In 2020, while the AfDB has been impacted by the pandemic at various levels, including individual and institutional, the independent evaluation function of the Bank has demonstrated resilience, adaptability and responsiveness by continuing to deliver and remaining engaged and attentive to demands.
EVALUATION PRODUCTS DELIVERED

2 validation synthesis reports

2 project cluster evaluations
on the Bank’s support for access to finance and mainstreaming green growth and climate change into the Bank’s interventions

2 impact evaluations
of Malawi irrigation projects and a Ghana road project

2 Country Strategy and Program Evaluations
for Egypt and Mali

2 sector evaluations
of the Bank’s Private Sector Development Strategy and its support for the energy sector

4 thematic evaluations
of the African Water Facility, the Bank’s support for access to finance, the Bank’s partnerships and its loan syndication

4 corporate evaluations
of the Bank’s Fragility Strategy, its portfolio review and restructuring policy, its civil society engagement, and mainstreaming green growth and climate change into its interventions

1 evaluation synthesis
on Gender mainstreaming

First
Management Action Record System (MARS) report
IDEV has demonstrated its resilience in different ways:

1. **BY DELIVERING A RECORD 20 EVALUATION PRODUCTS**

2020 has been an exceptional year for IDEV. Despite the uncertainty from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was able to ensure business continuity and continued to deliver on its core Work Program. In fact, it exceeded its target for 2020 by delivering a **record 20 evaluation products**, including 17 evaluations, 2 validation synthesis reports and its first Management Action Record System (MARS) report, which tracks the implementation of evaluation recommendations by the Bank (see Annex 2).

Evaluation products delivered include:

**Validation Synthesis Reports**

**Synthesis Report on the Validation of 2014-2019 Expanded Supervision Reports**

An Expanded Supervision Report (XSR), undertaken as a self-evaluation, records an AfDB private sector operation’s performance when it has reached early operating maturity. IDEV independently validates a sample of XSRs each year – over the 2014-2019 period, this number was 46. This synthesis report aggregates the results of the 46 XSR validations.

The report found that monitoring for Early Operating Maturity by project type and self-evaluating all projects reaching operating maturity has not systematically taken place. Over the past decade, the Bank has been successful in internalizing the process of undertaking XSRs and improving the quality of XSRs, but not the process of selecting projects for the XSR exercise. The operations reviewed did result in positive development outcomes. The synthesis found that 34 of the 46 evaluated interventions realized positive results that, on balance, met or exceeded specified financial, economic, environmental, and social performance benchmarks and standards, i.e. an overall success rate of 74%. The overall disconnect between Management’s and IDEV’s ratings for the share of projects with positive outcome ratings is 8 percentage points. IDEV’s quality assessment rated 43 of the 46 XSRs (93.5%) as satisfactory or highly satisfactory. This compares favorably with the 2011 synthesis, in which 20% of the reports were rated unsatisfactory. Notwithstanding the overall positive rating for the quality of XSRs, there is room for improvement in the area of identifying and formulating lessons.

**Main lessons and drivers of success**

- Working with good sponsors is the most deterministic factor in overall project success.
- Good front-end work is instrumental to the assessment and achievement of targeted development results.
- Non-lending assistance is correlated with higher rates of project success.
- There is an element of innovation in the Bank’s use of instruments.
The synthesis report recommended the development of specific guidance on lessons that provides sufficient distinction between findings, lessons, and recommendations, and improves the staff’s capacity to rate project performance to reduce or close the gap between self and independent ratings.

**Synthesis Report on the Validation of 2018 Project Completion Reports**

The AfDB undertakes self-evaluations of its sovereign operations through Project Completion Reports (PCRs) prepared by the Bank’s operations departments. This report synthesizes findings from the independent validation of 65 PCRs prepared in 2018. It summarizes the key results of the 2018 PCR Evaluation Notes (PCRENs), focusing on the PCR quality; the performance of the projects, Bank and borrowers; and key lessons for improving the quality of PCRs and project results performance. The synthesis report found the quality of the 2018 PCRs to be satisfactory overall, though uneven. The percentage of PCRs with satisfactory quality increased from 59 in 2016 to 78 in 2018. The performance of the 2018 PCR projects was also found satisfactory, for the combined criteria of the relevance of project development objectives and design, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. It, however, decreased slightly from 77% in 2015 to 74% in 2018. In general, the PCRs tended to rate project performance significantly higher than the PCRENs. As points for improvement of the PCRs, the synthesis report pointed to the quality of the evidence, lessons, recommendations, M&E and compliance with the Bank’s guidelines.

**Main lessons**

- **Project preparation and design:** Integrating operations and maintenance and associated budget into project design is important for successful project implementation and results.
- **Implementation arrangements and performance:** Inadequate implementation of a project’s M&E framework can critically limit the available project information for evaluating performance and for learning from experience.
- **Institution and capacity building, and ownership:** Involvement of relevant government agencies and national civil society organizations early in the project cycle is critical for improving the sustainability of project outcomes.

**Project Cluster Evaluations**

**Evaluation of the AfDB’s Role in Increasing Access to Finance in Africa - Project Cluster Evaluation**

This project cluster evaluation, which supports a thematic evaluation (see below), examined 32 operations with an approved value of USD 3.3 billion, purposefully focused on countries where the Bank had multiple operations during the period under consideration (2011-2018). The evaluation found that access to finance remains a key constraint to private sector development and low-income populations’ economic inclusion. It also found that the high priority given to access to finance in the AfDB’s Financial Sector Development Policy and Strategy (FSDPS) and in partner countries was not reflected in the Bank’s Country Strategy.
Papers (CSPs) for the selected countries. Target groups were not sufficiently defined, and the broad intended development outcomes limited the Bank’s role in advancing access to finance for the underserved. Although the AfDB’s operations were in line with the FSDPS and relevant to their respective country contexts, the evaluation found that they tend to provide temporary solutions to financial sector development barriers rather than addressing the root causes.

