which has given the decision-making

and project-executing bodies the support needed to help them draw up the programme for the future. In addition, the Ministry of Planning was interested in the evaluation's "demonstration effect" on other donors: for the first time a bilateral donor had systematically and extensively reviewed the aid it had provided. On the basis of this experience, the Senegalese Government wants to persuade other donors to carry out similar evaluation.

Annex II: Excerpt from the country evaluation of Zaire  
(1984)

Methodology and course of the evaluation

In order to meet the objective of working out recommendations for future activities, the method of this evaluation deviated from the "classic" evaluation of single projects. Due to the number of projects to be evaluated on the one hand and the limited time available on the other, it was necessary to concentrate on the essential aspects (such as the analysis of the project-executing agency, the target definition, effectiveness in terms of development, suitability, and model character). Accordingly, the evaluation was essentially restricted to the study of files and to comparatively short project visits combined with surveys. Detailed surveys "on the spot" were done in the case of only two projects implemented by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS), one in the health sector and the other in the agricultural sector. (In both cases - the project "Rural Health Service in Northern Ubangi" and the Settlement Project Mbankana -, an extensive inspection was carried out along the lines of the usual evaluation scheme since these projects which were promoted within the framework of social structure aid, were due for a developmental evaluation anyway. The pertinent reports will be submitted separately, the essential facts and findings, however, will be given scope in the country evaluation). In the case of the envisaged agricultural extension services project South Kabare, the inspection was carried out together with two experts from US-AID.

It should also be mentioned that an effort was made to supplement the experience gained in the German projects by visiting projects of other donors, primarily several private donors (the Churches!).

To elucidate the economic environment and the possibilities for private investors, the inspection mission also had a look at the projects SIFGRZAL (timber cutting and processing), SOFIDE (development bank) and the free trade zone Inga, projects in part promoted by the German side. These projects, however, did not constitute an essential part of the evaluation.

Finally, considerable scope was given to the exchange of views with the Zaire government authorities, prominent figures of business and industry and society, as well as with representatives of other important donors.