



## Evaluating for Development Results

MANILA, PHILIPPINES – On 31 March and 1 April 2008, the **Malaysian Evaluation Society** discussed *Evaluation under a "Managing for Development Results" Environment* in Kuala Lumpur on the occasion of its third biennial conference. Senior experts of the **Ministry of Finance of Malaysia**, the **Asian Development Bank**, the **World Bank**, the **United Nations Development Programme**, the **International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation**, the **International Development Evaluation Association**, and the **United Nations Children's Fund** spoke on evaluation methodologies, resource utilization for development results, sustainable evaluation, information technology tools for evaluation, and knowledge utilization.

More than 170 participants from 15 countries, some of them African, attended the conference. They included 15 participants from **Cambodia**, **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, and **Viet Nam**, who joined in advance of a two-week training program organized through ADB technical assistance for *Capacity Development for Monitoring and Evaluation*, implemented by the **Centre for Development and Research in Evaluation, Malaysia**. (CeDRE, Malaysia was instrumental in running the conference.)

**Keith Leonard** of ADB's Operations Evaluation Department gave an opening session keynote address on *Improving Project, Program and Policy Performance in Developing Countries Through Managing for Development Results*. **Olivier Serrat** and **Irish de Guzman**, also of OED, spoke on *Learning Lessons with Knowledge Audits* and showcased the **evaluation pages at ADB.org** and OED's **Evaluation Information System**.

OED's presence at the conference provided tangible evidence of the strategic shift that the department made two years ago: it meant moving from production of evaluation reports, that may do no more than "sit on a shelf," to contributing actively to the achievement of

**"Paradoxically, the countries that stand to benefit the most are least likely able to apply 'whole-of-government' MfDR,"** says **Keith Leonard**.

better development results. The new direction rests on the pillars of **knowledge management** and **evaluation capacity development**.

Knowledge management recognizes that for evaluation to add value the lessons, good practice, and recommendations that flow from evaluation must be communicated to audiences when needed in a form that facilitates use. But knowledge management needs to go beyond the simple act of dissemination to active engagement with those that can profit from evaluation findings such that their use is maximized. For this, OED acts to transfer knowledge across four interfaces: OED–OED, OED–ADB, OED–**developing member countries**, and OED–**international evaluation community**. Participation in the conference helped OED deliver on the latter two interfaces but most particularly the OED–DMC interface.



Evaluation capacity development recognizes (as stressed in the **Paris Declaration on Development**

**Effectiveness** and similar global forums) that developing countries hold primary responsibility for achieving development results—their development partners cannot do this for them; they can only assist. Further, in most developing countries aid makes up a very small proportion of total public expenditure. Therefore, recipients of aid need to apply evaluation tools and techniques for their own benefit, and do so across all public expenditure. However, there is a clearly recognized lack of awareness (to create demand) and competency (to provide supply) for this to happen. It is part of OED's **mandate** to develop evaluation capacity. Whereas evaluation capacity development has traditionally followed a largely "top-down" approach of OED acting as a teacher to a DMC "pupil" the emphasis has now switched to peer learning<sup>1</sup> with a range of organizations and individuals acting as facilitators



and resource persons. The strengthening of national evaluation associations and support to the creation of an evaluation community of practice are part of OED's corporate strategy. The technical assistance for capacity development for monitoring and evaluation mentioned above incorporates this new approach to learning. Some "peers" are more advanced than others: in this regard Malaysia is a leader that has a very important role to play, which provided the rationale for OED's support to the conference. OED's presence and contribution, both qualitatively and quantitatively, were appreciated by the Malaysian Evaluation Society, the Ministry of Finance of Malaysia, and the general audience.

On 2–3 April 2008, Olivier stayed on to take part in post-conference workshops on *Building a Knowledge Management Culture in Your Organization* and *Designing and Applying a Performance Management System*, and discuss further details of the technical assistance with

CeDRE and the participants from the **Greater Mekong Subregion**.

**"Development is essentially a knowledge-based endeavor. And evaluation has always been about learning—about how to be accountable, how to be transparent, and how to learn from experience,"** argues Olivier Serrat.

The benefits of participation in the conference and workshops were substantial. They included: (i) significant contribution to the development of evaluation capacity in DMCs, (ii) major dissemination of OED's knowledge products, such as *Learning Curves*, (iii) creation of awareness of the revamped evaluation pages at ADB.org and OED's Evaluation Information System, (iv) increase in recipient list for the dissemination of future knowledge products, and (v) enhanced credibility of OED as a source of knowledge and expertise, and a willing partner for building evaluation capacity and more generally as a supporter of the **MfDR agenda**.

#### See Also:

**Special Evaluation Study on Managing for Development Results in the Asian Development Bank: A Preliminary Assessment.** Available:

<http://www.adb.org/documents/ses/reg/sst-reg-2007-32/sst-reg-2007-32.asp>

**Special Evaluation Study on Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration at the Asian Development Bank: A Development Partner's Study for an OECD-DAC Joint Evaluation.** Available:

[www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=4](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=4)

**Evaluation News: Capacity Development for Monitoring and Evaluation.** 13 November 2007. Available:

<http://www.adb.org/documents/oed/news/2007/capacity-development-monitoring.pdf>

**Creating and Developing Evaluation Organizations: Lessons Learned from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Europe.** Available:

[http://ioce.net/resources/case\\_studies.shtml](http://ioce.net/resources/case_studies.shtml)

**How to Build Monitoring and Evaluation Systems to Support Better Government.** Available:

[http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/ecd/better\\_government.html](http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/ecd/better_government.html)

<sup>1</sup> The **MfDR Community of Practice** initiated as a result of ADB's Results Management Unit's efforts is a leading example of peer-to-peer learning.