

# **Mid-Term Evaluation of the EFA Fast Track Initiative**

## **Final Synthesis Report Volume 4**

### **Appendix V: Note on Approach and Methods**

July 2010

#### **Disclaimer and Response**



## EOC Disclaimer

The following disclaimer has been inserted in Appendix V at the request of the Evaluation Oversight Committee:

*The Evaluation Oversight Committee has not endorsed this Appendix but has agreed to allow its inclusion among the Evaluation Report Appendices in the interests of transparency. A **Note on Approach and Methods** was commissioned by the Evaluation Oversight Committee as an opportunity to provide critical reflection on the methods used by the evaluation team, and to demonstrate the ways in which contribution analysis and the innovative use of analytical workstreams had provided robust evidence to substantiate the findings of a complex and important evaluation. The EOC believes that Appendix V fails to provide methodological reflection of the type requested, and instead focuses on a number of contested and unresolved issues of process (some of which could have been instructive for future evaluations, had they been presented in an appropriately balanced fashion). We remain of the view that Appendix V does not provide a contribution to methodological debate, and we regret that this opportunity was not taken by the Evaluation Team.*

## Evaluation Team Response

The EOC's views on this Appendix are not shared by the evaluation team.

In particular, the EOC had made the following comments to the draft:

The Appendix as written does not offer an analysis and summary of what the particular approach contributed to the evaluation findings, nor does it appropriately address the particular issues of governance and management of the evaluation process. In fact the discussion of the methodology in Appendix V does not go beyond that which has already been included in other documents. We therefore do not see it as a necessary component of the full report and are advising the FTI Secretariat to publish the full report without this Appendix.

For that reason, the evaluation team consulted specifically with the QA panel about the EOC views quoted above. As described in ¶3.5 of the Appendix:

The evaluation's working methods included systematic quality assurance from an expert QA panel. The role of QA panel members was to review and comment on draft and final outputs from an independent perspective; they were not members of the evaluation team as such, and were not responsible for the team's conclusions

The QA panel comprised Nils Boesen, Christopher Colclough, Steve Packer and Juliet Pierce. With their permission, their views were conveyed to the EOC as follows (comments are not necessarily in the order of the names above):

### QA comment 1

As regards the first contention of the EOC, the Appendix provides a useful and informative summary of the ways in which the evaluation was undertaken, and of the approach used. ...

As regards the second contention, a central part of the text of the appendix is precisely on the issues of 'governance and management of the evaluation process'. Those of us who were close to the evaluation have been uncomfortably aware of the unwarranted interference by EOC in the ways in which the ET analysed and reported on its substance. Such interference ran completely counter to well-accepted principles of evaluation management – as is fully evidenced by the Appendix itself. The extent of misbehaviour on EOC's part can be explained only in terms either of their being put under stress by the FTI SC (in which case such pressure should have been resisted rather than acceded to) or by the existence of conflicts of interest amongst those members of EOC who had had earlier close involvement with FTI. Both of these possible explanations appear to have played a part. Each of them represented major threats to the potential impartiality of the evaluation and led to gross lapses of responsibility on the part of EOC.

My considered view is that the EOC has neither a moral nor a functional right to delete Appendix V from your report, nor to instruct the FTI secretariat to delete reference to it from the report. On the contrary the ET has an obligation to make the substance of the Appendix public. If the EOC were to act unilaterally to subdue it, I believe that the ET should do everything possible to reverse that outcome. In the very unfortunate circumstance of EOC not accepting this, the substance of the Appendix, and the reasons for its exclusion from the report, would need to be communicated separately to all stakeholders.

## **QA Comment 2**

I concur fully with the [preceding] assessment. First, the appendix describes the approach to the evaluation in the TOR, how it was developed, which changes occurred and how the evaluation process itself took place. ... I find section 2-3 to be a relevant and well balanced presentation and discussion of the methodological approach. ...The summary dismissal of this part is clearly inappropriate and not reflecting any decent practice for commenting – the EOC could ask for more details or elaboration of certain issues if they had a real interest in this matter.

As to the second part – section 4 – this does more than be “reflections”, by giving a detailed account of the role of the EOC and the relations to the ET. Again, dismissing this as “inappropriate” – read: unbalanced – is as close as you can come to authoritarian behavior where raw power, rather than arguments, are brought to bear. It unfortunately reflects the unwillingness of the EOC to relate to the issues at hand.

... you have all the right in the world to insist that App V be circulated, especially as this last EOC stance adds insult to injury considering how they have leaned on the evaluation so far. I also think you would do the evaluation community and the independence of future evaluations a favour by doing so.

I am certainly fully endorsing the quality of the appendix, not least p 12-18. I would welcome EOC's detailed response, that would be a welcome contribution to the handling in the future of this eternal tension between evaluators and their commissioners – despite all arms length principles the client is never that far away. In this case, far too close for comfort, of course – as honestly, openly and appropriately put on the table in the report.

## **QA comment 3**

An evaluation of this magnitude must surely have a methodological appendix. The wider community interested in both FTI and the evaluation of global initiatives more generally requires and deserves this.

## **QA comment 4**

This appendix is not intended to be a forum for simply airing grievances however painfully felt by either side. It is rightfully a place to reflect on problems in the hope of minimising them in future. EOC defensiveness now underlines the difficulties experienced throughout this evaluation in an unhelpful way. It opens up a wider question about why this appendix has not been included, and does not enhance the wider purpose of including this kind of appendix so as to try to improve evaluation at this level in future. The FTI team are right to insist on its publication as part of the deliverables requested.