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MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS (MDB)
EVALUATION COOPERATION GROUP (ECG)

**MDB-ECG Good-Practice Standards for
Country Strategy and Program Evaluation**

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ABBREVIATIONS

C-GPS	–	core Good-Practice Standards
CSPE	–	country strategy and program evaluation
ECG	–	Evaluation Cooperation Group
GPS	–	Good-Practice Standards
MDB	–	multilateral development bank
MDG	–	Millennium Development Goal
O-GPS	–	optional Good-Practice Standards
OECD-DAC	–	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development- Development Assistance Committee
TA	–	technical assistance

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I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A. Multilateral Development Bank Evaluation Harmonization

1. **The Harmonization Challenge:** In March 1996, the Development Committee Task Force on Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), issued a report on “*Serving a Changing World—Report of the Task Force on Multilateral Banks*” which called for harmonization of evaluation methodologies, performance indicators and criteria by the MDBs:

“currently, it is not possible to compare their operational results, or even to describe them in a common language. Many public sector institutions like the MDBs must be able to account for their efforts in readily understood terms. A common methodology for evaluating their portfolios should be developed and kept up to date over time, with best practices in evaluation techniques being identified and disseminated. A determined effort should be made to harmonize performance indicators and evaluation criteria, taking into account the differing circumstances of each institution. The lessons learned from these evaluations should be shared among the MDBs with a view to applying them quickly in new operations.

The heads of the...MDB evaluation units...[should] be charged with elaborating common evaluation standards, including performance indicators; exchange experience with evaluation techniques, share results; and become the repository of best evaluation practices. The immediate task would be to develop, within a specified time period, methodology and criteria for assessing and rating the MDB’s operational performance and development effectiveness.”¹

2. **The MDB Response:** In response to the Development Committee Task Force recommendations, the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) was formed. It consisted initially of the heads of the evaluation units of the five MDBs referred to in the Task Force Report: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank Group. The European Investment Bank joined in 1998. In March 1998 the original five ECG members reported to the Development Committee:

“The [Evaluation Cooperation] Group will continue its efforts to make evaluation results comparable and to have their findings properly translated into operational standards. Meeting in Hong Kong in October 1997, the MDB presidents strongly endorsed further intensification of collaboration among MDB evaluation units in harmonizing evaluation standards and activities, defining more effective linkages between independent and self-evaluation The harmonization dialogue will be extended to country evaluations, nonlending services, and evaluation of private sector operations.” (underlining added for relevance to this paper)²

1 Development Committee, Task Force on Multilateral Development Banks. *Serving a Changing World--Report of the Task Force on Multilateral Development Banks*. March 15, 1996, p. 18.

2 Development Committee. *Report from the Multilateral Development Banks on Implementation of the Major Recommendations of the MDB Task Force Report*. March 26, 1998, p. 4.

3. Moreover, the ECG mandate embodies and endorses MDB evaluation harmonization:

“The ECG (i) works to strengthen cooperation among evaluators and (ii) seeks to harmonize evaluation methodology in its member institutions, so as to enable improved comparability of evaluation results while taking into account the differing circumstances of each institution. Harmonization in the ECG includes increased information sharing and improved understanding of commonalities and differences in evaluation policies, procedures, methods and practices and is not interpreted by members as “standardization of evaluation policies and practices.”³

4. To promote evaluation harmonization, the ECG has prepared and implemented Good-Practice Standards (GPS) for several categories of MDB evaluations. These were derived from the evaluation principles of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), were built on good evaluation practice, and were designed to be consistent with MDBs operational policies. In 2001, the ECG issued a set of GPS for the Evaluation of Private Sector Investment Operations. These were subsequently updated in versions issued in 2003 and 2007.⁴ In 2002, the ECG agreed on a set of GPS for the Evaluation of MDB-Assisted Public Sector Operations,⁵ based on a review of practices relating principally to the evaluation of investment projects. In 2005, an Addendum to the GPS for the Evaluation of Public Sector Operations was prepared, covering the evaluation of policy based lending.⁶ In November 2005, as part of their ongoing effort to harmonize MDB evaluations, and consistent with their commitment to OECD-DAC, ECG members declared their intention to prepare a set of GPS for the evaluation of country strategy and programs.

B. Multilateral Development Bank Country Level Evaluation

5. Country Strategy and Program Evaluations (CSPEs) seek to describe and explain the performance of an MDB at the country level. They question whether the country program did the right things, in terms of whether the design and its implementation was the right one for the circumstances of the country. They ask not just “Did the country program work?” but “What made it work or fail?” and “How can we make it better?” Due to the fact they usually evaluate both completed and ongoing operations, their forward-looking nature and the controversy they may generate, CSPEs tend to engage evaluation clients more than other forms of independent evaluation. Typically, they have been one of the more influential types of evaluation. Consequently, they play an increasingly important role in the work programs of those independent evaluation offices that conduct CSPEs.

6. CSPEs undertaken by the MDBs are major and often costly evaluation exercises. They are classified as higher level evaluations because of their focus on strategic issues and because they build on the findings of evaluations of projects, programs, and sector or thematic issues of concern. A 1999 Review of MDB evaluation experience describes the benefits of CSPEs as follows:

³ Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG). *Amended ECG Mandate*. Approved by ECG members April 2003.

⁴ ECG. 2007. *MDB-ECG Good-Practice Standards for Evaluation of Private Sector Investment Operations*. Third Edition.

⁵ ECG. 2002. *Good Practice Standards for Evaluation of MDB Supported Public Sector Operations*.

⁶ ECG. 2005. *Evaluation of Policy Based Lending: An Addendum to the GSP for the Evaluation of MDB Supported Public Sector Operations*.

“(i) CSPEs can identify and assess broad and long-term issues and concerns better than other forms of evaluation; (ii) they provide valuable information about the country strategy process, whether project selection was based on merit, impact of non-project forms of assistance, aggregating results of activities across all sectors and providing input into, and strengthening, subsequent country strategies; (iii) CSPEs are better able to identify overall program and project delivery weaknesses, institutional difficulties, capacity utilisation constraints, borrower’s acceptance, commitment and compliance to conditions and impact of other aid agencies and external factors; (iv) they provide a framework for rating overall performance in meeting development goals and objectives, and better assess impact and sustainability issues for long-term aid effectiveness; and (v) they provide a valuable instrument for improving aid co-ordination among institutions and bilateral agencies and for the broader participation goal of increasing the role of national and local governments, civil society and the private sector in the developmental process.”⁷

7. As the locus of MDB assistance shifts from individual projects towards country-based strategies, programs, and interventions having economy-wide effects, the country becomes the most logical unit of aid management and accountability. Adoption of similar goals for development assistance (e.g., the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]) and agreements to harmonize and align assistance with national poverty reduction strategies also make it imperative that external assistance be evaluated at the country level.

8. CSPEs differ by purpose, by depth, and by the entity undertaking the evaluation. Within the MDBs, country assistance is typically evaluated as part of the preparation of new country strategies, both by the operational teams involved in preparing the country strategies and by the independent evaluation offices. Self-evaluation generally takes three main forms: (i) brief summaries of lessons identified, which are included in a new country strategy; (ii) a country strategy completion report; and (iii) a country strategy progress report or midterm review. Self-evaluations are generally validated by the independent evaluation offices to ensure consistency and to encourage candid and critical evaluation by the operations departments. Most of the independent CSPEs undertaken by the MDBs would be categorized as in-depth evaluation exercises, or full-fledged CSPEs. These are most suitable and rewarding when there is something of value to learn through an in-depth assessment, plus an opportunity to make use of the findings. This would include cases in which (i) a diverse portfolio of MDB assistance has been provided over an extended period, (ii) activities are sufficiently mature to be able to identify and/or anticipate results, (iii) government external assistance policies or aid agency assistance strategies are being formulated, and (iv) the lessons gleaned from the particular country case are expected to be of interest to other MDB member countries.

C. Purpose, Framework, Application, Benchmarking, and Updating

9. **Purpose of the GPS.** The standards aim to: (i) contribute to the ECG objectives of harmonization of evaluation criteria and processes; (ii) help the MDBs link evaluation and operational standards in pursuit of corporate missions and objectives; and (iii) assist in learning from experience between MDBs for improved results.

⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee. 1999. *Evaluating Country Programmes*. Report of the Vienna Workshop. Paris. p. 115.

10. **Guiding Framework.** This GPS have been developed within the general framework of the OECD-DAC evaluation principles and they draw on the findings of a recent ECG review of CSPEs.⁸ This GPS also builds on the foundation of good evaluation practices that have already been identified and endorsed by the ECG in its GPSs for public sector and private sector operations. More specifically, those GPS established for the organization and governance of the MDB independent evaluation process, as set forth in the 2002 *Good Practice Standards for Evaluation of MDB Supported Public Sector Operations*, will likewise apply to MDB country evaluations. Consequently, those practice standards are not repeated in this paper.

