

eVALUation Matters

A Quarterly Knowledge Publication on Development Evaluation



The Comprehensive Evaluation of Development Results: Behind the Scenes

Second Quarter 2017

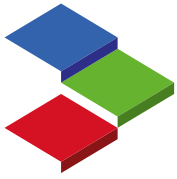


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From knowledge to action...
From action to impact

eVALUation Matters

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Rakesh Nangia, African Development Bank

Evaluators are being inundated with diverse methods with which to approach complex evaluations, and by an equal number of guides for implementing them. This edition of eVALUation Matters focuses on the method used to approach the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results of the AfDB – a complex exercise from which we will be able to pull lessons and learning.

10 Evaluating 10 Years of AfDB Support to Africa

Jacqueline Nyagahima, African Development Bank

Between 2004 and 2013 the Bank approved close to UA 32.9 billion in lending for 1319 projects and programs implemented in its regional member countries. This article describes how the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Bank's Development Results was carried out to meet the need of evaluating these ten years, and the need for the Bank to review its past performance in order to enhance its future interventions and impact.

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Daniel Kofi Andoh and Jacqueline Nyagahima, African Development Bank

In 2016 IDEV delivered the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results of the African Development Bank Group 2004–2013 (CEDR) among other high level evaluations. The CEDR was the most complex and massive evaluation ever undertaken by IDEV in terms of scope and scale. Hence it required and utilized a lot of resources: financial, human and time. The evaluation lasted 3 years and involved almost all of IDEV staff. The IDEV Work Program had to be adjusted and more funds were raised to accommodate the evaluation. This article describes how the CEDR unfolded and IDEV's experience in staying true to evaluation principles in the conduct of the CEDR. It's not so much about the destination but seeks to chart the journey.

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Given the scope of the CEDR (more than 200 project assessments in the context of 14 country program evaluations), evidence was provided by different evaluation teams. It was important to ensure consistency in the assessment across countries and across teams, and addressing inter-evaluator variability was fundamental to the integrity of CEDR synthesis.

This article focuses on what we did to address that challenging reality, how we did it and, candidly, how we would do it differently if we had the chance again.

36 Negotiating Challenges of Evaluation Field Research: Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results (CEDR)

Najade Lindsay and Kobena T. Hanson, African Development Bank

In evaluation studies, there is invariably the need to undertake field work, either in the form of data collection, consultative meetings, observations, and so forth. This article highlights experiences in the field in the context of the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results of the AfDB, and the means by which the evaluators achieved compromise and agreement to realize the best possible outcome for the evaluation. It draws on both the existing literature as well as insights and anecdotes from the collective field experiences of the IDEV evaluation team.

46 Consensus Building and Team Work in Complex Evaluations: Viewpoints from the AfDB's CEDR

Aminata Kouma and Kobena T. Hanson, African Development Bank

In evaluation field research, consensus building and effective teamwork are essential for various reasons, among which output quality, morale and retention. This article seeks to examine the essence of consensus building and team work in complex evaluations, using the CEDR experience as a case study. The focus is on team members who individually and collectively worked tirelessly to undertake the evaluation successfully.

“As we move to embrace more uncertainty and complexity in our daily lives, I believe the need for evaluations of complex interventions and the lessons they offer will only continue to grow”.

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Call for contributions:

Evaluation Matters is a quarterly magazine issued in both English and French, by IDEV, Independent Development Evaluation of the AfDB. We welcome topical articles from writers' original work and will be pleased to consider contributions for the themes in the above Editorial Calendar. See details at <http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/editorial-calendar-2017>



Find eVALUation Matters at <http://idev.afdb.org/en/page/evaluation-matters-magazine>



From the Evaluator General's Desk

The increasing emphasis on accountability and learning from results has created a need for evaluation approaches that can determine not only whether policies and projects or programs work, but also (if they do) how they work and (if they do not) what can be done to make them work. As a result, evaluators are being inundated with diverse methods with which to approach complex evaluations, and by an equal number of guides for implementing them.

A question often asked is, what defines an evaluation as complex? Is it a matter of scope, scale, resources (fiscal and human), and/or the time involved? Or is it about methods and methodologies?

Well, while it appears that complexity in evaluation revolves around outcomes, it may be not so simple. Actually, our lived experiences suggest that our daily lives are characterized by fluid, constantly shifting circumstances against a backdrop of varied – and often divergent – stakeholder opinions, counter-positions, and goals. The same can be said of our work experiences. With this in mind, it is reassuring to know that complexity in evaluation is not limited to predicting outcomes or their causes through a single strand, or through ►

► *simultaneous or multiple cause-and-effect diagrams. Complexity is also a product of context: a specific theory of change model may work well in one context but not in another.*

The broader perspective provided by complex evaluations are invaluable to policy and decision-makers. However, their sheer scale and intricacy present practical and methodological challenges. The Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results (CEDR) of the African Development Bank (AfDB) entailed interrogating large sets of interventions comprising diverse instruments and targeting multiple categories of beneficiaries across several sectors. This was daunting in itself, quite apart from the equally ambitious terms of reference. To meaningfully navigate our landscape, we had answer numerous questions, such as: What parts of the exercise should we commission external consultants, and which should we handle internally? How do we engage the right consultants? How much should we spend?

As we worked to fashion the CEDR pathway, the team exploited its freedom to design an approach best suited to the needs and information requirements of the Bank and its stakeholders, and in line with our resources and time horizon. Central to the process was the need for us to stay true to our core tenets – usefulness, realism, and credibility. ►

“Complex evaluations ...are those where outcomes are achieved through non-linear feedback loops and where outcomes are emergent – and where measures cannot be determined in advance...”

(Rogers 2008)



► *This edition of eVALUation Matters focuses on the evaluation of complex interventions; drawing on insights from, and experiences of, the CEDR exercise – a consultative, iterative process which prioritized the engagement and involvement of all key stakeholders throughout the exercise in order to mitigate the effects of key challenges involved in such a complicated undertaking.*

The publication synthesizes viewpoints and reflections by drawing on the extant literature on complex evaluations, field challenges, and teamwork, while at the same time incorporating rich empirical material, anecdotal vignettes, and personal stories from the field, to highlight the CEDR experience in all its complexity and diversity. Each article provides a further snapshot of the dynamics of a complex evaluation. Contributing authors contextualize key aspects of the process, while examining the dynamics amongst evaluators as well as that between evaluators and the many RMC stakeholders encountered in the process. Viewed from this perspective, the articles and papers in this issue constitute, individually and collectively, a set of relevant, pragmatic, and often overlapping analyses of the challenges and opportunities integral to the CEDR exercise.

Contributing authors highlight how the evaluation unfolded and how IDEV stayed true to its principles during the process; the challenges encountered along the way; the findings and breakthroughs – both planned and unanticipated; as well as the bonds established, and camaraderie nurtured. The essence of the issue is less about the expedition's destination, but rather the journey's twists and turns, and the life-long lessons learnt. ►►

► *As we move to embrace more uncertainty and complexity in our daily lives, I believe the need for evaluations of complex interventions and the lessons they offer will only continue to grow. The Bank's own strategic priorities – better known as the High-5s – themselves require us to think strategically to navigate the complexity of Africa's development and transformation. To this end, I strongly believe that the humble lessons and learning emanating from the CEDR exercise will go a long way to help us beat a new path – a path where we have a track record of results that come from the quality of our portfolio, the effectiveness with which we utilize resources, and an adjustment in our operations and procedures that come from knowledge, evaluation and learning.*

I invite you to enjoy the articles in this issue of eVALUation Matters, and encourage you to write back with your views, comments and reflections on the opinions and experiences expressed.

Happy reading!

About the Evaluator General

Rakesh Nangia is the Evaluator General for Independent Development Evaluation at the African Development Bank. Prior to joining the AfDB, he spent 25 years at the World Bank, where he held several positions including Director of Strategy and Operations for the Human Development Network and Acting Vice-President for the World Bank Institute. He attended the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and Harvard University and holds degrees in business administration and engineering.





Evaluating 10 Years of AfDB Support to Africa¹

Between 2004 and 2013 the Bank approved close to UA² 32.9 billion in lending for 1319 projects and programs implemented in its regional member countries. This article describes how the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Bank's Development Results was carried out to meet the need of evaluating these ten years, and the need for the Bank to review its past performance in order to enhance its future interventions and impact.

Jacqueline Nyagahima, African Development Bank

“THE African Development Bank (AfDB) gauges its own success by how far it improves the lives of Africa’s people³. Notably how well its operations create jobs, boost access to effective public services, spur private sector competitiveness, improve countries’ balance of payments, strengthen stability and growth in the financial sector, increase trade within and between nations, enhance trust in government, and achieve progress in the health and environmental sectors.

In 2013, the Independent Evaluation (IDEV) of the AfDB was commissioned to carry out a Comprehensive Evaluation of the Bank’s Development Results (CEDR). This was launched at the end of 2013, with the evaluation report to be delivered before the ADF replenishment in 2016.

The CEDR sought to answer three key questions with regard to the 10 year 2004–2013:

- Did the Bank achieve its objectives?
- Did the Bank propose results-focused strategies and programs?
- Did the Bank emerge as a valued partner at country level?

The CEDR also aimed to draw lessons and make recommendations to inform implementation of the Bank’s new strategic priorities, the High-5s⁴.

The scope of the CEDR was the entire Bank portfolio: all the interventions (lending and non-lending) approved by the Bank between 2004 and 2013. The AfDB development assistance is channelled through various instruments⁵ financed from different sources within the AfDB – the ADB (non-concessional lending) and the ADF (concessional lending) being the main ones. AfDB interventions (projects or operations) cover a wide range of sectors, a large proportion devoted to infrastructure – transport, energy, water and sanitation. Others include agriculture, finance, industry and mining, and social sectors.

The evaluation of a large set of interventions comprising diverse instruments and targeting multiple types of beneficiaries in multiple sectors was challenging⁶. Neither the AfDB nor any other Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) had ever undertaken such an assignment. The entire IDEV team had to be mobilized, and the IDEV Work Program readjusted to accommodate the resource requirements. In three years IDEV was able to deliver the *CEDR Synthesis Report* as planned.

The CEDR was based on evaluation studies carried out on 14 African countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, and Zambia (figure 1). These countries represented almost 60% of the Bank’s lending portfolio during 2004–2013. The makeup of their joint portfolio broadly matched ►



► that of the Bank in terms of regional balance, language, fragility and eligibility to the various windows of Bank financing (figure 2). For each of the 14 countries, strategies and programs were examined, and all projects that were completed or near completion (169 in total) were reviewed.

