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# International Development Evaluation: Comparing DAC and Non-DAC Approaches

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# Executive Summary

South-South cooperation (SSC) is growing rapidly, yet little is known about SSC providers' institutions and structures, particularly regarding evaluation. As such, this paper's original aim was to examine and analyse the evaluation approaches of several SSC providers, and compare these with the evaluation modalities of selected Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors. However, throughout the course of the research, it became clear that for most SSC providers, approaches for evaluating SSC are still in the process of being developed. The current evaluation environment in the SSC sphere provides interesting learning opportunities, as it brings to light some of the key principles of both DAC and non-DAC views on what constitutes effective international development and how it can best be evaluated.

This research paper examines three non-DAC member providers of international cooperation: Brazil, Mexico and India. The research examines how each country's approach to development and evaluation has evolved into how it looks today. Each country's interests in current initiatives for further expanding and formalizing evaluation activities are also explored, along with the main challenges hindering progress. A snapshot of the trends in Russia's development cooperation evaluation is also provided<sup>1</sup>. As a point of comparison, the evaluation approaches of two DAC member countries, Japan and Australia, are described.

## Key Findings

### *Evaluation practice in non-DAC countries is still evolving*

For DAC countries, evaluation practice is formalized, mandated, and required for most international development programmes and projects. In the non-DAC countries studied, evaluation tends to be *ad hoc*, generally measuring inputs and activities, and examining performance at the output level, i.e. the timely completion of the planned activities on budget. However, each country is in the process of developing an evaluation system. Of the three non-DAC countries studied, Mexico appears to have the most formalized evaluation system: a law introduced in 2011 requires the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of development cooperation and legislates the institutional structure to foster it. Brazil is currently formulating an agreement which would standardize M&E guidelines for all government agencies involved in SSC and is publishing an evaluation manual. India is in the process of clarifying to what extent India's SSC should be monitored and evaluated.

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<sup>1</sup> Russia was not selected as one of the non-DAC countries of focus for this study. However, input from the Government of Russia provided an opportunity to bring valuable findings from this country's evaluation practice into the study.

*Non-DAC countries are interested in measuring outcomes*

Brazil, India and Mexico have all expressed an interest in adopting an approach to evaluating SSC projects that is focused on long-term outcomes/impacts. However, SSC is currently underpinned by process-oriented principles such as reciprocity, shared responsibility, and mutual interest. This presents a different perspective to traditional donors' emphasis on outcome/impact-focused evaluation designs, in the sense that processes are a means to achieving outcomes, rather than an end in themselves.

*Non-DAC countries are interested in forging a distinct path to evaluating SSC*

The SSC countries in this study are interested in forging a distinct approach to evaluating their development cooperation. The non-DAC countries consider many evaluation criteria, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact in the existing DAC evaluation standards to be appropriate to both North-South and South-South development cooperation. However, non-DAC countries are also hesitant to systematically adopt a full set of pre-existing evaluation standards comparable to those of the OECD-DAC, holding that the evaluation criteria and standards for assessing performance should not be set unilaterally by the cooperation provider. SSC projects are framed as partnerships in pursuit of mutual benefits. Correspondingly, a common view amongst the non-DAC countries studied is that all countries involved in a development project should determine their own standards to measure a project's performance.

*The nature of SSC presents challenges to building comprehensive evaluation systems*

The agencies responsible for SSC in the non-DAC countries studied are engaged in various initiatives to increase their M&E capacity, such as trainings, manual design, and studies such as this one. However, a major challenge to building any sort of evaluation system is that SSC is typically decentralized among many agencies that respond to specific requests on a project-by-project basis. Furthermore, SSC encompasses a much broader set of activities than traditional aid, making it harder to introduce systematic approaches with broad applicability. Lastly, since SSC often involves a large number of small projects (rather than a smaller number of large programmes), it is difficult to develop metrics that can adequately capture this scale.

## **Conclusions**

The non-DAC countries in this study share the view that SSC providers should develop an evaluation system which differs from that of the North-South aid approach and is appropriate to SSC in its scope and design. However, there is general consensus that

there are certain principles and approaches within the OECD-DAC evaluation toolkit that may be useful for this endeavour, such as the focus on longer-term impacts and results.

Evaluation is a subjective process: evaluation policies, standards and practices are founded on certain sets of norms and values. As described in this paper, each non-DAC country has its own unique institutional structure, political environment, and approach to SSC. All of these factors influence how it chooses to design its evaluation structure, and what its evaluation system will ultimately look like.

In a few years' time, many more non-DAC countries will likely have developed their own evaluation standards, policies and practices that can be more fully explored. With this in mind, non-DAC cooperation providers and partners may have much to learn from each other's experiences, to support each other in determining their own approaches to evaluation that can best suit their individual SSC contexts.

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# 1.0 Introduction

Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) is pleased to present this paper, *International Development Evaluation: Comparing DAC<sup>2</sup> and Non-DAC Approaches* to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) China. This report summarizes the findings of research undertaken between September 2013 and April 2014, and presents the analysis and conclusions which have resulted from this undertaking.

## 1.1 Objective of Study

The goal of this study is to provide the Chinese Government with evidence-based research on approaches to evaluating development cooperation, focusing on non-DAC evaluation of SSC for development. This paper aims to provide policy-relevant research that compares the international development evaluation practices of non- Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries. It examines the policies and practices of a selection of these countries which engage in international development assistance, namely Brazil, Mexico and India. These cases were chosen for their relevance to the research interests of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC). While not originally included as one of the non-DAC countries selected for examination, a relevant brief overview of Russia is also included. Findings pertaining to Australia and Japan, both DAC members, are also presented in order to provide a point of comparison.

## 1.2 Methods

The data collection for this project included both primary and secondary research. The secondary data collection consisted of a review of relevant documents, literature, and online resources. The primary data collection comprised a series of key informant interviews, undertaken with knowledgeable public sector or academic representatives from the selected countries (interview questions see Annex).

## 1.3 Limitations

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<sup>2</sup> DAC refers to countries that are members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. It comprises the traditionally understood “donor” countries, the full list of which can be found here: [www.oecd.org/dac/dacmembers.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dac/dacmembers.htm). To put it simply, this paper looks at the practices of non-traditional donor countries, but also uses Japan and Australia and examples of traditional donors for comparative purposes.

Significant and unexpected challenges were encountered throughout the course of this study. The challenges explained below were addressed by extending the timeframe of the study, changing the data collection strategy mid-course, and modifying the outline for this paper:

*1. Assumptions around evaluation theory and practice are not universal*

As the researchers learned throughout this assignment, many of the contemporary debates on evaluation between DAC countries are deemed irrelevant, or simply not of interest, to non-DAC countries. For example, many of the questions regarding evaluation policies and standards assume that non-DAC countries are interested in evaluating their development programming in a systematic way. While there is certainly some interest in standardization, SSC principles dictate that the partner country's<sup>3</sup> priorities be placed before that of the development partner (i.e. "donor"), which may or may not include adherence to such standards.

*2. Evaluation of development assistance less prevalent than presumed*

In general, research questions assumed that more evaluation has been conducted by non-DAC countries than has actually taken place. In reality, evaluation of SSC projects is still in its very early days. In light of this, some of the original parameters of the research had to be revised in order to take the analysis in a direction that was relevant for this context and from which useful conclusions could be drawn.

*3. Challenges in identifying relevant information*

This study employed a typical methodology for a comparative review in which pertinent data sources (both people and documents) are unknown at the start of the project. The idea was that initial key informants would be identified collaboratively by the consultants and UNDP China, and then a rolling approach (a.k.a. "snowball sampling") would be used to identify further data sources.

In reality, this strategy proved challenging for a variety of reasons. Securing interviews with officials from non-DAC countries proved very difficult. This appears to have been due to a combination of issues. Firstly, because evaluation activities are nascent and many development cooperation units are currently in structural flux, some countries had difficulty identifying the appropriate person or people with the knowledge and authority to respond to the questions.

Secondly, some of the study questions may have been off-putting since their focus was not well matched to the context of the non-DAC countries, both in terms of their depth as

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<sup>3</sup> "Partner country" and "partnership" are the terms generally used in SSC and also throughout this paper to reflect the type of cooperative relationship between parties involved, rather than the traditional donor/recipient relationship.



well as the DAC-centric way in which they were framed. Obtaining documents from non-DAC countries was also exceedingly challenging: few provided detailed information about the resources they contribute due to a lack of detailed data and standardized criteria to measure these resource flows and/or an intentional decision not to make this information public.

Lastly, but importantly, few of non-DAC countries' evaluation has been documented thus far. It is the conjecture of the researchers that had this study been undertaken even a few years into the future, there would likely be much more information to work with.

The above limitations were addressed somewhat by amending the research and data collection questions. Proxy data sources were also used, for example, interviewing academics knowledgeable about government policies rather than government officials themselves and conducting extensive online research. However, some gaps do remain, and are noted throughout the report. For example, there is an absence of perception-based information for some profiled countries for which we were unable to conduct an interview with a government representative (Japan and India). In other cases (Australia), the organizations were undergoing transition rendering current documentation obsolete.



## 2.0 South-South Cooperation Evaluation: Historical Trajectory and Context

OECD-DAC defines evaluation of development assistance as the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. According to DAC standards, the aim of evaluation is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability (Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 2010).

While the definitions, standards, and criteria developed by the OECD have long been described as the gold standard in international development evaluation, this may not hold true for non-traditional donor countries (i.e. non-DAC members). As non-DAC countries begin to evaluate their own work abroad, they do not necessarily see the standards selected by developed countries as meeting their own needs for accountability and learning within an SSC approach.

