Democratic Republic of Congo:
Executive Summary

March 2017
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- Sector Evaluations
- Corporate Evaluations
- Project Performance Evaluations (Public Sector)
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Executive Summary

Evaluation Goal and Methodology

This evaluation, initiated and conducted by the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV), is part of a comprehensive evaluation of the development results (CEDR) of the Bank. Its goal is to review the specificity of the Bank’s actions in a transition economy like DRC, and make recommendations that could help improve the effectiveness of Bank assistance while supporting the preparation and operationalization of its future strategies in DRC over the 2017–2021 period.

The evaluation covers Bank strategies, operations and policy dialogue activities implemented through various financing mechanisms in DRC over the 2004–2015 period.¹ The evaluation method is based on two major themes, namely: obtaining development results and performance-based management of Bank interventions. It is structured around 20 evaluation questions (Annex 1.b) which mainly focus on aspects of fragility and is based on a documentary review, discussions with experts and quick surveys on the intervention sites that included individual and group discussions, consultation workshops and direct observations.

Development Context and Challenges of DRC²

Situated in Central Africa and lying astride the equator, DRC is one of the largest countries in Africa with a surface area of 2.3 million km². Between 2004 and 2015, the country’s population increased by 25 million, rising from 52.5 million to 77.27 million inhabitants. It is a youthful population (55% are under the age of 25 years) that lives predominantly in rural areas (63% in 2004 and 60% in 2015).

Since the mid-1990s, the country has experienced a series of political crises (flight and assassination of presidents, and challenge of election results), followed by relative calm in 2013. The current period is characterized by a new territorial redistricting and political tensions due to the postponement of presidential and legislative elections initially scheduled to be held in November 2016.

According to the latest estimates, the economic growth rate has fluctuated between 2004 and 2015, rising from 6.7% in 2004 to 8.5% in 2013, before falling back to 6.9% in 2015 following a slowdown, to 2.8% in 2009 due to the global financial crisis. This economic performance, which exceeds the African average (4.8%), is essentially driven by: (i) manufacturing industries (33% of GDP in 2014), and (ii) agriculture (21% of GDP in 2014).

Over the 2005–2015 period, DRC was classified among fragile States on the harmonized lists of most international organizations. Despite positive trends, particularly in economic growth, State capacity and legitimacy, regional conflicts and armed violence, the country is still dogged by enormous challenges, namely: the fragile legitimacy of State institutions; a high poverty rate; difficult access to basic social services; economic, political and institutional instability; a poor business environment; and threats to biodiversity.

Bank Assistance Strategy and Program in DRC

II) and mainly sector strategies in agriculture (SSADR, PDDAA, PNIA) and health (SRSS, PNDS). The Bank intervened in DRC through 63 projects worth a total of approximately UA 1.2 billion. Economic and social infrastructure accounts for nearly 80% of the total amount invested in this portfolio.

Results of Evaluation of Bank Strategies and Programs

Relevance

Relevance is assessed as moderately satisfactory. The Bank’s CSPs during the review period reflect the fragile state of DRC, but do not provide an integrated analysis of the factors of fragility. Through its successive strategies, the Bank has supported the country through its evolution from a “post-conflict” situation at the beginning of the period to a “development” situation thereafter. The Bank’s strategies and operations in DRC are globally aligned with its general orientations. The use of the Fragile States Facility (FSF) was relevant. However, considering the country’s situation, the amounts for the 3rd pillar were small relative to the needs, and there was a focus on Government services to the detriment of further strengthening of private sector stakeholders and civil society organizations. Although gender inequality, youth employment, regional disparities and green growth are identified as key issues in the CSPs, the Bank’s strategies and operations in DRC have remained poorly inclusive.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is assessed as moderately satisfactory. As regards economic and social infrastructure, the attainment of results is satisfactory in terms of outputs and moderately satisfactory in terms of outcomes. While operations in the transport and social development sectors are most effective overall, the results are less satisfactory in the agricultural and rural development sectors. In the energy sector, the operations are not advanced enough for their effectiveness to be determined. With respect to economic and financial governance, only one of the four projects funded by the Bank, namely the Emergency Program to Mitigate the Impact of the Financial Crisis (PUAICF) was evaluated, since the others were not yet fully advanced in their implementation. This program attained its objectives by helping to restore macroeconomic balance in DRC and achieve the completion point of the HIPC Initiative (as of July 2010). It created favorable conditions for implementation of the Bank’s subsequent support in public finance management area.

Effects on Factors of Fragility

A correlation can be established between the Bank’s operations and the positive or neutral trends in factors of fragility. The positive trends relate to institutional capacity in economic governance and economic growth, while the neutral trends concern diversification of the economy and living conditions in the critical provinces.