**Evaluation of Mainstreaming Green Growth and Climate Change into the AfDB’s Interventions: Energy and Transport Cluster**

This project cluster evaluation is one of the six building blocks of the corporate evaluation of Mainstreaming Green Growth and Climate Change (GG-CC) into the Bank’s Interventions (see below). It assesses seven energy and transport projects in five countries: Cameroon, Morocco, Mozambique, Rwanda and Senegal, for a total value of USD 564 million. The evaluation found the relevance and effectiveness of the projects in achieving their intended GG-CC mainstreaming results (outputs and outcomes) to be satisfactory overall while their efficiency was found unsatisfactory. The evaluation noted that the AfDB has increasingly enhanced the integration of GG-CC principles into its sectoral policies and strategies, particularly in the energy sector, more so than in the transport sector. The Bank has also successfully mobilized and leveraged climate funds to finance major energy infrastructure projects. Although investments in green infrastructure have increased, particularly in renewable energy, there are still challenges faced in transitioning countries toward low-carbon development. Finally, the evaluation found that the AfDB is increasingly developing relevant knowledge products to support the integration of GG-CC in the energy and transport sectors.
Country Strategy and Program Evaluations


The evaluation covers a crucial period, namely the pre-revolution, revolution, and post-revolution periods. The Bank supported the country with 53 operations focusing on infrastructure development, macroeconomic stabilization, and inclusive growth. At close to USD 2.5 billion, Egypt’s portfolio was among the AfDB’s top five country portfolios over the period. Overall, the evaluation found that the performance of the AfDB was satisfactory, despite a volatile and challenging context. The Bank delivered a highly focused program adapted to the country’s changing needs, although it was over-ambitious given resource capacity. The Bank’s performance was found excellent in energy and water supply and sanitation, but the non-lending activities, such as technical assistance, did not progress well. Attention to crosscutting issues (gender equality, inclusiveness and green growth) has evolved at the strategic level; yet it could be better at the implementation and results reporting level. The evaluation expected that the large and positive benefits of the Bank’s support will be maintained. Factors that supported the achievement of results include good program design, policy dialogue, ownership, and leadership by the Government of Egypt. In contrast, factors that hampered the achievement of results include insufficient funds and in-country staff, challenges in the projects’ procurement process, and lengthy government project ratification processes.

The evaluation recommended the Bank to (i) strike an appropriate balance between budget support and investment operations underpinned by its comparative advantage; (ii) strengthen the balance in its program and project portfolio (increased private sector focus); (iii) enhance its role as a knowledge broker; and (iv) strengthen program delivery.

Main lessons

- A strong country ownership and relationship with the country, and flexibility in the design and delivery of Bank support, is essential when the country is undergoing rapid transition.
- Focusing and becoming deeply involved in strategic investments, institutional development and policy reform in key sectors is essential to the delivery of results over time.
- A coordinated, multi-partner approach to budget support works well, particularly when partners support common reforms, and have their own areas of focus to concentrate on.
- Linking dialogue and knowledge products to lending operations and complementing this with demand-driven policy reform support is an effective way of using non-lending resources.
Sector and thematic evaluations


The evaluation of the AfDB’s 2013-2019 PSD Strategy assessed the contribution of the Strategy to the Bank’s efficiency and effectiveness, with a view to informing the new PSD Strategy that is currently under preparation. It noted that implementation of the Strategy commenced well during the early years but momentum subsequently stalled, with the PSD Results Measurement Framework not used to monitor progress and the planned mid-term review not undertaken. The evaluation found that the application of the PSD Strategy in the Bank’s African member countries and its contribution to the achievement of the Ten-Year Strategy as well as the High 5s was highly relevant. At the same time, the Strategy had design weaknesses, and it could have defined criteria to better balance the non-sovereign operation (NSO) portfolio between operations through financial institutions and real sector operations. While the evaluation found that sovereign operations (SOs) satisfactorily supported improvements in the investment and business climate, the effectiveness of NSOs varied depending on the sector supported. Although linkages between SOs and NSOs were important, they were rare, and evident only in some case study countries. Institutional performance indicators focussed on key aspects of the Bank’s effectiveness and efficiency, but this data has not been publicly available from 2016 onwards. The Bank did not report on its SO and NSO PSD portfolio in an integrated manner. In addition, the evaluation found only a limited number of operations in the 2013-2019 approval list for which completion reports and validated completion reports were available.

The evaluation recommended to adapt the Bank’s institutional arrangements for PSD operations in order to maximize its impact in regional member countries and to strengthen linkages between its sovereign and non-sovereign operations at country/regional level. It also advised to carry out an in-depth analysis of the effect of NSOs on Small and Medium Enterprises, to increase the Bank’s PSD operations in low-income and transition countries, and to improve the quality of PSD Strategy design, management, measurement and reporting of results.

Main lessons

- Good alignment with institutional strategy is a necessary condition, but the lack of a thorough analysis of financing and capacity constraints led to lack of realism in the ambition of the PSD Strategy.
- In the absence of common guidance for designing PSD programs, there was wide variation in the customization of PSD country/regional programs and High 5 PSD priorities, with lost opportunities to maximize the benefits of combining sovereign and non-sovereign activities.
- Lack of clarity in delivery responsibilities and institutional arrangements for PSD operations generally and NSOs in particular resulted in challenges in the smooth implementation of the PSD Strategy.
- The Bank did not fully understand the balance of sectors and instruments that would best support the needs of target groups of private sector beneficiaries.
Evaluation of the AfDB’s Support to the Energy Sector in Africa

Over the 1999-2018 period, the Bank committed nearly USD 18 billion to the energy sector, implementing successive energy policies (1994 and 2012), frameworks, action plans and the New Deal on Energy for Africa (NDEA) 2016-2025. The evaluation found that while the Bank’s support to the energy sector was relevant, there were shortcomings in the design of its projects, including in long-term sector planning, risk assessment, resource allocation and tracking of progress, among others. The Bank’s support was deemed effective and sustainable, but challenges were noted in sector governance, regulatory frameworks and the affordability of services, especially for the poor. The evaluation recommended the Bank to improve the quality of NDEA management, measurement and reporting of results; to strengthen its assistance to the capacities of RMCs to formulate and implement comprehensive energy policies; to increase its support to RMCs to enhance power utilities’ performance and the financial sustainability of the power system, and to increase its funding to RMCs and the private sector for sustainable energy access.

“The Energy Sector Evaluation, covering a 20-year period, demonstrated the Bank’s impact on Africa’s energy sector but also identified areas that require attention to further increase the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Bank’s interventions. Importantly the IDEV evaluation also assessed the first years of the Bank’s New Deal on Energy for Africa (NDEA) strategy, providing clear guidance on how the NDEA can be adjusted to the market realities.”