In general, the values and principles of SSC tend to more strongly place the partner country's priority needs, as defined by the partner country, at the centre of development cooperation. While traditional donors have built up accountability structures such as required evaluation for their projects, the emphasis in SSC tends to be on speed and economy of assistance (UNDP, 2013, p. 56).

This section provides a brief overview of the history and institutional context of the provision and evaluation of development cooperation by each of the three non-DAC countries profiled for this study. A brief overview of Russia is also included.

### 2.1 Brazil

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#### Country Summary

Located within the Ministry of External Affairs (MRE), and guided by foreign policy priorities, the Brazilian Development Agency (*Agência Brasileira de Cooperação*, or ABC) is the body responsible for coordinating Brazil's technical cooperation. Largely conducted as bilateral SSC, ABC uses a demand-driven approach and accepts requests for projects from other developing countries. Brazil has distanced itself from both the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), and is a strong proponent of fully distinguishing SSC from the DAC approach of cooperation. At this stage, Brazil has not developed policies or explicit standards

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to guide the evaluation of its cooperation, and does not require implementing partners to systematically monitor or evaluate projects. As such, Brazil rarely conducts evaluations of development projects. Brazil is currently formulating M&E guidelines for agencies involved in SSC and is publishing an evaluation manual.

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## 2.1.1 Brazil's Evaluation of Development Assistance

### ***History of Evaluation***

The Government of Brazil has had a performance management system with internal and external controls (including an audit process performed by a central agency) in place for many years. In the last decade, Brazil has conducted basic internal evaluations of major domestic programmes in its multi-year plan. However, Brazil has not developed a government-wide evaluation structure and it rarely conducts external evaluations of its projects and programmes (UNDP Brazil Staff, 2013).

### ***Current Evaluation Structures***

Currently, Brazil does not have policies or standards addressing the evaluation of SSC (ABC staff, 2013). The MRE's internal bylaw designates the ABC as the institutional body responsible for evaluating SSC (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação, 2012b). To fulfil this responsibility, ABC seeks to coordinate with the relevant Brazilian government agencies leading the implementation of the initiative (e.g. Ministry of Health) to do the evaluation. Thus, in principle, evaluation of SSC is a shared responsibility between ABC and its implementing partners.

In the case of SSC implemented through a triangular approach, ABC evaluates the project jointly with the third party implementing agency. Typically, the third party agency will provide the M&E standards and plan, and ABC will strive to follow these procedures (ABC staff, 2013).

### ***Current Evaluation Activities***

With very few exceptions, Brazilian development cooperation initiatives do not formally include an M&E component. Outcomes and impacts are not measured, and M&E tasks are specified *ad hoc* on a project-by-project basis. Currently, monitoring consists of recording project activities in a simple log frame. Occasionally, a follow-up mission to examine projects is conducted (ABC staff, 2013; UNDP Brazil Staff, 2013). Upon completion of an SSC project, a final report is submitted, which includes a descriptive section on the activities implemented and a brief overview of the project's quality, although there is no uniform standard for defining quality (ABC staff, 2013). ABC publications about its development cooperation initiatives are broadly descriptive, explaining what was done

and who was involved.

Notable exceptions in Brazil include the National Service for Industrial Apprenticeship<sup>4</sup> (SENAI) and the Ministry of Health, which have both formally built M&E into their programme management structure (Cabral & Weinstock, 2010). SENAI was created in 1941, supported by mandatory contributions from companies in the sectors of industry, fisheries, communications and some segments of transportation, with the mandate of providing professional education and quality technical services that promote innovation and help increase competitiveness of Brazilian industries. Currently,

- SENAI has 809 mobile and stationary operational units across the country, receiving about 2.5 million enrollments in about 3 thousand courses that prepare workers for 28 industrial areas;
- Courses and technological services are offered in areas of design, energy, logistics, environment and automation, among others;
- Courses range from professional learning, secondary technical education and higher education and postgraduate studies<sup>5</sup>.

The Ministry of health provides conditions for the promotion, protection and recovery of health of the population, reducing diseases, controlling endemic diseases and parasitic diseases and enhancing health surveillance, thereby giving better quality of life in Brazil. Some of its main areas of competence include:

- National health policy
- Coordination and supervision of the health system
- Environmental health and actions for the promotion, protection and recovery of individual and collective health, including that of workers and of the Indians
- Scientific research and technology in healthcare

The Ministry of Health has earned a particularly strong reputation in this regard through its current efforts to systematically introduce impact evaluation. The Ministry of Health also maintains a publicly accessible management system for international cooperation initiatives in the health sector<sup>6</sup> (SISCOOP), through which project planning information, objectives, and monitoring information on activities are collated and shared (Brazil Ministry of Health, n.d.). This system is still under improvement with plans to soon publish outcome-focused evaluation information as it becomes available.

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<sup>4</sup> *Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial.*

<sup>5</sup> More information available online in Portuguese: <http://www.portaldaindustria.com.br/senai/>

<sup>6</sup> Sistema de gestão de projetos e ações de cooperação internacional em saúde.

### ***Current Initiatives for Progress***

ABC has sought to sign an agreement with Brazilian SSC partner institutions that would include guidelines for M&E. However, this initiative is a slow process given ABC's limited political clout<sup>7</sup> and has not yet been successful (ABC staff, 2013).

Recently, ABC developed an evaluation manual which will be published for internal use in the coming months. Drawing on best evaluation practices in the literature, Brazilian expertise, and tailored to reflect the Brazilian context, this manual proposes a standardized set of methodologies and processes for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating SSC projects (ABC staff, 2013). ABC sought for the manual to be relevant to the wide range of project types and sizes (from very small to large) that Brazil undertakes. It does not dictate that a particular evaluation methodology be followed, but rather provides general terms of reference outlining what an evaluation should include, and suggestions for when to contract an external evaluator. ABC plans to institutionalize the manual internally and hopes that it will also be adopted and institutionalized by partners, and thereby increase and improve M&E efforts. The extent to which this effort will be successful remains uncertain given that ABC does not have the legislative authority to ensure the institutionalization of the manual across partners (ABC staff, 2013).

### ***Challenges***

According to ABC, successfully involving and coordinating all parties required to collect relevant M&E information can be challenging (ABC staff, 2013). In addition to its lack of formal authority in the matter, ABC is a relatively small agency that does not have staff specifically responsible for M&E (Ibid.). It is staffed primarily by career diplomats who frequently rotate positions, and lacks a large enough cadre of permanent technical staff with the time and/or skills for M&E (Cabral & Weinstock, 2010).

## **2.1.2 Background: Brazil's Development Assistance Context**

### ***Historical Trajectory & Institutional Context***

The origins of Brazilian SSC go back to the 1970s and 80s. ABC was created in 1987 and has evolved to become the coordinating body for Brazilian technical cooperation. Today, ABC is institutionally located in the MRE as a department linked to the Undersecretary-General for Cooperation and Trade Promotion.

ABC is mandated to negotiate, coordinate and supervise the programmes and projects managed and implemented in Brazil by traditional donors, as well as projects where

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<sup>7</sup> Many of Brazil's aid actors have their own International Affairs Units specifically dedicated to this work and thus ABC's involvement in these initiatives is sometimes limited despite its official mandate as a central coordination body (ABC staff, 2013).

national Brazilian partners are the providers to other South countries (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação, 2012c). Its approximately 100 staff members play a coordinating role, relying on Brazilian public institutions at federal and state level, as well as private sector actors, to provide technical expertise for projects (ABC staff, 2013). ABC is divided into three main operational units: an SSC coordination unit dealing with technical cooperation provided by Brazil, a coordination unit for multilateral cooperation, and a coordination unit for bilateral and trilateral cooperation, managing both received and outgoing cooperation.

In terms of the project approval process, ABC accepts requests for projects from other developing countries and then reaches out to the relevant Brazilian organizations and agencies, most of which now have dedicated international units, to gauge their interest and capacity to undertake a project. If the required Brazilian partner organizations are willing to commit to the project, ABC undertakes an initial planning mission to the developing country to create a project strategy, then drafts a project plan, which is sent to the partner country for finalization and signature (ABC staff, 2013).

Responsible solely for technical<sup>8</sup> SSC, ABC is only one of the many bodies that coordinate the various aspects of Brazilian cooperation. Other forms of cooperation, such as economic and educational cooperation, are coordinated by other Brazilian public and semi-public institutions, as well as private organizations. These actors are involved to different extents in designing, negotiating and providing technical cooperation. State agencies such as the Brazilian Company of Agricultural Research,<sup>9</sup> the National Bank of Economic and Social Development<sup>10</sup>, as well as private organizations such as SENAI, are also important players in Brazilian cooperation. However, civil society organizations do not play a significant role in official cooperation (Beghin, 2012; UNDP Brazil Staff, 2013).

### ***Approach, Goals & Focus***

Brazil's national development goals for SSC are determined by foreign policy priorities. However, there is not yet specific legislation that regulates cooperation provided by Brazilian public sector institutions to developing countries. Goals are set by the Brazilian diplomacy agency in the MRE. This agency provides ABC with policy guidance on geographic areas of focus, as well as broad development goals based on its current foreign policy objectives (ABC staff, 2013). More specific objectives are established on a case-by-case basis for bilateral cooperation. In the case of SSC conducted through the triangular approach, ABC works within the thematic focus of its implementing partner(s), following multilateral as well as project-specific agreements (ABC staff, 2013). ABC

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<sup>8</sup> Technical cooperation (TC)/ Technical assistance (TA) are forms of development cooperation, where expertise is provided to developing countries in the form of personnel, training, research, and associated costs.

<sup>9</sup> *Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agrícola (EMBRAPA)*.