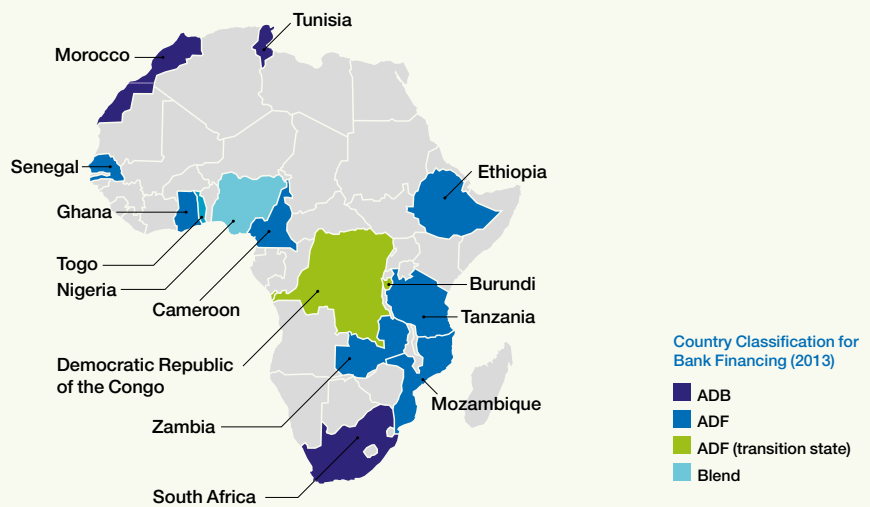
Overall, the evaluation found that the Bank delivered **modest development outcomes** which changed lives. Nearly two thirds (64%) of the projects financed by the Bank led or could lead to positive benefits for the beneficiaries. However, only close to 27% of the assessed interventions achieved, or were likely to achieve, their planned outcome. A further 30% of the interventions were expected to achieve under half of their planned development outcomes.

The evaluation found that the failure to attain outcomes was attributable to both the Bank and the beneficiary countries. On the Bank’s side, the limiting factors were found to be weak project design, which did not properly manage the contextual risks, and weak supervision.

On the side of the countries, deficiencies in leadership, ownership and capacity to implement were noted. The CEDR found that the Bank had identified pockets of activity where the right mix of dialogue, knowledge and lending fostered good outcomes, for example in public-private partnerships. It also recognized that the Bank was widely appreciated as a development partner in countries where long-standing relationships had built trust and allowed the Bank to act as an advisor. While the Bank’s physical presence (in the form of a national office) usually helped, it did not always allow the Bank to perform optimally when country conditions were less favorable.

The **sustainability** of the Bank’s interventions was found to be poor. Only 28% of the projects examined had robust economic and financial mechanisms in place to ensure maintenance of the achieved outputs and outcomes beyond the end of the project. Sustainability of project outcomes was linked to ownership at country level and a long-term vision of sector strategies. The Bank was able ►

Figure 1: The 14 countries involved in the CEDR



► to set the conditions for sustainability by proper project design, construction of institutional capacities, and coordination with other development partners.

The efficiency of the Bank's interventions was also found to be poor. While cost efficiency indicators were quite positive, project over-runs weakened the total efficiency of the Bank. Almost half the projects examined had been delayed by a year or more. Weaknesses in the design of some projects compromised their efficiency and led to poor or delayed outcomes. Project delays also arose from lengthy Bank procedures and complex arrangements with development partners. For the private-sector operations, on the other hand, project supervision and management were identified as the weakest aspects.

“For each of the 14 countries, strategies and programs were examined, and all projects that were completed or near completion (169 in total) were reviewed”.

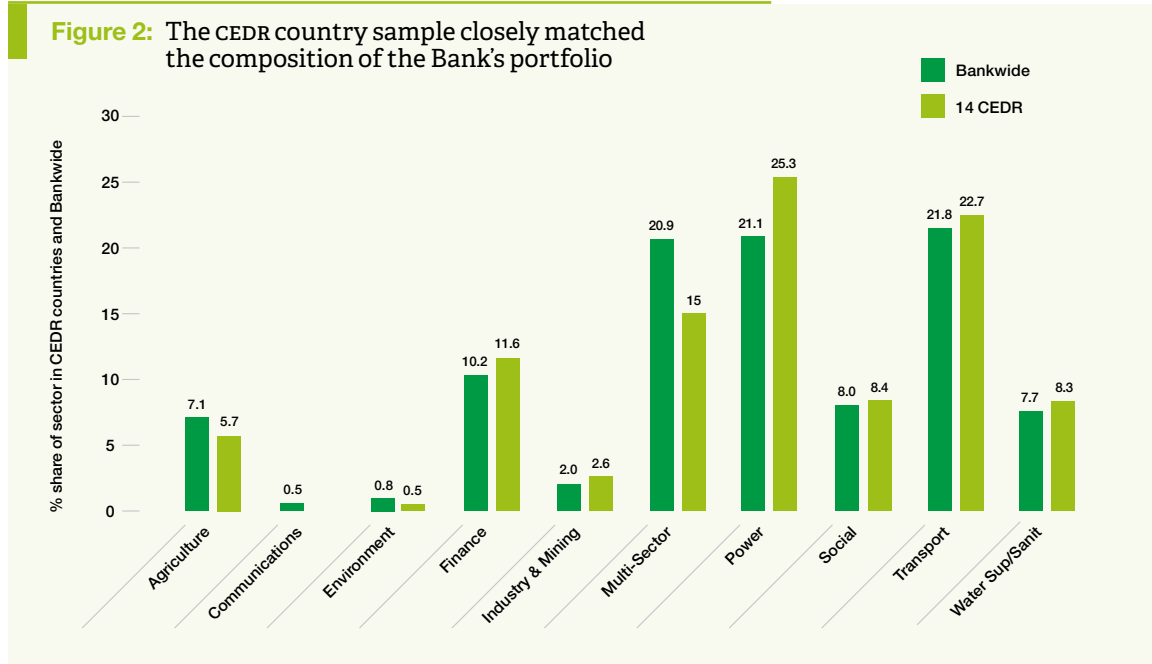
The CEDR made recommendations to the Bank in the following three areas: *Positioning in context, improving corporate services, and enhancing delivery.*

1. **Positioning in context:** The Bank pursues different objectives and faces different challenges depending on the RMC context. It needs to better analyze and clarify the strategic role it intends to play to add value and pursue partnerships that are relevant to delivering the High-5s at country level. These partnerships can only be pursued if analyzed first, by identifying strategic roles, contributions

and constraints as well as threats and opportunities. The Bank also needs to analyze deeply the risks related to implementation and to the sustainability of its interventions. Together with defining clear roles and possible partnerships, this should form the basis for framing strategies, programs, and projects around key selected outcomes. In this context, the Bank should focus more on lessons learned and make them more usable at project and strategic level. Finally, the Bank should ensure that its country offices are adequately equipped in terms of skills and resources so that they can ably implement its strategies in the RMCS with a focus on transition states.

2. **Improving corporate services:** The Bank needs to ensure that its corporate strategies are based on a well-designed theory of change that is shared with stakeholders and partners, and that its corporate procedures are flexible enough to respond quickly to country-specific needs. A special focus should be put on transition states, where the Bank might consider consolidating multiple financing sources and streamlining trust funds to avoid delays and disruptions. Whenever it can fill knowledge gaps in areas related to its strategies, the Bank should be able to propose a relevant combination of analytical work, dialogue, and financing instruments to the client country, building on existing good practices.
3. **Enhancing delivery:** The Bank needs to strengthen its performance and accountability frameworks, processes, and culture. Closer attention should be paid to the depth and quality of supervision for both private and public sector operations. The CEDR noted that where actions ►►

Figure 2: The CEDR country sample closely matched the composition of the Bank's portfolio



► (changes) were already under way at the Bank, the recommendations could be used to feed lessons into the processes and help identify key priority issues. The recommendations of the CEDR are already being implemented. In 2016, guided by its new Development and Business Delivery Model (DBDM), the AfDB embarked on a transformation process that aims to improve its capacity to deliver on its High-5s. The changes included a vital restructuring of the Bank – moving operations closer to clients in the

RMCS and devolving decision-making to the regional hubs. Previously decisions were made at headquarters in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire. The DBDM seeks to inculcate a culture of performance, delivery, and institutional learning that improves and evolves. The transformation aims to make the Bank more flexible (and thereby more responsive to the development needs of its RMCS), to improve its effectiveness, and to increase its development impact.





Endnotes

- 1 The author would like to thank Mr. Samer Hachem for the invaluable information, data and insights which resulted in this article; and Ms. Najade Lindsay for valuable editorial advice on an earlier draft.
- 2 1 Unit of Account (UA) = 1.54 US\$ as at December 2013.
- 3 African Development Bank Group Results Measurement Framework 2016–2025.
- 4 The High-5s are the five priority action areas for the AfDB: Light up and power Africa; Feed Africa; Industrialize Africa; Integrate Africa; and Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa.
- 5 The AfDB's interventions are: Project loans, Structural Adjustment Loans, Sectoral Adjustment Loans, Sector Investment Loans, Technical assistance, Knowledge work and Policy dialogue. Technical assistance, Knowledge work and Policy dialogue encompass the non-lending interventions. www.afdb.org.
- 6 For further details, see article entitled "The CEDR Journey" in this issue.

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Author's profile

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The CEDR Journey

In 2016 IDEV delivered the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results of the African Development Bank Group 2004–2013 (CEDR) among other high level evaluations. The CEDR was the most complex and massive evaluation ever undertaken by IDEV in terms of scope and scale. Hence it required and utilized a lot of resources: financial, human and time. The evaluation lasted 3 years and involved almost all of IDEV staff. The IDEV Work Program had to be adjusted and more funds were raised to accommodate the evaluation. This article describes how the CEDR unfolded and IDEV's experience in staying true to evaluation principles in the conduct of the CEDR. It does not focus on the destination, but rather seeks to chart the journey.

Daniel Kofi Andoh and Jacqueline Nyagahima, African Development Bank

How it all started

EVERY journey begins with the first step and in hindsight the surprise at IDEV was probably that an evaluation of this scope and scale had not been done much earlier. The Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results (CEDR) of the African Development Bank (AfDB or the Bank) was unlike any that Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) had ever undertaken. The scope of the CEDR covered all interventions approved by the AfDB between 2004 and 2013. It was massive and challenging in terms of assessing the large set of projects made up from diverse instruments and targeting multiple categories of beneficiaries in several countries and sectors¹.

Rakesh Nangia, the Evaluator-General, recounts the genesis of the CEDR: “at a Board Meeting there arose a request to IDEV from both the African Development Fund (ADF) Deputies and the AfDB Board who wanted to know how the Bank’s resources have been utilized and towards what development outcomes?”² Mindful of the importance of this question in supporting the Bank to improve its development effectiveness, he of course agreed to commit IDEV to satisfy the request. Now reflecting on the tumultuous route plodded in delivering the final CEDR, he might have had second thoughts.

Lesson 1: “do not commit to evaluations on the spur of the moment”.

The decision made was the trigger for IDEV to lead a process of extensive internal and external consultations, culminating in the submission of a memorandum to the Board of Directors titled: *Conducting A Comprehensive Evaluation Of The African Development Bank: Exploratory Note*.³ This memorandum presented the scope of the evaluation and further proposed six options to the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness (CODE). Thus was conceived the CEDR.

Narrowing the scope

Lest we get ahead of ourselves, let’s delve deeper into the consultative processes. The Bank had to first look critically at its own context, to help identify what type of evaluation would be most useful to the AfDB at this point in its history as an institution.

At the time of the CEDR inception, the Bank’s specific challenges revolved around its new strategic direction, upcoming events and changes, as well as possible disruption of other important ongoing work. All these needed to be factored into the approach to be taken. Though evaluations look back in time, the CEDR in this case needed to be done such that the lessons gathered could be tailored to help the Bank implement its strategy ►►

► going forward. We will expand more on the upcoming events and changes in the latter part of this article.