11. **Application.** The GPS pertains to the evaluation of country strategy and programs of both the public and the private-sector oriented MDBs, since they both strike a balance in their evaluation between “bottom-up” project-level evaluations and a “top-down” assessment of business climate quality and the macro-environment. It is also acknowledged that there are some differences between the CSPEs undertaken by public-sector and by private-sector oriented MDBs. The private-sector oriented MDBs have financial return objectives that must pass the market test; they have far fewer assistance instruments aimed at having country-wide effects; their operations depend largely on market demand; and their corporate and country strategies tend to be illustrative of the range of activities in which their banks wish to engage. Consequently, their evaluations include more analysis of performance determinants, outcomes and impacts of projects and technical cooperation activities. Moreover, private-sector oriented MDBs are highly exposed to market fluctuations and they maintain a frequent monitoring of the overall project portfolio for accounting and financial reporting purposes. The focus of the private-sector MDB CSPEs should be therefore more on lessons identified from strategy impact assessments, such as environmental impacts, broader private sector development impacts, transition impacts, and economic/social impacts in the immediate area of the various projects.

12. **Progress Benchmarking.** ECG members agree that periodic assessments will be undertaken to assess the extent to which the GPS are being applied. The GPS have been summarized in a tabular form in Attachment 1 to assist in progress benchmarking.⁹ Some time will be required to adjust member practices to the GPS, and thereafter to conduct at least one CSPE under the new GPS regime. Accordingly, the first benchmarking exercise is expected to be scheduled for 2010.

13. **GPS Updating.** CSPE methods, approaches, rating criteria and their application will continue to evolve over time. Adoption of results-based monitoring and evaluation systems in partner countries, and improvements in both the self and independent evaluation of MDB operations, sector and thematic studies, special studies and impact evaluations, will influence the nature of the evaluation data base that CSPEs are built upon. It is envisaged therefore that the GPS will require periodic stocktaking and updating. As members reach further agreements on CSPE methods, approaches, criteria, rating standards, and applications to special CSPE cases, they will document them in subsequent refinements of this GPS.

⁸ ECG. 2007. Phase I Background Report for the Preparation of a GPS for MDB CSPEs.

⁹ A baseline of CSPE practices for African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank Group is included in the self-assessment questionnaire provided in the Phase I Background Report.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF GOOD-PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR INDEPENDENT COUNTRY STRATEGY AND PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

14. Two sets of standards, “core” GPS [**C-GPS**] and “optional” GPS [**O-GPS**], are identified. The core standards are defined as those which establish the key principles for CSPEs, and are necessary to permit comparability of evaluation results, to the extent possible, among the MDBs. While the core standards listed in this paper are currently in practice to some extent in all members, institutional differences may affect the pace at which harmonization can be achieved. Optional GPS are defined as those that are not strictly needed for comparability but are nonetheless designed to help improve accountability and learning within each institution.

A. Process-Related Good-Practice Standards

1. CSPE Goals, Objectives, and Focus

15. **CSPE Goals.** The main goal of an MDB CSPE is to provide information on MDB performance at the country level that is credible and useful, and that enables the incorporation of lessons and recommendations that can be used to improve the development effectiveness of the MDB’s overall strategy and program of country assistance [**C-GPS**].

16. **Objectives.** CSPEs are used for both accountability and lesson-learning purposes in the MDBs [**C-GPS**]. They provide an accounting to the MDB’s board of directors regarding the results achieved from MDB assistance in a country over an extended period of time. CSPEs also serve as an important learning experience by drawing on evaluation results to engage in a constructive dialogue on what could be done to improve the effectiveness of an MDB’s assistance program in the future.

17. **Client Responsiveness.** CSPEs are designed to meet the information requirements of the main target clients [**C-GPS**], which would generally be the board, senior management, and relevant operations staff within the country departments. Identifying the government as the main target client is also a good practice, because the government will need information on past assistance performance if it is to demand better service from the MDBs.

18. **Unit of Analysis.** CSPEs focus on evaluating the results of MDB assistance. They take the country as the unit of analysis and attempt to evaluate MDB assistance to the country using already prepared country strategy(ies) as a point of reference [**C-GPS**]. They do not evaluate the performance of a government or the progress of a country, although a CSPE may draw on country progress indicators to assess the performance of the assistance program.

2. Country Selection and Mutual Accountability

19. In practice, certain strategies and programs in some countries warrant more attention than others. Faced with limited evaluation resources, it is good practice to select those countries and programs for CSPEs where the findings and lessons will be most beneficial to the MDB and to the country [**C-GPS**]. Factors such as portfolio size, country development characteristics, and the likely relevance of the evaluation findings to similar issues in other member countries should be considered in making the selection of countries for which a CSPE is to be undertaken. It is an optional good practice to treat each borrowing member equally, and hence to make an effort to undertake CSPEs for all countries to which institutions provide assistance [**O-GPS**].

20. **Joint CSPEs.** To date, the vast majority of CSPEs are undertaken by individual MDBs. Only a handful has been undertaken jointly by two development banks, or by MDBs and other development partners. In many cases, “joint” CSPEs between MDBs have been conducted as parallel exercises, with separate reports. The main benefit of such a joint activity is the reduction in the burden and cost for recipients. Increasingly, however, evaluation on a broader scale than the traditional project, sector, or thematic levels will be required, not only to assess results at the country level but also to look more closely at the role of the different institutions in the process. Joint or multi-aid agency CSPEs can provide this broader perspective while fostering cross-agency learning and reducing evaluation transaction costs to in-country stakeholders. While the situation varies in each case, MDBs should endeavour to reduce potential bottlenecks to undertaking joint CSPEs within each institution [**C-GPS**]. While some of these are outside of the control of the evaluators (e.g., different reporting requirements, different country strategy timing), the broader efforts to foster MDB harmonization (e.g., joint MDB country strategies, pooled funding arrangements) are likely to make it more feasible to undertake multipartner CSPEs in the medium term. While multipartner CSPEs are recommended, the decision on whether or not to join forces with partners in a CSPE is best made on a case-by-case basis [**C-GPS**].

21. **Mutual Accountability.** There is also a need for multipartner evaluations of country assistance extending beyond the MDBs to include all sources of external assistance, for which the evaluation challenges would be significantly greater. Participation in multipartner evaluations of the totality of country assistance will be encouraged. To the extent possible, the GPS set forth in this report shall be applied in such joint evaluation exercises [**O-GPS**].

3. Timing

22. A CSPE should be timed to permit the results, recommendations, and lessons identified to feed into the preparation of the next MDB country strategy and be available to management and the executive board in time for reviewing or approving the new strategy [**C-GPS**]. Optionally, the results of a CSPE could be provided at a time in which the government is willing to make strategic decisions about the use of external assistance [**O-GPS**].

4. Advance Preparations

23. **Preparatory Steps.** CSPEs build on the existing stock of MDB self- and independent evaluations. Evaluations of key projects, programs, and technical assistance (TA) operations should, if at all possible, be scheduled sufficiently in advance of the preparation of a CSPE [**C-GPS**]. Operations staff should also be encouraged to prepare self-evaluations in a timely manner.

24. **Sector/Thematic Studies.** At the discretion of each evaluation unit, sector or thematic studies, special evaluations, or impact assessments may be undertaken to prepare for a CSPE [**O-GPS**]. If sector or thematic evaluations are undertaken in advance of a CSPE, then it is a good practice to issue these as separate reports and to discuss them with the government agencies responsible for the particular sectors or thematic areas. Application of the same evaluation criteria and ratings systems at the sector/thematic level as those to be used for the CSPE facilitates the aggregation of sector/thematic assessments at the country level [**O-GPS**].

5. Coverage

25. **Time Period.** CSPEs should cover a period of assistance that is long enough to provide a sufficient period of time in which to witness development results, while providing more emphasis on evaluating recent performance during the current strategy period to ensure that the findings are operationally relevant. Newly initiated, completed and ongoing assistance activities will be covered in an MDB CSPE **[C-GPS]**.

26. **Product and Service Coverage.** CSPEs will cover the full content of the MDB's program of engagement with the country over the relevant time period **[C-GPS]**. They will cover a series of MDB strategies and assistance in projects, programs, TA, economic and sector work, and knowledge products, but also non-financial services, including the role that MDB assistance plays in policy dialogue, processes used in addressing issues in the execution of the program, as well as in coordinating, harmonizing and catalyzing assistance from other development partners, the private sector, and civil society. By necessity, some areas will be covered in more depth than others. Those areas of focus should be determined based on (i) client needs, and (ii) the areas of the past programs that can evoke the most important lessons for the future strategy **[C-GPS]**. In the large-country cases in which there are too many interventions to cover all of them, the CSPE will draw its inferences from a purposeful sample of an MDB's assistance activities that is representative of the main thrusts of the MDB's strategy and program of assistance **[O-GPS]**.

27. **Second- or third-generation CSPEs** will summarize the findings from the previous CSPE and take stock of the extent to which the lessons and recommendations of the first CSPE were utilized **[C-GPS]**. Coverage of the second- (or third-) generation CSPE will overlap with the previous CSPE by a period of a few years to validate end-of-period assessments and to provide continuity with the previous evaluation **[C-GPS]**.

