

**For Official Use**

**DCD(2007)5**



Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**02-Aug-2007**

**English - Or. English**

**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE**

**DCD(2007)5**  
**For Official Use**

**INFORMATION NOTE ON THE DAC PEER REVIEW PROCESS**

Contact: Karen Jorgensen, Tel: 33 (0)1 45 24 94 61, Fax: 33 (0)1 44 30 61 44, E-mail:  
karen.jorgensen@oecd.org;

**JT03230732**

Document complet disponible sur OLIS dans son format d'origine  
Complete document available on OLIS in its original format

**English - Or. English**

## INFORMATION NOTE ON THE DAC PEER REVIEW PROCESS

1. This note is intended to outline and give guidance on the process for preparing Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Reviews. It is for the use of all parties involved in the Review – the reviewed member, the examiners and the DAC Secretariat.
2. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) functions as a forum where bilateral donors come together to exchange experience and to address issues of common interest or concern. Its overarching objective is the continuous improvement of member efforts in all areas of development assistance, through the exchange of good practices and the promotion of co-ordination and collaboration. Every four to five years on average, the DAC reviews and assesses each member's development co-operation system. The Review makes recommendations and suggestions for improvement and a follow up process ensures that lessons are translated into policies, programmes, and practices of the DAC member.
3. The main objectives of the Peer Reviews are:
  - To monitor DAC members' development co-operation policies and programmes and assess their effectiveness against the goals and policies agreed in the DAC as well as internationally and nationally established objectives.
  - To assist in improving individual and collective aid performance through mutual learning.
  - To identify good practices, share experience, and foster co-ordination.
4. Membership of the Development Assistance Committee obliges members to undergo, and to serve as "examiners" in, Peer Reviews. The Peer Review process relies upon two DAC members as examiners for each review.
5. The Secretariat designates well in advance five members to be reviewed and ten members to serve as examiners in a given year. The Secretariat takes care to select for each review examining members with a programme of similar size and complexity to the programme being examined, and which can offer lessons as well as benefit from the learning opportunity that a Peer Review provides. Language and geography are other factors taken into account in matching examiners to each review.
6. The Peer Review involves five stages: i) preparation and planning, ii) fact-finding, analysis and report writing; iii) the Peer Review meeting; iv) approval and publication, and v) follow-up. Throughout the process, the examiners, the reviewed country, and the Secretariat interact in a spirit of team collaboration, sharing information at all levels in order to facilitate both the organisation and the successful outcome of the Peer Review.
7. The Peer Review and Evaluation Division of the Development Co-operation Directorate is responsible for conducting the Review process. An administrator is assigned to each peer review with responsibility for the day-to-day facilitation of the process and for drafting the report. The Head of the Peer Review and Evaluation Division provides overall guidance.

8. The Review team consists of:

- one or two representatives from each examining country,
- two or three Secretariat staff members, and
- a humanitarian assistance expert.

9. The examiners are considered representatives of the DAC as a whole, both contributing to and learning from the Peer Review process. They may be DAC Delegates or senior staff from headquarters or field offices. They need to have experience in development co-operation and must participate actively in all aspects of the Peer Review process. It is important, for substantive and logistical reasons, that the team is kept as small as possible.

### **Preparation and planning of the review**

10. To start the process, the Secretariat agrees with the reviewed member and the examiners, a plan including provision of documentation by the reviewed member and timing of all missions.

11. At the latest one month before the team undertakes mission travel, the reviewed member submits to the Secretariat a country memorandum (max.40 pages), based on the outline of the DAC *Peer Review Content Guide*.<sup>1</sup> This is the reviewed member's opportunity to provide the Peer Review team with information on the national aid system, including any reforms since the previous review and the challenges still outstanding. The memorandum serves as the basis for the consultations between the reviewed member and the reviewers and is published on the OECD On-Line Information System (OLIS). This, and other background documentation, must be submitted to the Secretariat in either English or French.

12. It is important that the member under review submits its annual statistical report to the Development Co-operation Directorate's Statistical and Monitoring Division not later than three months before the Review in order to ensure that the review is based on up-to-date information.

13. The reviewed member makes funds available to the DCD in the form of a voluntary contribution to cover essentially the cost of field missions. The cost will be estimated as a lump sum, depending on whether one or two field missions are involved. Hence, pledges and funds should be received, ideally, at the beginning of the biennium, or latest at the beginning of the year in which the review will be initiated.