Daniel Schroth, Acting Director, Department of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, AfDB

The evaluation covered 118 interventions in 52 countries for a total volume of approximately USD 195 million approved by the African Water Facility (AWF), a multilateral Special Fund that provides grants and technical assistance to enable governments, non-governmental organizations and private-public partnerships to address the increasing investment need for the development and management of water resources in Africa. The evaluation found the AWF to be a highly relevant instrument and one of the few water-related actors that operate at the African continental scale to support project preparation, which enables further co-production and co-financing of projects with a range of development partners and actors. The AWF’s focus on “soft” development aspects, such as project preparation, innovation, and policy development, was found to have added a unique value to addressing the continent’s water and sanitation challenges. The development effectiveness of the AWF was deemed satisfactory overall, although there is an indication of a decline in recent years due to shifting strategic priorities. The AWF has been effective in enabling African countries to introduce innovative models for managing national water resources.

Main recommendations

- Be more flexible, nimble and efficient, to maintain the AWF’s comparative advantage and fulfill its mandate, in collaboration with the AfDB.
- Improve the results reporting and communication of the AWF (about the AWF as a Facility, its operations, and achievements) to its range of stakeholders.
- Adopt concrete measures to improve its operational efficiency for optimal delivery on its mandates.
- Engage more with decision-makers and continue to market itself to donors to renew their participation and engagement, thereby increasing its financing.

“IDEV’s evaluation of the African Water Facility presented a positive picture of the Facility’s results and impacts and rated it as a highly relevant instrument in supporting African countries in addressing water sector challenges. It also identified areas of improvement, such as incorporating cross-cutting issues, especially gender as well as climate change, environmental and social equity into project design. The evaluation was very timely and has been a critical tool for engaging with the Facility’s partners, strengthening resource mobilization efforts, and informing AWF’s new strategic plan”.

Wambui Gichuri, Acting Vice-President, Agriculture, Human and Social Development/Director, Water and Sanitation Department, AfDB
Evaluation of the AfDB’s Role in Increasing Access to Finance in Africa

This thematic evaluation, which was informed by the aforementioned cluster evaluation, examined the spectrum of 226 interventions approved by the Bank in support of Financial Sector Development (FSD) over the 2011-2018 period, for a total value of USD 13 billion. It found that recent developments in the financial sector require attention in developing a new FSDPS. In addition, the FSDPS’s hybrid nature (combining both a policy and a strategy) posed its own challenges: while the document reflected a state-of-the-art in financial sector knowledge, there was limited clarity on the relationship between the policy and the strategy, and the definitions of the concepts used. Despite increased internal capacity to deliver, the evaluation found weak coordination of FSD activities across the AfDB.

In terms of operational performance, the Bank’s operations were found to be in line with the FSDPS’s objectives and relevant to their respective client and country contexts, but the majority did not necessarily serve the underserved. Operations also did not seem to form part of a coherent Bank strategy toward FSD. While the operations were found effective in providing resources and services otherwise unavailable to client financial institutions, it was not feasible to track and measure development outcomes for end-beneficiaries. Although about half of the Bank’s FSD operations were found to be efficient in terms of respect of time, overall efficiency was deemed only partially satisfactory due to inefficient communication, the lack of an automated procurement system, and clients’ complaints of overly prolonged processes.

Main recommendations

- The role of the Bank in FSD should be clarified by focusing more on the Bank’s strategic priorities, conducting sector diagnostics that identify barriers to access to finance at the country and regional levels, and being more explicit on how operations contribute to FSD;
- Position the AfDB as a key player in FSD, by stepping up the Bank’s engagement in policy and regulatory dialogue, formalizing the coordination of the Bank departments involved in financial sector activities, improving outreach and deepening relationships with sector stakeholders, and increasing the resources for operations aimed at fostering regional financial integration;
- The Bank should improve the benefits for the intended target groups by better defining and measuring the project development outcomes and benefits for target groups, building on effective approaches to support SME finance, moving from a pipeline to a portfolio approach, and using a more deliberate approach to narrow the gender gap in access to finance.

“We particularly appreciated IDEV’s constructive approach to the Evaluation of the Bank’s Role in Improving Access to Finance in Africa. Their willingness to engage meant that we had robust discussions about what was working well and areas where we need to refine our approach. The valuable lessons and recommendations in the report will inform and enrich the development of the 2021-2025 Financial Sector Development Strategy, and thus shape the Bank’s engagement in the financial sector for years to come”.

Stefan Nalletamby, Director, Financial Sector Development Department, AfDB
Evaluation of the Partnerships of the AfDB

The AfDB’s Ten-Year Strategy considers effective partnerships as one of the key approaches through which the Bank would deliver its development objectives. This evaluation assessed the Bank’s approach to and management of development partnerships over the period 2008–2019, examining 75 active partnerships and the Bank’s partnership ecosystem. It found that despite the Bank not having developed a specific partnership and resource mobilization strategy, its partnerships aligned with its strategies and were consistent with international development agendas and continental initiatives. Overall, the Bank was found to have been effective in using its various development partnerships to mobilize additional resources and deliver better results through the operations funded by these partnerships, but it did not manage its partnerships optimally to ensure results delivery using the most cost-efficient/effective means. However, the partnerships were generally found to be sustainable.

The evaluation recommended the Bank to: (i) define and set out the strategic directions for partnerships and resource mobilization, clarifying priorities and ensuring coherence; (ii) review the current partnerships framework and institutional arrangements with a view to achieving strong coordination, greater efficiency and better results; and (iii) provide adequate resources, KPIs and incentives for the management of partnerships.

Main lessons

- A more precise definition of strategic direction contributes to the successful mainstreaming of partnerships.
- Clarification of roles and coordination from Senior Management are essential to achieve efficiency.
- Formalized and mainstreamed partnerships are likely to be more successful.
- Dedicated resources are an essential contributing factor to the success of partnerships.
- Investing in adequate systems is expected to have a cross-cutting impact for partnerships and more Trust Funds.
- Effective M&E, transparency, and accountability promote strong alliances.

Evaluation of Loan Syndication at the AfDB

Loan syndication and distribution is the process of involving a group of lenders in funding various portions of a loan for a single borrower, to spread the risk of financing a project. The evaluation assessed the performance of the Bank in mobilizing resources from the private sector through loan syndication over the period 2008–2019.

The evaluation found that the Bank’s approach to syndicating loans was relevant, while its effectiveness and efficiency were unsatisfactory. Syndicated loans have been identified as an appropriate instrument to boost resource mobilization from the private sector and increase the Bank’s leverage in various sectors, mainly infrastructure. The Bank’s syndication program was considered a useful and adequate instrument that fits both the needs of the Bank’s clients, regional member countries and potential investors. The implementation of syndication and the achievement of results thereof, however, did not meet expectations, mainly due to the low level of mobilization and the limited number of deals that the Bank led and brought to financial closure over the decade. The efficiency of the syndication function

2 At the time of writing, the evaluation has not been presented to CODE yet. The recommendations will only be final following CODE’s endorsement.
was hampered by multiple implementation challenges, among which weaknesses in internal coordination and the inadequacy of the incentives in place, notably Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and staff capacity.

