

### *Evaluation of the European Commission's Country Level Cooperation with the Republic of India – ref. 1091*

#### *Abstract*

*The scope of the evaluation is to provide the relevant external co-operation services of the EC and the wider public with an overall independent assessment of the Commission's past and current assistance to India for the period from 1991 to 2005, with special focus on the following fields: health, education, environment and rural development, trade and economic cooperation, governance and aid effectiveness.*

#### **Methodology**

The evaluation is based on a number of evaluation questions translating the purpose of the evaluation and also the five evaluation criteria. The questions are further broken down into judgement criteria and indicators. The evaluation was carried out in three phases: an inception/desk phase including the identification of the questions; a field phase including a three week mission to India and; a report writing phase including the drafting of the final report.

#### **Main Conclusion**

- EC aid to India **has gained in relevance and showed improvement in alignment** over the period in consideration (1991-2006). The strong ownership of the Indian government of many of the development programmes has further facilitated better co-ordination.
- The project-based approach was gradually replaced with a more strategic process, in which sector policies took the centre stage. **This shift to sector support facilitated a qualitative improvement in the ongoing dialogue** on development co-operation between the EC and India.
- However, **the sector-specific support has not contributed** significantly to the ongoing political, administrative and financial decentralisation and **devolution of powers to the locally-elected bodies**.
- There are **some limited but robust evidence on impact of the EC support to social sectors and hence to effectiveness of poverty reduction** :
- Enrolment and access to education has improved, although with mixed results in terms of governance and gender disparities. b) The EC support to the Health and Family Welfare Programme has been successful in assisting the decentralisation of State and District health services, however, very little attention has been paid to explicit pro-poor planning of interventions.
- The **phasing out of rural development and stand-alone environment projects** (whose impact is limited) **has been appropriate**.
- More recent programmes and projects to promote **cross-cultural economic co-operation and academic/scientific exchanges are highly appropriate responses** to the increasing diversity and maturity of EU-India relations. These interventions have the potential for high and sustainable visibility.

## **Main Recommendations**

- The EC should prioritise improved governance and accountability in its work in the two social sectors where the majority of support is granted and use its leverage capacity to facilitate structural reforms.
- The EC should increase the focus on support to public providers of social services since, in health and education, the private sector plays a growing role. This issue should be included in the sector support programmes.
- The EC should invest more efforts in activities that reflect the diversity and maturity of EU-India relations beyond the two traditional spheres of development co-operation:
  - a. Intensify efforts to *identify niches* where the EC can add value (e.g. multicultural exchanges).
  - b. *Engage with a wider spectrum of civil society organisations*
  - c. *Enhance educational exchanges* and expand opportunities being granted, such as the Erasmus Mundus.
  - d. *Expand media exchanges* centred on, for example, investigative journalism and other critical roles of the media in a democratic society.

## **Feedback**

The final report is transmitted to the Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner and Commissioner Michel and distributed to the relevant services within the Commission and the other EU institutions. A fiche contradictoire with main recommendations is circulated within the Commission in order to collect answers from the relevant services. A seminar was organised in India (Delhi) to present the second draft final report to local stakeholders and EU member states. All documents will be made available to the public on the Evaluation Unit Web site.

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