What did IDEV evaluate?

The evaluation covered the 2004–2015 period, during which the volume of Bank assistance to Burundi was about UA 544 million (USD 745 million). Of this, UA 237.6 million was for 31 national operations and the rest for multinational projects involving the country. Two priority sectors represented 64% of the Bank’s commitments in the country: transport infrastructure (48%) and economic governance (16%). The other sectors were energy, social, agriculture, and to a lesser extent, the environment, water and sanitation, and communications. A total of 15 completed projects were assessed representing 32% (UA 156.6 million) of the total budget of operations in Burundi. The main funding instruments were the ADF (58%) and the Fragile States Facility (42%).

What did IDEV find?

Relevance is rated satisfactory. Overall, Bank strategies and operations in Burundi are consistent with its overall priorities and strategies. The factors of Burundi’s fragility (political, economic, social and environmental) are well identified in the Bank’s strategies. Bank operations targeted structural fragility factors and resilience building which were: (i) human and institutional capacity; (ii) underemployment; (iii) equitable access to services, resources and growth, and (iv) the environment.

The effectiveness of Bank operations is moderately satisfactory. The Bank’s operations aided growth factors like mobility and access to electricity, and reduced fragility factors by building governance capacity and promoting employment. However, their impacts on economic growth and poverty reduction remained limited due to severe internal and external constraints.

The sustainability of Bank operations is moderately satisfactory for economic and social infrastructure projects. Technical soundness and national capacity are factors of sustainability in regard to infrastructure. Sustainability is fragile for governance support operations due to lack of ownership of reforms by the government and to a fragile macroeconomic, political and institutional environment. The current political instability poses a serious threat to the viability of all investments.

Bank efficiency is moderately satisfactory in the governance and social sectors and moderately unsatisfactory in the economic infrastructure sector. Project implementation delays are still a major problem, partly due to poor quality at entry assessment of operations and the weak technical capacity of project implementers. However, the opening of the Bank Country Office has had a positive effect.
What did IDEV recommend for the new strategy?

The next country strategy should:

- More explicitly include regional integration and inclusive growth objectives in the strategy, and ensure that they are reflected in the portfolio of operations and mainstreamed into national policies.

- Better mainstream environmental issues into strategies and operations in the context of infrastructure and agricultural projects, clearly gearing them towards the inclusion and strengthening of factors of resilience to climate change.

- Continue to carry out analytical work to inform the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies by focusing on issues relating to inclusive growth, gender, vulnerability and the development of economic activities in order to promote the development of integrated markets within the East African Community.

- Play a key, more active role in reviving dialogue on governance and public finance management as well as private sector development issues.

- Continue to implement budget support operations while ensuring the economic and financial viability of the investments made and the policies implemented by the Government, and coordinating (in particular) the investment projects financed with internal and external resources.

- Support the establishment of a system to monitor and evaluate strategies and programs implemented in the country.

What did Management respond?

Management overall supports the findings of this report. These various findings and recommendations will be taken into account both in the proposed extension of this strategy 2012–2016 to 2017, as well as in the design of the next Bank assistance strategy in Burundi and the various operations stemming from it.