14. A donor not a member of the DAC may participate as an observer in the Review process on condition that prior agreement is given by the reviewed country, the Examiners, and that the DAC has been informed before the Review begins. The Committee has agreed a separate procedure, "Code of Conduct", for observers which must be followed both by members wishing to host an observer, and by those wishing to have a Peer Review experience.<sup>2</sup> On a case-by-case basis, the Secretariat facilitates the observerships, and any requests to serve as an observer as well as offers to host, should be sent to the Secretariat, who will ensure that the DAC procedure is followed.

---

<sup>1</sup> [DCD/DAC(2007)6/FINAL]

<sup>2</sup> [DCD/DIR(2005)24/REV1]

### **Fact-finding, analysis and report writing**

15. **Methodology:** Fact-finding, analysis and report writing are all guided by the DAC Peer Review Content Guide which sets out the key questions of interest to the DAC in reviewing aid programmes. The Content Guide is approved by the DAC for a biennium and contains six sections: (i) Strategic orientations, (ii) Policy Coherence, (iii) Aid flows and Allocations, (iv) Management and Organisation, (v) Aid Effectiveness, and (vi) Special Issues. The last chapter, in particular, reflects issues of special interest to the DAC. For the 2007-08 Biennium, each review will contain an analysis of the member's activities to support capacity development, as well as activities in one of two areas, namely Governance, Accountability and Anti-Corruption or Conflict, Peace, Security and Fragile States. A member may suggest another topic for analysis subject to the agreement of the examiners. A member's humanitarian assistance portfolio is part of the Peer Review analysis. The analysis is undertaken by a humanitarian assistance specialist within a framework agreed by the DAC, and is included in an annex to the Peer Review report. The report also contains a Statistics Annex in standard format.

16. **Consultations:** While the Secretariat collects and analyses material from a variety of sources, consultations between the member and the review team are invaluable to the process in which a Senior Secretariat official plays the role of lead facilitator. Such consultations are held both at headquarters and at the field level with the key institutions and partners. These consultations form the backbone of the fact-finding stage of the Peer Review process.

*Mission to the Capital/Headquarters:* The mission to the capital seeks to cover all relevant areas of the reviewed member's development co-operation system. The Secretariat works directly with the reviewed member co-ordinator to organise a mission which normally lasts four to five days with the participation of all team members. The reviewed member is responsible for making all the arrangements for the visit including meeting schedules, hotel reservations and local transport.

Opening and closing sessions are commonly held with the head of agency and there are a range of meetings within the aid ministry/agency and with other departments of the government, Parliamentarians, civil society, NGO umbrella groups, academics and the research community. The review team presents preliminary findings or "key impressions" to the reviewed member's representatives at a closing session, providing an opportunity for discussion and response.

*Field Mission:* The review team normally pays one or two one-week visits to the field - depending on the size of the member's programme - in order to gain an understanding of how policies are implemented. These missions are not intended to assess, in a comprehensive way, the relevance and effectiveness of the country programme of the reviewed DAC member, or to evaluate individual projects. Rather, the review team focuses on generic or system issues and lessons that are representative of the reviewed member's development co-operation and which may be applicable elsewhere. The team meets with a wide range of local stakeholders - partner government officials, beneficiaries, civil society representatives and other donors. Also here the team presents its "key impressions" at the end of the mission. A separate report of the field visit is included as an annex to the Peer Review report. If the review includes two field visits, one may be scheduled before the mission to headquarters so as to enable examiners to use findings and observations from the field as inputs to that mission. Field visits are organised by the Secretariat directly with the reviewed member representative in country who is responsible for all logistical arrangements.

17. **Drafting the Report:** The Secretariat consolidates information gathered during the missions as well as from other sources. In consultation with the examiners, it drafts the two parts of the Peer Review report including the annexes. A draft of the Secretariat Report (Part 2) is first shared with the examiners for comments and is subsequently sent to the reviewed member who has one to two weeks to undertake a

factual check of the text. The Part 2 report is posted on OLIS three to four weeks ahead of the Peer Review meeting. The Secretariat encourages the examiners to collaborate particularly closely on the text of the Main Findings and Recommendations (Part 1) which is posted on OLIS two weeks before the Review meeting. Unlike for Part 2, the reviewed country does not receive this document prior to submission to OLIS. Both Parts are translated and are available in English and French at the Peer Review Meeting.

### **The Peer Review Meeting**

18. The review process culminates in a one-day Peer Review meeting, led by the DAC Chair, at OECD headquarters in Paris. The review team's findings are presented by the examiners who include proposals for recommendations from the DAC to the reviewed member. The Committee discusses the draft DAC Main Findings and Recommendations (Part 1). The Secretariat Report (Part 2), including the annexes on the field visits and the humanitarian assistance activities, may also be discussed.