<sup>10</sup> *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico y Social (BNDES)*.

describes its SSC approach as being demand-driven, and based on solidarity and respect for other countries' sovereignty.

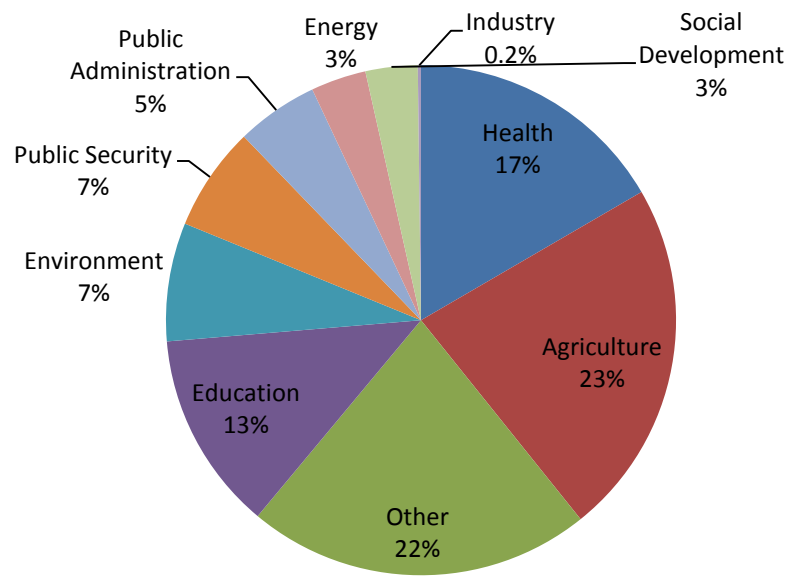
Brazil is a strong proponent of fully distinguishing SSC from the DAC approach of cooperation. Brazil has distanced itself from the Paris Declaration and the AAA and does not participate in the Organization of American States' Inter-American Network of Cooperation, preferring to pursue its own course and approach to development cooperation.

Using the bilateral approach of SSC is Brazil's political priority, and the majority (about 80%) of ABC's SSC is provided via this approach (ABC staff, 2013). In addition, Brazil is one of the SSC countries that most actively provide development cooperation through a triangular approach of multilateral cooperation, typically in partnership with a UN agency, or with a DAC country (most often Germany and Japan). In these cases, Brazil also fully funds the activities that it undertakes (ABC staff, 2013).

Brazil's SSC extends across all continents. It focuses primarily on Latin America, and specifically on the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), but also includes Africa. Through the India-Brazil-South Africa Group (IBSA), Brazil has developed cooperation partnerships throughout Africa, with a particular focus on Portuguese-speaking countries. It also occasionally carries out projects in Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania.

Since it became active in SSC, Brazil has undertaken about 1,000 development cooperation projects in 80 countries. The volume of its technical cooperation has continued to rise, reaching 52 million BRL (22.5 million USD) in 2010, not including contributions of expertise provided in-kind by Brazilian cooperating institutions (Cabral & Weinstock, 2010, p. 3). As of late 2013, ABC had approximately 250 active projects in 50 countries, ranging from very small, short-term projects to medium-sized, longer-term initiatives (ABC staff, 2013). As seen in Exhibit 2.1.1 below, Brazil's main area of focus is institution building through technical assistance, primarily in agriculture, health and education. Other areas of involvement include justice, sports, environment, information technologies, workplace safety, urban development, air transportation and tourism. In addition, more recent projects have included components of culture, trade, and human rights (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação, 2012a).

**Exhibit 2.1.1: Distribution of Brazilian technical cooperation by thematic areas**



Source: Based on 2010 data provided by ABC. In Cabral & Weinstock, 2010.

## 2.2 India

### Country Summary

Demand-driven and with a focus on mutual benefits, India's cooperation with other Southern countries is largely conducted through bilateral channels without distinguishing between aid, trade, technology transfer, and development activities.

With the recent (2012) creation of the Development Partnership Administration (DPA), the first government agency specifically devoted to international cooperation, India is moving towards centrally managing its SSC policies, in one form or another, since its independence in 1947. With the creation of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) in 2010, India is increasingly recognizing the importance of evaluation – at least with its domestic programming. However, it is not yet clear to what extent India's SSC will be monitored and evaluated, given that the specific roles and responsibilities of these two new entities are still being defined.

Due to the inability to secure an interview with an appropriate representative of the Government of India, and the scarcity of information publicly available on this topic, this section is relatively limited in information about India's current practices and interests in evaluation of development cooperation. India does not publish evaluations of its



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development cooperation and does not appear to have an evaluation policy requiring the regular evaluation of government programmes. Going forward, it may or may not consider this relevant in its SSC context.

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## 2.2.1 India's Evaluation of Development Assistance

### ***History of Evaluation in India***

Evaluation of India's domestic development programmes started with the introduction of planning in the 1950s. Recognizing a need to evaluate the programmes funded by government plans, the Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) was established in 1952. This financially and administratively independent agency was created as a three-tier organization within the Planning Commission, including field units and regional offices (S. P. Pal, 2011).

Since the 1970s, the PEO has gone through several periods of re-organization and eventual decline, losing autonomy from the government's Planning Commission and seeing its budget reduced as the role of central planning in India's government contracted (S. P. Pal, 2011). Recently, however, there has been a resurgence of the role of evaluation in India's domestic development programmes. Since 2007, an online Management Information System has been developed for the central government's flagship programmes, and a government-wide Performance Management and Evaluation System has been introduced.

The most recent change in the evaluation environment in India is the creation of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), which became functional in late 2013 and will absorb PEO. The IEO is funded by the Planning Commissions, though unlike PEO, it is at arm's length from the Planning Commission both technically and administratively. However, IEO has no legislative underpinning (Santosh Mehrotra, 2013). IEO is tasked with providing an independent assessment of the outcomes and impacts of the major domestic flagship programmes of the Government of India, and advising on management systems (Government of India, 2010).

India does not have a policy requiring the regular evaluation of government programmes and thus the IEO does not regularly evaluate programmes. Rather, line ministries, the PEO, or the two in consultation, may commission an evaluation to review the performance of large flagship programmes. Small evaluations of domestic programmes are also undertaken routinely and periodically by implementing ministries, most of which have funds earmarked specifically for M&E (Santosh Mehrotra, 2013). Evaluations are also frequently conducted by external parties, most typically research institutions. The details

of how these smaller evaluations are undertaken are not clear, as there is no standard approach to evaluation across government.

### ***Current Evaluation Structures***

As PEO has focused only on domestic programmes, before the establishment of the DPA, India did not have an institutional body dedicated to M&E of SSC (staff member at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), 2013). Like IEO, DPA is very newly created and its exact role is still being defined. With the creation of these two new bodies, it is not yet clear to what extent India's SSC will be monitored and evaluated, nor is it understood where exactly that responsibility might lie (RIS staff member, 2013). Due to the inability to secure an interview with an appropriate representative of the Government of India, it is also not clear whether India has an evaluation policy that applies to SSC.

### ***Current Evaluation Activities***

It is not clear whether India undertakes evaluations of its SSC initiatives. However, according to an evaluation specialist at an India-based research institute that works frequently with the Government, India is seeking to develop a robust base of analysis and evidence upon which to build an evaluation framework for SSC (RIS staff member, 2013).

Web-based research revealed some information about India's evaluation of SSC specifically related to trade. In 2012 India reported that it had not yet undertaken any evaluations of its cooperation programmes or projects (OECD/World Trade Organization Questionnaire for SSC completed by India, 2012). However, in 2012 India noted that it had plans to evaluate its trade related cooperation initiatives for 2013.

### ***Current Initiatives for Progress***

The creation of the IEO could enable progress towards the evaluation of India's SSC. However, as the research team was not able to secure an interview with a government representative, the Government of India's intentions to move in this direction remain unclear. Given the very recent change in political leadership, there is further uncertainty about what India's future intentions in this regard may be.

### ***Challenges***

The research was unable to reveal information about the major challenges India faces in evaluating its development cooperation. However, in its response to the OECD's research questionnaire about the evaluation of trade-related cooperation, India cited several challenges it faces in evaluating such programmes (OECD/World Trade Organization Questionnaire for SSC completed by India, 2012). These included: difficulties in setting quantifiable objectives and obtaining in-country data, an absence of suitable indicators,

and the inability of partners to collect and report data (Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry India, 2012).

## 2.2.2 Background: India's Development Assistance Context

### ***Historical Trajectory & Institutional Context***

India's provision of development assistance dates back to the year after its independence, when it supported Bhutan in 1948 (Rani D. Mullen, 2013). The first decades of Indian development assistance focused mainly on multi-year loans to neighbouring East Asian countries, offered primarily through the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Beginning in the early 1960s, India's approach shifted to the focus on technical assistance and training. In 1964, the Indian Technical and Economic Assistance programme (ITEC) was launched by the MEA to provide cooperation through capacity building to other countries in the South via training, skills development and experience sharing.

In 2004, India re-structured its assistance delivery channel by introducing Lines of Credit. Backed by the government, and managed by the Export Import Bank of India (Exim), these Lines of Credit are provided to other developing countries as a means of financing MEA-designed projects in promotion of the export of India's projects, goods and services (Sachin Chaturvedi, 2011). A significant institutional change took place with the introduction of the DPA, formed in 2012 as a department within the MEA to centrally manage development cooperation.

Today, the MEA decides on the focus countries and the nature of development partnerships while the DPA manages grants and coordinates all assistance, ITEC manages technical assistance, and Exim Bank manages Lines of Credit. India also engages in SSC via the Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa Programme (SCAAP) and the Technical Cooperation Scheme of the Colombo Plan<sup>11</sup>. Like Brazil, civil society organizations do not play a significant role in Indian cooperation initiatives (Rathin Roy, 2013).