So without a strict definition to adhere to, IDEV exploited its freedom to design a comprehensive evaluation that best suited the Bank's and its stakeholders' needs and information requirements. Of course it drew on the experience of other organisations and engagement in the Comprehensive Evaluation Knowledge Sharing Platform⁴ to derive the key influencing factors for a successful comprehensive evaluation. It must be also noted that the Bank was not a total novice, it had its own prior experience of conducting a comprehensive evaluation, albeit of smaller magnitude. This was the 2004 evaluation "Stepping up to the future"⁵. Though this evaluation did not look at the developmental results of Bank investments,⁶ it covered a period of three African Development Fund (ADF) cycles⁷. So from these reviews, experiences and consultation IDEV distilled three crucial cornerstones of success: usefulness, realism, and the credibility of the process.

- **Usefulness:** The CEDR had to be aligned with future strategic direction such that it coincides with opportunities for major reform (such as a change in leadership and or funding process) and provides timely and relevant information that is responsive to demands from key stakeholders.
- **Realism and/or feasibility:** An evaluability assessment to ensure that there was availability of requisite data, particularly on results, to warrant the exercise. There was need to propose a realistic timeframe,⁸ have its scope well circumscribed, and fully embed the CEDR in the wider evaluation work of IDEV to ensure effective coordination and use of resources⁹.

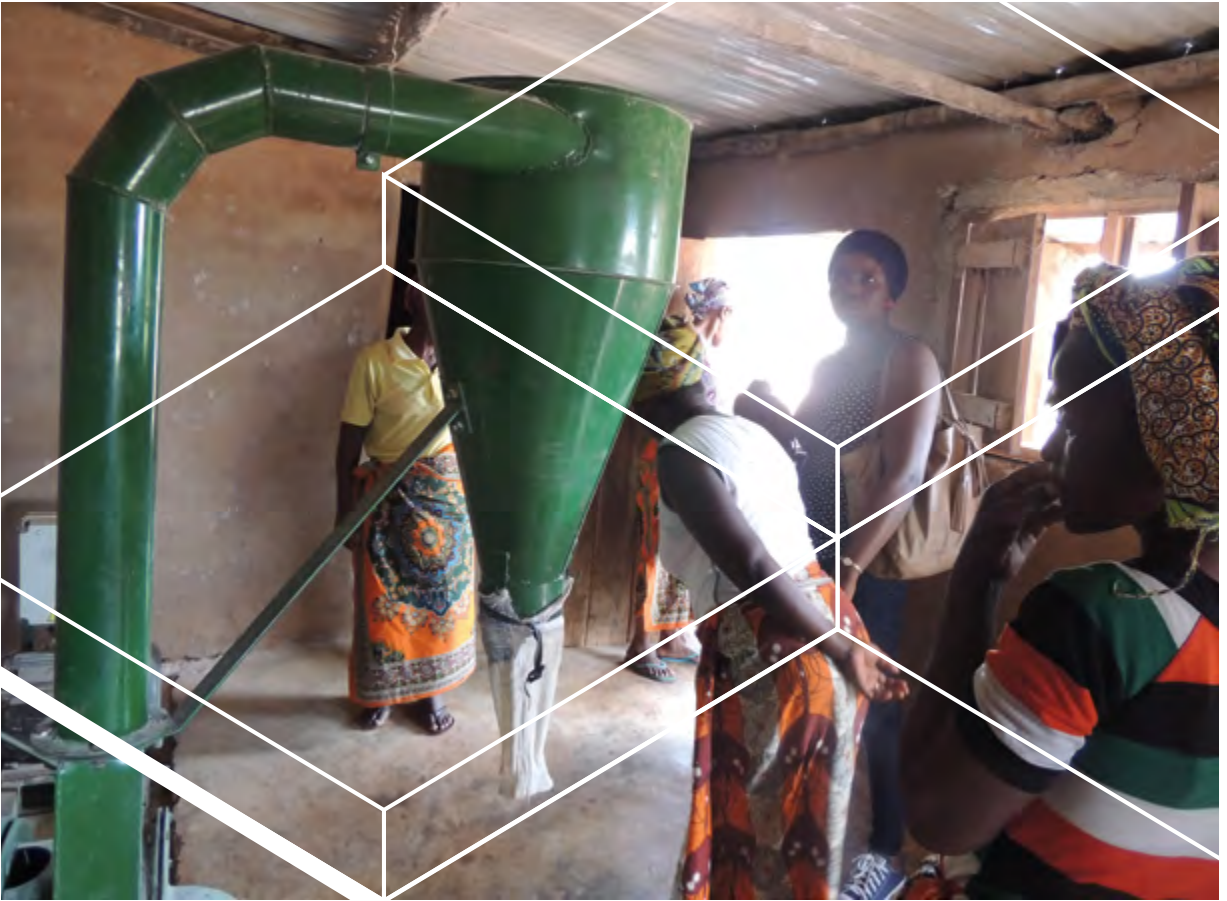
- **Credibility:** This called for the engagement and buy-in of internal and external stakeholders. The governance and independence of the CEDR, having a talented multidisciplinary independent team and lastly the need to follow up.

From Six Options a Decision is taken

Having set its criteria for assessment, the IDEV team proposed six options. These were:

1. ***Institutional Evaluation*** – the main question this evaluation had to respond to was whether the Bank manages itself and its development assistance efficiently.
2. ***Evaluation of the Bank's Implementation of Reforms (commitments associated with ADF replenishments and General Capital Increase VI)*** – the main question this evaluation had to respond to was whether the Bank had met its external commitments.
3. ***Evaluation of Results Achieved*** – the main question this option sought to address was whether the Bank was achieving its desired results. Crucially, it was also to address the question "If so, why? If not, why not?"
4. ***Two Separate Products: i) Smaller Results Report and ii) Full Evaluation of Commitments and Reforms*** – i) A first report focusing on results would synthesize findings from evaluations conducted in the previous two years – including country, sector and thematic evaluations. ii) A second evaluation would evaluate progress in implementing reforms related to external ADF and GCI commitments. The two products were to be separate. ►►



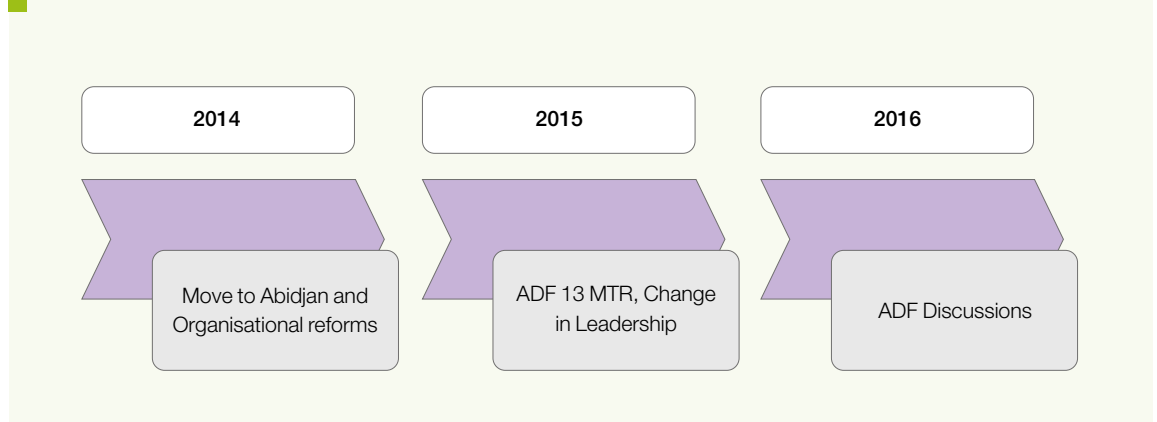


- **5. Two Separate Products: i) Review of Implementation of Commitments and ii) Full Results Evaluation** – This option was to allow IDEV to focus on a comprehensive results focused evaluation, while also delivering a smaller targeted and separate product in time for both the ADF mid-term review and arrival of new Bank leadership. i) IDEV was to provide an independent review of the extent to which reforms related to external commitments had been implemented at mid-term. ii) A full results report was also to be produced, the two were to be separate products.
- 6. Two Separate Products: i) Evaluation of the ADF Replenishment process and ii) Full Results Evaluation** – This option had similar objectives as the previous option, with changes in products. i) With this option, IDEV

was to provide an independent evaluation of the ADF replenishment process in time for the mid-term review. ii) A full results report was also to be produced, the two were to be separate products.

At the end of the deliberations at a CODE meeting,¹⁰ Committee members adopted Option 5 on the grounds that it was the most comprehensive option. It was a hybrid option that focused on commitments and results. Arriving at this choice wasn't all plain sailing, as not all members were convinced of the usefulness and relevance of undertaking a comprehensive evaluation.

To buttress Option 5, CODE recommended that it should be practical, useful and worth the money invested. IDEV was invited to prepare documents¹¹ on the scope, the time frame, and the cost ►►

Figure 1: Context during the conduct of CEDR Evaluation

► of evaluation as well as the implications on its work program. This was to be subsequently discussed, amended and approved. Life had now been breathed into the CEDR – it was a project with defined scope, budget and timeframe.

Lesson 2: ‘when preparing an options paper do not present too many choices.’

The Context of the CEDR

Timing is a crucial factor in ensuring major evaluations have impact. Considering that in addition to a large number of institutional reform processes, the Bank was about to embark on an immense organizational change, one has to recognize that the timing of the CEDR was sensitive. Changes occurring in the environment of AfDB included (see figure 1):

- A. Mid-term and completion of the 13th ADF cycle.
- B. An impending change of Bank leadership was expected in September 2015.
- C. The return to Abidjan from Tunis ensuring that throughout 2014, the Bank would be going through the process of returning to Abidjan, putting pressure on staff including both corporate services and operational teams.
- D. In addition, there were a number of other reviews planned by different sections of the Bank, looking at the organization's processes of particular note was the “*Good to Great*”¹² review commissioned by Bank management to look at the institution's structure and processes, the outcome of which was then not yet clear, but had the potential to lead to significant changes. Even more imminent was the planned mid-term review of the implementation of the decentralization road map (due at end 2013).¹³
- E. IDEV itself needed to revise its work program to ensure it dovetailed with the chosen comprehensive evaluation option. Indeed, other Bank reviews were in the pipeline including a review of regional resource centers, etc. There were a number of ongoing or planned reviews looking at the functioning of the organization and its processes. The existing rolling work program proposed an increased number of country strategy evaluations, in addition to evaluating food security, energy and gender equality. In terms of institutional evaluations, proposals were made to cover decentralization, regional resource centers, procurement, and trust funds, among other themes. ►

► Executing the CEDR

Undertaking Option 5 was very challenging. In view of the size and complexity of the CEDR, the entire staff of IDEV was involved in the evaluation. The major concern was to avoid putting additional pressure on Bank staff and management during this already busy time, when the priority was to complete the move to Abidjan with as little disruption to normal operational delivery as possible.

The CEDR process was guided by a panel of senior independent advisors comprised of eminent evaluation and development experts, who also flagged important methodological challenges that the team had to address.

At the design phase, it became clear that the scope of the evaluation was too broad, and as the evaluation progressed, it became increasingly challenging both methodologically and logistically. The IDEV staff had to learn while doing, innovating and iterating, adapting as the evaluation went along. IDEV carried out the various work packages of the assignment in teams with most of the staff involved in more than one team.