The evaluation recommended to develop a five-year strategic framework to establish syndication as a cost-covering and revenue-generating business function, with a sharper focus on business development. It also recommended to strengthen the syndication processes and delegation of authority in line with the One Bank Approach as well as to improve innovation, reporting, and learning of co-financing and syndication.

Main lessons

- Deals are likely to be more successful and closed relatively faster when processes are efficient.
- Reducing the average size of syndicated deals could increase the Bank’s activity.
- Coordination and cooperation between investment officers and syndication experts, as well as building a strong network of lenders, are essential factors for success.
- Adequate delegation of authority empowers investment officers and syndication experts to close deals.
- Concentration could boost syndicated loan performance and the Bank’s additionality.

Corporate evaluations


The evaluation assessed the relevance of the AfDB’s Fragility Strategy 2014-2019, the efficiency of its implementation by the Bank and its effectiveness in term of results. It covered the Bank’s assistance to Low-Income Countries eligible for the African Development Fund (ADF) and featured permanently or temporarily on the Bank’s lists of Transition States (TS) during the 2014-2019 period. During this period, the AfDB approved 354 operations for 22 TS, representing a total amount of USD 6.48 billion. Overall, the Bank’s Strategy was found relevant to meet the specific needs of TS, although it was more focused on responsiveness than prevention. The Bank was able to mobilize various financing instruments, including NSOs, to support TS in a context of continued decline in ADF resources. The evaluation found progress in the Bank adapting its policies, rules and procedures to situations of fragility. However, more could be achieved with greater Bank-wide ownership of the Strategy. The Bank was found to have shown flexibility and responsiveness to countries’ changing contexts and needs, but no selectivity. Also, despite Bank efforts, the positive results achieved are too modest to reverse the dynamics that drive fragility. The timeliness of the Strategy’s implementation was found to be unsatisfactory. Only budget support operations were implemented in a highly satisfactory manner. The sustainability of the outcomes was deemed unsatisfactory mainly due to the challenging environment in TS, financial constraints and institutional weaknesses.

At the time of writing, the evaluation has not been presented to CODE yet. The recommendations will only be final following CODE’s endorsement.

Countries where the main development challenge is fragility
The main recommendations emerging from this evaluation include revising the Strategy to make prevention one of its principles of engagement and strengthen its overall relevance; creating conditions to better mainstream cross cutting issues into the Bank’s strategies and operations in TS; and focusing on an integrated approach (strong synergy) for investment projects and a structural approach to capacity building.

Main lessons

- To remain relevant, a fragility strategy must be flexible, with mid-term reviews that are held on time, to allow it to adjust and consider the evolution of the rapidly changing context.
- In a context of continuous decline in highly concessional resources, early and preventive intervention targeting identified pockets of fragility will ultimately make it possible to be more effective and to preserve resources for concrete development actions.
- Having a partnership framework with other technical and financial partners, civil society organizations or private sector actors who have a comparative advantage over the Bank in certain situations, makes it possible to maximize the development impact of Bank interventions in any circumstance.
Evaluation of Mainstreaming Green Growth and Climate Change into the AfDB’s Interventions

This corporate evaluation assessed the mainstreaming of Green Growth and Climate Change (GG-CC) into the AfDB’s policies, strategies, tools and operations approved between 2008 and 2018. The transition to green growth is one of two overarching objectives of the AfDB’s Ten-Year Strategy 2013–2022, and an integral part of the Bank’s GG efforts is building resilience to climate change impacts.

The evaluation found that the results of GG-CC mainstreaming activities were increasingly evident after the Bank’s approval of key policy and strategy documents such as the ‘Transitioning Towards Green Growth’ framework (2014) following the Bank’s Ten-Year Strategy, and the “High 5s” (2015). The Bank did well in mainstreaming GG-CC in its policies, strategies and operations during design, but GG-CC references in country and regional strategies, sectoral policies, programs and projects were deemed to have been implemented in a limited way. Attention to measures that consider GG-CC were found to dissipate during project implementation, mainly due to capacity constraints at the country level. From the Bank’s portfolio of 873 projects that were identified as mainstreaming GG-CC, 20 projects were selected for in-depth analysis. While the relevance of these projects was found satisfactory, their effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability were deemed unsatisfactory. The evaluation recommended to establish a clear theory of change and put in place adequate mechanisms to monitor and track GG-CC results throughout the project cycle.

Main lessons

- Where specialized GG-CC units are located higher in a multilateral development bank’s structure, GG-CC results are better achieved.
- An increased role, capability and GG-CC expertise in Regional and Country Offices tends to enhance the performance of projects and non-lending interventions in the area of GG-CC.
- Monitoring and measuring of the Bank’s achievement of GG-CC results are essential in ensuring that its intentions and its approved intervention designs that mainstream GG-CC are being implemented.

Evaluation of the AfDB’s Portfolio Review and Restructuring Policy

This evaluation was undertaken to inform the revision of the AfDB’s Portfolio Review and Restructuring Policy and its implementation guidelines. It found that the Country Portfolio Performance Reviews (CPRs) are relevant as a dialogue tool to assist member countries in meeting current Bank obligations, but only marginally relevant in addressing constraints to achieving the development objectives of projects or the portfolio as a whole. In addition, many of the portfolio review processes did not take advantage of the country knowledge and client relationships built by staff in the Bank’s Country Offices. The current CPR guidelines were found to focus on processes rather than results, and do not articulate how the CPR would complement and reinforce project supervision. The evaluation also found that CPRs succeeded in aggregating findings and information from implementation progress reports, but have not been an effective tool for rectifying the consequences of weak project design and poor project supervision.
The evaluation recommended to refocus the CPR on the analysis of portfolio problems, with a view to problem-solving and promoting progress towards a country's development results, and to systematize and enhance support to Country Offices in the management of their country portfolio by clarifying the role of implementation support managers and improving coordination and cross-fertilization.

Main lessons

- Designing a policy instrument with too many objectives and multiple target audiences risks a loss of focus and effectiveness.
- Defining clear and simple processes and providing incentives to contribute to development results can improve the usefulness and effectiveness of the portfolio management and restructuring policy / guideline.
- A well-designed, results-oriented Country Portfolio Improvement Plan has the potential of becoming an effective tool for portfolio dialogue and monitoring.
- Institutionalizing a culture of quality and results can make an important contribution to project success.