There is not yet specific legislation that regulates cooperation provided by Indian public sector institutions to developing countries. India's national development goals for SSC are determined by foreign policy priorities. The MEA sets the goals based on its current foreign policy objectives and then provides the PDA with policy guidance on the geographic areas of focus and broad goals to be achieved (Rani D. Mullen, 2013; Sachin Chaturvedi, 2011).

### ***Approach, Goals & Focus***

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<sup>11</sup> This section draws largely from Rani D. Mullen, 2013.

India provides development assistance directly through bilateral partnerships as well as regional and multilateral agencies. It also participates in triangular partnerships: the earliest example of such is the construction of a road to send economic support from India to Nepal that was undertaken jointly by Nepal, India and the United States in the late 1950s (Sachin Chaturvedi, 2011).

India describes its development assistance approach as demand-driven, responding to the development priorities of partner countries, and focusing on the mutual interests of India and the partner country (Rani D. Mullen, 2013; RIS staff member, 2013). India does not officially attach conditionalities to the cooperation it provides and its approach is described as one that does not prescribe policies, and does not challenge national sovereignty (Rani D. Mullen, 2013; RIS staff member, 2013). India refers to its approach as a “development compact”, a non-compartmentalized approach where there is no distinction between aid, trade, technology transfer, and development (RIS staff member, 2013).

India’s cooperation focuses primarily on its East Asian neighbours and Africa. It also cooperates with the Middle East, and to a lesser degree, Latin America. While there is no information available about the value of in-kind cooperation provided, the Government of India makes public the EXIM Bank’s Operative Lines of Credit to each country. According to calculations based on this data, the ten countries that received the most credit for the 2005-2013 period were Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Sudan, Mozambique, Nepal, Myanmar, D.R. Congo, Tanzania, and Mali. The biggest recipient, Sri Lanka, received 1216.16 million USD during this period while Mali received 253 million USD (Rani D. Mullen, 2013).

India does not publish a list of its thematic priorities. However, its portfolio of projects over time reflects a sectoral emphasis on agriculture, health, and technology and infrastructure. Within this, there is a focus on human resource development programmes, and a particular emphasis on training and skills development (Sachin Chaturvedi, 2011). Its activities in these areas include offering university scholarships and workshops, lending subject-matter and technical experts, and building infrastructure such as research institutions, hydroelectricity and power transmission systems. India also offers concessional loans for these projects through EXIM Bank.

The size and diversity of India’s development partnerships have grown significantly over the past decade, and today, are comparable in volume to the foreign aid budgets of smaller, high-income European countries (IDCR, n.d.). The value of India’s development cooperation has grown particularly quickly in recent years. Since the early 1960s India has offered over 2 billion USD in development assistance, with the budgeted figure for

2013-14 reaching over 1 billion USD (Rani D. Mullen, 2013).

## 2.3 Mexico

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### Country Summary

With membership in the OECD and observer status on the DAC since 1994, Mexico acts as interlocutor between Southern and Northern countries in international development cooperation. The principal administrative body responsible for programming, promoting, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating Mexico's international cooperation is the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID). This body has a formal mandate and legislated responsibilities for evaluation in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration. However, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of Mexico's international cooperation are not yet monitored or evaluated; AMEXCID is in the process of establishing a directorate that will focus on planning and evaluation, including, potentially, impact evaluations.

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### 2.3.1 Mexico's Evaluation of Development Assistance

#### *History of Evaluation in Mexico*

Mexico has a relatively solid legislative and administrative foundation for the evaluation of domestic programmes that can inform, or could be expanded to include, an M&E system for SSC. The Federal Budget and Fiscal Responsibility Law<sup>12</sup> and the General Law of Social Development<sup>13</sup>, both adopted in the mid-2000s, are the centrepieces of evaluation framework in Mexico. The laws comprise tools such as a performance measurement system, results-based budgeting, and evaluation of social development policies. The General Law of Social Development created the National Council of Social Policy Evaluation (CONEVAL)<sup>14</sup>, an autonomous body that is mandated to take the primary responsibility for evaluating national social development policy and establishing guidelines and criteria for the design, identification and measurement of poverty. And yet, this evaluation policy only covers the evaluation of domestic social programmes and is not intended to address international development cooperation projects.

#### *Current Evaluation Structures*

Mexico's Law of International Cooperation for Development (2011) created the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID in Spanish) and

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<sup>12</sup> *La Ley Federal de Presupuesto y Responsabilidad Hacendaria*

<sup>13</sup> *Ley General de Desarrollo Social*

<sup>14</sup> Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política Social, see official website:  
<http://www.coneval.gob.mx/quienessomos/Paginas/Creacion-del-Coneval.aspx>

mandated the elaboration of the International Development Cooperation Programme (PROCID in Spanish), published in April 2014.<sup>15</sup> The 2011 Law also establishes that PROCID and its specific projects should be evaluated and its results disseminated. The Law includes among its basic principles the criteria of ownership, alignment, harmonization, results-based management and mutual responsibility, as established in the Declaration of Paris in 2005 (AMEXCID, n.d.-c). The results-based management principle necessitates the establishment of an M&E system, as Mexico recognizes in the PROCID (AMEXCID, 2014). According to representatives of AMEXCID, as of early 2014, AMEXCID's new organizational structure includes a directorate that will focus on development cooperation planning and evaluation which will ease compliance with the 2011 Law. To that end, AMEXCID is developing an M&E framework and toolkit for Mexico's development cooperation.

In addition, AMEXCID is responsible for developing and administering a national register of international development cooperation (called RENCID<sup>16</sup>) that will contain information about cooperation projects and initiatives, including on coordination, monitoring, and evaluation (AMEXCID, n.d.-b). Currently, AMEXCID is working in collaboration with national counterpart institutions of the Federal Public Administration to consolidate data management practices for the full implementation of RENCID.

### ***Current Evaluation Activities***

Traditionally, Mexico's evaluation of development cooperation consisted of budgetary monitoring, general assessment of the execution of cooperation programmes (midterm and final assessments) and to a more limited extent, monitoring results. AMEXCID asks designers of international cooperation projects to state any concrete and tangible results that the project will seek to achieve, and to define quantitative indicators to measure each result (AMEXCID, Unit of Economic Relations and International Cooperation, n.d; AMEXCID, 2013b). The proposal form also requests that project partners measure their project outcomes throughout and at the end of the implementation period. Even though activity reports are requested, outputs, outcomes and impacts of international cooperation projects cannot yet be systematically monitored. The challenges related to M&E practices in SSC go beyond the methodological design of projects; they are closely related to staff availability, coordination among the diversity of national actors that participate in technical cooperation projects, capacity development, and process streamlining.

### ***Current Initiatives for Progress***

Taking an important step forward towards the collection, aggregation, and dissemination of information about SSC, AMEXCID recently made public the financial value of its

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<sup>15</sup> Diario Oficial de la Federación, Programa de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, 30 de abril de 2014, available at [http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota\\_detalle.php?codigo=5342827&fecha=30/04/2014](http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5342827&fecha=30/04/2014)

<sup>16</sup> Registro Nacional de la Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo.

contributions to international cooperation for development for the first time. This included direct financial disbursements and in-kind support by thematic area of cooperation including: humanitarian aid, contributions to international organizations, economic/financial cooperation, technical/scientific cooperation and educational/cultural cooperation. Compiling this information involved collaboration with 22 public institutions and was among the first steps in consolidating the national register (RENCID) that AMEXCID is mandated to provide by the Law of International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID, 2013a).

According to representatives of AMEXCID, the agency is undergoing significant institutional changes to improve development cooperation processes, including evaluation practices. As mentioned above, AMEXCID is designing a framework for project planning, monitoring and evaluation which is more comprehensive and results-oriented while still tailored to the reality of Mexico's SSC. (AMEXCID staff member, 2014a). The new framework will require project proposals to state clear objectives along with relevant and measureable indicators in order to be approved. AMEXCID's directorate in charge of planning and evaluation will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the new tools and processes related to the introduction of the M&E system, so that to start with, the immediate project outcomes can be measured. AMEXCID plans to use this evaluation information to inform its future programme and organizational planning (AMEXCID, 2014). The feedback loop will be based on ex-post surveys and meta-analysis at country programme level. Also under preliminary consideration is eventually contracting external evaluators to undertake deeper evaluations for large-scale projects. If Mexico decides to take this route, the projects to be evaluated externally would be selected either based on their budget size in absolute amounts or by drawing a sample of all cooperation projects (AMEXCID staff member, 2014b). In addition to this framework, AMEXCID recognizes that capacity development and strategic communication are basic tools for an M&E system, and is putting in place a training system, for both AMEXCID staff and national counterparts.

### **Challenges**

Compared to Brazil and India, Mexico has built a solid institutional and legislative foundation capable of supporting a standardized evaluation system for its international cooperation initiatives. Representatives of AMEXCID nonetheless noted that there would be further challenges in establishing standardized evaluation processes, namely, the difficulty of developing concrete objectives and measureable indicators for its more intangible SSC goals, such as regional integration. This is why the first period will aim to better understand what information exists and is still needed around methodological tools and training. AMEXCID also noted that it has so far been difficult to develop systematic metrics to cover the plethora of small-scale technical cooperation activities



(AMEXCID staff member, 2014a).