Along the way, the options paper had to be revised and new instruments introduced. The newly introduced PRA (Project Results Assessment) was a hugely useful instrument in getting the information during the evaluation. Additionally, many factors appeared, for example some countries that had been selected for the evaluation went into political/civil strife and getting information from these countries became increasingly problematic.

Nevertheless, the IDEV team managed to pull off the exercise with sound determination and irrevocable resilience. The principal driving force was all the IDEV

team pulling together and pushing in the same positive direction. The teamwork was exemplary, with excitement, and seamless working across IDEV divisions.

Lesson 3: “Where there is a will there is a way. The challenge is inspiring staff to be willing.”

The CEDR and IDEV staff

On staff views we will let them speak for themselves. Some IDEV staff were interviewed to share their most profound experience with the entire process. This is what they had to say:

“My involvement with the synthesis team was challenging given the unfamiliarity with the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) method. This was an analysis across the 14 country performance case studies. The method required certain levels of data, some of which had not been collected by some CSPE teams. Delays in producing the country performance case studies put undue pressure on the designated peer reviewers and the synthesis team. In the end IDEV evaluators worked as a team to bring solutions and agree at certain stages on formats and approach to meet deadlines and move forward to achieving goals.” **Akua ARTHUR-KISSI**

“It is not common for an organization to have its work evaluated by its peers. During the CEDR, we established quality criteria on the basis of which we assessed our evaluations in order to arrive at a certain standardization of the processes and at a certain level of quality sought. ...The recommendations resulting from these self-assessments were generally well accepted and taken into account by the authors of the evaluations.” **Michel TANO AKA** ►►



► *“As part of the CEDR work, I conducted two CSPES and was also responsible to report on the general portfolio review. Working on all these was a parallel exercise for me. The workload was extremely heavy, punctuated by field missions. The timeline for delivering the reports was very short – so there was great pressure on time. Nevertheless, sitting under a tree and talking with project beneficiaries to hear their opinion and points of view was always a very rich experience.”*
Girma KUMBI

“The most interesting was to work with other colleagues, and also to review a number of PRAs in various sectors, with drafting styles ranging from a PRA to another.”
Latefa C. CAMARA

“I was requested to peer-review a total of 20 PRA reports in accordance with the “newly-established” quality assurance process established exclusively for the CEDR, while I was overloaded with other urgent assignments at the same time. The deadline was very tight. Due to other urgent (competing) assignments, it was unavoidable for me to work at night-hours as well as during the weekend. The quality assurance process required involving at least two internal peer reviewers

per PRA. Given this rule, coordination and communication with other peer reviewer was essential to complete the review work before the deadlines.”
Hajime ONISHI

“IDEV had to ensure the quality and conformity of the results of each project level assessment before inclusion in the synthesis. 1/3 of the project evaluations were still expected by April 1st 2016! Still, despite the short delays and pressure our own teams of evaluators worked together to achieve this goal and finally, the deadlines were met.”
Samer HACHEM, Task Manager, CEDR.

Conclusion

The CEDR was designed as a synthesis of evaluation studies (building blocks) that were undertaken at country level. Using a purposive sampling strategy, a sample of countries were selected for examination. The objective was to portray a significant share of the Bank’s portfolio and reflect its composition in terms of regions, language, eligibility for various sources of Bank financing, and fragility status, insofar as possible. The final sample of 14 countries¹⁴ represented almost 60% of the Bank’s lending portfolio, based on approvals during 2004–2013. ►►

► Despite a shaky start of the CEDR, IDEV was able to steer the exercise and deliver the CEDR Synthesis Report and 14 CSPE reports on time. By harnessing the strengths of the team, within the limits of the available funds, and mitigating the challenges of the CEDR process, IDEV was able to deliver on its mandate. Team alignment behind a common vision, thrust and shared interest and commitment to do the evaluation made it happen. Creativity,

flexibility to adapt, learning by doing, and experience sharing allowed the whole team to develop its capacity. And the panel of eminent evaluation and development experts concluded its statement giving “the evaluation team credit for delivering credible answers to the strategic questions raised.”

Final lesson: “it’s all about the people.”

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Endnotes

- 1 Further detailed in this issue in the article, “Evaluating ten years of the AfDB in Africa’s development.”
- 2 Recounted by Rakesh Nangia during CEDR retreat 14th July 2017.
- 3 Submitted on the 17th of October 2013.
- 4 The comprehensive evaluation knowledge sharing platform was set up by a group of independent evaluation departments, including all the main IFIs, a number of UN agencies and global funds. The aim is to share knowledge and therefore improve practices.
- 5 Stepping up to the future: an independent evaluation of ADF vii, viii. ix. Despite its title the evaluation did not focus only on ADF funds but issues facing the ADB as a whole.
- 6 Specifically it only covered ADF funds unlike the CEDR which covered both ADF and also ADB funds.
- 7 The concessional window of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group. The Fund’s resources consist of contributions from internal Bank resources and periodic replenishments by donor countries, usually on a three-year basis.
- 8 Most examples fell in the range of 18 months to 2 years.
- 9 From IDEV’s reviews an average of 1.5 million USD was the cost of such evaluations.
- 10 Held on 29 October 2013.
- 11 Two approach papers, were prepared one for commitments and one for CEDR, as these were two separate evaluations.
- 12 The objective of the assignment being conducted by McKinsey is to “conduct a diagnostic study of the Bank’s business processes and organizational structure...to assess the status and effectiveness of the ongoing reforms and propose a robust adjustment plan with the aim of realigning the Bank’s business processes and organizational structure with its LTS”.
- 13 See Board document “Implementation of the decentralization road map: terms of reference for a mid-term review” ADF/BD/IF/2013/151
- 14 The 14 countries are presented in the article “Evaluating ten years of the AfDB in Africa’s development” in this Issue.

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Jacqueline Nyagahima is a Knowledge Management consultant who joined the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) unit of the AfDB in 2016. As well as communication and knowledge management (CKM), her multi-disciplinary specialisms include business process analysis and design, strategy development and implementation, formulation and documentation of policies and procedures, training and facilitation. Jacqueline holds an MBA from Heriot-Watt University, UK; an MSc with specialization in Computer Science, from Makerere University, Uganda; and a BSc. with Education also from Makerere University. Prior to joining IDEV, Jacqueline served as the head of communication and public relations at the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA). She counts among her achievements raising the profile of CKM both at the ASARECA Secretariat and among the member national agricultural research systems. Another achievement is the MSc. program in agricultural information and communication management (AICM) now offered in several universities viz. University of Nairobi & Egerton University, Kenya; Haramaya University, Ethiopia; and Makerere University, Uganda. She was in the core team that developed the program.





169 Shades of Grey: Dealing with inter-evaluator variability

Given the scope of the CEDR (more than 200 project assessments in the context of 14 country program evaluations), evidence was provided by different evaluation teams. It was important to ensure consistency in the assessment across countries and across teams, and addressing inter-evaluator variability was fundamental to the integrity of CEDR synthesis.

This article focuses on what we did to address that challenging reality, how we did it and, candidly, how we would do it differently if we had the chance again.

Penelope Jackson, African Development Bank

Introduction

Is the glass half full, or half empty?" We saw starkly the truth of that old adage recently when synthesising the results of the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results (CEDR).

Addressing inter-evaluator variability is fundamental to the integrity of CEDR synthesis and as part of this process evidence provided by different evaluation teams was brought together.

This article focuses on what we did to address that challenging reality, how we did it and, candidly, how we would do it differently if we had the chance again.

The basic building blocks of the CEDR were country evaluations, drawing on project results assessments (PRAs). Projects are the building blocks of country programs – after all the AfDB is fundamentally a project based bank. The vast majority of these PRAs were carried out within the context of the 14 country evaluations, resulting in an assessment of more than 200 projects.

The PRA approach employed goes well beyond the project completion report validation that many independent evaluation departments conduct, especially in the multilateral development bank (MDB) sphere. However, it is rarely as in depth as our full project evaluations – with few, for example, involving new beneficiary surveys. In assessing relevance,

effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, using multiple sources, it provides the right level of information to be used: both in the context of the country evaluations and for the CEDR.

Given the ultimate aim of synthesising the results of the PRAs for the CEDR, the importance of consistency in the assessment across countries and across teams was obvious from the outset. After some initial experimentation, a standard template with detailed guidance on how to assess and rate the main sub criteria, (in line with existing evaluation cooperation group (ECG) and OECD-DAC guidance) was developed for public sector operations. This was soon followed by similar guidance for private sector (or non-sovereign) operations. The latter was an interesting challenge since the difference in approach to evaluating public and private sector operations, at least amongst ECG members, is ingrained. For the purposes of the CEDR, a way to compare and collate across these two groups of operations had to be found, and one that was still aligned with existing practices and ECG guidance.

Again with consistency in mind, the PRA approach was rolled out with staff workshops to discuss each item and iron out any differences in understanding. Unfortunately, the tool was introduced too late and so, for a minority of the country evaluations, the PRAs actually had to be retrofitted with new information collected to ►



► fill in gaps. The next batch of country evaluations were the pilots and further adjustments were made to the guidance where understanding differed across teams. The quality assurance process was piloted with 17 of the PRAs, before rolling out to the remaining 14 African countries later – including all regions, languages and development status. In sum there were more than 200 PRA available for use in the CEDR synthesis. But how far could we trust each of these in terms of rigour of the analysis, triangulation of data sources, and consistency in rating?

To be included in the synthesis database (both in terms of inclusion for the ratings and for the qualitative information) the PRAs had to go through a quality control process. In addition to ensuring the quality of the individual documents, this process was designed to ensure consistency, or at least reduce inconsistency introduced through inter evaluator variability.

At this point we expected to find little variation, perhaps a few outliers. We had, after all, followed the same detailed guidance, attended the same workshops. What we actually found was a significant degree of remaining variation between teams – both in terms of the strictness or generosity of their assessment and also the level of evidence provided to support the findings.

Why did we still see such variation? For some criteria, such as the delivery of outputs and some aspects of efficiency, the ratings are based on a numeric calculation (that is percent of planned outputs delivered with a clear rating scale showing what percent range falls within which rating). In these cases the job of the quality control is to ensure that supporting evidence can be cited, that the calculation is correct and the appropriate rating is provided as a result. However, for others there is a need for evaluator judgement, that is an assessment on a qualitative basis to inform the

ratings. While this is normal in evaluation it also means that variation, particularly between evaluation teams, creeps in. Despite pages of guidance, one evaluator may see the glass as half full and another as half empty, and with a six point rating scale this can make a real difference to the aggregate results.

So how did we pick up the variation and what did we do about it? First, it was vital that we had built in a process that allowed this variation to be picked up. This also enabled us to see which criteria were subject to the highest degree of variation in the assessment – including relevance of design and matters relating to the sustainability criteria.

The process worked as follows. The country evaluation task manager submitted the PRA to the quality control process. The PRA was then reviewed by a member of the quality assurance group with no connections to the country or project in question (though where possible allocated to those with the appropriate sector expertise). During the pilot phase, two separate reviewers examined each PRA and then met to consolidate a single review. In practice, this approach was found to be too time consuming and added limited value. So, for the remainder of the PRAs, a single reviewer was allocated to each with all reviewers encouraged to exchange experiences. The dimensions of the review are included in Box 1.