19. The delegation of the reviewed member is normally led by the head or deputy head of the ministry/agency with other relevant staff present, including their DAC Delegate. The Delegation is given an opportunity to present its response to the report, and to engage in a debate with the DAC. While the examiners take the lead, other members of the Committee are invited, indeed encouraged, to raise questions, offer comments and draw on their own experience in the course of the debate in the interest of mutual learning. Ultimately, the DAC agrees recommendations to the member under review.

### **Approval and Publication**

20. The morning after the Peer Review meeting the Secretariat organises an editorial session in order to incorporate any comments from the DAC into the Main Findings and Recommendations (Part 1). The editorial session is attended by the examiners, the reviewed member representatives and the Secretariat. As appropriate, corrections to the Secretariat Report (Part 2) are also made to ensure coherence with Part 1.

21. Changes in any of the documents are factual or strictly reflect an adjustment agreed by the DAC during the Peer Review meeting. For purposes of transparency, any change in language or disagreement with conclusions or recommendations suggested by the examiners should be raised by the reviewed member in the Peer Review meeting itself in order to ensure that only issues that seem legitimate to other members will be considered. The edited Part 1 text is sent to DAC delegates for final approval and after the three-day deadline, the Secretariat cannot consider any further amendments.

22. At this stage, the Main Findings and Recommendations and a Press Advisory are posted on the DAC Website. The complete report is subsequently placed in final form on OLIS and on the DAC web site. It is published as part of the DAC Journal and it can also be published separately as a "pre-print" at the request – and the expense – of the reviewed member. The DAC Journal is released quarterly and pre-prints are produced to order.

23. Often the reviewed country invites the DAC Chair to join in an event to launch the report to the media, civil society and other stakeholders. This serves to increase accountability at home and to build increase awareness about the development assistance efforts among the public.

### **Follow-Up**

24. The DAC Chair, accompanied by a representative of the Secretariat, visits the capital of the reviewed member 18 to 24 months after the Peer Review meeting to discuss implementation of the recommendations made by the DAC. Prior to the visit, the reviewed member presents relevant information on actions taken, or planned, as a consequence of the Peer Review. Following the visit, the DAC Chair provides the Committee with a note describing his conclusions.

## Annex - Overview of Peer Review Illustrative Timeline

	PR minus 6 months Preparation	PR minus 4-5 months Visit to Capital/Headquarters	PR minus 3-5 months Field visit(s)	PR minus 1-3 months Document Writing	Peer Review Meeting & Editing Session	Post Peer Review Publication and Follow-up
<b>DAC Chairman's role</b>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets agenda with Examiners &amp; Secretariat (PR -1 day).</li> <li>• Chairs PR meeting.</li> <li>• Issues Press Advisory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends launch.</li> <li>• Leads follow-up mission 18-24 months later.</li> </ul>
<b>Secretariat's role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selects examining countries.</li> <li>• Co-ordinates overall team planning</li> <li>• STAT-PEER informal co-ordination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sends letter and Content Guide at least one month before visit.</li> <li>• Co-ordinates mission with reviewed member.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sends letter and Content Guide at least one month before visit.</li> <li>• Directly co-ordinates mission with the reviewed member field staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads drafting of core documentation, places on OLIS and requests translation</li> <li>• PR minus 2 weeks for Part I.</li> <li>• PR minus 3-4 weeks for Part 2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents field visit(s) at the Peer Review.</li> <li>• Chairs editing session the morning after the Peer Review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places final reports on OLIS</li> <li>• Follows through on publications</li> <li>• Supports the Chair in all follow-up.</li> </ul>
<b>Examiners' role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in preparatory meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment on agenda.</li> <li>• Participate in mission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment on agenda.</li> <li>• Participate in mission.</li> <li>• Comments on field visit report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to core documentation: agree outline of report, esp. part 1; written text (e.g. boxes) comments of drafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead discussions based on Part I issues.</li> <li>• Participates in editing session on behalf of the DAC.</li> </ul>	
<b>Reviewed member's role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of Memorandum to the DAC.</li> <li>• Submission of annual statistical reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranges full agenda of meetings in collaboration with Secretariat.</li> <li>• Provides logistic support and ensures visit co-ordination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the Secretariat selects field visit(s) destination; informs government authorities</li> <li>• Organises meetings with relevant parties. Sends programme to Secretariat</li> <li>• Prepares logistical support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides factual check of Part 2 report prior to placing it on OLIS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to issues and questions raised by examiners and the DAC.</li> <li>• Participates in editing session.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orders publications, as needed.</li> <li>• Requests Internet version, as needed.</li> <li>• Initiates request for launch/follow up; provides documentation and undertakes planning with Chair.</li> </ul>