28. **Limited-Scope CSPEs.** While recognizing that a full performance assessment of a complex assistance program should not be undertaken in a superficial manner, there are, however, special cases in which a limited scope CSPE may be appropriate. Limited-scope CSPEs may be warranted in cases in which the MDB's role in the country is quite minor, when there are likely to have been few results achieved during the CSPE period, and when there is little likelihood of findings and lessons from a CSPE going beyond what is already known from existing project and program evaluations **[C-GPS]**. A limited-scope CSPE may also be needed to deliver evaluation findings to meet tight time-sensitive demands **[O-GPS]**.

29. **Validation Reports.** A validation report of a self-evaluation report can be treated as a special category of a limited effort CSPE. If self-evaluation reports (i.e., country strategy completion reports) are properly done and independently validated, this may reduce the need for in-depth independent CSPEs, particularly for smaller borrowers. In addition, validation of a country-level self-evaluation can serve to assess whether or not a full CSPE is required to investigate more deeply issues raised in the completion report. It can be difficult, however, for operations staff to prepare candid and critical evaluations of country assistance performance, particularly in countries whose development results lag far behind what was expected. Independent validation of the completion reports should be undertaken to encourage internal consistency in the evaluations (often between indicators and evaluative judgements) and can be used to assess the adequacy of the documentation and performance ratings **[C-GPS]**.

6. CSPE Approach Paper

30. A CSPE approach (or position) paper will be prepared to define the country-specific evaluation approach, to set out the main evaluation parameters, and to brief the evaluation team and stakeholders within the MDB and the government **[C-GPS]**.

7. Preparation Period

31. After the CSPE approach (or position) paper is approved, an in-depth CSPE will generally be implemented over a period of 6–12 months for data collection, analysis, reporting and review **[C-GPS]**. This should provide sufficient time for an in-depth review of secondary materials and field visits, while ensuring that findings are delivered in a timely manner.

8. Staffing

32. MDB CSPEs will generally be led by an experienced evaluator with sufficient experience in MDB operations to understand well the processes involved in formulating country strategies and assistance programs **[C-GPS]**. To the extent that resources permit, a multidisciplinary team will be employed to undertake the CSPE **[O-GPS]**.

9. Guidelines

33. CSPE guidelines will be prepared by each MDB. While the guidelines should provide some latitude to tailor CSPE methods, coverage and approach to diverse country circumstances, a uniform set of guidelines will be used to explain the CSPE, as an evaluation instrument, to stakeholders in the MDB, the country, and elsewhere. The guidelines will serve to establish a core set of CSPE goals and objectives, methods, evaluative criteria, evaluation questions, procedures, reporting formats, quality control processes, and outreach and dissemination arrangements **[C-GPS]**. If formal rating is included, then the guidelines should clearly specify the rating criteria and performance assessment methodology. Quality control processes should ensure that the principles set out in the guidelines are strictly adhered to so that performance assessments and other findings will be comparable across CSPEs **[C-GPS]**. While the principles set out in the CSPE guidelines should be strictly adhered to, the detailed scope, methods and approach may need to be tailored to diverse country circumstances and to equally diverse assistance roles that the MDBs play **[C-GPS]**.

B. Methodology-Related Good-Practice Standards

1. CSPE Methods and Approaches

a. Overview

34. A CSPE is premised on the assumption that a series of MDB country strategies and programs can be disaggregated into a contextual diagnosis, strategic and programmatic objectives, and an intervention logic that is amenable to formal evaluation. A typical MDB CSPE exercise begins with an effort to make explicit the causal model implicit in the design of the assistance program **[C-GPS]**. It includes a contextual analysis to identify program objectives; assess the validity of the MDB's diagnosis (in terms of the relevance of the objectives); and examine the relevance of the MDB's strategy towards meeting the objectives, including the definition and delivery of the lending and nonlending assistance program **[C-GPS]**. Top-down, bottom-up, and attribution-cum-bank contribution assessments will be used to garner evidence

on the extent to which strategic objectives were achieved and to test the consistency of evaluation findings **[C-GPS]**. The evidence base will then be analyzed, using various techniques, to identify performance determinants and to examine the contribution made by the MDB to the achievement of development results **[C-GPS]**. A set of evaluative criteria is applied to the evidence base to rate or otherwise reach an evaluative judgment about the performance of the country assistance in meeting its goals and objectives (See Section B-2 below) **[C-GPS]**. Key findings and lessons are drawn from the performance assessment and provide the foundation for future-oriented recommendations **[C-GPS]**. In MDB CSPE reports, the methodology used is clearly explained to ensure common understanding and to avoid disputes **[C-GPS]**.

b. Evaluation Questions

35. A number of fundamental evaluation questions are defined to guide the assessment of country strategy and program performance. These will include both questions that are standard to all CSPEs, as well as those defined for the specific country case **[C-GPS]**. The CSPE is expected to provide evidence-based answers to these questions. At the discretion of each evaluation unit, standard questions may include those similar to the following:

- (i) Were the bank's strategy and program relevant to the development challenges facing the country?
- (ii) Were suitable instruments of assistance selected to achieve strategic priorities?
- (iii) Did the bank assistance achieve its desired objectives? If so, were they achieved efficiently?
- (iv) Are these achievements sustainable over time?
- (v) Was the bank's assistance effective in producing results, both at the level of individual interventions and at the level of the program as a whole?
- (vi) What is the overall impact of bank assistance, for example on the economy, poverty reduction, and the MDGs?
- (vii) Did bank assistance contribute to outcomes that will improve the country's capacity to manage the economy, combat poverty, and foster sustainable socioeconomic development?
- (viii) Was there a suitable division of labor and were there effective coordination arrangements with other development partners?

Both the general and the evaluation-specific questions that are asked will be documented in the CSPE report for the readers to be able to judge whether the evaluation team has sufficiently assessed them **[C-GPS]**.

c. Counterfactuals

36. The most accurate measure of a bank's contribution is a comparison of the situation prevailing with and without bank assistance. In practice, counterfactuals are difficult to derive and defend for a country program as a whole. These should be used only when they are possible and defensible **[O-GPS]**. In some instances, comparisons with similar countries can be used as a counterfactual, although these tend to compare performance across countries and not across assistance program outcomes. It may, however, be possible to derive reasonable counterfactuals for specific components of an assistance program, such as cases in which one

region was assisted and others were not, or when formal impact evaluations have been undertaken in advance of the CSPE [O-GPS].¹⁰

d. Attribution and Contribution

37. Formal attribution—i.e., separating the MDB’s role or contribution from that of other internal or external players—is extremely difficult in a CSPE because of the multiplicity of factors that affect development outcomes and impacts at the country level. Therefore, the assessment of program results will identify the main drivers of outcomes and assessing whether or not the MDB has (or has not) made a contribution to key results that is both plausible and meaningful [C-GPS]. A plausible association of MDB assistance with development results can be assessed by (i) characterizing the role played by the MDB in the sector or thematic domain (i.e., lead MDB, main policy interlocutor); (ii) examining the policies and actions of other major development partners for consistency with those of the MDB; and (iii) examining evidence that the main outcomes were not achieved primarily due to the efforts or involvement of another development partner or by exogenous events. In addition, CSPEs will attempt to characterize the nature of the MDB’s contribution to results by assessing the extent to which MDB assistance delivered additional value beyond the financing provided [O-GPS].

e. Evaluability

38. Evaluability, at the country level, is a measure of how well a proposed strategy or program sets out criteria and metrics to be used in its subsequent evaluation. A CSPE will include an assessment of the evaluability of the country strategy(ies) and programs of assistance [C-GPS]. Various factors influence the evaluability of country assistance, including the quality of the country diagnostic; the linkage between that diagnostic and the intervention logic; and the degree to which targets and indicators were specified ex-ante, baseline information was collected, outcomes were monitored, and results were reported.

39. Evaluability of country strategies and assistance programs can be a serious problem, especially if country strategies are very broad, and have goals and indicators far removed from an MDB’s contribution; if the intervention logic is not well defined; or if there are large backlogs of projects that should, but do not, have project completion reports. Evaluability constraints can be overcome by (i) reviewing strategy, program, and project documents to reconstruct program objectives, indicators, and/or baselines; (ii) retrofitting results frameworks from the reconstructed program logic; (iii) undertaking sector reviews to assess performance of completed and ongoing operations; (iv) collecting before-and-after performance evidence from executing agencies; project files; and, in selected cases, beneficiary surveys; and (v) concentrating the analysis on key trends in assistance performance for which data exist [C-GPS].

f. Multiple Evidence Sources

40. Performance judgements in a CSPE are generally based on as wide an evidence base of primary and secondary data as is both practical and possible. Differences in the evidence base need to be carefully reconciled and explained. The aim should be to obtain the widest possible breadth of information, to analyze the evidence carefully, and to base findings on information that has been successfully validated from multiple sources. All MDB CSPEs examine evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, from a wide range of secondary data

¹⁰ Separate impact evaluations are generally not conducted as part of a CSPE because of the cost, time required, and the limited extent to which the findings can be generalized.

sources, including documentation from the bank as well as from other development partners, government, research institutions, and other outside sources. Findings of past evaluations are drawn on and validated. Primary data is drawn from interviews with key stakeholders, which are used to validate the key findings, and to help reveal the reasons for particular patterns of performance. Field visits to project sites are sometimes included to cross-check information obtained from project files and government reports. In some cases, focus groups are used to address specific issues or obtain in-country beneficiary views. **[C-GPS]**.

