Summary report of the INTOSAI CBC Workstream Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Cooperation Webinar 23 March 2022

Evaluation

The fourth session of the P2P webinar series on exchanging lessons learned on the project management cycle in medium to long-term peer-to-peer cooperation was led by SAI Sweden and IDI. The webinar's focus was on "evaluation", with representatives from a variety of SAIs virtually discussing the dilemmas, challenges and benefits associated with this phase of the project management cycle.

Managing useful evaluations

The SNAO presented the aim of their evaluations which are based on the OECD DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. In their presentation, SNAO also focused on how to manage useful evaluations. The IDI approach to evaluation has similar underlying principles as the SNAO, but, due to the nature of IDI, also some divergences. IDI conducts follows the OECD principles in their evaluations and have developed formal evaluation procedures and policy in line with IDI needs.

The presentation was followed by a Q&A. One of the questions concerned how to get started with evaluations when time and resources are limited. In order to manage impactful evaluations, there is a need to develop a policy in which the *who, when,* and *why-* questions are answered. Additionally, it is crucial that a set of criteria for prioritisation is established. Following up on this, the question was raised what to do when evaluations do not provide enough learning outcomes? According to IDI, it is most valuable when lessons learned can be drawn from multiple evaluations. Both IDI and SNAO agreed that a big challenge is to find the right external evaluator.

Another participant asked how to handle working transparently but at the same time not being able to share all the details. It is important that an evaluation is never initiated without a dialogue with the partner(s). In principle, conducting an evaluation is about being accountable and that is an argument for publishing all evaluation reports. Confidentiality is a crucial aspect when publishing a report. The publication should not contain information that can compromise the data or the safety of the participants.

Case study: Somalia as an example of good practice

Following the Q&A, the participants were divided into break out groups. They were asked to discuss two questions about the Somalia case study that was shared prior to the webinar session. Firstly, the participants thought about what the purpose of the evaluation might be and secondly, they were challenged to formulate evaluation questions aligned with the OCED-DAC criteria. The outcomes of the break-out groups were recorded on a 'Miro-board' and reviewed in the plenary session. The findings of these questions were discussed in plenary.

Regarding the purpose of the evaluation, many suggestions were made such as:
- o Determining whether support in the future is needed, and if so, how the support should be provided
- o Evaluating if the project has achieved its objectives
- o Evaluating if the project has led to a potential for sustainable change?
- o Being accountable

It became clear that most evaluations are built on a theory of change of the programme.

Several of these evaluation potential questions linked to the OECD-DAC criteria are listed below.

- o Does SAI leadership support all project activities? And if not, is the support still justified?
- o What is the link to the broader PFM strategy and country development?
- o Have you seen an organisational adjustment according to the outcomes of the evaluation?
- o Is the support enabling the SAI to implement its strategic plan?
- o Are the peer support stakeholders working together effectively?
- o Are the new audit approaches being implemented in other audits conducted by the SAI?

Concluding remarks: Potential for following up

The take home points of this webinar session concentrated on the *why, how*, and *what*-questions of evaluation processes. *Why* do SAIs and other organisations conduct evaluations? *How* is the independence of evaluation processes guaranteed and *how* can the different objectives be balanced? *What* is the purpose of evaluations and *what* are good questions that can be used to conduct evaluations?

The topic of evaluation faces several challenges: evaluations require resources, time, and dedication. Nevertheless, this webinar showed the potential to explore this topic further after the completion of the cycle of webinars in this workstream. The discussion of P2P programme evaluations could be a way of continuing the exchange of experience and best practices regarding the project cycle and contribute to sustainable change.