Evaluation of the AfDB’s Engagement with Civil Society

This evaluation assessed the Bank’s engagement with Civil Society at the corporate, regional member country and project levels over the period 2012-2019, to enhance the Bank's approach and inform the development of a new Bank strategy on Civil Society Engagement (CSE). It found a lack of clarity and understanding around what the Bank aims to achieve with CSE. The lack of an M&E framework has also hampered monitoring, learning and knowledge management of CSE experiences. The evaluation found progress with respect to disclosure and access to information at the corporate level, but communication remains largely one-way, from the Bank to CSOs. The CSO Forum has been the most sustained example of corporate level dialogue. Internal and external collaborations and partnerships were found to be a substantial driver in enhancing meaningful CSE by the AfDB. However, the Bank’s strategic and convening positioning has not fully reflected CSE in the design of the Bank’s strategies and priorities, and its dialogues at the regional member country level. The evaluation’s recommendations include enhancing awareness and common understanding of the purpose and potential value-added of CSE to the Bank’s mandate as well as strengthening the resourcing approach for effective implementation of CSE. The evaluation also recommended to strengthen CSE in policy dialogue at the country and regional levels to contribute to the Bank’s agenda of inclusive growth and good governance.

Main lessons

- Inadequate internal awareness limited the use of existing Bank mechanisms and institutional structures aimed at enhancing CSE. This in turn hindered the achievement of the desired outcomes.
- Lessons from the Bank and development partners point toward the potential usefulness of a credible and reliable accreditation system for Africa-based CSOs to enhance selectivity and mitigate reputational and operational risks for Bank staff in partnering with civil society.
- Conducting country- or region-specific mapping of civil society in line with the Bank’s mandate and development priorities would help to contextualize the Bank’s CSE and foster an enabling environment for CSOs.
When civil society engages with the Bank, the Bank implements and probably takes into consideration a lot of civil society inputs. This is why it is very important to have feedback mechanisms and to close the feedback loop. It is also very important that the voices of civil society feed into the processes of evaluation. Our perspectives and our insights are used to improve the programming cycle through receiving our views on how things have gone. This evaluation is a very critical step and is very important in closing the perception gaps and the participation gaps”.

Laura Nyirinkindi, East African CSO Representative on the 2018-2020 Bank-Civil Society Committee

Evaluation synthesis on Gender Mainstreaming at the AfDB

The evaluation synthesis covered the period 2010-2018. It was a follow-up to the previous synthesis of gender mainstreaming undertaken by IDEV in 2012, and intended to inform the development of the Bank’s new Gender Strategy for the period 2021-2025. The evaluation exercise examined the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, catalytic effect and sustainability of the Bank’s gender mainstreaming approaches, mechanisms and results in light of institutional, regional and global priorities for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Africa. As part of the evaluation, a synthesis of evaluative evidence from 12 comparator institutions was conducted, and a number of good practices and lessons identified for the AfDB.

The report offered several points for consideration in developing the AfDB’s new gender strategy, inter alia: (i) mapping the pillars and interventions in the Gender Strategy to the AfDB’s Ten-Year Strategy, its High 5 priorities and the SDGs, as well as to internal corporate policies and processes, would enhance the usefulness of the strategy in the Bank; (ii) the new gender strategy should maintain the structure of the former gender strategy, with both internal and external components and a more streamlined and sharper focus; and (iii) co-development of the new gender strategy is critical to increase internal and external buy-in.

Main lessons

- Building on existing strengths and comparative advantages, while applying a sharper scope, would help the AfDB to mitigate weaknesses and better leverage its mandate.
- The Bank can strategically leverage the processes in its development and business delivery model and align with regional and global priorities by visibly and strategically linking the Bank’s gender agenda to the SDGs. This would also enhance framing and optimal accountability at the RMC level.
- A clear senior management commitment to the gender agenda at the corporate and sectoral levels should be supported by an internal accountability system, adequate resourcing and visibility of the agenda.
- All entry points for gender mainstreaming in the AfDB project cycle need to be strategically used for maximum impact.
IDEV’s evaluation synthesis was influential in shaping the Bank’s new Gender Strategy, approved at the end of 2020, thanks to strong engagement with the evaluation users throughout the evaluation process, and a dedicated capitalization workshop upon its completion.

“The IDEV evaluation synthesis on gender mainstreaming was very instrumental in the development of the Bank’s new Gender Strategy, ensuring it is anchored on lessons learned, best regional and international practices, as well as the Bank’s comparative advantage”.

Vanessa M. Moungar, Director, Gender, Women and Civil Society Department, AfDB

MARS Report tracking the follow-up of evaluation recommendations

In 2020, IDEV published its first yearly report assessing the follow-up by the AfDB of recommendations from its independent evaluations, which are tracked through the Management Action Record System (MARS – see Annex 4). The assessment considered the evaluation recommendations with all their actions due by December 2018, which represents 198 recommendations from 36 evaluations, with 304 sub-recommendations and 587 actions. The IDEV report found the level of adoption of recommendations, which considers the alignment of the AfDB Management actions to evaluation recommendations as well as the timeliness of their implementation, to be low. The analyzed Management action plans were highly aligned (84%) with the agreed evaluation recommendations. Most of the action plans (77%) have also been implemented, but generally with significant delays (on average, more than 18 months). Since Level of Adoption measures the extent of both alignment and timely implementation, and implementation scores lower, this drives the rating for adoption. Timeliness was found to have been the main challenge in the implementation of action plans.

The report recommended that Bank Management should strengthen a culture of results and accountability by i) continuing to track the implementation of the actions it agreed to take in response to IDEV’s evaluation recommendations, and ii) holding Departments accountable for the timely implementation of these actions, including through the use of Key Performance Indicators. It also advised Management to record more systematically within MARS the evidence on the implementation of the actions it has taken to address IDEV’s recommendations, and for IDEV and Management to work together to improve the quality of evaluation recommendations and ensure the number of recommendations made by IDEV remains manageable. Following the presentation of the report, 116 of the 198 assessed recommendations were retired because they have been implemented or were no longer relevant.
2. BY HAVING AN IMPACT ON NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS IN REGIONAL MEMBER COUNTRIES

The influence of IDEV’s evaluations went well beyond the AfDB, to reach national stakeholders in regional member countries also.