41. Formal sample surveys, while less common, can also be used to assess project performance, to solicit feedback on the responsiveness of the MDB to key government agencies, and to assess the quality of the MDB's performance as a development partner **[O-GPS]**.

g. Client Participation

42. Client participation in the CSPE process encourages respect for the fairness and objectivity of the CSPE, and contributes to early buy-in of the key results and recommendations. MDB CSPEs will endeavour to involve key stakeholders in the CSPE process, from the design of the evaluation, through its execution, to the discussion of the key findings **[C-GPS]**. However, MDB CSPEs are independent evaluations so they are not conducted jointly with the country.

h. Disclaimers

43. Given the breadth and complexity of the task, and the possible weaknesses in the evidence base, there is only so much that any CSPE can conclusively evaluate. Therefore, it is good practice that the limitations of the CSPE methodology, and its application, are frankly acknowledged in the evaluation report **[C-GPS]**. This would include factors impinging on the accuracy of the performance assessment and the breadth and depth of the evidence base upon which performance assessments are drawn. This also makes it possible for evaluation clients to establish the degree of precision with which CSPE findings should be interpreted.

2. CSPE Evaluation Criteria

44. Performance of a country assistance strategy and program of assistance should be formally assessed using a set of well-defined evaluation criteria. The standard evaluation criteria that are applied to projects and programs can be interpreted and applied to the evaluation of country assistance. For harmonization purposes, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact are considered mandatory criteria **[C-GPS]**. Institutional development, borrower and bank performance are optional criteria **[O-GPS]**.

a. Relevance, Positioning, and Coherence

45. **Relevance** refers to the degree to which the design and objectives of the MDB strategy and program of assistance were consistent with the needs of the country and with the government's development plans and priorities. Relevance is assessed by first examining the needs of the country over an extended period, and the government's priorities and/or strategies for addressing these needs. An analysis of the evolving country context is used to assess the extent to which MDB assistance was relevant to the critical constraints to long-term progress in socioeconomic development, both in those areas in which the MDB provided assistance and in those it did not **[C-GPS]**. This will include a candid assessment of the realism of the diagnosis and the strategy, and the adequacy and consistency of the assistance program with the

strategy, in light of recent social and economic developments, political economy issues, government policies and strategies, and the strategies and focus of other development partners. The processes used to maintain relevance, such as MDB research and policy dialogue, may also be assessed [O-GPS].

46. Optional criteria may be used to evaluate the design of the country assistance strategy and program [O-GPS]. **Country Positioning** *is a measure of how well the MDB responded to (or even anticipated) the evolving development challenges and priorities of the government, built on the organization's comparative advantage, and designed the country strategies and programs in a manner that took into consideration the support available from other development partners.* Several subcriteria have been used to assess the extent to which an MDB's assistance was positioned appropriately, including: the extent to which assistance was concentrated in areas of the MDB's evolved comparative advantage; has built on lessons of past experience; and, was selective/focused on a few sectors to reduce transaction costs, provide a sufficient quantum of assistance in any one area, and create positive synergies. **Coherence** *refers to the extent to which there were measures aimed at fostering internal and external synergies within the program. This can include complementarity between different program elements, and can also include the extent to which policies of the assistance provider are self-reinforcing. It can also include the extent to which external partnerships promote an efficient and effective division of labor in providing assistance that allows complementarities and synergies between assistance programs to be reached.* Coherence may be examined along three dimensions: definition of programmatic focus in terms of anticipated results, integration across bank instruments in support of program objectives, and specification of the division of labor with other developmental actors.

b. Efficiency

47. **Efficiency** *refers to the extent to which the design and delivery of assistance were most cost effective.* Measuring efficiency is difficult at the overall country program level because of the difficulty of estimating the combined benefit flows of various categories of MDB assistance (i.e., policy support, capacity building, aid coordination). Instead, CSPEs typically draw on proxy indicators of the efficiency of MDB support in comparison to cost [C-GPS]. This may include indicators related to project/program implementation, for example, of planned versus actual commitments, disbursement patterns, lending outcomes, project quality at entry/supervision, projects at risk, design and supervision coefficients, monitoring and evaluation arrangements, implementation problems and their resolution, and other factors affecting program implementation. Ratings accorded to projects, programs, and TA are also used as a proxy for returns-on-investment and timely delivery of services, while economic internal rates of return for major investments may also be reviewed. Various proxies for transaction costs to the government may be assembled and analyzed, including the number of missions per annum; the proportion of time that senior government officials devoted to servicing MDB missions; and the average amount of time that executing agencies have allocated to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of MDB-supported assistance activities. Factors affecting the efficiency with which resources are used are identified in MDB CSPEs [C-GPS].

c. Effectiveness

48. **Effectiveness** *refers to the extent to which the assistance instruments achieved the intentions and objectives set.* Outcomes are assessed in a CSPE with respect to program objectives at different levels: across similar lending and nonlending projects; within key sectors and/or thematic thrusts; and at broader institutional, macroeconomic, and socioeconomic levels.

Drawing primarily on a (bottom-up) analysis of cumulative program performance, CSPEs assess achievement of results both in terms of the extent to which strategic outcomes were achieved, and the extent to which sufficient development progress was made. Results are generally compared in three ways: (i) before and after the country assistance period being reviewed; (ii) between the country and similar countries (within the same region or at a similar level of development), as appropriate; and (iii) benchmarked against any absolute standards (e.g., the MDGs, costs of capital, rates-of-return). The determinants of MDB performance in attaining strategic objectives are identified in the CSPE report **[C-GPS]**.

49. CSPEs are also uniquely suited to assess the suitability of MDB policies in different country contexts, such as compliance and results of safeguard policies, financial management policies, decentralization, human resource policies, relations with civil society, cofinancing policies, adequacy of bank instruments, and responsiveness of the MDB's services to country-specific assistance requirements. Not all MDB policies can be assessed in all country cases. In MDB CSPEs, a distinction will be drawn between those MDB policies whose coverage is mandatory and those whose coverage is optional **[O-GPS]**.

d. Sustainability

50. **Sustainability** refers to the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the program period. The degree to which the results of MDB assistance are likely to be sustained after the conclusion of the program will be covered by examining the degree to which past interventions have been sustained; by identifying risks that could affect benefit flows; and assessing the extent to which policies are in place to mitigate such risks **[C-GPS]**. In assessing the sustainability of benefit flows, a key issue is the extent to which adequate institutional arrangements have been established to further the implementation of program-supported measures. Similarly, factors that negatively affect sustainability, such as fiscal distress or insufficient attention to recurrent financing, may also be assessed.

e. Impact and Institutional Development

51. **Impact** refers to the MDB's contribution to long-term changes in development conditions. Impact is generally assessed with reference to the MDB's contribution to the attainment of specified development goals (i.e., macroeconomic balance, socioeconomic conditions, transition impact, MDGs, and other specified national poverty reduction goals and objectives) and to the contribution of MDB assistance individually to the national and/or sector-specific impact-objectives established during the programming process **[C-GPS]**. Program impacts will most often be assessed using before-and-after comparisons, and to a lesser extent by comparing performance with similar countries or with internationally accepted standards (e.g., MDGs). Factors exogenous to the program will be examined to distinguish those impacts which can reasonably be associated with the assistance program from those whose proximate determinants lie elsewhere.

52. **Institutional development** refers to the extent to which MDB assistance improved or weakened the ability of the country to make more efficient, equitable, and sustainable use of its human, financial, and natural resources, for example through (a) better definition, stability, transparency, enforceability, and predictability of institutional arrangements; and/or (b) better alignment of the missions and capacities of organizations with their respective mandates. The extent to which the MDB's support has helped to develop institutional capacity may be assessed by examining changes in the performance and governance of public institutions, nongovernment organizations, the private sector and civil society **[O-GPS]**.