### 2.3.2 Background: Mexico's Development Assistance Context

#### ***Historical Trajectory & Institutional Context***

An institutional body for development cooperation has existed in Mexico since the establishment of the General Directorate of International Technical Cooperation in 1971 (AMEXCID, n.d.-a). In 1988, Mexico enshrined international development cooperation in its constitution as one of the principles of its foreign policy, and in 1990, the Mexican Programme for Technical Cooperation for Development was established. Moving beyond its active general participation in development cooperation discussions, in 2011, Mexico made official its commitment to the global development agenda by introducing the Law of International Cooperation for Development. This law instituted a national system of international cooperation for development for the first time as a formal policy in Mexico, including outlining the institutional framework and objectives in this area. This law also mandated the creation of AMEXCID as new unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2012.

AMEXCID's advisory council is composed of members of twenty national government bodies, which together formulate and approve PROCID<sup>17</sup>. This Programme was published online for the first time in April 2014<sup>18</sup>. PROCID outlines the strategic direction and procedures to be followed in implementing international cooperation actions toward the achievement of objectives as established in the 2011 law for the 2014-2018 period. AMEXCID implements its programming through five general directorates: educational and cultural cooperation; economic cooperation and promotion; bilateral economic cooperation and relations; technical and scientific cooperation; and Mesoamerica<sup>19</sup> integration and development projects. Mexican cooperation initiatives include a variety of actors by involving civil society organizations, private sector enterprises, academia, and state and municipal level governments in dialogue, coordination, and implementation (Citali Ayala Martinez, 2009).

#### ***Approach, Goals & Focus***

Mexico provides cooperation to other Southern partner countries directly as a bilateral partner through horizontal cooperation, and through a triangular approach to multilateral cooperation. In the triangular approach to cooperation, Mexico supports its partners with the administration of resources, typically by providing advice and lending technical

<sup>17</sup> According to AMEXCID, PROCID has been developed and will be published in the coming months.

<sup>18</sup> Accessible online in Spanish:

<http://www.amexcid.gob.mx/images/pdf/procid/Programa-de-Cooperacion-Internacional-para-el-Desarrollo-2014-2018.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Mesoamerica is a region and cultural area that includes Mexico and Central American countries.

experts (AMEXCID, 2012).

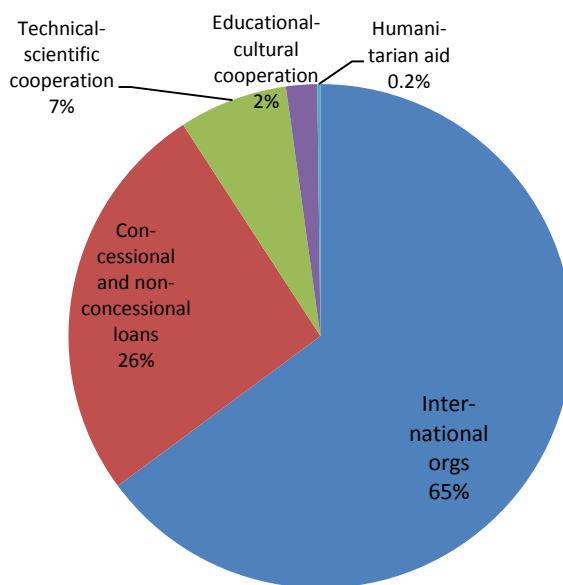
Mexico also plays an additional role in SSC that is unique among middle-income countries. Unlike India, Brazil and China, Mexico is a member of the OECD and has observer status on the DAC. In this capacity, Mexico is a facilitator of knowledge exchange between emerging countries and traditional donor countries, both learning about DAC donor practices and voicing a development assistance recipient perspective.

The Government of Mexico states that the overarching goal of its development cooperation activities is to promote sustainable development (AMEXCID, 2012). In the PROCID, AMEXCID prioritizes expanding its role as a provider of SSC. However, its approach to SSC as described will follow OECD principles. In the PROCID, Mexico outlines that its international development cooperation programme for 2014-2018 will be governed by Article 1 of its 2011 Law of International Cooperation for Development, which is based on the 2005 Paris Declaration Principles, as well as the principles outlined in the 2011 Busan Partnership document. Specifically, Mexico cites: ownership and alignment, harmonization, results-based management, shared responsibility, transparency and accountability, a gender perspective, a focus on human rights, inclusiveness, complementarities, sustainability, and joint-financing (AMEXCID, 2014, pp. 27–28). Based on the PROCID, Mexico will seek to follow DAC principles in providing SSC; PROCID does not mention any principles or approaches that depart from the DAC approach.

Mexico has provided cooperation in every continent when bilateral, regional and multilateral channels are all considered. The particular geographic focus of Mexico's cooperation efforts is primarily Central America, and secondly, the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean where the general objective is regional integration and development. This geographic focus is mandated by Mexico's 2011 Law of International Cooperation for Development.

In 2012, Mexico offered approximately 277 million USD of development cooperation (AMEXCID, 2013a). Exhibit 2.3.1 below depicts the distribution of Mexican financial contributions for development cooperation by type.

### Exhibit 2.3.1 - Distribution of Mexican financial contributions for development cooperation by type



Source: (AMEXCID, 2013a)

Based on 2012 data, the sector focus of Mexico's cooperation was primarily in: environment (20%), education (15%), government and civil society (15%), agriculture, forestry and fisheries (12%), and health (6%) (AMEXCID, 2012, p. 6). In terms of specific areas of focus, the majority (roughly 75% in 2012) of Mexico's cooperation focuses on human resources development, specifically, on capacity building in partner countries through workshops, seminars, technical advising, formal educational opportunities, and to a lesser extent, joint research as part of technical and scientific cooperation (AMEXCID staff member, 2014a; AMEXCID, 2012, p. 7). The available data does not include a breakdown by region or country.

## 2.4 Russia: A Snapshot

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**Country Summary**

Russia was not originally selected as one of the non-DAC countries of focus for this study. Russia does not identify itself as a provider of SSC and was recently (2013) re-classified as a high-income country by the World Bank. However, Russia is not a member of the OECD and its approach to international cooperation and the evaluation of such initiatives provide a unique type of non-DAC perspective worth exploring. At the end of this study (April 2014), an opportunity arose to interview a knowledgeable representative of the Government of Russia. Based on this information, a brief examination of Russia's evaluation is provided below.

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**2.4.1 Russia's Evaluation of Development Assistance*****Current Evaluation Structures***

There is no policy or standard that requires Russian development assistance to be evaluated, nor any unified approach to evaluating cooperation initiatives. However, each ministry's state programme and sub-programmes, of which development cooperation initiatives form a part, have a set of expected results and key indicators which are required to be evaluated against and reported upon annually. In the case of Russian-funded initiatives administered through multilateral institutions, evaluations are conducted in accordance with the methodology and standards of the relevant multilateral institution.

***Current Evaluation Activities***

Generally speaking, when Russian ministries conduct evaluations, findings are not made public and are not widely shared, even across government. As a result, the proportion of development cooperation initiatives that Russia evaluates is unknown.

***Current Initiatives for Progress***

Russia is currently in the process of formalizing its development cooperation system. This process includes plans to establish an administrative body specifically responsible for development cooperation, as well as criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of Russian development cooperation initiatives. Still in its draft form, the general ideas for evaluation criteria are:

- Relevance of the assistance provided to the general development cooperation strategy;
- Achievement of the planned results;
- Achievement of the results as comparable or superior to the results of similar initiatives;
- Unexpected results;
- Efficiency with which results were achieved;

- Sustainability of results;
- Contribution to the development of bilateral relations between the partner country and Russia; and
- Contribution to the positive image of Russia in partner country.

Interestingly, these criteria include some of those also listed in the DAC standards (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability) as well as some (contribution to bilateral relations and cooperation provider's image in the partner country) that reflect the approach of a "business partnership" in pursuit of the mutual-gain characteristic that SSC approaches make explicit.

In the pursuit of establishing a unified approach to the evaluation of development cooperation across government, Russia currently has plans to create a development cooperation council that will have the mandate and delegated authority to request other government ministries engaged in developing cooperation work to follow evaluation standards, criteria, and guidelines once they are created.

## **2.4.2 Background: Russia's Development Assistance Context**

In Russia, bilateral international development assistance programmes are implemented as part of the programmes run by different national government ministries (known as state programmes). 14 of Russia's 42 state programmes include various activities that relate to development cooperation. A majority of Russia's development cooperation initiatives are administered by multilateral institutions. There is currently no coordination body for Russian development cooperation.

## **2.5 Comparison with DAC Member Countries**

This sub-section provides an overview of the evaluation practices of two DAC member countries, Australia and Japan, and is intended to provide a point of comparison with the non-DAC countries profiled above.

### **2.5.1 Australia**

#### ***Current Context of Development Assistance Evaluation***

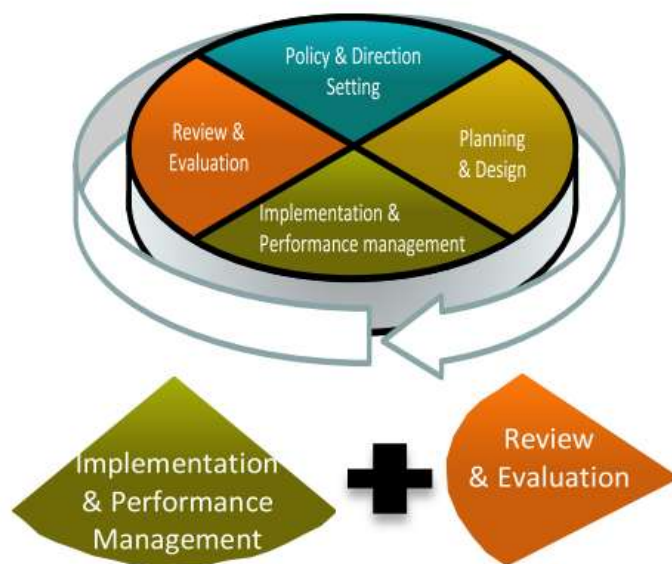
Australia's aid programme overall is undergoing a significant shift as it is absorbed within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). With respect to evaluation more specifically, the landscape is also expected to change, with all governing policy

documents to be reviewed and rewritten in the coming months. While some of these policies will likely only have minor changes, others are expected to require significant rewrites (DFAT staff member, 2014).

