Synthesis Study of DFIDâ??s Strategic Evaluations 2005 â?? 2010

Description

Tweet

A report produced for the Independent Commission for Aid Impact
by Roger Drew, January 2011. Available as pdf.

Summary

S1. This report examined central evaluations of DFIDâ??s work published from 2006 to 2010. This included:
â?? 41 reports of the International Development Committee (IDC)
â?? Two Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer reviews
â?? 10 National Audit Office (NAO) reports
â?? 63 reports of evaluations from DFIDâ??s Evaluation Department (EVD)

S2. These evaluations consisted of various types:
â?? Studies of DFIDâ??s work overall (16%)
â?? Studies with a geographic focus (46%)
â?? Studies of themes or sectors (19%)
â?? Studies of how aid is delivered (19%) (see Figure 1)

S3. During this period, DFIDâ??s business model involved allocating funds through divisional programmes. Analysis of these evaluation studies according to this business model shows that:
â?? Across regional divisions, the amount of money covered per study varied from Â£63 million in Europe and Central Asia to Â£427 million in East and Central Africa.
â?? Across non-regional divisions, the amount of money covered per study varied from Â£84 million in Policy Division to Â£5,305 million in Europe and Donor Relations (see Figure 2).

S4. Part of the explanation of these differences is that the evaluations studied form only part of the overall scrutiny of DFIDâ??s work. In particular, its policy on evaluation commits DFID to rely on the evaluation systems of partner multilateral organisations for assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral aid. No central reviews of data generated through those systems were included in the documents reviewed for this study. The impact of DFIDâ??s Bilateral and Multilateral Aid Reviews was not considered, as the Reviews had not been completed by the time this study was undertaken.

S5. The evaluations reviewed had a strong focus on DFIDâ??s bilateral aid programmes at country level. There was a good match overall between the frequency of studying countries and the amount of DFID bilateral aid received (see Table 4). Despite the growing focus on fragile states, such countries were still less likely to be studied than non-fragile countries. Countries that received large amounts of DFID bilateral aid not evaluated in the last five years included Tanzania, Iraq and Somalia (see Table 5). Regional programmes in Africa also received large amounts of DFID bilateral aid but were not

centrally evaluated. Country programme evaluations did not consider DFIDâ??s multilateral aid specifically. None of the evaluations reviewed considered why the distribution of DFIDâ??s multilateral aid by country differs so significantly from its bilateral aid. For example, Turkey is the single largest recipient of DFID multilateral aid but receives almost nothing bilaterally (see Table 7).

S6. The evaluations reviewed covered a wide range of thematic, sectoral and policy issues (see Figure 3). These evaluations were, however, largely standalone exercises rather than drawing either retrospectively on data gathered in other evaluations or prospectively including questions into proposed evaluations. More use could have been made of syntheses of country programme evaluations for this purpose.

S7. The evaluations explored in detail the delivery of DFIDâ??s bilateral aid and issues of how aid could be delivered more effectively. The evaluations covered the provision of multilateral aid in much less detail (see paragraph S4). One area not covered in the evaluations is the increasing use of multilateral organisations to deliver bilateral aid programmes. This more than trebled from Â£389 million in 2005/6 to Â£1.3 billion in 2009/10 and, by 2009/10, was more than double the amount being provided as financial aid through both general and sectoral budget support combined.

[**RD comment**: I had the impression that DFID, like many bilateral donors, does very few ex-post evaluations, so I wanted to find out how correct this view was. I searched for â??ex-postâ?• and found nothing. The question then is whether the new Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) will address this gap â?? see more on this here]

Tags

1. DFID
2. ICAI
3. Reports

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