

## **REPLY TO DFID MAR REVIEW NOVEMBER 2013**

### **General comments**

The European Commission welcomes the renewed opportunity for reviewing progress in areas of co-operation which are vital to ensuring that development co-operation makes a real difference in the lives of the world's poorest people and generates growth in developing countries. We note the progress highlighted by DFID in such areas as demonstrating the results of EU development, in improving the gender aspects of co-operation, and in streamlining and simplifying our financial procedures.

On the other hand, we regret that DFID continues to apply an unfounded distinction between the EDF and the budgetised programmes. The systems for management apply, in almost all respects, to both, so there is considerable repetition in the DFID analysis. Moreover, European policies on EU enlargement, the Neighbourhood and the Middle East are key for wider UK Government priorities, and restricting the analysis only to the priorities of DFID may mislead the wider British public.

### **Gender**

The Commission has taken major steps forward over the last few years in designing and implementing the Gender Action Plan, which are insufficiently acknowledged. While it is true that not all targets have been achieved, the update seems generally negative in tone. Virtually no mention is made in the DFID analysis of the important role of Member States in relation to the Gender Action Plan. The Commission emphasises that a major evaluation on gender and women's empowerment has been launched, the results of which should be available by the end of 2014.

### **Staffing issues**

We are surprised that there is no mention of the extensive reorganisation of the services implemented in 2011. The objective of this reorganisation was to make more progress in achieving greater alignment between politics, policies and their implementation, especially in the current context of staff reductions.

## **Results framework**

The update acknowledges that progress is being made and that it is hoped to introduce the framework in 2014.

## **Evaluation**

The European Commission attaches great importance to evaluation in providing lessons to be learnt and in informing the general public of the impact of our development programmes. The 'uptake' study which has been launched, and on the recommendations of which a decision will be taken in the first part of 2014, should enable us to meet all the concerns expressed in the update. Concerning evaluation in the Delegations, a network of evaluation correspondents has been set up to encourage the sharing of good practice and to increase awareness of evaluation issues.

Since 2011 the Commission has begun to apply, with the co-operation of some Member States, new approaches for the evaluation of budget support, which is a significant step forward in defining the strengths of budget support as a delivery mechanism. The same is true of the approach for evaluating support for capacity development.

The Commission is ready to discuss any evaluation with the Member States, but clearly cannot impose such a discussion. We draw the attention of DFID to the public seminars which are held at the end of every evaluation process managed by the Evaluation Unit, whether in-country (for country-level evaluations) or in Brussels for thematic evaluations, to which Member States are always invited. Moreover, regular meetings of EU evaluation services are convened by the Commission in order to improve understanding and co-ordination within the EU of the evaluation of development co-operation, for instance the use of evaluation in support of joint programming.

## **Value for money**

We welcome recognition of the efforts made to improve the efficiency of our programmes and simplify procedures.