The reviewer and the task manager for the PRA met to discuss the findings of the review with the former providing written comments on weaknesses and suggestions on changes, as well as a rating. Each PRA was rated in one of four categories (see Box 1). The majority of PRAs were rated in categories B or C – that is the reviewer recommended changes and in many cases stated that changes were required before the PRA could be included in the synthesis – that is to reach what the team called ►

Box 1: Quality assurance criteria and conclusions

The quality assurance team examined each PRA against the following dimensions:

- Evaluation design: effective use of theory of change/intervention logic
- Clarity and Rigour of Analysis: ratings and use of multiple lines of evidence
- Validity/reliability of information: data sourcing and referencing

Each PRA was then rated in one of four categories, as follows:

- A. PRA meets minimum quality threshold and should be included in synthesis and no recommendations for improvement are made.
- B. PRA meets minimum quality threshold and should be included in synthesis. Recommendations are made that could improve the PRA further.
- C. Before including in the synthesis specific adjustments are required in order to meet the minimum quality thresholds.
- D. PRA does not meet minimum quality threshold and should be excluded from the synthesis. Significant additional work would be required to reach MQT.

► minimum quality threshold (MQT). Hardly any PRAs were rated A – that is with no changes at all recommended before inclusion. However, more than 30 of the PRAs were either not provided on time or rated in category D – meaning that they should not be included in the synthesis because changes required to bring them up to standard would need to be of a fundamental nature.

Any disagreements or areas where reviewers and task managers were unclear were brought to the attention of the quality control process coordinators. The coordinators also paid close attention to PRA receiving either the top or bottom grades and the extent to which task managers effectively addressed the reviewer's comments.

At the end of the process the total number of PRA available for the final synthesis was brought down to 169. So while this reduced the statistical representativeness of the project sample available for the synthesis, this was far preferable to allowing lower quality assessments to be included.

At the end of this process, the team had a reasonable level of confidence in the comparability and quality of the PRAs included in the synthesis – and therefore in the synthesis itself. However, all involved admit the process was far from perfect and variability was never fully eliminated. In addition, the process was rushed with the team working overtime in a high stress situation. Lessons that the team drew from this experience include the following: ►►



- ▶ **■** If you don't tell your teams what your minimum quality threshold is at the outset, don't be surprised if they don't all meet it. While the PRA guidance was detailed, it would have been strengthened by clearly communicating the specific criteria against which each PRA would be quality assured, allowing teams to plan accordingly, rather than adding on later. The experience also provides lessons in what needs to be included within the PRA document, notably in relation to the explanation of the methodology used and clear referencing of sources.

“At the end of this process, the team had a reasonable level of confidence in the comparability and quality of the PRAs included in the synthesis – and therefore in the synthesis itself.”

- **Plan enough time not only for the reviewers to do a good job but also for the task managers to address substantive comments seriously.** The very tight time frame allowed for the quality assurance process meant that where reviewers advised teams to make changes or find additional data, they did so on a minimal basis, that is what will allow me to meet the MQT? Time should be made to integrate significant improvements.
- **Stagger the process.** In our experience the quality assurance process started when nearly all of the PRAs had already been delivered with an extremely tight timeline for all 200 to be reviewed and revised. This had two main implications (i) it led to a large volume of work in a condensed period both for the reviewers and (ii) while some PRAs were 'hot

off the press' with changes easier to incorporate, some had been completed up to three months earlier with changes harder to integrate since the results had already been taken forward in draft country strategy program evaluation (CSPE) reports.

- **Piloting – possibly the most important part of the process.** The quality assurance process was piloted with 17 of the PRAs, before rolling out to the remainder. This piloting process culminated in a full day workshop for all the reviewers to share their experiences and concerns, and for the coordinators to point to initial differences in approach. It resulted in greater progress towards consensus, revision of the quality assurance (QA) guidance and process, collective assessment of both the feasibility of the original plan (which resulted in shifting from a two reviewer to single reviewer approach) as well as their understanding of how to apply the criteria and recommendations. Following the pilot, reviewers had more confidence in their approach and work proceeded more quickly.

Overall, the process was far from perfect, but it was robust enough to give IDEV staff, management and the CEDR panel of reviewers a degree of confidence in the quality and comparability of project level assessment results. The quality control effort moved us from the full spectrum of shades of grey to an acceptable range of shades within which all PRAs fell, in terms of both quality and consistency of ratings. However, we have also learned what we would do differently if we had our time again – notably building the QA criteria into the process from the beginning and allowing much more time for the process as a whole. Furthermore, it should be added that revisions to the PRAs themselves are currently being tailored for use in different types of evaluations.

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Author's profile

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Negotiating Challenges of Evaluation Field Research: Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results (CEDR)¹

In evaluation studies, there is invariably the need to undertake field work, either in the form of data collection, consultative meetings, observations, and so forth. This article highlights experiences in the field in the context of the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results of the AfDB, and the means by which the evaluators achieved compromise and agreement to realize the best possible outcome for the evaluation. It draws on both the existing literature as well as insights and anecdotes from the collective field experiences of the IDEV evaluation team.

Najade Lindsay and Kobena T. Hanson, African Development Bank

Introduction

WHERE evaluation is concerned, field work involves a range of well defined, albeit variable, methods. These range from formal and informal interviews to direct observation, stakeholder engagement, collective discussions, analysis of personal documents compiled along with surveys, the results from activities undertaken off- or on-line, and finally collections of personal anecdotes and life-histories.

According to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)² evaluation is defined as: an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible of an activity, project, program, strategy, policy, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the intervention.

In evaluation studies, there is invariably the need to undertake field work, either in the form of data collection (quantitative or qualitative), consultative meetings, observations, and so forth. However, the nature and/or scope of any field work during an evaluation is dependent on the type of evaluation and its purpose. With

this aim, the evaluation methodology adopted will reflect the field work's scope, sample size, time frame, resources (human and fiscal) available, and the host of numerous project/program stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries to be engaged.

An evaluation will seek to verify a range of factors, including actions, results, outputs, outcomes/impact, triangulate methods and methodologies, information sources and the accountability of resources. This task is essential for the credibility of the evaluation. Selecting the sample is another key methodical step that has a bearing on the factors mentioned. Against the backdrop of resource, time and scope constraints, there is also the purely human element of availability, ability to communicate and the precise level of cooperation. Given the myriad interactions an evaluation has with multiple actors, stakeholders, beneficiaries, and so on, the process requires great skill. Usually an evaluator faces numerous challenges that can only be overcome through tactful negotiation in order to achieve the evaluation's goals.

The value of results obtained from evaluation field research depends on the quality of data gathered in the field, which in turn depends upon the evaluator, his/her level of involvement, and their ability to recognize points that others may not necessarily observe. The more receptive an evaluator is to new ideas, concepts and techniques, the more adaptable they are to ►►

► unforeseen challenges in the field. Doing so effectively, also requires a better understanding of the specific dynamics operating in the area and the ways an intervention impacts the lives of its beneficiaries. It further requires flexibility, creativity, and an ability to adjust approaches and methods in the light of external challenges.

Bearing these factors in mind this paper highlights experiences encountered in the field and the means by which the evaluators achieved compromise and agreement to realize the best possible outcome for the evaluation. It draws on both the existing literature as well as insights and anecdotes from the collective field experiences of the IDEV evaluation team.

“The investigation concluded that the AfDB delivered results, although not to its full potential, especially with respect to sustainable outcomes. In redefining itself as a results-oriented and learning institution, the AfDB is now firmly set on the right track.”

AfDB's CEDR

The Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results (CEDR) of the AfDB is an independent, and evidence-based assessment of development results achieved by the AfDB over the period 2004–2013. It highlights the extent to which Bank interventions have made a difference across Africa. Aside from assessing results, the CEDR teases out lessons and makes recommendations to inform the implementation of the Bank's new strategic priorities, the High-5s³.

The evaluation's scope covered all Bank interventions (lending and non-lending) approved between 2004 and 2013. To ensure fiscal prudence, the evaluation focused on 14 African countries which, together, accounted for approximately 60 percent of the Bank's lending portfolio, based on approvals during 2004–2013, and broadly match the composition of the Bank's portfolio in terms of regional balance, language, fragility and eligibility to the various windows of Bank financing. For each country sampled, an evaluation of the Bank's Country Strategies and Program (CSP) was conducted⁴. This effort was further complemented with 169 Project Results Assessments (PRAs). This was imperative since the CEDR was designed as a synthesis of individual building blocks.

The investigation concluded that the AfDB delivered results, although not to its full potential, especially with respect to sustainable outcomes. In redefining itself as a results-oriented and learning institution, the AfDB is now firmly set on the right track. The report furthermore points out that the Bank should be explicit about its strategic role in member countries; enhance the flexibility of its corporate procedures; and frame strategies, programs and projects in a manner that recognizes sustainability constraints. Finally, it should strengthen its performance and accountability frameworks and processes.

Evaluation Field Challenges

Undertaking any field work, quantitative or qualitative, is never easy. It involves engaging numerous stakeholders and actors, negotiating 'gate-keepers', balancing time and resource constraints while all the time being mindful of delivery deadlines. Evaluation, much like all forms of applied research, requires patience and creativity, particularly as barriers to ►►



► access often emerge unexpectedly and at inopportune times. Challenges cover a wide spectrum including the inability to access target respondents, political or civil strife, access – or rather the lack of – to information and data, disagreements with the local team or among evaluation team members, researcher bias, field design hurdles, ethno-cultural differences, linguistic barriers, time and budgetary constraints, and so forth. They can impact an evaluation, individually or collectively, making field research and data collection time consuming and difficult (Lennie and Tacchi 2015).

Invariably, interruptions, “confusion, frustration, and miscommunication are (a) part and parcel of applied research” (Border Criminologies 2013). Field challenges, such as those highlighted above, can be the result of many reasons. Sometimes they reflect institutional resistance. At other times, they reveal institutional cultures and difficulties. As with informed consent, research access needs to be continually sought and obtained. Above all, setbacks remind us of our own positionality as evaluators. We are always both privileged yet dependent and vulnerable (Border Criminologies 2013).

As an evaluator, it is very easy to feel entitled to access. Yet we ask a lot of those who allow us into their lives and into their workplaces. So, while it is extremely humbling and frustrating to arrive in the field and be ‘denied entry by the gate-keepers’, field challenges and related frustrations of undertaking field research, “provide an opportunity to reflect on broader, deeper concepts, like power and responsibility, as well as the goals and justification of our evaluation. They may also provide an opportunity to be creative, a reminder to forge new research pathways and modes of access, and a moment to consider what we may bring to those who work with us” (Border Criminologies 2013). As Blackman (2007) notes, the

advancement of more reflexive approaches will require that field investigators become more aware of, and forthright about, the challenges and the opportunities presented by the field.

The extant literature on this issue often advises that to minimize the challenges associated with field work, and to strengthen evaluation design, we should adopt a good mixed-method design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches (cf. Bamberger and White 2007). Surprisingly, not so much comment is articulated about field challenges. Invariably, the challenges encountered during field work, evaluators’ attempts to resolve them, and their doubts or critical reflections on the process tend to be omitted from published reports. Perhaps it is taken for granted. Yet either way, invaluable knowledge and learning is ignored with respect to crucial background information about data collection techniques, evaluation research methods and methodologies (Weller and Kinder-Kurlanda 2015; Kubisch et al. 2011). It is therefore crucial to discuss the challenges of field work, not only to strategize about how to negotiate and manage them, but also to think them through. More importantly, doing so will promote peer-learning and experience sharing. This is particularly vital in the case of complex evaluations, such as the CEDR, which transcends national, cultural, and linguistic borders, involves multiple teams, and where access to, and processes of data, analysis, and interpretation are likely to be even more challenging.