Institutional development is more frequently assessed as part of an overall assessment of effectiveness and impact since capacity-building has come to be treated as an integral cross-cutting objective of most MDB programs.

f. **Borrower Performance**

53. **Borrower performance** focuses on the processes that underlie the borrower's effectiveness in discharging its responsibilities, with specific focus on the extent to which the government exhibited ownership of the assistance strategy and program. Borrower performance may be assessed by examining the degree of client ownership of international development priorities, such as MDGs and MDB corporate advocacy priorities, the quality of policy dialogue, and by the extent to which the Government provided consistent support for MDB-assisted programs. It is an optional good practice to assess, but not to formally rate, borrower performance **[O-GPS]**.

g. **Bank Performance**

54. **Bank performance** focuses on the processes that underlie the MDB's effectiveness in discharging its responsibilities as a development partner, including compliance with basic corporate operating principles; consistency with furtherance of the MDB's corporate, country, and sector strategies; and its client service satisfaction. An assessment of bank performance typically considers: (i) the relevance and implementation of the strategy; the design and supervision of the MDB's lending interventions; (ii) the scope, quality, and follow-up of diagnostic work and other analytical activities; (iii) the consistency of the MDB's lending with its nonlending work and with its safeguard policies; and (iv) the MDB's partnership activities. It may also include the extent to which the MDB was sensitive and responsive to client needs and fostered client ownership **[O-GPS]**. The views of operational staff, the borrower, executing agencies, and other development partners are also typically considered in assessing bank performance.

h. **Partnership and Harmonization**

55. **Partner Coordination** refers to the contribution made by an MDB to coordinating external assistance, and to building government and country ownership of external assistance processes. Robust partnerships are required to address complex development challenges. In recognition of this, CSPEs examine the extent to which the MDB has been an effective partner in a multi-stakeholder development assistance effort **[O-GPS]**. This may include an assessment, but not a formal rating, of the MDB's participation in aid agency/partner groups, the extent to which MDB activities were well coordinated with those of other aid agencies, the degree to which the MDB helped improve the government's capacity for mobilizing and utilizing external assistance, and the manner in which the MDB fostered involvement of all stakeholders (e.g., government, private sector, civil society, nongovernment organizations, and other development partners) in the development process. The degree to which the Paris Declaration on Harmonization and Aid Effectiveness principles (i.e., government ownership, alignment with government strategies, results orientation, program approaches, use of country systems, tracking results, and mutual accountability) have been promoted should be covered in the assessment of the MDB's contribution to building robust development partnerships.

3. Performance Rating

a. Ratings Principles and Comparability

56. A formal rating system is generally viewed as a useful component to a CSPE, because it can help to organize and discipline the evaluation and can make the assessment process transparent and uniform across countries **[O-GPS]**. But formal rating can be problematic.

57. If formal rating is undertaken, then the rating system should use well-defined criteria and be kept as simple as possible **[C-GPS]**, because ratings that are too numerous or too detailed may confuse the user. Moreover, discussion of the ratings should distract from the main messages. For those MDBs that wish to include ratings, the manner in which the ratings are derived should be clearly stated in MDB CSPE reports, and the summary-evidence upon which they were made should be presented along with the rating itself. The limitations of the CSPE rating system should also be frankly acknowledged **[C-GPS]**.

58. Ensuring that CSPE ratings are comparable across CSPEs implies the need for a rating system that is uniform, both in its definitions and in its application in different country cases **[C-GPS]**. While there will always be some element of evaluator judgment, strict adherence to CSPE rating guidelines and careful quality control can help to promote ratings that are comparable across CSPEs in those evaluations that include a formal rating.

b. Rating Criteria

59. If a quantitative rating is undertaken, the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact are considered, and definitions should be made consistent with those listed above **[C-GPS]**. The ratings of the additional criteria at the country level—i.e., positioning, institutional development, coherence, partner coordination, and bank performance—are considered to be **O-GPS**. The ratings for each criteria that are employed should be presented separately so that the results of the performance assessment are fully transparent to the evaluation users **[C-GPS]**.

c. Rating Subcriteria

60. For those MDBs that quantitatively rate performance, defining subcriteria, if any, in a way that is applicable to specific country cases can help to provide an evaluative framework for more uniform, systematic, and comparable assessment **[O-GPS]**. MDB evaluators have drawn on a decade of experience in undertaking CSPEs to evolve a set of evaluative subcriteria suitable for assessing country assistance performance in different country settings. A list of CSPE-specific subcriteria for each of the criteria indicated above is provided in Attachment 2. This list is not meant to be either exhaustive or minimal; it reflects many of the factors found to be important determinants of country assistance performance, a subset of which is likely to be suitable in varied settings. An evaluative judgment is required to assess the degree to which chosen subcriteria have been achieved in a particular evaluation.

d. Weighting Criteria

61. If overall performance ratings (or headline ratings) are generated—as an optional good practice—then more emphasis should be accorded in the weighting to the results (i.e., effectiveness and impact) of the assistance program and to the sustainability of the net benefits **[O-GPS]**.

C. Reporting-Related Good Practice Standards

1. Findings, Lessons, and Recommendations

62. **Findings and Lessons.** CSPE reports will include evaluation findings that are relevant to the specific country case, follow logically from the main evaluation questions and analysis of data, and show a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions drawn **[C-GPS]**. CSPEs will identify and focus on a small number of major findings and lessons that are unambiguously rooted in the evaluation evidence, have clear operational implications, and do not exceed the boundaries of the evidence presented in the CSPE **[C-GPS]**.

63. **CSPE Recommendations.** CSPE recommendations will be conveyed constructively in the form of proposals that are actionable within the responsibilities of the users, few in number, country specific, strategic, operational, and (ideally) not obvious **[C-GPS]**.

2. Reporting and Review

64. **Reporting.** Standard CSPE reporting formats will be used to foster uniformity in coverage and presentation while providing sufficient latitude to tailor the reports to the needs of a particular country case. The report should include coverage of the country context, country strategy and program, program implementation, program outcomes and impacts, partnerships, thematic issues, lessons and recommendations **[C-GPS]**. The CSPE report will be presented in plain language. It will be evidence- and analysis-based, and will focus on those key issues that could be evaluated conclusively, rather than all issues that have been examined **[C-GPS]**.

65. **CSPE Review.** For quality control purposes, the draft CSPE will be rigorously reviewed internally by the staff and management of the independent evaluation office, and externally by MDB operations staff, government stakeholders and, optionally, by external reviewers **[C-GPS]**. The CSPE review process should also extend to parallel or supporting studies to ensure that they are contextually correct and consistent with the CSPE process. The revised CSPE report will reflect these comments and acknowledge any substantive disagreements. In cases in which there are such disagreements, the formal views of management, government, external reviewers, and/or the board will be reflected in the final CSPE report **[O-GPS]**.

3. Making Findings Accessible

66. **Disclosure.** It is a good practice to publish the findings of CSPEs **[C-GPS]**. Publishing the CSPE findings helps to foster learning beyond the immediate client groups and also helps to promote transparency in the evaluation process. Optionally, the main findings of CSPEs can be made available in summary form to the public **[O-GPS]**. To spotlight the diversity with which CSPE findings can be interpreted, CSPE publications will generally include the formal views of management, government, external reviewers, and the board **[C-GPS]**.

67. **Dissemination.** It often requires considerable effort to ensure that the CSPE findings are disseminated beyond a small group of senior MDB and government officials. Presentations to parliament, public seminars, consultation workshops, and press briefings are some of the ways in which CSPE findings can be more widely disseminated **[O-GPS]**. Summarizing the CSPE in a readily accessible form (such as an evaluation précis) and translation of CSPE findings into the local language are also optional good practices that can help to contribute to wider dissemination of findings and results **[O-GPS]**.

4. Generalizing Findings and Tracking Recommendations

68. **Generalizing CSPE Findings.** The findings from CSPEs will be summarized and used for comparative purposes in the annual and/or biannual reviews of evaluation findings prepared by the independent evaluation offices **[C-GPS]**. Using CSPEs for comparative purposes helps foster a more general understanding of the factors that influence country assistance performance.

69. **Tracking Recommendations.** Tracking and reporting on the progress by which key findings, lessons, and recommendations are actually utilized by the MDB helps to facilitate institutional learning practices. This is an optional good practice that can be accomplished through either recommendation tracking systems or periodic reviews of the utilization of CSPE findings and recommendations **[O-GPS]**.

ECG PROGRESS BENCHMARKING TABLE
(to be completed by each participating MDB in 2010)

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks^b
A. Process-Related GPSs					
A.1. CSPE Goals, Objectives, Client Responsiveness, and Unit of Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) provide credible and useful information on bank performance at the country level. (ii) Used for both accountability and lesson learning purposes. (iii) Designed to meet information requirements of main target clients. (iv) Focus on evaluating the results of bank assistance, with the country strategy(s) as the main reference point. 				
A.2. Country Selection and Mutual Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Countries selected are those where the findings and lessons will be most beneficial to the bank and the country. (ii) Efforts will be made to reduce potential bottlenecks to undertaking joint MDB CSPEs. (iii) The decision to pursue a multipartner CSPE will be made on a country-specific basis. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (iv) Covering all countries treats all borrowers equally. (v) Participation in multipartner evaluations of total ODA to a country is to be encouraged. 		
A.3. Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) CSPE should be timed to feed into the preparation and review of the new MDB country strategy. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) Could also be timed to contribute to strategic decision making of the Government. 		
A.4. Preparatory Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Evaluations of key projects, programs and TA should be scheduled to precede the CSPE. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) Sector/thematic studies or impact assessments may be scheduled to precede a CSPE. (iii) Application of the same evaluation criteria in sector/thematic studies as in the CSPE facilitates their use. 		