Impact evaluation of the AfDB-supported small-scale irrigation projects in Malawi

The development impact of two irrigation infrastructure projects in Malawi of USD 21 million each, completed in 2014 and 2017, was evaluated. These were the 2006-2014 Smallholder Crop Production and Marketing Project, covering 13 districts across the nation, and the 2009-2017 Agriculture Infrastructure Services Project, which covered seven districts in Southern Malawi. The evaluation found that the irrigation projects had a positive impact on crop productivity and crop diversity, including a substantial revenue increase of participating farmers, but crop intensity did not change as expected. Despite improved food security there where effective local leadership and markets existed, and reductions in poverty, no evidence of impact on child nutrition was found. A small, unexpected negative impact on
health was also indicated, and the evaluation found differentiated effects on female- vs. male-headed households. The evaluation recommended the Bank to support capacity and governance systems of local institutions, to enhance agricultural market access and to engage in knowledge work and policy dialogue.

In collaboration with the relevant sector departments and the Bank’s office in Malawi, two webinars were organized, for the AfDB staff and Malawian government officials, to share and discuss the evaluation findings and recommendations. The Malawian Government stated its intention to make good use of the lessons from the evaluation. To address flaws in project design, for example, it has strengthened its capacity to undertake a better review of designs, by various ministries working together with local authorities. It is also applying higher standards of work and greater quality assurance. Finally, a taskforce composed of different departments is examining the issue of unutilized infrastructure in all irrigation schemes.

Main lessons

- Inadequate attention to the capacity and governance systems of local institutions undermines achievement of sustainable outcomes from irrigation development.
- Building market infrastructure is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to create markets for farmers.
- Technical quality of the construction designs of irrigation schemes should be ensured to enhance the effectiveness of the projects’ outcomes.
- Empowering women to participate in irrigated farming can improve ultimate development outcomes, i.e., poverty reduction and household welfare.

"The AfDB IDEV Report provided us with a critical third eye view whose recommendations will certainly lead to improved planning, design, implementation and sustained attainment of irrigation's broader impacts such as increased income levels, enhanced food security, nutrition and health for our farmers, their dependents and consumers at various spatial and time scales”.

Geoffrey C. Mamba, Director of Irrigation Services, Department of Irrigation, Ministry of Agriculture, Malawi

Impact Evaluation of the AfDB-Funded Ghana Fufulso-Sawla Road Project

The Ghana Fufulso-Sawla Road Project stands out as a flagship in terms of its inclusive and integrated design, which provides a holistic response to the socio-economic needs of the beneficiary districts by not only constructing a 147.5km road but also ancillary works including a hospital, health centers, education facilities, a water treatment plant and market centers, for a total sum of USD 156 million. Overall, the evaluation found a positive impact of the project on improved transportation conditions in beneficiary communities, on household
incomes, health and education outcomes, and poverty reduction; and the intervention benefited women and girls specifically, albeit to a lesser degree than men. However, these positive development outcomes were highly unlikely to be sustained due to deficiencies in design, capacity, maintenance, and community engagement and ownership. The evaluation recommended the AfDB to enhance its integrated approach to its road investments to foster development impact in terms of poverty reduction, to improve the quality of road projects’ design and results focus, and to strengthen the human and institutional capacity to sustain development gains.

The evaluation made good use of data provided by Ghana Statistical Services. Two learning events, one internal (for staff) and one external (including the Ghana national stakeholders) are planned to share and discuss the evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations.

“Before the road, armed robbery activity was high, especially during the rainy season, as the bad nature of the road slowed down the movement of cars. But this has reduced significantly as a result of the road.”

An official at the Central Gonja District Assembly, Ghana

Main lessons

• Integrating community development interventions into road transport infrastructure brings an added value to, and fast tracks, the AfDB’s poverty reduction, job creation, and inclusive development efforts.

• Participation and collaboration among stakeholders are key to the sustainability of integrated road interventions similar to the Fufulso-Sawla Road Project, as they can amplify or jeopardize a project’s impact.

• Coupling road projects with community development interventions can increase the likelihood of benefits accruing to women and girls.

“IDEV’s Impact Evaluation of the Fufulso-Sawla Road Project is insightful in that it has yielded many useful findings and lessons learned. Given the multifaceted dimensions of poverty on the African continent, the findings of the evaluation are invaluable in demonstrating the benefits of implementing comprehensive and integrated interventions. The evaluation provided robust evidence that the integrated approach resulted in an amplification of the project’s impact and generated synergies that accelerated development. The report has therefore provided a blueprint for Board consideration in the review and approval of similar road transport infrastructure projects on the continent.”

Kenyeh Barlay, Executive Director representing the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan, AfDB

The evaluation assessed the AfDB’s support to Mali over three CSP periods. It covered 109 AfDB interventions with a total value of nearly USD 1.4 billion. It found that the performance of the Bank’s strategy and program in Mali was satisfactory in terms of relevance, sustainability, efficiency, and consideration of crosscutting aspects (such as gender, environment, and youth), but unsatisfactory in terms of effectiveness, impact, institutional performance, and addressing fragility by building resilience. Challenges were faced in lengthy legal procedures and administrative red tape; inadequate capacity in terms of expertise and staffing; poor quality at entry of projects; frequent change of project officers at the AfDB; low understanding of the AfDB’s disbursement procedures by service providers; and the difficult operating context characterized by fragility and insecurity. Among others, the evaluation recommended to (i) increase the AfDB’s impact on the country’s development, through a greater private sector share in the operations portfolio and a larger Bank contribution to knowledge; (ii) enhance engagement by the Country Office with different categories of development partners in Mali, including developing and implementing a communication and civil society involvement plan; and (iii) improve the AfDB’s performance in the implementation of operations.

To help ensure the quality and usefulness of the evaluation, representatives from four Malian government ministries as well as Malian civil society took part in the Evaluation Reference Group. As part of efforts to promote usage of the evaluation by national stakeholders, the evaluation team held a meeting to share and discuss the preliminary findings of the evaluation. The AfDB’s Country Office in Mali and the team preparing the next CSP for Mali (2020-2024) are taking into account the evaluation’s findings, lessons and recommendations.

Main lessons

- In the configuration of Bank assistance, it is possible to maintain selectivity while showing the necessary flexibility to a country’s changing needs.
- The Bank can achieve substantial and tangible outcomes, even in difficult contexts, by developing strategies and operations in a participatory manner with the government and civil society; developing projects in synergy with other technical and financial partners; establishing clear results frameworks on the basis of which results can be monitored and measured; adopting more flexible approaches in situations of fragility; and responding quickly to emergencies.
- Effective collaboration between the Bank and other development partners is essential in Mali, among others to build the capacity of the private sector and civil society in addition to that of the State.

“

The Independent Evaluation of the AfDB’s intervention in Mali has enabled us to fully understand our actions on the ground. It highlights our strengths and weaknesses while exploring future directions to increase our impact on the country’s development.”