In the following section this article highlights some of the challenges evaluators involved in the CEDR faced. Two types of field challenges are addressed using country case studies from Burundi and Mozambique. First, political tensions in the field resulting in an inability to access respondents and primary data; and, secondly, linguistic issues, stemming ►►

► from an inability to communicate with in-country consultants.

AfDB – IDEV’s Experience

Given the myriad challenges that can occur during field evaluation research it is always recommended to have protocols in the form of triangulation such that, where at all possible, information is collected from multiple sources and facts crossed checked against each other and verified prior to reporting. Indeed, regardless of an evaluator’s background or experience, while in the field – especially when undertaking evaluation across national and linguistic borders – one is inevitably confronted with the unknown and the unexpected.

Drawing on the field experiences of the CEDR teams working on Burundi and Mozambique, this article teases-out the issues and challenges faced and how these hurdles were resolved.

a. Burundi – East Africa

The socio-political crisis in Burundi following the presidential elections of 2015 resulted in civil strife, tit-for-tat attacks between pro – and anti-president supporters, and street protests which were met with violent repression. These developments coincided with the AfDB’s preparatory mission to the country. Consequently, the environment was one characterized by deep suspicion, particularly of ‘strangers’ asking questions.

The IDEV mission quickly realized that “interviews with stakeholders were received with trepidation and framed by the lens of mistrust.” Several opposition officials had been dismissed from the public service, tensions were high, and respondents did not want to be seen speaking to strangers as this could be misinterpreted by observers and officials alike. Furthermore, those who did, “provided responses that lacked

objectivity.” Adapting to the situation, the team initially opted to interview respondents outside of their work environment in the local office of the Bank in Burundi. This creative step introduced into the data collection schedule enabled the team to “complete the interviews, as well as field visits” to target sites and institutions.

“The IDEV mission quickly realized that “interviews with stakeholders were received with trepidation and framed by the lens of mistrust.”

Unfortunately, in the period between the preparatory mission and the data collection mission itself, the situation in the country deteriorated significantly, putting the entire evaluation process in jeopardy. The developments raised a number of questions: What should be done? Should the country be dropped from the evaluation? How could IDEV proceed in this context? Upon reflection and consultations amongst team members, as well as with IDEV Management, it was decided to proceed using an inventory of documents/data produced by the country, development partners, and to consult on all the secondary material and data available on the relevant sectors. The team also reviewed all available studies undertaken by the AfDB pertinent to the evaluation objectives, and then hired a local consultant to conduct all in-country interviews.

The IDEV team managed to stay engaged with the field via technology – holding a three-day virtual conference – since it was neither feasible nor safe to travel to Burundi to carry out the mission’s data collection. The three-day video conference, aimed at bringing together AfDB staff in Burundi, csos and the government, had to be coordinated with the Bank’s local office in ►



► Bujumbura. While not easy, given the political environment, and unsure even if calls would be taken, the team persevered.

Ultimately, the tenacity, dedication, creativity, and flexibility of the team members – individually and collectively – ensured that data was gathered, interviews undertaken, discussion held (even if virtual), and the report produced in a timely fashion. The process – while daunting and fraught with multiple and sometimes overlapping challenges – confirms Kubisch et al. (2013) point that, the “iterative process of learning and doing helps to position evaluation as a tool for improving practices and nurturing change at every level. (It further) cultivates ownership... and increases the likelihood that results will be useful, relevant, and credible for potential users” (2013: 147). The developments also demonstrated the value of triangulating methods and methodologies while being flexible and willing to adapt

(cf. *Border Criminologies* 2013; Bamberger and White 2007). Again, the importance of consulting the existing studies during an evaluation was underlined since in the absence of these studies it would have been almost impossible to gather enough empirical data to finalize the study.

As one member of the team put it succinctly, “as evaluators, we must have enough perspective to adapt the methodology according to the context.” Another simply said, “flexibility is a watchword. In life, as in work, there are always events that come to modify an established plan. It is therefore necessary to be able to adapt.”

b. Mozambique, Southern Africa

In Mozambique, IDEV’s work centered on the capital city, Maputo, with field missions to the northern and southern regions of the country. ►

► The approach was to employ the services of local consultants to carry out the field investigations. However, when the IDEV evaluation team met with the local team it quickly became apparent those engaged spoke minimal English. Further discussions also raised another issue, the consultants' qualifications and evaluation capabilities did not meet the IDEV team's expectations. The issue of not being able to communicate easily, coupled with doubts about the local consultants' skills and capacities, called for a rethink on the way forward as the local consultants were clearly not the right people for the task at hand.

This development meant that the mission, originally designed as a supervisory undertaking, now had to face the prospect of being turned into a data collection undertaking. As one IDEV team member put it, "before, we were expecting a certain workload based on basic supervision. Once on the ground, we realized that we would have to take the lead and do all the work." As in the case of Burundi, the team had to redefine itself, adapt to the situation it was confronted with, and forge a way forward. First, the team sought and received authorization to extend the mission. Next they slid into the driver's seat and lead the process: working very closely, navigating the linguistic and communication challenges and the interaction complications with the local consultants. This involved moving from providing "basic supervision" to a "total supervision" role monitoring every step of the process.

Drawing on their training, team dynamics and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, illustrated by their willingness to be flexible in their work schedules and protocols, the mission managed to successfully meet its mission objectives. While the undertaking was daunting, it also served as a learning opportunity. Mission team members commented, "We learnt a

lot in terms of evaluation, and team work, particularly when it comes to communicating and interacting with others... and how to get the best from our co-workers" The experience also "taught us to be very adaptable because we had to lead missions, and conduct meetings we weren't necessarily used to. We also learnt a lot in terms of stress management."

Conclusion

The Burundi and Mozambique experiences clearly demonstrate creativity, flexibility, and an ability to compromise – all qualities invaluable to a successful evaluation. This article in its attempt to highlight the challenges and issues faced when collecting and analyzing evaluative data and information, also acknowledges that no matter what the circumstances, credibility and dependability need to be established, and the field research process must be objective and transparent. An integral aspect of achieving this delicate balance hinges on embracing reflexivity, an in-depth self-awareness of one's strengths, limitations and perspectives.

As revealed by the experiences of members of the AfDB's team that undertook the CEDR, being: a) flexible – that is willing to make changes to the instruments used in data collection and willing to adjust the ways in which data is collected, as well as accommodating team members' view points and suggestions; b) creative – that is open to thinking and acting outside the box; c) reflective – considering what your study needs to accomplish, but also mindful of its feasibility in particular contexts; and, d) open to adaptation, was central to the teams meeting their objectives. The case studies also confirm the extant literature's position on the value of team work, communication, and a willingness to correct course mid-flight. ►

The insights from Burundi and Mozambique further demonstrate how important sharing one's field experiences are to future initiatives. They do not only lend credence to the invaluable shift in evaluation practice so as to give prominence to learning, but also highlight the essence of strategic thinking – the ability to map-out threats, opportunities and possibilities while in the

field, and to adjust accordingly. As Kubisch et al. (2011:147) observe, the “iterative process of learning and doing helps to position evaluation as a tool for improving practices and nurturing change at every level.” It not only strengthens ownership and buy-in, but also increases the likelihood of results’ findings and outcomes being accepted as relevant, credible and worthwhile.



Endnotes

- 1 We would like to express its appreciation to the CEDR evaluators – Ms. Eglantine Marcelin, Mr. Clement Banse, and Ms. Carla Silva – for making time to share their field experiences, without which this article would not have been possible. Thanks also goes to Mr. Daniel Andoh for his input on the draft text. All errors and/or omissions are solely ours.
- 2 The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is an inter-agency professional network that brings together the evaluation units of the UN system, including UN departments, specialized agencies, funds and programs, and affiliated organizations. It currently has 46 such members and observers.
- 3 The High 5s are the five priority action areas for the AfDB: Light up and power Africa; Feed Africa; Industrialize Africa; Integrate Africa; and Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa.
- 4 For more on the AfDB's CEDR, kindly access the full report, including the methodology at: http://idev.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/IDEV%2C%20CEDR%20Report%20EN_web.pdf

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Web Sources

SkillsYouNeed – <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/negotiation.html>

UN Evaluation Group – <http://www.uneval.org/>

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Consensus Building and Team Work in Complex Evaluations: Viewpoints from the AfDB's CEDR¹

In evaluation field research, consensus building and effective teamwork are essential for various reasons, among which output quality, morale and retention. This article seeks to examine the essence of consensus building and team work in complex evaluations, using the CEDR experience as a case study. The focus is on team members who individually and collectively worked tirelessly to undertake the evaluation successfully.

Aminata Kouma and Kobena T. Hanson, African Development Bank

CONSENSUS building and effective teamwork are vital capabilities that are highly valued in evaluation field research. Working effectively as part of a team is important for output quality, morale, and retention. Team work also encourages an innovative spirit and creative ability to generate new knowledge, thinking productively, while increasing one's motivation and enthusiasm to learn and solve problems together (Rousseau et al. 2006). However, these skills do not necessarily happen on their own accord. They need to be fostered, and doing so entails creating a culture that values collaboration. In a team setting, individuals understand and believe that thinking, planning, decision making and actions are better when done cooperatively.

Team work further helps to promote deep learning. This takes place through interaction, problem solving, dialogue, cooperation and collaboration, resulting in the construction of knowledge. The vision of, and approach to, team collaboration and knowledge transmission has similarly changed with the birth of concepts like "learning by doing" (Aldrich 2005), "X-teams" (Ancona and Bresman 2007), and "Theory U" (Scharmer 2007). While acknowledging these innovative approaches, this article will not delve in to them given its limited scope. Rather, the article adopts Scarnati's (2001) conceptualization of team work as a cooperative process that allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results. Scarnati (2001) sees team work as a

synergetic process in which the efforts of the group surpasses that of an individual. He argues that interdependence is the distinctive feature of successful teams².

While there is no magic formula to constitute an effective team, research has identified a number of attributes required for successful team work. Central to these are: a) a commitment to team success and shared goals; b) interdependence; c) interpersonal skills; d) open communication and positive feedback; d) trust; and e) commitment to team processes, leadership, and accountability. According to Bennett and Gadlin (2012), trust is among the most critical elements that influence team cohesion (see also Haas and Mortensen 2016; Rousseau et al. 2006). After all, while a group of individuals can team up to work on a collaborative initiative "without having established trust, it is very difficult for a team to continue working together toward a common goal without establishing it" (Bennett and Gadlin 2012: 774). Where trust and mutual respect are the norm, delegating authority is an option likely to be exercised. If trust is low, more active participation – providing greater control and opportunities to influence – is always required. Communication is equally essential and not surprisingly cuts across all the above listed attributes.

Given the centrality of trust to successful collaboration, Gratton and Erickson (2007) argue that "forming teams that capitalize on preexisting, or "heritage," relationships, increases the chances of a project's ►

► success.” The CEDR team members were drawn from the IDEV divisions and partnered with consultants to jointly undertake the evaluation. Viewed from this perspective, it can be argued that some preexisting or “heritage” relationship did exist.