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks^b
A.5. Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Coverage is long enough to see results, but more emphasis is put on the current strategy period. (ii) Newly initiated, completed and ongoing operations are covered (iii) The full content of bank assistance is to be covered. (iv) Depth of coverage will depend on client needs and those areas most likely to evoke lessons for the future strategy. (v) For second or third generation CSPEs, the previous CSPE findings summarized and use of previous CSPE lessons and recommendations assessed. (vi) Subsequent CSPEs will have an overlap in the period covered of a few years. (vii) CSPEs may have a limited scope if the MDBs role is minor, if there were few results, or little likelihood of findings and lessons of broader import. (viii) Completion reports of country strategies will be independently validated. If the completion and validation reports are comprehensive and apply CSPE criteria, this may serve as a limited-scope CSPE. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ix) In the large country cases, a representative sample of assistance activities will be assessed. (x) A limited-scope CSPE may also be needed to deliver evaluation findings to meet tight time-sensitive demands. 		
A.6. CSPE Approach Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A CSPE approach (or position) paper will be prepared for each CSPE. 				
A.7. CSPE Preparation Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A full CSPE will be implemented over a 6-12 month period of time. 				
A.8. Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) CSPE teams will be headed by an experienced evaluator with sufficient experience in bank operations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) A multi-disciplinary team will be engaged to undertake the CSPE. 		
A.9. Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Each MDB will have CSPE guidelines that set-out CSPE goals and objectives, methods, evaluative criteria, evaluation questions, 				

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment ^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks ^b
	<p>procedures, reporting formats, quality control processes, and outreach and dissemination arrangements.</p> <p>(ii) While guidelines will be adhered to, the actual methods, scope, and approach may be tailored to the country setting.</p> <p>(iii) Quality control procedures will ensure that guidelines are adhered to.</p>				
<p>B. Methodology-Related GPSs</p>					
<p><i>CSPE Methods and Approaches</i></p>					
<p>B.1. Overview</p>	<p>(i) CSPE method includes steps to: make the causal model explicit in the country strategy, analyze country context, assess validity of the bank's diagnosis, and analyze relevance of the strategy and program, both in design and delivery.</p> <p>(ii) Top-down, bottom-up and attribution-cum-contribution assessments are used to assemble information on performance in achieving strategic objectives.</p> <p>(iii) Evidence base is analyzed to identify performance determinants.</p> <p>(iv) Evaluation criteria applied to assess performance in multiple dimensions.</p> <p>(v) Findings and lessons are drawn, and future-oriented recommendations are provided.</p> <p>(vi) Methods are explained in the CSPE report.</p>				
<p>B.2. Evaluation Questions</p>	<p>(i) General and country specific evaluation questions are posed to guide the assessment.</p> <p>(ii) Evaluation questions are documented in the CSPE report.</p>				

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks^b
B.3. Counterfactuals			(i) Counterfactuals should be used only when they are possible and defensible. (ii) Counterfactuals can be proxied through comparisons with similar countries, or examination of those parts of the program for which a counterfactual can be more clearly identified, or for those parts of the program for which prior impact evaluations have been conducted.		
B.4. Attribution and Contribution	(i) Attribution analysis will examine the main drivers of outcomes and assess whether or not the bank has made a contribution to key results that is both plausible and meaningful.		(ii) The bank's contribution to results will be assessed by examining the extent to which bank assistance delivered additional value beyond the financing provided.		
B.5. Evaluability	(i) A CSPE will include an assessment of the evaluability of a bank's strategy and program of assistance.		(ii) Evaluability constraints may be overcome by reconstructing the program logic, retrofitting results frameworks, drawing on available information sources, and collecting performance information.		
B.6. Multiple Evidence Sources	(i) A CSPE will draw on the widest possible breadth of information, will analyze the primary and secondary evidence-base carefully, and will base findings on information that has been successfully validated from multiple sources.		(ii) Use of client perception surveys can provide evidence about MDB performance.		

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks^b
B.7. Client Participation	(i) Participation of key stakeholders in the CSPE process will be encouraged.				
B.8. Disclaimers	(i) The limitations of the methodology, and its application, are frankly acknowledged in the CSPE report.				
B.9. CSPE Evaluation Criteria	(i) Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact are considered mandatory criteria.		(ii) Institutional development, borrower and bank performance are optional criteria.		
B.10. Relevance, Coherence, and Positioning	(i) Relevance will be examined vis-à-vis the country context. (ii) The bank's strategy and program will be examined to assess if the diagnosis is correct, whether its objectives are consistent, and the assistance and instruments consistent with the diagnosis.		(iii) MDB processes used to maintain relevance will be assessed (iv) Criteria, such as positioning and coherence, are used to assess the degree to which the design of the strategy and program harnesses positive synergies, and builds on the bank's core competence.		
B.11. Efficiency	(i) Efficiency will be assessed using indicators of cost-effectiveness, transaction costs, program execution, portfolio performance and for large investments, return-on-investment.				
B.12. Effectiveness	(i) Extent to which strategic outcomes were achieved and sufficient development progress was made is used to assess program effectiveness. (ii) Determinants of performance in achieving bank objectives are identified.		(iii) MDB's contribution to broader corporate objectives is assessed but a distinction is drawn between those thematic issues whose coverage is mandatory and those whose coverage is optional.		
B.13. Sustainability	(i) The degree to which the results of bank assistance are likely to be sustained after the conclusion of the program will be assessed.				

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks^b
B.14. Impact and Institutional Development	(i) Impact is assessed relative to national goals and to program-specific goals and targets.		(ii) Extent to which the bank has helped to develop institutional capacity may be separately assessed if not part of impact assessment.		
B.15. Borrower Performance			(i) Borrower performance, and particularly the degree of program ownership, may be assessed, but not formally rated.		
B.16. Bank Performance			(i) Bank performance is formally assessed, including the MDB's responsiveness to client needs.		
B.17. Partnership and Harmonization			(i) The CSPE will examine the extent to which the bank has been an effective partner in a multi-stakeholder development assistance effort.		
<i>Performance Rating</i> B.18. Ratings Principles and Comparability	(i) If quantitative rating is undertaken, the rating system should use well-defined criteria and be as simple as possible. (ii) The manner in which ratings are derived is stated in the report. (iii) Limitations of the rating system are acknowledged.		(iv) Use of a quantitative rating system to make the assessment process transparent and uniform across countries.		
B.19. Rating Criteria	(i) Standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact) are drawn on for the rating system and are defined in a manner consistent with the criteria definitions set forth in the GPS if quantitative rating is included in the CSPE.		(ii) Positioning, coherence, and partner coordination criteria may be used to assess and rate issues of synergies, coherence, and improved overall aid effectiveness.		

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment ^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks ^b
B.20. Rating Subcriteria	(i) Rating subcriteria are selected and applied in the CSPE which are most suitable for each particular country case.		(iii) Bank performance may be rated.		
B.21. Weighting Criteria	(i) Ratings accorded for each criteria should be presented separately to make the performance assessment transparent if quantitative rating is undertaken.		(ii) If an overall-cum-headline rating is generated, more weight should be accorded to effectiveness, impact and sustainability.		
C. Reporting-Related GPSs					
C.1. Findings, Lessons, and Recommendations	(i) CSPEs to include findings that are relevant, country-specific, evidence-based, and follow from the evaluation questions. (ii) Lessons should be evidence-rooted and have operational implications. (iii) Recommendations are constructive, actionable, few in number, strategic and non-obvious.				
C.2. Reporting and Review	(i) Uniform formats are followed with latitude to tailor to the country case. (ii) Report will cover country context, country strategy, program implementation, program outcomes and impacts, partnerships, thematic issues, lessons and recommendations. (iii) Report will be presented in plain language and cover those issues that could be conclusively evaluated. (iv) Draft report and supporting studies will be rigorously reviewed internally and externally.		(v) Where there are substantive disagreements during the review process, these will be reflected in the final CSPE report.		
C.3. Making Findings Accessible	(i) CSPE findings will be published.		(ii) CSPE publications will include formal views of management, external reviewers and the board.		

GPS Category	Core GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment ^a	Optional GPS Description	Degree of MDB Alignment	Remarks ^b
C.4. Generalizing Findings and Tracking Recommendations	(i) Annual and/or biannual reviews of evaluation findings will summarize and compare CSPE findings.		(iii) Outreach events may be held to boost the dissemination of CSPE findings. (iv) A précis or other summary publication may be issued and findings translated into the local language to make CSPE findings more accessible. (ii) Recommendation tracking systems or periodic reviews of the utilization of CSPE findings and recommendations will be prepared to track CSPE use.		

CSPE = country strategy and program evaluation, ECG = Evaluation Cooperation Group, GPS = Good-Practice Standards, MDB = multilateral development bank, ODA = official development assistance, TA = technical assistance.

a Alignment refers to the extent to which the MDB evaluation practice is fully, partly, or not harmonized with the relevant GPS.

b The remarks section may be used to explain the reasons for divergence between the GPS and bank practice.

SUBCRITERIA FOR EVALUATING COUNTRY ASSISTANCE

1. What follows is a suggested list of possible subcriteria that multilateral development bank (MDB) evaluators could draw from in tailoring the interpretation of evaluation criteria to the circumstances merited by each particular country case. This is neither a comprehensive nor a minimal checklist. The subcriteria listed here have been found to be important determinants of country assistance performance in MDB evaluations. They can be used to select and define the subcriteria employed in evaluating specific country cases. This is aimed at providing the flexibility required in a country evaluation so that the evaluative criteria are interpreted in a way that is most suitable, given varying country contexts, assistance roles, and data availability.