Australia has been a long supporter of various aid effectiveness measures, and opened its own Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) in 2006. The ODE was created as a structurally independent unit of AusAID, with a direct reporting line to the AusAID Director-General, and bringing together two units that were previously separate. It is mandated to “assess the quality and evaluate the effectiveness” of the aid programme (AusAID, 2012).

In Australia, ODE is responsible for overarching evaluation policy and standards, while the majority of actual programme evaluations are undertaken by the organization’s programmes themselves. Evaluation of programmes is conducted at many levels, including the level of initiatives (i.e. projects), programmes, across programmes, and at the sectoral level. Staff with responsibilities for performance and quality (including evaluation) sit within regional and country programme commissions and manage evaluations of their projects. According to ODE staff, evaluation is considered a core project management function that is important to understand and manage.

#### Exhibit 2.5.1 Performance Management and Evaluation at AusAID<sup>20</sup>



ODE also undertakes in-depth thematic and strategic evaluations, provides advice, and builds the evaluation capacity of the Australian development programme (ODE, 2009). Given that ODE is institutionally at arm’s length from the programmes and operations

<sup>20</sup> Source: AusAID Guideline to Evaluation, 2012.

themselves, this strategic, high-level role within the evaluation function is a way to divide the evaluation work between ODE and DFAT's programmes in a complementary fashion.

ODE is overseen by the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC), which was established in 2012 by the Foreign Minister. The IEC provides independent advice to government on all matters related to evaluation, such as ODE's evaluation plan, strategy, coverage, and risks to aid effectiveness. This committee is comprised of both internal and external experts, with the aim of providing objective guidance and additional oversight in an advisory capacity.

In Australia, it is expected that all development assistance projects above a threshold of 3 million AUD should be evaluated at least once. This threshold is soon to be raised, likely to 10 million AUD.

### ***Evaluation Policy & Criteria in Australia***

Australia's current evaluation policy, called the Performance Management and Evaluation Policy, balances both utilization of evaluation findings (i.e. organizational learning) and responsibility for results (i.e. accountability) as its main objectives. According to key informants, Australia has seven standards, with subsidiary standards. These standards and sub-standards were developed and then field-tested in programming in Indonesia (one of AusAID's largest country programmes). Over the last 18 months or so, these standards have been adapted for use throughout the department. While built upon the DAC evaluation criteria, they place more emphasis on gender equality. However, these standards may change as a result of the ongoing amalgamation with DFAT.

### ***Historical Trajectory & Institutional Context***

Australia opened the Australian Development Assistance Agency in 1973, bringing together in one office various components of development assistance that had previously operated within several different government bodies. This agency underwent several iterations, locations and name changes culminating to its last incarnation, AusAID. As of October 2013, AusAID was merged with, and subsumed under Australia's DFAT. Almost parallel mergers have also taken place in Canada and New Zealand (also both DAC countries) in recent years. In these mergers, independent development agencies were also brought under the fold of the departments with mandates for foreign affairs and trade, emphasizing greater alignment and the role of national interest in foreign aid policy. As the implementation of the merger is ongoing, the impact this will have upon the Australian aid programme is yet to be seen. However, the general shift is intended to bring the country's aid programme more closely in line with the country's foreign policy priorities.



### ***Scale of Development Assistance***

Australia is a long-standing and growing provider of development assistance, noted by OECD to be “punching at or above its weight” (OECD, 2013). With respect to aid effectiveness, Australia adheres to such international agreements as the Paris Declaration and the AAA. In 2007, Australia committed to raising the amount of its aid to 0.5% of its Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015. While it recently delayed this goal to 2018 (as it recovers from the global economic crisis), it has been scaling up its resources to meet this commitment.

### ***Sectoral Focus***

Australia’s aid programme focuses on the following sectors: health, education, economic development, governance, and humanitarian assistance (DFAT, 2014). While it provides assistance across the world, it does have a regional focus upon Asia and Oceania; all of its top 10 recipients of official development aid (ODA) are from this region (OECD, 2013). In addition, gender equality has been a key focus of Australia’s development assistance in the past two decades, which is also reflected in its evaluation standards. How the DFAT merger may change Australia’s focus going forward is yet to be seen.

### ***Current Challenges in Australian Evaluation***

Current challenges within the Australian development assistance evaluation context include technical and supply issues; the need for evaluations to be planned well in advanced and adequately resourced has been recognized (ODE staff, 2014). Also, as the new standards and procedures for evaluation continue to be rolled out across the department, ODE will be working to ensure that they are interpreted consistently and as intended. In order to more closely establish attribution, there is particular interest in improving impact evaluation. Impact evaluation is a more complex form of evaluation requiring a more intensive, expensive, and longer-term process with a focus on quantitative metrics. Within this, establishing Value for Money (i.e. efficiency) and attribution will be a focus of these efforts (ODE staff, 2014). Programming in Melanesia will likely be the focus, as Australia aims to understand its impact and role in countries like Papua New Guinea that have development issues that seem extraordinarily difficult to resolve.

## **2.5.2 Japan**

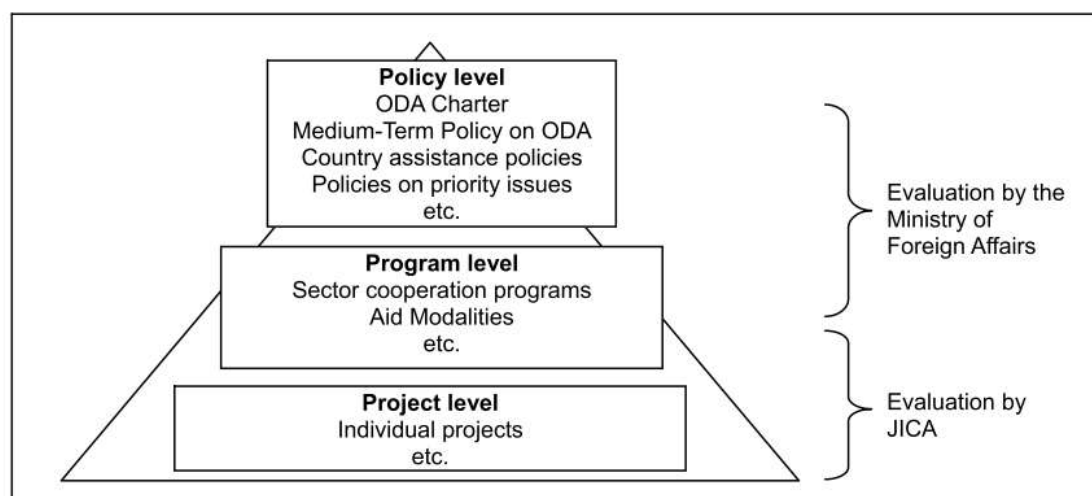
### ***Current Context of Development Assistance Evaluation***

In Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) share responsibilities for the evaluation of development assistance by size, type and target. JICA mainly evaluates development projects, called

“Operations Evaluations”, using its Plan Do Check Action (PDCA) system. “Plan” refers to pre-project evaluations; “Do” refers to mid-term reviews at the implementation stage; “Check” comprises ex-post M&E; and “Action” describes the process of feeding evaluation findings back into project planning (JICA, 2012).

While Project Implementation Departments at JICA conduct those evaluations addressing from pre-implementation to implementation (i.e. “Plan” and “Do”), JICA’s Evaluation Department conducts project-level evaluations that require extra objectivity, such as evaluations of completed projects. Evaluation results are also quantified into a rating system to reflect uniformity across projects. While MOFA sometimes conducts project-level self-evaluations on occasion, it mainly focuses on evaluations of policy and programmes. It usually conducts these evaluations as third-party evaluations (i.e. uses external evaluators) to enhance objectivity.

### Exhibit 2.5.2 How ODA is evaluated in Japan<sup>21</sup>



Prepared based on *ODA Evaluation Guidelines, 5th Edition* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Japan also has an Advisory Committee on Evaluation, an external body which provides advice on policies, and systems etc., to the Japanese government. This body recommends improvements to JICA’s evaluation methods and systems, with a view to improving overall evaluation quality. The committee is comprised of external experts from diverse professional backgrounds with expertise in both evaluation and international aid. In addition to the project evaluations conducted by JICA, MOFA undertakes evaluations of completed ODA projects that have not been completed after five and ten years for accountability purposes, as well as general grant aid of over 1 billion yen and loans of over 1.5 billion yen.

<sup>21</sup> Source: JICA, Evaluation Department. (2010). *New JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluation*, First Edition.

### ***Evaluation Policy & Criteria in Japan***

Like Australia, Japan's governing documentation reflects a dual role in evaluation as providing accountability of ODA, as well as the use of evaluation findings to improve programmes and policies. In other words, it aims to achieve both of the main pillars of evaluation, learning and accountability. JICA's guidelines for the evaluation of development assistance are currently being updated, and the extent of the upcoming changes is unknown. However, it is likely that they will still closely reflect the DAC criteria for evaluation.