It is within the above context that this article seeks to examine the essence of consensus building and team work in complex evaluations, using the CEDR experience as a case study. The focus is on team members who individually and collectively worked tirelessly to undertake the evaluation successfully. The objective is to demonstrate how team members employed a mix of interpersonal, problem solving, and communication skills to work together toward a common goal. Team work is contingent upon and enmeshed within overlapping and embedded social interactions, communication processes, and field realities. Understanding how team members employed and negotiated these complex challenges rather than focusing on the character of them themselves, should serve to shed more light on the role of their human agency and provide learning and lessons for other evaluators and field researchers alike.

Following this introduction, subsequent section: a) briefly introduces the CEDR exercise and its outcomes; then b) drawing on available literature on evaluation, field research and team work showcases the experiences of the AfDB – IDEV’s CEDR evaluation team. The section also highlights the role collaboration played out within teams, lessons learnt, and how the experiences (individual and collective) mirror, conflict with, or shore up known research findings on the role and import of teamwork in the field; and c) offers some concluding remarks.

Consensus and Teamwork in Evaluation: IDEV’s CEDR Experience

AfDB’s CEDR³

The Comprehensive Evaluation of the Development Results (CEDR) of the AfDB is an independent, and evidence based assessment of development results achieved by the AfDB over the period 2004–2013. It highlights, among other points, the extent to which Bank interventions have made a difference across Africa. Aside from assessing results, the CEDR draws out lessons and makes recommendations to inform the implementation of the Bank’s new strategic priorities, the High-5s.

The evaluation’s scope covered all the Bank interventions (lending and non lending) approved between 2004–2013. Although to ensure fiscal prudence, the evaluation focused on 14 African countries which, together, accounted for approximately 60 percent of the Bank’s lending portfolio, based on approvals during 2004–2013, and broadly match the composition of the Bank’s portfolio in terms of regional balance, language, fragility and eligibility to the various windows of Bank financing. For each country sampled, an evaluation of the Bank’s Country Strategies and Program (CSP) was conducted. This effort was complemented with 169 Project Results Assessments (PRAs); an imperative since the CEDR was designed as a synthesis of building blocks.

The evaluation favored ratings aggregated across projects and countries – an approach very similar to that utilized by other multilateral development banks – where project level evaluations are employed as building blocks for country, thematic and corporate evaluations. Fourteen country level evaluations were also carried out to reach overall judgments about the Bank’s performance. ►►



► Overall, the evaluation observed that while the AfDB delivered results, it had not met its optimal potential, especially with respect to sustainable outcomes. Nonetheless, it acknowledged that the AfDB's reform agenda – aimed at redefining itself as a results oriented and learning institution – has set it on the right track. In addition, the report pointed out that the Bank should be explicit about its strategic role in member countries; enhance the flexibility of its corporate procedures; frame strategies, programs and projects in a manner recognizing constraints to sustainability; and strengthen its performance and accountability frameworks and processes.

Field Experiences and Lessons Learnt

As part of a concerted effort to harness knowledge and learning, members of the CEDR process were interviewed and asked to share insights on their most

memorable experience, event or activity from CEDR. We wanted to know what inspired them most, and what they were proud of, or disappointed by; we were also interested to know whether they learnt something new or saw something strange and also what frustrated them most? This section captures the voices of team members discussing their involvement in the self assessment, quality assurance and compliance of project evaluation reports, and their participation in field missions.

Central to the CEDR was the need to synthesize the data from each of the Project Results Assessments (PRAs). While a firm was recruited for this purpose, the deadline was tight as a third of PRAs were due by 1st April. Faced with this reality, IDEV's evaluators decided to review the PRAs internally to ensure the quality and conformity of the results of each evaluation prior to forwarding to the ►



► consulting firm for synthesis. The process, amongst others, involved “two colleagues reviewing each PRA, discussing points of discrepancy, and then deciding whether it required further adjustments, was good enough to be included in the evaluation, or whether it should be discarded due to it not measuring up to the standard of a good PRA.” Colleagues reviewing the PRAs had to adhere to following the same logic, so that their comparison would be objective.

The literature tells us that successful team work relies on synergism amongst all its members to create an environment where everyone is willing to contribute and participate. Adopting this approach enables the promotion and nurturing of a positive, effective collaborative environment (Gratton and Erickson 2007). This is exactly what the voices from the field suggest. As one colleague noted, the “atmosphere was one characterized by a mobilization of all hands on deck, and mutual supportiveness.” Another not only revealed that the exercise, “allowed

for extensive interaction with almost all colleagues, and allowed us to get closer creating a more cordial atmosphere,” but that it also led to the development of a “team united, and motivated by the attainment of the common goal, (which ensured that) we managed to accomplish such a task in record time.” It was also pointed out that while the quality assessment process of reviewing the PRAs was new, and put in place specifically for the CEDR, it greatly “enhanced coordination and communication with others.”

Having the right support is another key factor that facilitates team effectiveness (Haas and Mortensen 2016). This aspect comes through visibly in the voices from the field. Members of the CEDR team used phrases such as “cordial atmosphere” and “worked together in a good atmosphere”, all in reference to the enabling environment, characterized by mutual support, trust, and the collaboration that was forged... More importantly, the environment and team dynamics ensured that everyone was on the same playing ►►

► field in terms of information. In addition, there was a lot of peer learning and informal mentoring that the CEDR process nurtured, enhanced and advanced. These developments, however subtle, confirm a widely held view in the literature that “shared knowledge is the cornerstone of effective collaboration; it gives a group a frame of reference, allows the group to interpret situations and decisions correctly, helps people understand one another better, and greatly increases efficiency” (Haas and Mortensen 2016). These traits also mirror Gratton and Erickson’s (2007) findings on collaboration among teams, which states that “appreciating others, being able to engage in purposeful conversations, productively and creatively resolving conflicts” are imperative to forging meaningful team collaboration. As one CEDR member pointed out, “...it was a very rewarding experience, it was the first time I had participated in such an exercise.”

The findings further confirm existing research which points to the fact that collaboration “improves when the roles of individual team members are clearly defined and well understood – when individuals feel that they can do a significant portion of their work independently” (see Gratton and Erickson 2007). To this end each CEDR member knew their role(s) as PRA reviewer, member of a CSP team, and so forth, again confirming Haas and Mortensen’s (2016) point that teams cannot be inspired if they don’t know what they’re working toward and don’t have explicit goals.

In terms of the skills garnered, capacities built, and lessons learnt, team members without fail acknowledged these benefits. Feedback such as “the team work was very interesting because there were invaluable contributions from everyone” and “extensive and trustworthy communication with other internal (AfDB) peer

reviewers helped my team complete the quality assurance process well before the deadline” succinctly express members’ appreciation of, and value for, the exercise. It also speaks volumes about the CEDR process, the learning made possible, and the skills developed.

“The findings further confirm existing research which points to the fact that collaboration “improves when the roles of individual team members are clearly defined and well understood – when individuals feel that they can do a significant portion of their work independently”.

This article would, however, not be balanced without any mention of the frustrations, fears, and fatigue faced by, and poignantly captured in the voices of, respondents. Team members remarked that “the deadline was very tight”, resulting in many being stressed. As one concisely put it, “countries on which I was developing CSPES were expecting our inputs, so there was a great time pressure”, and “it was unavoidable to work at night as well as during weekends.” Another simply said “I was overworked.” Yet another pointed out that the “workload was extremely important, although heavy, and punctuated by field missions ...I had a very short window within which to deliver (field reports) on time.” Such tensions are not unique to the AfDB team and are expected when undertaking an evaluation within tight time constraints (Scarnati 2001; Lingard et al. 2012).

Clearly, the voices from the field while shedding light on complexity and ►



► challenges of the field work, also highlighted the resolve of members, and spoke of the personal traits and skills that were enhanced and advanced as a result of the process. Consistently, interviewees articulated a sense of team spirit, mutual collaboration, and respect in their voices. They also emphasized the learning aspect and how team members – singly and variously – improvised in the face of field realities. One colleague best summed up the experience, and pride of the team in the following words: “We were able to deliver the reports ...in a timely manner through team work. The teams of different (IDEV) divisions, different levels, and consultants ... worked together in a good atmosphere. The lesson we learned is that team work pays.”

For any evaluation to be embraced and useful in solutions to complex problems it needs to focus on producing evidence that generates learning; it should not be constrained by the fear of failure. The CEDR experience fulfilled this goal: it is embodied in the vignettes of evaluators’ voices, the ability and determination to rise to the challenge and tackle something new, and it has helped forge new bonds of collaboration within and across IDEV divisions, strengthened existing ties of cooperation, and helped enhance and advance a culture of mentorship, peer learning, and experience sharing.

Concluding Remarks

Many factors in the field and team dynamics shape the success or otherwise of any complex evaluation. Unfortunately, there is no special method to build a successful collaboration. Some of the characteristics mentioned in the preceding sections

(trust, collaboration, resources, time, leadership, shared expectations, planning, and so on) contribute to achieving the right dynamics and team spirit. This article, while recognizing the importance of the diverse factors, focuses on the critical role the collaboration and consensus building played in the AfDB’s CEDR process. It draws on the voices of the evaluators who were in the field, and the available literature. Its key message hinges on the core CEDR process: a strong sense of the “collective” in terms of trust, team spirit and confidence. Consequently, team members managed to nurture a strong sense of team orientation, trust in each other’s intentions, as well as confidence in, and capacity for collective efficacy.

CEDR team members interviewed used phrases such as “a strong commitment from everyone” and “good contribution from everyone” to characterize their experience. Others, when asked why they perceived the evaluation exercise as an overall success, noted that there was “extensive and trustworthy communication with others”, and that “it (CEDR exercise) enabled us to get closer, creating a very cordial atmosphere.”

These voices from the field, affirm the findings of the available literature on evaluation field research, team work, collaboration and trust (cf. Haas and Mortensen 2016; Gratton and Erickson 2007; Rousseau et al. 2006). Viewed from this perspective, the significance of the CEDR teams’ voice “resides not in its generalisability, but in its resonance, its ability to transport readers to their own team work moments and to produce a sense of déjà vu that signals shared social experience and prompts deep reflection” (Lingard et al. 2012:872).