Sustainability

The sustainability of Bank operations is assessed as moderately unlikely. Overall, the technical soundness of achievements is moderately unlikely. Economic and financial viability and the political and governance environment are the criteria with the poorest performance. This stems essentially from road maintenance policy shortcomings, especially for rural roads, and failure by the State (or provinces) to provide the operating budgets of facilities established through Bank operations.

Institutional sustainability and capacity building, ownership and sustainability of partnerships, as well as environmental sustainability, are considered to be moderately unlikely.
Efficiency

The Bank’s efficiency in DRC is assessed as moderately unsatisfactory. Project implementation delays are the main problem. The delays are due to three factors, namely: (i) country context; (ii) Government responsibility; and (iii) Bank responsibility.

Knowledge and advisory support for policy formulation

There is a wide gap between the Bank’s professed intentions in DRC in terms of policy dialogue and its results. As regards economic governance, the Bank significantly engaged in policy dialogue to help DRC reach the completion point of the HIPC Initiative. In other sectors, the Bank’s involvement in dialogue on sector policy implementation was limited to the production of studies that were insufficiently promoted. Furthermore, the Bank’s involvement in dialogue with civil society stakeholders and the private sector remains weak. The Bank’s analytical studies over the review period were neither programmed nor given any follow-up. They are few in number and their linkages to policy dialogue are not obvious.

Findings: Performance-based Management

Quality of CSPs and Selectivity

Overall, the quality and selectivity of CSPs have not been satisfactory despite an improvement over the review period. Bank strategies lack of consistency in the choice of pillars that change with each CSP, without any real common denominator, and by the sheer diversity of intervention areas. This situation is not conducive to consolidating experience and weakens the effectiveness of resources raised to monitor operations.

Managing for Development Results

Managing for results was increasingly factored into the Bank’s strategies in DRC during the review period. However, owing to weak statistical and national monitoring/evaluation systems and a failure to implement recommendations, the Bank’s monitoring and supervision mechanisms neither functioned well nor enhanced the effectiveness of strategies and programs.

Implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States

Implementation of the Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States is unsatisfactory. This finding is partly due to the difficult context in DRC (weakness of the State and magnitude of needs). The Bank contributed to the implementation of principles aimed at improving aid effectiveness in DRC under the Paris Declaration (2005).

Complementarity and Synergies

Synergies between Bank operations in DRC are not optimal and differ from sector to sector. The potential for synergy between road, agricultural and environmental projects was not exploited. Furthermore, there was no capacity building strategy that cuts across the various areas of intervention.

Leverage

Leverage effects are evident in various forms, with the outcomes varying from sector to sector. The most emblematic is the Bank’s involvement in the development and promotion of the INGA 3 project which should allow for considerable investment by public and private partners. Leverage effects can also be observed in the social and transport sectors.
Country Performance

DRC performance in its cooperation with AfDB improved during the review period, mainly with development of the capacity to define and manage sector reforms. However, several shortcomings remain, in particular: weaknesses in the statistical apparatus; deficiencies in budget execution; inadequate mobilization of counterpart funds; precipitous implementation of decentralization; shortcomings in assistance coordination; and very limited involvement of line Ministries in project monitoring.

Recommendations

The evaluation proposes four recommendations as follows:

1. Better focus the Bank’s intervention strategy in DRC on areas of comparative advantage with potential for catalytic effect on factors of fragility;

2. Improve quality at entry for Bank operations in DRC;

3. Improve the sustainability of operations through coordinated efforts at various levels, strategy formulation, preparation of interventions, and policy dialogue; and

4. Improve the monitoring/evaluation mechanisms of the Bank’s strategies and interventions in DRC.
About this Evaluation

This evaluation examines the African Development Bank’s assistance to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) over the 2004–2015 period; a period in which DRC was classified among fragile States on the harmonized lists of most international organizations. The evaluation aims to draw lessons from past performance to increase the effectiveness of the Bank’s development actions in transition countries. Between 2004 and 2015, the Bank financed 63 projects in the country worth about USD 1.62 billion.

Four successive Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) guided the Bank’s cooperation with the DRC over the period in review. The evaluation is based on data and information gathered from different sources including document reviews, key informant interviews and site visits. All areas of the Bank’s interventions in the country were covered by the evaluation. However, due to various limitations (country size, level of project implementation, data), only 18% of the Bank’s total portfolio and 4 out of the 9 sectors of the Bank’s interventions were examined in depth. The sectors are agriculture and rural development, transport, energy, and water and sanitation sectors.

Overall, this 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. The evaluation recommends that the Bank should focus on addressing factors of fragility in the country and improving the quality at entry, the sustainability, and the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of its operations in the DRC.