In Japan's case, the current evaluation criteria are 1) Relevance of Policies, 2) Effectiveness of Results, and 3) Appropriateness of Processes (MOFA, 2013). The evaluation of policy, in particular, appears to have a more prominent role in Japan than in comparable countries. This is evidenced not only by the above criterion, but also by the fact that they have a Government Policy Evaluation Act, a Cabinet Order for its enforcement, and guidelines specific to the evaluations of policies. Japan defines policy evaluation, which is not limited to development assistance, as "...evaluating the policies in terms of necessity, efficiency, validity, etc. to improve the planning and implementation process" (MOFA, 2010). This frames evaluation as important in enhancing not only results externally (i.e. the impacts of programmes on beneficiaries) but those internal to government as well (i.e. looking inward to the performance of public bodies).

Interestingly, Japan has introduced an evaluation criterion called "diplomatic viewpoints" as of 2011, which assesses the extent to which development assistance has demonstrated positive returns for Japan as a donor country (MOFA, 2013). While the rest of the aforementioned evaluation criteria are focused on the results achieved in recipient countries, this criterion attempts to assess the extent to which Japan's national interest are advanced through the assistance it provides overseas.

### ***Historical Trajectory & Institutional Context***

Japan has been providing development assistance, in one form or another, since the 1950s. However, this assistance grew larger and more complex in the 1980s when Japan experienced rapid economic growth. In 2008, JICA merged with Japan's development bank, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). While Japan's MOFA plays a significant role in ODA, the institutional relationship is different from that of Australia. Essentially, MOFA is responsible for the policy direction of its development assistance, while JICA actually implements development projects.

### ***Scale of Development Assistance***

Japan's most recent numbers reflect that 0.17% of its GNI is budgeted for ODA. Japan is

also one of the largest providers of ODA, ranking 5<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of size of ODA, despite slight dips due to its recent fiscal difficulties. Japan has provided bilateral aid to 169 countries (MOFA, 2013), though its regional focus is within Asia. It also provides aid through multilateral institutions and international financial institutions.

### ***Sectoral Focus***

Japan's list of priority sectors covers a broad range, encompassing education, health, water resources/disaster management, governance, peace-building, social security, transportation, information and communications technology (ICT), natural resources and energy, economic policy, private sector development, agricultural/rural development, natural environment conservation, fisheries, gender and development, urban/regional development, poverty reduction, environmental management, and SSC. However, the last available White Paper (see MOFA, 2012) would suggest that infrastructure development is becoming an increasingly important focus for the government. The attention on infrastructure stems from the 2010 ASEAN discussions regarding a plan for regional connectivity. Japan chose to leverage its past infrastructure support and experience to enhance the "physical connectivity" component of this plan (see MOFA, 2013).

In terms of regional focus, Japan's assistance is largely focused on Asia, particular East Asia and ASEAN countries. However, Japan is also active across Africa. Recent publications highlight the need to provide support to countries which share similar values, such as human rights and democracy (MOFA, 2014).

### ***Current Challenges in Japanese Evaluation***

The study encountered difficulties in obtaining opinions on the current challenges and upcoming trends regarding development assistance evaluation at Japan's MOFA and JICA. However, it is understood that impact evaluations are being conducted when possible, facilitated in part by the increasing use of quantitative indicators to determine successes. All development assistance projects require, at the planning stage, log frames and indicators at the outcome level. Recent documentation would also suggest that greater emphasis is being placed upon the independence and transparency of the evaluation function, and the objectivity of the evaluation function is widely emphasized (JICA, 2012). More specifically, MOFA is working towards hiring more external evaluators, creating stronger feedback loops, and promoting the "visibility" of evaluation (MOFA, 2013).

As noted by interviewees and in official documentation, both Japan and Australia have their own evaluation standards that draw from and build upon the evaluation criteria and standards developed by OECD-DAC.

## 3.0 Issue-Driven Analysis

This section will explore evaluation approaches and challenges noted as relevant to most non-DAC countries, as well as those noted as relevant to DAC-member countries.

### 3.1 Non-DAC Countries

#### ***Interest in an Outcome/Impact-based Approach to SSC***

As described in Section 2, at present, evaluation conducted by non-DAC countries generally tends to examine performance at the output level, i.e. the timely completion of the planned activities on budget. However, Brazil, India, and Mexico have all expressed interest in adopting an approach to SSC for development that is focused on longer-term outcome/impacts. All three countries are currently seeking a greater understanding of how their current engagements are contributing to outcomes and are looking to develop ways to evaluate these (RIS staff member, 2013). Indeed, Mexico and Brazil have taken, and continue to take, initiatives toward this goal. However, due to the differences between traditional aid approaches and SSC approach, outcome/impact-based frameworks for evaluation of SSC projects will naturally differ from those used by traditional donors.

#### ***Approaches to SSC Evaluation***

Reflecting the differences between traditional aid approaches and SSC approach, the three non-DAC countries reviewed here are interested in developing a set of evaluation standards that they feel best reflect the unique design, intents and purposes of their SSC context. Each of the countries studied is currently at a different stage in the process of developing standards, frameworks and capacities to conduct evaluation of their SSC initiatives. However, based on the documentation reviewed and the interviews conducted for this study, Brazil, India and Mexico are, to varying degrees, less focused on adopting any single existing set of evaluation standards.

Mexico appears to be the most open to incorporating existing evaluation standards. This includes adopting the OECD-DAC standards, which Mexico may find largely appropriate to its context given that AMEXCID's recently released four-year plan for international development cooperation (PROCID 2014-2018) states that Mexican cooperation will be governed by the principles of the OECD's Paris Declaration of 2005 and the 2011 Busan Partnership.

Brazil, on the other hand, is openly uninterested in adopting a complete set of evaluation

standards used by traditional donors, given that it considers them as not appropriate for SSC (ABC staff, 2013). While Brazil agrees that the high-level DAC evaluation criteria (e.g. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency) are relevant to the SSC context, Brazil is against the idea of having evaluation standards determined by anyone other than the countries involved in the cooperation project. In the view of ABC, each country involved should determine for themselves the evaluation standards against which to measure a project's performance. Thus, while there is interest in evaluating "effectiveness", for example, ABC noted that there are differences in how effectiveness is defined in the SSC context versus in traditional development assistance.

For example, when measuring effectiveness in the context of SSC, it is important to evaluate how well Brazil's partnership was received by the partner country (ABC staff, 2013). This might be gauged, for example, by asking the partner country to define the standard(s) by which a certain project should be determined as effective or not, and later asking them how they felt the project performed against these standards (ABC staff, 2013). Likewise, and in contrast to the DAC countries profiled in this paper, representatives from India and Brazil both suggested that the evaluation criteria and standards for assessing the quality of performance of their SSC initiatives should be defined by the partner country's government, and not by their own governments. The details of how this would be implemented in practice have not yet been determined, for example, whether it would be done on a project-by-project, country-by-country, or sectoral basis. Using this approach, it would also likely be up to each country government to consult with its civil society on what criteria and performance standards should consist of.

Brazil is interested in developing a set of evaluation standards that combined relevant existing high-level evaluation criteria with new criteria unique to SSC. Russia's currently planned evaluation standards provide insight into how such a new set of standards might look.

Representatives from Mexico and India echoed this interest in considering new evaluation criteria, standards, and methodologies for their SSC. They noted that the high-level evaluation criteria included in the evaluation standards of traditional donors may be relevant to SSC, but at the same time stressed the need for different performance standards under these criteria, and accordingly, methodologies that reflect the different nature and values of the SSC process. In the case of India, the SSC discourse of government and research institutes already explicitly emphasizes the mutual-gain objectives underpinning its SSC initiatives. For instance, published reports describe the economic and/or social benefits for both SSC partners (see for example Rani D. Mullen, 2013).

### **Capacity Building Efforts**

Both Brazil and Mexico are collaborating with UNDP to develop institutional capacity for evaluation. Some multilateral organizations with South-based membership are also working toward this end. For example, the General Secretary of Latin America has been working with members to develop a set of indicators that reflect the specific characteristics of SSC.

Internally, Brazilian, Indian and Mexican agencies responsible for SSC are engaged in various initiatives to increase M&E capacity among their own staff, and in some cases also among partner government agencies. This includes hosting *ad hoc* information/training sessions with internal and external experts (e.g. teams from national research institutes) as well as consulting with local experts. In the case of Brazil and Mexico, capacity building efforts include undertaking formal projects to develop evaluation guidelines and how-to manuals. Both countries hope to complete these projects soon.

Representatives of all three countries indicated that their development agencies would benefit from capacity building in evaluation through training and the appropriate budget to hire qualified staff, or at least appropriately train existing staff.

### **Key Challenges**

Brazil, Mexico and India are all beginning to build evaluation capacity within their agencies responsible for SSC and among their SSC partners. The key challenges noted in achieving these goals are the following:

**Staff capacity** - Though they are the principle agencies responsible for the evaluation of SSC, ABC and AMEXCID do not have staff focusing uniquely on evaluation. In the case of ABC, building and maintaining such expertise is challenged by regular rotations of staff. Also a challenge for Mexico and Brazil is the fact that AMEXCID and ABC respectively play the role of coordinators of SSC initiatives; frequently their involvement in implementation is minimal. They therefore rely on the cooperation and skills of other national government bodies and implementing agencies to successfully undertake evaluation activities. This set-up inhibits the ability of the development agencies to ensure that evaluation activities are systematically conducted (both in terms of frequency and design) and thus makes the aggregation of monitoring and evaluation information more challenging.

**Institutional structure** - The case of Brazil best highlights this challenge. The decentralized nature of Brazil's SSC system, characterized by a diversity of funding, managing, and implementing institutions, makes enforcing and coordinating evaluation a challenge. Currently, there is no institutionalized mechanism for sharing experiences among Brazilian providers of technical cooperation and ABC does not have any legislative



authority to require their collaboration participation in evaluation activities. This makes systematic evaluation, even at the output level, a challenge. Russia and Mexico face similar challenges with the coordination of relevant actors.