Maimouna Ndoye Seck, Executive Director for Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Gabon, Mali, Niger and Senegal, AfDB
3. BY CONTINUING TO DELIVER KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND TO ORGANIZE KNOWLEDGE EVENTS

Leveraging knowledge from completed evaluations and meaningfully applying it in operational processes is critical to encouraging positive change in development organizations. Evaluation is not an end itself, but a means to improve the relevance, quality, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Bank’s interventions. For this to happen, knowledge must be disseminated in ways that speak to the intended users. In 2020, IDEV continued to produce, publish and disseminate knowledge products such as briefs, highlights and technical background reports for each completed evaluation. In addition, to further ensure that its evaluations will be used, IDEV (co-)organized eight (virtual) knowledge events to capitalize on the findings, lessons and recommendations from various evaluations.

The first event of the year was a capitalization workshop on the evaluation synthesis of gender mainstreaming at the Bank. This was followed by a virtual learning event, organized together with the Bank’s departments for Agriculture & Agro-industry, Agricultural Finance & Rural Development, and Water & Sanitation, focusing on how to turn lessons and recommendations from IDEV water sector evaluations into action in water & sanitation and agricultural water management strategies and operations. On the same topic, after the presentation of its impact evaluation of two AfDB-supported small-scale irrigation projects in Malawi, IDEV and the Bank’s Country Office in Lilongwe organized one webinar for Bank staff and one for Government officials to provide a better understanding of the factors that affect the development outcomes of irrigation projects and the opportunities to incorporate the evaluation lessons and recommendations into the design of future Bank irrigation interventions. At the end of the year, IDEV teamed up with the Bank’s Strategies and Policies Department for a discussion webinar on the Bank Group’s Policy and Guidelines on Portfolio Review and Restructuring, which are being revised on the basis of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

Quality is one of the three key principles underpinning the One Bank vision. To improve the quality of the Bank’s Project Completion Reports and help the Bank draw lessons from the IDEV validations of the 2016 and 2017 PCRs that can inform future operations, a workshop on PCR quality organized by IDEV together with the Bank’s Quality Assurance Division saw more than 300 Bank participants. A set of issues were raised that need to be addressed to improve PCRs, relating not only to the PCR format and guidance, but also to resources and processes, as well as training and additional M&E support. Another major theme was the incentives to invest in quality project completion reporting.
In 2020, Evaluation Matters, IDEV’s quarterly magazine dedicated to perspectives and insights on evaluation and development issues, covered topics such as promoting an evaluation culture, the use of big data and modern technologies in evaluation, and the Bank’s Development Evaluation Week.

“Ultimately, it is the quality of our operations that determines the Bank’s development impact”.

Delivering as “One Bank” document
4. BY ORGANIZING A VIRTUAL EVALUATION WEEK

From 2 to 4 December 2020, the fourth edition of the AfDB Development Evaluation Week took place under the theme “From Learning to Transformational Change in Africa: Accelerating Africa’s delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Decade of Action.” Given the pandemic, the Evaluation Week 2020 was a fully virtual event. It consisted of six online sessions over three days, focused on how effective learning from evaluation is linked to the delivery of sustainable development results, against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The event was opened by AfDB Acting Senior Vice President Swazi Tshabalala and AfDB Acting Evaluator General Karen Rot-Münstermann. It was attended by both internal and external stakeholders. The key speakers included Peter Van Rooij, Deputy Regional Director for Africa at the International Labour Organization (ILO), who gave a keynote address on institutional learning. The event attracted more than 600 participants from all over the world.

More than 600 participants from all over the world
Six key lessons from the 2020 Evaluation Week

1. The quality of operations’ design and preparation is an important determinant of the smoothness of their implementation and their achievement of development results.

2. The case of Uganda demonstrates that a country’s commitment to putting in place mechanisms for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals is a crucial step in reaching them.

3. An organization that is open to learning, from evaluation and other evidence, is more likely to achieve transformational development results that contribute to the attainment of the SDGs.

4. However, to be open to learning, there needs to be a culture in the organization, propagated from the top, that it is acceptable to make mistakes.

5. Evaluation must be useful to the organization and should be seen as a benefit, rather than a necessary evil.

6. Evaluations should be relevant and responsive to knowledge needs. Evaluations only have value if they are used and have an impact, if they lead to improvements.

“
What is often called a lesson learned is rather a mistake repeated when you scratch the surface.”

Peter Van Rooij, Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for Africa, International Labor Organization

“The success of the Development Evaluation Week is a testament to the importance that the Bank attributes to learning from evaluation”.

Swazi Tshabalala, Acting Senior Vice-President, AfDB

“We work in the development sphere so we need to take risk. We should be willing to fail by taking risk. But where we can’t fail is in learning from our failures and experiences”.

James Scriven, CEO, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Invest
5. BY CONTINUING TO PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE AFDB AND ON THE CONTINENT

In 2020, IDEV continued to support evaluation capacity development in the Bank and throughout the African continent on both the supply and demand side. IDEV organized five trainings and learning events on evaluation for its staff, and several webinars that were open to a wider audience.

In times of crisis, policy-makers need quick assessments of policies, programs, strategies or functional delivery, with performance data and recommendations for improvements. A webinar on rapid evaluation was organized for IDEV staff to acquaint them with this evaluation tool. In addition, with just 10 years left to deliver the SDGs, IDEV’s contribution to the final push included facilitating a webinar as part the gLOCAL Evaluation Week on the UN 2030 Agenda & its SDGs, where African parliamentarians shared their experience of tracking progress on the SDGs. Other training and webinar topics included remote data collection techniques, change management and rigorous impact evaluation.

IDEV continued to support evaluation capacity development on the continent through Twende Mbele, a peer-learning partnership on M&E among African governments (participating countries include: Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Uganda, and South Africa). It also continued to host the Secretariat of the African Parliamentarians’ Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE), and organized two webinars with APNODE National Chapters (see Annex 3) to promote knowledge exchange and learning among parliamentarians. Furthermore, it continued to pursue partnerships to build capacity and promote a culture of evaluation, with organizations such as EvalPartners, CLEAR, UNDP, and UN Women. Finally, IDEV contributed to the newly launched Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI), an inclusive partnership responding to the global demand for better M&E.

IDEV remained an active member of the international evaluation community, contributing to discussions spearheaded by the OECD/DAC Evaluation Network on the implementation of the revised international evaluation criteria, and to various working groups of the Evaluation Cooperation Group, among others.