2. These subcriteria are divided into two groups. The first are the standard evaluation criteria that can be applied to the program as a whole, or to particular components (i.e., sectors or themes). The second are a set of transversal criteria (and subcriteria) that have been used to assess collective characteristics of country assistance services. For each, an evaluative judgment is required to assess the degree to which each chosen subcriterion has been achieved.

A. Standard Evaluation Criteria

1. Relevance: *refers to the degree to which the design and objectives of the MDB strategy and program of assistance were consistent with the needs of the country and with the government's development plans and priorities.*

- (i) Based on a valid diagnosis of the context for external assistance
 - development context thoroughly reviewed
 - adequate assessments of key sectors and thematic areas of proposed bank intervention
 - candid review and assessment of government policies and strategies
 - robust consultative process to identify and validate priorities
 - careful assessment of feasibility of using country systems
 - careful review of lessons of past experience
 - informed understanding of factors driving aid effectiveness
- (ii) Consistency with the country's long-term development requirements (for each major objective)
- (iii) Consistency (i.e., alignment) with the government's development (or poverty) strategy and priorities (for each major objective)
- (iv) Designed in a manner consistent with the government's institutional capacity to absorb external assistance
- (v) Consistency with global agreements (Millennium Development Goals [MDGs], Paris Declaration commitments, World Trade Organization, etc.) for each major strategic objective
- (vi) Consistency with bank corporate policy and strategy (for each major objective)
- (vii) Importance of program objectives addressed to meet critical development constraints (by category, such as macroeconomic management, structural reform, sector reform, private sector development, institutional development, human development, environmental reform, and infrastructure development).
- (viii) Any important objectives that, in hindsight, should have been pursued, but, in the end, were not (i.e., were any important development issues omitted or ignored in the diagnosis?).
- (ix) Program formulation and design were relevant to achieving objectives

- adequacy of the external financing for the program operation
 - extent and appropriateness of the medium-term framework
 - consistency and coherence of the program logic (identification of the goals to be achieved, the specific purpose[s] of bank assistance, program measures, their expected outputs, outcomes, and impacts, together with the key assumptions and risks to performance all identified)
 - appropriate assistance instruments selected (assistance properly sequenced to reach targets, internally consistent, realistic/feasible, manageable and with clearly defined targets, and objectives)
 - social consequences assessed, and suitable mitigation measures incorporated in overall program design
 - performance risks (both internal and external) adequately identified, and suitable strategies for managing risk incorporated
 - realistic time frame for results to be delivered, given institutional and other constraints
- (x) Extent to which sector and thematic objectives were sufficient to achieve a level of critical mass, balanced among objectives, and selective and focused
- (xi) Extent to which dialogue and consultation ensured effective ownership of the program by the government and by society at large
- (xii) Degree to which the bank's program was built on lessons of past experience, was sufficiently focused and selective, and drew on areas of core bank competency
- (xiii) Bank's program took into consideration, and was harmonized with, assistance provided by other development partners
- (xiv) Bank responsiveness in designing, and then adapting the assistance strategy to fundamental changes in client circumstances throughout the implementation period.
- (xv) Extent to which the assistance strategy and program maintained their relevance to the client's development constraints and priorities over time
- (xvi) Assistance strategy and program could be readily evaluated
- targets well defined, linkages traced, baseline values provided, and performance targets specified
 - reporting, monitoring, and evaluation responsibilities assigned and funding provided
 - knowledge gaps identified, and actions identified for securing information needed for decision making included

2. Effectiveness: *the extent to which the assistance instruments achieved the intentions and objectives set.*

- (i) Degree to which activities anticipated in the strategy and program were actually undertaken
- (ii) Sufficient interventions were undertaken to generate outputs and outcomes identified in the country strategy and/or program
- (iii) Performance of the portfolio as a whole was satisfactory in comparison with bank-wide averages
- (iv) Extent to which major issues arose during execution and were (or were not) resolved
- (v) Extent to which main assistance program objectives achieved progress toward each of their stated objectives
- (vi) Extent to which results defined under the country assistance program were actually achieved

- (vii) Extent to which there were major shortcomings, such as unintended social costs or environmental damage, in achieving the program objectives
- (viii) Performance as assessed by rating of bank projects (both self- and independent ratings) in terms of achievement of major objectives
- (ix) Project evaluation judgements regarding achievement of development objectives have verifiable claims
- (x) Extent to which achievement of program objectives demonstrated best practice in some areas
- (xi) Extent to which factors beyond the government's control influenced the outcome of the program (including changes in world markets, natural calamities, war/civil disturbance)
- (xii) Were other performance assessments reviewed and presented for major components of the bank's assistance (including those whose findings contradict the evaluation)?
- (xiii) Extent to which actual performance met or surpassed benchmarks for financial performance of similar categories of private investment (for private sector operations)

3. Efficiency: *refers to the extent to which the design and delivery of assistance were most cost effective.*

- (i) Readiness for implementation of all products and services was secured
- (ii) Products and services were delivered in a timely manner
- (iii) Extent to which strategic objectives were achieved on time
- (iv) Were benefits gained from early completion of assistance (or costs incurred from late completion)
- (v) Benefits of major interventions are, or are expected to be, substantial
 - positive economic rates of return for major investments
 - positive financial rates of return and/or return on equity for MDB-supported private investments
 - major policy or institutional reforms were undertaken that did ease critical constraints to improved socioeconomic performance and poverty reduction
 - unambiguous evidence that benefits reached the poor
- (vi) Debt assumed and adjustment costs from MDB-supported reforms were relatively low compared with the value arising from the achievement of socioeconomic objectives (i.e., social benefits likely to exceed social costs)
- (vii) Overall program financing was provided in a timely manner
 - financing provided in sync with external financing requirements
 - reasonable time for project design, negotiation and effectiveness
 - disbursements took place according to plan
- (viii) Costs of providing the assistance were similar or less than that in comparator country programs and were kept in line with bank norms
- (ix) Unit costs were reasonable for major investments
- (x) Transaction costs of providing assistance were modest (in terms of time spent preparing projects, number of missions undertaken, extent to which efforts were made to combine or hold joint missions with other development partners, and time spent by key government officials in design and oversight of the bank's program)
- (xi) Public expenditures made adequate provision to meet the government's portion of program counterpart costs, and sufficient financing was provided for future recurrent cost requirements

4. Sustainability: *the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the program period.*

- (i) Absence of major policy reversals
- (ii) Continued borrower commitment to assistance program objectives demonstrated through postprogram implementation of related measures
- (iii) Sociopolitical support for the main objectives of the assistance program
- (iv) Adequacy of institutional arrangements for implementing agreed upon reforms and program measures
- (v) Conducive macroeconomic and political setting (i.e., stable and supportive)
- (vi) Continued need for (i.e., ongoing relevance and value of) the results and benefits
- (vii) Ownership by the government and other key stakeholders
- (viii) Financial capacity to address recurrent costs
- (ix) Degree of resilience to risk of the development benefits of the country assistance program over time, taking into account the following factors:
 - technical resilience
 - financial resilience (including policies on cost recovery)
 - economic resilience
 - social support (including conditions subject to safeguard policies)
 - environmental resilience
 - ownership by governments and other key stakeholders
 - institutional support (including a supportive legal/regulatory framework, organizational and management effectiveness)
 - resilience to exogenous effects, such as international economic shocks or changes in the political and security environments

5. Institutional Development: *the extent to which bank assistance improves or weakens the ability of a country to make more efficient, equitable and sustainable use of its human, financial and natural resources, for example through (i) better definition, stability, transparency, enforceability, and predictability of institutional arrangements; and/or (ii) better alignment of mission and capacity of organizations with their respective mandates.*

- (i) Contribution towards improving/strengthening the capacity of public institutions to ensure stable, transparent, enforceable, and predictable execution of their mandates
 - soundness of economic management
 - structure of the public sector, and, in particular, the civil service
 - institutional soundness of the financial sector
 - soundness of legal, regulatory, and judicial systems
 - extent of monitoring and evaluation systems
 - effectiveness of aid coordination
 - degree of financial accountability
 - informal norms and practices that govern social and economic interactions
 - extent of building nongovernment organization capacity
 - level of social and environmental capital
- (ii) Contribution toward improving organizational capacity (in planning, policy analysis, skills upgrading, public awareness building and consultation, management, restructuring, decentralization, management of information systems, financial controls, financial restructuring, regulatory enforcement, and agency governance)

- (iii) Contribution towards improving private sector capacity (i.e., improving the rules of the game for efficient, broad-based private sector development)
- (iv) Contribution to improving the stability, diversity, and growth potential of financial sector services
- (v) Contribution to improving nongovernment organization and civil society capacity
- (vi) Contribution towards improving the governance of the public sector (i.e., transparency, checks and balances, public participation, improved fiduciary policies and practice, and accountability in the discharge of public duties).
- (vii) Extent to which capacity has been developed within Government to manage the formulation and implementation of suitable public policies and programs

