Project Summary

Project Background
The EU-ACP Business Assistance Scheme (EBAS) has been one of the main pillars of the EU-ACP private sector development strategy benefiting some 55 ACP countries directly.
The programme had essentially two elements:
• a matching grant fund of € 20 mio for users and providers of business development services (BDS)
• a budget for providing “hand-holding” activities to assist the beneficiaries

Evaluation Objective
The final evaluation of EBAS had two main objectives:
• a comprehensive assessment of the Programme’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, consistency, impact and sustainability and
• recommendations regarding the continuation of EC interventions in the area of BDS based on the “lessons learned” during the past.

Evaluation Activities
• Briefing at EC services followed by extensive desk research
• Field research over five months covering typical projects in seven countries
• Projects were clustered according to sectors and cross-cutting issues
• Classification according to
  (a) “positive hypothesis” vs.
  (b) “cautious hypothesis” each for
    - relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact, as well as
    - coherence, consistency and co-operation

Implementation Features
• Preparatory phase of the evaluation consisting of desk research and the preparation of individual meeting schedules in 7 countries;
• In each country: meetings and group discussions with enterprises, intermediaries, service providers, CDE antennas, government agencies officials and the EC Delegations:
• Findings, per country discussed with ECD in de-briefing sessions
• Draft Report discussed as draft with EC evaluation services ACP Secretariat and CDE

Services Provided
• 7 countries visited for intensive field studies
• 125 meetings with enterprises, intermediaries, etc. to assess project performance and derive lessons learned
• Evaluation report, recommendations for structure and methodology of future programmes of similar nature
• Donor coordination in support of the market for BDS