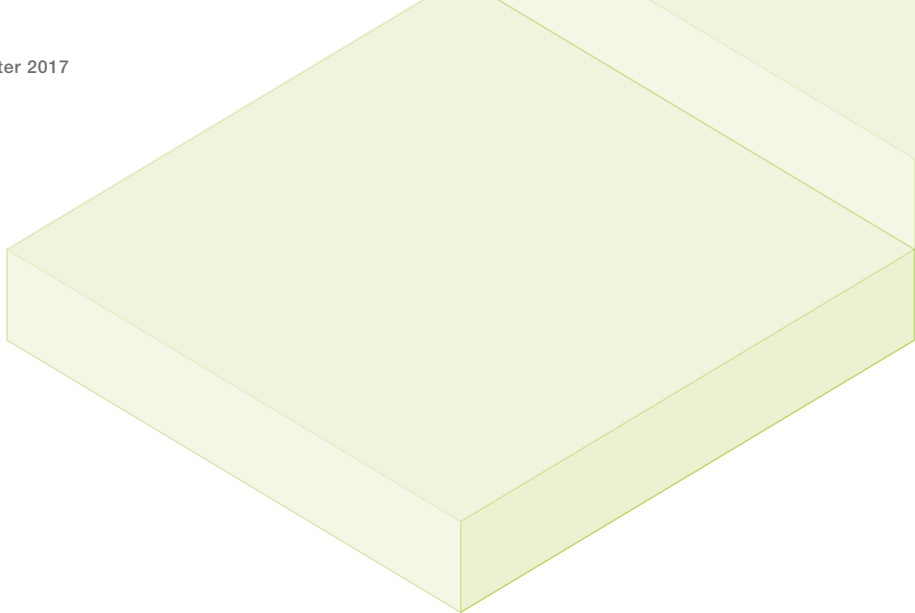
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Endnotes

- 1 IDEV would like to express its appreciation to the CEDR evaluators – Ms. Latefa Camara, and Messrs. Girma Kumbi, Hajime Onishi, and Samer Hachem – for sharing their field experiences and insights without which this article would not have been possible. All misrepresentations, errors, and or omissions are solely ours.
- 2 For more on teamwork, see: Scarnati, J. T. (2001) 'On becoming a team player.' *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, 7(1/2), pp. 5 – 10. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13527590110389501>
- 3 For more on the AfDB's CEDR, kindly access the full report, including the methodology at: http://idev.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/IDEV%2C%20CEDR%20Report%20EN_web.pdf

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① IDEV Publishes 2016 Annual Report: Business Unusual



IDEV published its **Annual Report 2016**, a year marked by the delivery of an exceptional report, the Comprehensive Evaluation of the AfDB's Development Results, and a transformation process to meet new evaluation needs. IDEV completed 11 high-level evaluations, including the CEDR, seven country strategy and program evaluations, a country program case study, a regional integration strategy evaluation for Eastern Africa, and an evaluation synthesis on Private Sector Development. It also completed two impact evaluations of country rural water and sanitation programs. Furthermore IDEV organized numerous learning activities and provided

strong support for the development of evaluation capacity on the continent.

“The world of international development is changing and so is the AfDB. Business as usual cannot be the response. Business Unusual is the fitting title of the 2016 IDEV Annual Report” said Rakesh Nangia, Evaluator General at the AfDB. “IDEV has adapted to the changing context, positioned itself as a driver of change, and is transforming itself to respond to new evaluation needs in the era of the SDGs and the Bank’s High 5 priority areas”

🌐 <http://idev.afdb.org/en/news/2016-was-business-unusual-afdb%E2%80%99s-independent-evaluation-says-annual-report>

2 New Evaluations

The Mozambique Country Case Study for the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Bank's Development Results

is a case study of the AfDB's assistance to Mozambique over 2004–2013 (a period that saw the Bank approve a total of UA 674 million for 30 projects across eight sectors), as well as a contribution to the CEDR. It examines how the Bank has managed its operations, and lessons learned from what has supported and what has hindered performance. Evaluators triangulated a number of methods and methodologies, notably project assessments, reviews of the broader portfolio of strategies and of non-lending activities, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions during field visits to selected project sites.

Overall, the evaluation concludes that the Bank's strategies and project portfolio were relevant to Mozambique's development priorities, but that it was not selective enough in its interventions, and that there were problems with project design. Despite the fact that the Bank's interventions generated positive outcomes in different areas, the Bank's



overall performance was negatively affected by a weak focus on results. Also the AfDB is still seen more as a funding partner rather than a knowledge broker.

🌐 <http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/mozambique-country-case-study-comprehensive-evaluation-banks-development-results-2004-2013>



The Evaluation of the AfDB's Eastern Africa Regional Integration Strategy Paper

examines 24 operations amounting to UA 1.4 billion to assess the extent to which development results have been achieved and to suggest potential improvements that will help guide the preparation of the next Regional Integration Strategy. Evaluators drew on multiple lines of enquiry including document reviews, literature review, portfolio reviews, key informant interviews, and project results assessments. Overall, the evaluation finds that the Eastern Africa RISP and the Bank's operations were aligned with the needs of the Regional Member Countries and the Bank's strategic priorities, but did not integrate the broader objective of regional integration. Capacity issues, particularly in Regional Economic Communities, have hampered effectiveness and sustainability, and there were weaknesses in efficiency and results-based management.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/independent-evaluation-banks-eastern-africa-regional-integration-strategy>

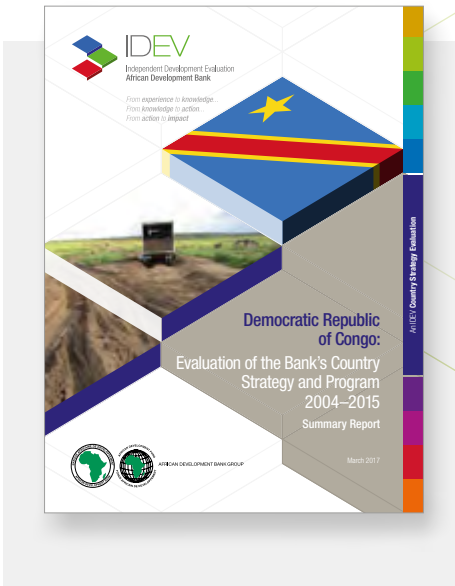


The Ghana Country Strategy and Program Evaluation

evaluates the impact of UA 1.3 billion of AfDB support for development in Ghana during the 2002–2015 period. Evaluators interrogated issues and questions via a triangulation of evidence from four different sources: i) review of project documents; ii) literature review; iii) stakeholder interviews; and iv) site visits. Overall, the evaluation finds that the Bank's strategies and interventions were relevant to Ghana's development needs and that the support has generally been effective. However, there were long delays in the implementation of projects, and their sustainability is threatened by various risks.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/ghana-evaluation-banks-country-strategy-and-program-2002-2015>





The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Country Strategy and Program Evaluation

examines the AfDB's UA 1.2 billion assistance to the DRC over the 2004–2015 period. Evaluators drew on data and information gathered from different sources including document reviews, key informant interviews and site visits. Key sectors focused on were agriculture and rural development, transport, energy, and water and sanitation. Overall, the evaluation finds that the Bank strategies supported the country through its evolution from a “post-conflict” situation to a “development” situation. However, they did not sufficiently deal with all the country's factors of fragility. The Bank's interventions were most effective in the transport and social development sectors, while its involvement in policy dialogue was weak.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/drc-evaluation-banks-country-strategy-and-program-2004-2015>



Other new evaluations



3 Capacity building initiatives & Knowledge sharing



Private-sector stakeholders meet in Kenya for networking, peer-learning, and experience sharing.

IDEV and the Evaluation Department of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, in collaboration with the AfDB's Regional Directorate for Eastern Africa, organized a two-day knowledge-sharing and peer-learning event on the theme **Towards Private Sector-Led Growth: Lessons of Experience** on 3-4 April 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya. The forum, which combined keynote speakers, panel discussions, and presentations to interrogate threats, opportunities and possibilities facing private sector-led development in Africa, attracted over 60 participants from the Kenyan public and private sectors, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, diplomatic corps in Nairobi, development practitioners, civil society and media, as well as AfDB management and staff.

IDEV held a two-day team-building retreat in Abidjan on 10-11 April 2017.

The retreat, facilitated by the AfDB's Human Resources Department, aimed at enhancing work processes and the working environment, including improving the IDEV team's soft-skills for effective teamwork

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/news/idev-team-building-retreat-abidjan-10-11-april-2017>



IDEV team-building retreat in Abidjan, 10-11 April 2017

IDEV, represented by Evaluator General Rakesh Nangia, participated in the **2017 Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High-level Meetings** in Washington D.C., USA on 19-20 April 2017. Mr. Nangia delivered a speech at the Sector Ministers' Meeting on the State of Development Effectiveness in the WASH sector in Africa.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/news/sanitation-and-water-all-high-level-meetings-2017>



Rakesh Nangia of IDEV speaks with Caroline Heider of IEG

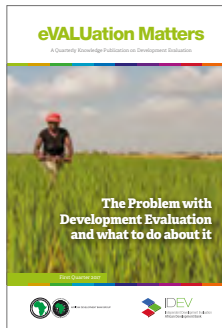
On 20 April 2017 Evaluator General Rakesh Nangia participated in a conversation with Caroline Heider, Director General of the Independent Evaluation Group at the World Bank. The conversation, centered on the essence of evaluations, touched on a number of key issues including real-time evaluations, self-evaluations, country/program evaluations, how to negotiate systemic challenges and/or initiate deep-dives, and the significance of strategic dialogue with management.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/media/rakesh-nangia-idev-speaks-caroline-heider-ieg>

IDEV, represented by Division Manager Karen Rot-Munstermann, attended the EvalPartners Third Global Evaluation Forum from 25–28 April 2017 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, aimed at reviewing progress of the EvalAgenda 2020, particularly in support of the SDGs. Also in attendance were Sen. Roger Mbassa Ndine and Hon. Evelyn Mpagi-Kaabule, members of the Executive Committee of APNODE. The forum brought together over 150 delegates including government representatives, parliamentarians, development partners, foundations, private sector, academia, civil society, and the evaluation community.



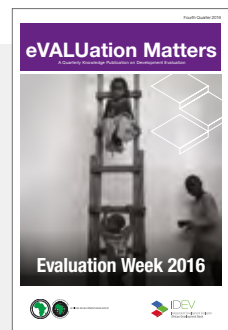
<http://idev.afdb.org/en/page/african-parliamentarians%E2%80%99-network-development-evaluation-apnode>



First Quarter 2017: *The Problem with Development Evaluation and what to do about it*

Development evaluation has been around for a while now. However, the perception is that it does not garner its expected level of influence. Why is there poor assimilation of the lessons learned and recommendations from evaluation? Where do the problems really emanate? Is it from the users of evaluations, or from the evaluators? Is it from the policy or the process?

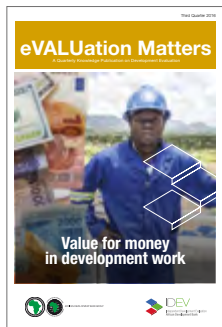
<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/problem-development-evaluation-and-what-do-about-it>



Fourth Quarter 2016: *Evaluation Week Special*

Achieving transformation requires not only investments and policies, but also a change in mindset. With this in mind, we at IDEV organized the AfDB Development Evaluation Week 2016 on the theme of Driving Africa's Transformation. This edition of Evaluation Matters captures the images, the debates and the words of wisdom from experts at the event.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/evaluation-matters-fourth-quarter-2016-evaluation-week-special>



Third Quarter 2016: *Value for Money in Development*

The concept of value for money (VfM) in development work is the subject of much debate and confusion. In VfM analysis by development agencies, four key terms known as the 4 Es are often used. These are Economy – minimizing costs; Efficiency – getting more results for the costs; Effectiveness – successfully achieving the intended outcomes; and Equity – reaching different groups. How are these terms interpreted and applied by development practitioners?

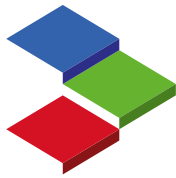
<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/evaluation-matters-third-quarter-2016-value-money-development>



Second Quarter 2016: *Evaluation of Private Sector Development Assistance*

This issue of eVALUation Matters examines the challenges and opportunities as well as the emerging trends of private sector development.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/evaluation-matters-second-quarter-2016-evaluation-private-sector-development-assistance>



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