6. Impacts: *refers to the MDB's contribution to long-term changes in development conditions*

- (i) Anticipated and unanticipated (positive and negative) impacts identified, and adjusted to take into consideration unexpected shocks or other factors beyond the program's control
 - on the country's macroeconomic balance
 - on the country's economic performance
 - on poverty reduction
 - on social development
 - on governance
 - on environmental sustainability
 - on gender equality
 - on regional cooperation
 - on transition from central planning to the market
 - on other major social, political, or institutional changes in context
- (ii) Extent to which the program has improved the government's capacity, in key sectors and thematic areas, to make effective and efficient use of its human, financial, and natural resources
- (iii) Commercial performance of the MDB's private sector operations, the degree to which these have had wider impacts on private sector development, and the extent to which these have catalyzed private sector investment in the country
- (iv) Anticipated and unanticipated impacts from major projects or programs identified for illustration of the magnitude and pattern of intervention effects (i.e., from impact studies, beneficiary surveys, etc.)
- (v) Evidence that impacts attributable to the country program have been, to the extent feasible, isolated from those caused by other factors
- (vi) Country assistance program's additional contribution to development impacts (delivering relevant knowledge or advice, catalyzing change, fostering more effective use of external resources, etc.)
- (vii) Degree to which bank assistance makes a meaningful contribution to the government's efforts to foster achievement of the MDGs
 - reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015
 - enroll all children in primary school by 2015
 - make progress toward gender equality and empowering women, by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005
 - reduce infant and child mortality rates by two thirds between 1990 and 2015
 - reduce maternal mortality ratios by three quarters between 1990 and 2015
 - provide access for all who need reproductive health services by 2015

- implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015

7. Borrower Performance: *focuses on processes that underlie the borrower's effectiveness in discharging its responsibilities, with specific focus on the extent to which government exhibited ownership of the assistance strategy and program.*

- (i) Shared ownership of the bank's country strategy and program
- (ii) Maintained a high level dialogue with bank staff and management
- (iii) Consulted with civil society and other stakeholders on program implementation
- (iv) Supported high-quality preparation of bank-assisted projects
 - degree of ownership and involvement in identification and design
 - political support for project-related reforms secured
 - adequate institutional arrangements for program implementation
- (v) Provided sufficient counterpart funds and project staff
- (vi) Followed procurement and safeguard (resettlement, environmental, indigenous peoples, fiduciary) guidelines
- (vii) Carefully supervised project implementation
- (viii) Engaged in a high quality dialogue on policy matters with the bank
- (ix) Implemented policy reforms, agreed upon between the bank and the government, in a timely manner
- (x) Provided a policy framework supportive of effective aid utilization (i.e., supportive macroeconomic policies and complementary structural and sector policies)
- (xi) Fostered public outreach, disclosure, and awareness building throughout program implementation
- (xii) Provided results-based monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

8. Bank Performance: *focuses on the processes that underlie the MDB's effectiveness in discharging its responsibilities as a development partner, including compliance with basic corporate operating principles; consistency with furtherance of the MDB's corporate, country, and sector strategies; and its client service satisfaction.*

- (i) Quality of strategy and program at entry
 - appropriate degree of selectivity
 - grounding in recent economic and sector work
 - adequate economic and financial rationale
 - adequate risk assessment
 - realistic assessment of financial requirements and borrowing capacity
 - incorporation of lessons identified in past evaluations
 - adequate institutional analysis
 - adequate poverty, social (including gender), environmental, and stakeholder analysis
 - incorporation of monitoring and evaluation indicators and reporting procedures
 - focus on areas of bank comparative advantage
 - appropriate mix of assistance instruments selected
 - assistance strategy and program was suitable, given the country context and institutional capacity of the client government
- (ii) Quality of MDB supervision
 - degree to which supervision focused on achieving objectives

- degree to which civil society participation was fostered in program implementation
 - problems identified during implementation were expeditiously assessed and resolved
 - adequate resources devoted by the MDB to supervision
 - attention paid to monitoring and evaluation data and processes
 - quality and timeliness of self-assessment (i.e., country strategy completion reporting)
- (iii) Quality of other services
- built client ownership of the assistance program
 - built strong linkages between the strategy and analytical and advisory services
 - provided high-quality knowledge products
 - maintained high-quality dialogue with the government and civil society
 - maintained high quality-at-entry for new projects
 - explained and provided training in bank policies, safeguards, and procedures
 - provided staff with the appropriate skills mix to develop the strategy and program
 - strengthened the government's capacity for financial management and accountability
 - enforced compliance with procurement guidelines, audit requirements, and other project cost controls
 - managed the portfolio effectively
 - provided timely notice to the board of fundamental changes in bank strategy
 - solicited feedback on, and was responsive to requests for ways of improving bank performance
 - provision of necessary long-term financing
 - provision of suitable risk mitigation services

B. Additional Optional Criteria (Subcriteria)¹

1. Coherence: *refers to the extent to which there were measures aimed at fostering internal and external synergies within the program; this can include complementarity between different program elements, and can also include the extent to which policies of the assistance provider are self-reinforcing; it can also include the extent to which external partnerships allow for an efficient and effective division of labor in providing assistance that allows complementarities and synergies between assistance programs to be reached.*

- (i) Country priorities served to establish the main development objectives
- (ii) Country strategies were realistic for forging progress towards selected development objectives and were aligned with, and supportive of, implementation of national development strategies and policies
- (iii) The country assistance program was designed to make a substantial contribution to the achievement of the defined objectives
- (iv) The choice of assistance, across objective area, included measures that would be innovative and have positive synergies and demonstration spillovers and

¹ Coherence is a separate evaluative criterion used by the Office of Evaluation and Oversight of the Inter-American Development Bank. It is assessed as part of positioning by the Operations Evaluation Department of the Asian Development Bank.

- foster complementary activities, so that the value of the program as a whole would be greater than the sum of its individual parts
- (v) The strategies and assistance choices were aligned with and supportive of the assistance provided by other development partners in an effective division of labor
 - (vi) Assistance instruments were chosen, and effectively integrated, to ensure that the response to development challenges was sufficient, complete, and cohesive
 - (vii) Choice of sectors, regions, and target groups was consistent with the needs identified to meet program objectives

2. Positioning: *a measure of how well the MDB responded to (or even anticipated) the evolving development challenges and priorities of the government, built on the organization's comparative advantage, and designed the country strategies and programs in a manner that took into consideration the support available from other development partners.*

- (i) Country priorities and bank corporate priorities were aligned
 - country goals and bank corporate goals were aligned
 - strategic pillars aligned to contribute to country strategic objectives
 - strategic gaps and risks identified and agreed upon with the government
- (ii) Timing and scope of bank engagement were in what turned out to be major development priorities in the country
- (iii) Program was results oriented, coherent, and translated the strategy into appropriate operations, which collectively addressed critical development constraints
- (iv) Strategic focus was appropriate by sector, target group, and geographic area
- (v) Program provided a critical mass of assistance, sufficient to generate sustained results
- (vi) The mix of lending and nonlending services, as well as operational approaches were tailored to the particular conditions of the country
- (vii) Productive relationships were forged with other development partners within the wider framework of development cooperation in the country
- (viii) The bank was well positioned to respond effectively to country priorities
 - the bank was structured, staffed, and managed to respond effectively to client requests
 - institutional arrangements fostered the generation and use of new knowledge to spur innovation
 - assistance was managed for the delivery of development results
 - corporate safeguards were adhered to
- (ix) Results were delivered and the most strategic opportunities for assistance were exploited effectively

3. Partner Coordination: *refers to the contribution made by an MDB to coordinating external assistance, and to building government and country ownership of external assistance processes.*

- (i) Degree to which assistance fostered government leadership of aid coordination
- (ii) Degree to which assistance built the government's capacity to plan its public investment and to mobilize and manage external assistance (including debt management) effectively
- (iii) Degree to which the MDB played a role in catalyzing or otherwise inspiring other stakeholders to cooperate towards achieving common development results

- (iv) Degree to which the policies and strategies pursued by other partners were consistent with that pursued by the bank. (i.e., if there were major conflicts or inconsistencies, were steps taken to resolve these?)
- (v) Extent to which the assistance effort played a catalytic role in resource mobilization
- (vi) Degree to which the MDB coordinated and mobilized aid resources effectively
- (vii) Degree to which the MDB served as an effective aid partner, in terms of knowledge sharing, support for and participation in multipartner initiatives, design of complementary assistance initiatives, assistance provided to other partners to resolve problems of wider concern, and active participation in aid coordination arrangements

Sources: African Development Bank. 2004. *Guidelines for Country Assistance Evaluation* (prepared by O. Ojo). Tunis; Asian Development Bank. 2006. *Guidelines for the Preparation of Country Assistance Program Evaluation Reports*. Manila; Inter-American Development Bank. 2003. *Protocol for the Conduct of Country Program Evaluations*, Revised Version, Report RE-271-1. Washington, D.C.; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee. 1999. *Evaluating Country Programmes*. Report of the Vienna Workshop. Paris; World Bank. 2003. *Country Evaluation Guidelines (internet version) and Country Questionnaire*; and 2005. *Country Assistance Evaluation Retrospective: An OED Self Evaluation*. Washington, D.C.