**Defining measureable outcomes** - Beyond building general expertise in evaluation, in order to systematically evaluate SSC initiatives, non-DAC countries may want to define what their outcome/impact-based approach to evaluation will look like. Brazil, India and Mexico noted that the primary challenge in this regard stems from the unique characteristics of SSC as described earlier in this section. Since these three countries do not necessarily intend to adopt any existing set of evaluation standards, performance standards, or methodologies in its entirety, they are seeking to create a custom set of performance standards and indicators that are both measureable and valid. Mexico highlighted the problem inherent in establishing concrete objectives and measureable indicators for its more intangible SSC goals such as regional integration. It is also difficult to develop systematic metrics to cover the plethora of small-scale technical cooperation activities it undertakes (AMEXCID staff member, 2014a). As demonstrated by Brazil and Mexico, a further challenge in terms of actually collecting data on the desired outcomes are the logistical and technical challenges of developing and implementing the necessary electronic information systems.

### ***DAC vs. Non-DAC Approach to Development Assistance and What this Means for Evaluation***

To the extent that they are representative of the SSC approaches of other non-DAC countries, the cases of Mexico, Brazil and India show that some modalities of SSC do not fit the definition and categories of official aid established by the OECD-DAC. For example, the three non-DAC countries studied highlighted the demand-driven/voluntary approach underpinning SSC. Non-DAC countries characterize their SSC initiatives not as a donor-recipient relationship, but rather as business partnerships, initiated through an equitable negotiation between both parties and with the goal of obtaining mutual benefits. Success is seen to be defined by each party involved. This means that applying a consistent set of standards and methodologies developed unilaterally by cooperation providers to evaluate development is not necessarily appropriate.

Furthermore, the three non-DAC cases in this study demonstrate that the theoretical approach underpinning SSC is primarily focused on a series of process-oriented principles. For example, there is an interest in determining whether cooperation activities have met criteria such as equity, reciprocity, and shared responsibility (Secretaria General Iberoamericana, 2012, pp. 23–24). This represents a different approach to that of traditional donors' outcome/impact-focused evaluation designs, which see these process indicators as a means to a results-oriented end. For these types of evaluations, the quality

of the implementation process of projects is considered an output or immediate outcome-level, not a long-term/ultimate outcome. To properly reflect SSC theory and practice, SSC countries may not consider the traditional definition of a development assistance outcome as applicable to their approach to evaluation.

## 3.2 DAC Countries

### *Evaluation in DAC Countries*

The DAC views evaluation as an objective and independent process in which expected development results are defined, measured, and assessed. The underlying principle is that decision-making should be based on evidence, and that continual learning is a key function of effective development<sup>22</sup>.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) was a landmark agreement with commitments to five principles aimed at improving development effectiveness. The fourth area (results) emphasized the need for evaluation, and aims to build the capacity of developing countries to conduct their own evaluations.

The DAC strives to improve development effectiveness in a number of ways, including enhancing evaluation. To do so, it develops and maintains norms and standards around evaluation policy and practices in the field of development cooperation. These (generally accepted by traditional donor countries) can also be adapted for evaluation of any public sector initiative. The five DAC criteria, outlined below, are designed to serve as a general guide for evaluating development assistance:

**Relevance:** The extent to which the programme is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and funder. Evaluation questions pertaining to relevance include aspects such as the needs of the target group, the accuracy of the problem identification, and alignment of priorities.

**Effectiveness:** A measure of the extent to which a programme or initiative attains its objectives or achieves its planned results. Evaluation questions examining effectiveness look at things like the achievement of outputs and outcomes, and the potential for contribution to higher-level (ultimate) outcomes or impact.

**Efficiency:** An assessment of the scope of outputs in relation to inputs. Efficiency questions examine the ratio between resources and results, issues of time and budget, use/allocation of resources, and issues of overlap and duplication.

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<sup>22</sup> See more at [www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation)

**Sustainability:** An assessment as to whether the benefits or results of the programme or investment are likely to continue after the programme or project funding has been withdrawn.

**Impact:** A measure of the positive and negative changes at the societal or organizational level produced by a policy, programme or intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Evaluation questions examining impact look at the very high-level goals of a programme, and the effect on project/programme beneficiaries. Measurement of impact typically requires a robust counterfactual, i.e. a description of what would have happened had the development project not occurred.

### ***Conclusion***

Whereas the non-DAC countries in this study are increasingly centralizing their development assistance into one body, the current trend among DAC countries is to bring existing development agencies under the umbrella of the departments that are responsible for foreign affairs and trade. These mergers represent a move towards greater alignment within a country's foreign policy, and a greater emphasis on the role of national interest in foreign relations.

Like the non-DAC countries studied, the DAC countries examined here have been involved in some form of development assistance for several decades. Development activities are framed more as "assistance" or "aid" as opposed to "cooperation", reflecting the more traditional donor/recipient relationship.

Evaluation is strongly embedded in both Australia and Japan's international development assistance as a key function for both learning and accountability. Regular evaluation of development assistance is mandated through formal evaluation policies that govern the practice of evaluation in both countries. Both Australia and Japan have developed and implemented their own evaluation standards, which draw heavily from those prescribed by DAC, but offer country-specific emphases on certain aspects. Neither country prescribes methodologies to be used (e.g. participatory methodologies), but rather allows for methodologies to be tailored to the initiatives being evaluated.

## 4.0 Summary of Key Findings

The following table summarizes the main findings of the study, for ease of comparison between the DAC and non-DAC countries profiled in this paper.

**Exhibit 4.0 Summary Comparison of DAC Country vs. non-DAC Country Trends**

<b>DAC Countries</b> (Japan, Australia)	<b>Non-DAC Countries</b> (Brazil, India, Mexico, Russia)
Trend towards absorbing aid agencies within foreign affairs and trade departments.	Trend towards creating institutional bodies or agencies uniquely responsible for international cooperation. These are located within foreign affairs ministries and have varied levels of autonomy.
International development assistance increasingly influenced by foreign policy priorities.	International cooperation of all forms, including development assistance, prioritizes mutual benefits and foreign policy priorities from the outset.
Standard practice is to measure performance to the outcome level.	Standard practice is to measure inputs, activities, and outputs, if at all.
Increasing interest in impact evaluation designs (i.e. attribution of observed outcomes to the development initiative).	Increasing interest in measuring outcomes.
Evaluation practice is formalized, mandated, and required for most international development programmes and projects.	Evaluation is largely <i>ad hoc</i> , but evaluation policies, standards, criteria, and guidelines are developing.
Country's own evaluation standards are drawn from DAC standards and criteria.	Interest in creating evaluation standards and criteria, but a rejection of DAC standards as universally applicable with a preference toward developing criteria and performance standards specifically tailored to SSC approaches.
Does not dictate the use of particular methodologies for evaluation.	Does not dictate particular methodologies to be used for evaluation.
Measures of success focus on results, and are defined (largely) by the donor country's standards.	Measures of success focus on process, relationships, and are defined also by the partner/recipient country.

## 5.0 Conclusions

While the three non-DAC countries studied all have interest in developing evaluation standards and frameworks, these are at a very early stage. In general, evaluation of international cooperation is a new practice for these countries. The trends observed in this study would suggest that in a few years' time, it is probable that evaluation practices and standards in these countries will have evolved significantly and may be more easily understood.

While there is increasing interest in assessing outcomes and even impact, current practice among non-DAC countries is to monitor inputs, activities, and outputs. All three non-DAC countries studied noted that they would like to build their current institutional capacity for undertaking evaluation. Furthermore, the decentralized, diverse, and multi-actor nature of SSC makes it difficult to conduct evaluation systematically.

As members of the DAC, Japan and Australia are obliged to develop their evaluation standards in accordance with OECD principles. Non-DAC countries have no such obligation, and as such, have a blank slate to develop criteria that they feel will be most appropriate to their SSC. DAC standards prioritize results for beneficiaries, and mandate objectivity in evaluation. SSC tends to prioritize the concepts of mutual benefits, reciprocity, shared responsibility, and other relationship and process-oriented measures. These ideas represent distinct understandings of development success.

Despite some differences in understanding what evaluation is meant to achieve, it appears that all non-DAC countries in this study do agree that evaluation systems are a necessary and useful part of the development process. However, there is little consensus among them regarding how exactly these systems should be designed or what they should look like. Non-DAC countries are making deliberate efforts to develop an accountability system that is both relevant to SSC, and embodies SSC principles such as shared values, non-interference, high responsiveness, and minimal bureaucratic burden to partner countries. As non-DAC countries continue to set their own standards and practices for the field of international development as a whole, it should be expected that they will continue to do the same for the evaluation of it too.

## Annex: Interview Questions

The general questions explored for non-DAC member countries in this study included:

- What development focuses and goals have these countries adopted? Why?
- Who defines national development goals and by what processes?
- To what extent are the countries interested in an 'impact-based' approach to South-South cooperation for development?
- How has any absence of feedback mechanisms (to inform future project management and policymaking) been addressed, operationally and technically speaking? What have been the challenges here?
- What have been the challenges of including a project's beneficiaries as well as wider civil society in the evaluation of a given project?

The general questions explored for DAC member countries in this study included:

- What are some the key challenges in the evaluation of development assistance currently facing DAC-member countries? What are the areas that need improvement?
- How did DAC countries select their evaluation standards? Was it challenging? What were the key challenges?

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## Appendix B: Participating Entities

Representatives from the following entities contributed information to this research study:

Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) (*Agência Brasileira de Cooperação*)

Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) (*Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo*)

Monitoring & Evaluation Division, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Australia

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) India