**Evaluation Capacity Development events**

- **Training on Effective Writing**
- **Webinar on Rapid Evaluation**
- **Webinar on the UN 2030 Agenda and its SDGs (as part of the gLOCAL evaluation week)**
- **Training on Change Management**
- **Webinar with APNODE Cameroon on good evaluation practices for effective decision-making**
- **Webinar with APNODE Zimbabwe on drivers promoting the use of evaluation for public policy**
ADAPTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

1. ADAPTABILITY TO THE CRISIS CONTEXT

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, IDEV has faced several challenges in conducting empirical data collection and site visits for its evaluations. Local and international travel restrictions resulted in limited access to governments, beneficiaries, and partners, and hindered IDEV evaluation teams’ ability to conduct face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders. At the same time, the Bank moved all staff to working from home, thus stopping physical meetings of evaluation teams and Evaluation Reference Groups. In this environment, IDEV staff had to be creative and innovative in doing their work, and make maximum use of the resources at their disposal. To address these challenges while continuing to implement its work program, IDEV employed alternatives to the classical in-person methods of evaluation data collection, including virtual and online communication tools to interact with internal and external stakeholders and Evaluation Reference Groups. It also hired local consultants for local data collection. Where feasible, new sources of evidence such as “big data” and geo-spatial data sets were also considered and applied.

For example, in the evaluation of the Gabon country strategy and program, which started in January 2020, the COVID-19 restrictions came into force just as the inception report was being finalized. Given that a field mission from Abidjan was no longer possible, the evaluation team developed an alternative plan for data collection and incorporated it into the inception report that was agreed by other main stakeholders: the consultant, the Bank’s Country Office in Libreville, and the Government of Gabon. Meetings were held virtually, by means that were convenient to participants. In the end, the data collection took twice as long as usual, but the team managed to collect all necessary data for a robust and credible evaluation.

“In the context of COVID-19, with travel restrictions, we had to be innovative and flexible. For the Gabon CSPE, our team was able to adapt the initial methodology by developing an alternative approach composed of a combination of remote interviews and site visits by local consultants, complemented by secondary data”.

Samson Houetohossou, Evaluation Officer, IDEV
Gabon country strategy and program evaluation: Success factors for alternative data collection

- Technology: the quality of the internet connection, exploring the possibility of using different virtual meeting applications such as Zoom, MS Teams, Skype, etc.
- Buy-in and readiness (following much preparatory work): readiness of the evaluation team (including level of experience of the consultant), support from the Country Team and agreement of Government officials.
- Coordination, flexibility, learning from experience, and staying calm.

Alternative data collection tools for evaluations

- Dig existing data sources deeper or explore new ones
  - Bank Data Portal
  - National Statistical Office Data
  - Satellite & GIS Datasets: NOAA, GEMS
  - International DataSets: DHS, MICS

- Try remote strategies to data collection
  - Social Networks
  - Remote Sensing (satellite or laser imaging) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
  - Drone Imaging
  - Interpersonal Surveys
  - Online or web surveys
    - Mobile phone and Personal Computer
  - Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI)
  - Interactive Voice Response (IVR)
  - Self-Administered Questionnaires (SAQ)
  - Recruitment of National Consultants
  - Short Message Service (SMS)
  - Singular Sitting or Modular Design
For the impact evaluation of the Last Mile Connectivity Project in Kenya, IDEV used satellite imagery data to capture changes in access to electricity in 180 transformer communities across six Counties. The high resolution of the images allowed the team to analyze the quality of housing, a key indicator of wealth. The evaluation also used a publicly available population distribution mapping of Kenya to randomly select the households for the treatment and control groups. This approach supported the impact evaluation method of Spatial Regression Discontinuity Design.

**Key lessons on satellite data collection from the evaluation of the Last Mile Connectivity Project**

- Spatial datasets can be used in the design of evaluations. However, the evaluator should be intentional about their use and the ability of the evaluation team to use the technology.
- Spatial datasets are of varying resolution depending on whether or not they are publicly available.
- While spatial data is useful, its contribution is complementary, as an additional line of evidence, and for validating other sources of data (i.e., quality of housing).
In adapting its working methods, IDEV relied strongly on the support and collaboration of stakeholders such as Bank Country Offices, Government officials, members of Evaluation Reference Groups and AfDB Management, who after a certain adjustment period also proved resilient and determined to continue the Bank’s work despite the circumstances.

2. RESPONSIVENESS TO NEW NEEDS AND REQUESTS

In 2020, there was a strong demand from the Bank’s Board of Directors and Management for evaluative knowledge, in particular lessons from past experience, to inform new initiatives. To help the Bank respond more effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic, IDEV launched a dedicated microsite with relevant and actionable knowledge resources. The site includes two IDEV knowledge products developed specifically to support the Bank’s response to COVID-19. The first provides a set of seven key lessons drawn from the Bank’s response to the Ebola outbreak in 2014, while the second presents findings and lessons from the Bank’s budget support instrument for countries experiencing a crisis. The microsite also includes links to other relevant internal and external evaluative knowledge.

IDEV also joined several knowledge partnerships in response to COVID-19. For example, it partnered with the Independent Evaluation Department at the Asian Development Bank on two initiatives: a knowledge product called Responding to the Novel Coronavirus Crisis – 13 Lessons from Evaluation and Evaluation HEAD-lines, an interview series featuring conversations with the heads of independent evaluation functions to understand how they are adapting their evaluations to remain relevant during the COVID-19 crisis.

In May, IDEV proposed to CODE an update to its 2020 work program to incorporate two evaluations that had been requested as part of the agreement on the Bank’s seventh General Capital Increase, namely an evaluation of the Bank’s Additionality and Development Outcome Framework (to replace the planned evaluation of the Bank’s guarantee instruments) and an evaluation of its Non-Concessional Debt Accumulation Policy (to replace the planned evaluation of the Bank’s Amended Credit Policy). Subsequently, in the annual work program update done each year in November, IDEV agreed with CODE to add three evaluations to the 2021 work program which also respond to specific knowledge needs: an evaluation of the Bank’s crisis response support to RMCs in the face of COVID-19 (including the Crisis Response Facility), an evaluation of the Bank’s Transition Support Facility, and an evaluation of counterpart funding. To make room for these new evaluations, other work in the program was dropped or downscaled.
Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV)
African Development Bank
Avenue Joseph Anoma, 01 BP 1387
Abidjan 01 – Côte d’Ivoire
Phone: +225 27 20 28 28 41
Email: idevhelpdesk@afdb.org
Website: idev.afdb.org
Twitter: @evaluationafdb