From experience to knowledge...
From knowledge to action...
From action to impact

eVALUation Matters
Is a quarterly publication from Independent Development Evaluation at the African Development Bank Group. It provides different perspectives and insights on evaluation and development issues.

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About Independent Development Evaluation
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Evaluation Week 2020 Edition

As part of the UN's 'Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030', a global call was made for timely data and evidence-based policymaking to boost progress on the SDGs. A core part of the evidence base for decision making and development programming can be drawn from evaluation. In this context, the AfDB's biennial Development Evaluation Week (2-4 December 2020) focused on how effective learning from evaluation is linked to the delivery of sustainable development results.

This issue of eVALUation Matters adds to the discourse that took place at Evaluation Week 2020 and takes a deep dive into some of the key issues discussed during the event, among others:

- what is happening in terms of SDG data collection, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, and what are the challenges and opportunities?
- learning from evaluation - from how organizations learn to how learning-to-action occurs;
- the importance of considering knowledge needs as a starting point for institutional learning;
- why evaluations need to be influential, and what can be done to make sure that they impact the programs, policies, and strategies of organizations;
- 40 years of evaluation at the AfDB.

All documents, presentations, photos, videos and other materials from the Evaluation Week are available on the following website: http://idev.afdb.org/en/EvalWeek2020
From the Acting Evaluator General’s Desk

The Four Key Questions for Comprehensive Knowledge Management
In this op-ed, Peter Van Rooij shares some of his thoughts on knowledge management and the importance of considering knowledge needs as a starting point. In particular he focuses on what he considers 4 key questions: (i) What knowledge do we need? (ii) What knowledge do we need but actually already know? (iii) What knowledge do we need that we can find elsewhere? and (iv) What knowledge do we need that needs to be generated?

Highlights From The Knowledge Session On Learning From Evaluating Progress and Addressing Challenges in Tracking The SDGs
An overview of the points raised in a knowledge workshop on the practical challenges of collecting data on, monitoring, reporting on and evaluating the SDGs and some of the successes Uganda has had.

Reflections on the IDEV Operations Clinic: What Way Forward For IDEV To Continue To Support The Improvement Of Operations’ Design Quality?
As part of Evaluation Week, IDEV held a morning of one-on-one consultations with operations staff, as well as a number of short presentations on challenges of quality at entry of operations and the expertise and support available in the AfDB for quality and results of operations. Session organizer Debazou Yantio reflects on the session and what kind of support IDEV could continue to provide to Bank staff.
Projects of Good Quality at Entry Are Destined for Greater Success - The Story of The Nairobi Outer Ring Road Improvement Project

More meaningful learning from the evaluation of a project is assured if the project design was of good quality at entry, and more precisely on its degree of evaluability. Furthermore, to a large extent, the greater the evaluability of a project, the greater the likelihood of its success. In this article Jacqueline Nyagahima uses a recent IDEV evaluation to show that evaluability and implementation readiness are the key quality at entry factors that can lead to a greater likelihood of project success.

Interview With Burt Perrin: Influential Evaluations

What makes an evaluation influential? How can we ensure that it is read, understood, and used in decision-making? In this interview, Burt Perrin discusses why evaluations need to be influential and what we can do to make sure they have an impact on programs, policies and strategies of organizations.

Elevator Interview With Penelope Jackson, Division Manager Quality Assurance, AfDB

In a brief interview, Penelope Jackson, Division Manager Quality Assurance at the AfDB, provides her thoughts on what kinds of institutions are able to learn from evaluations, and what factors contribute towards institutional learning.

40 Years of Evaluation at The AfDB: Memories From Staff

Testimonials from current and former staff and an infographic on the history of evaluation at the AfDB.

News in Pictures

Hot off the Press

"Evaluation by itself has no intrinsic value. It only has value if it is used in some way to help to make a difference."

The year 2020 marks 10 years left to go for the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in Agenda 2030. The United Nations therefore kickstarted an ambitious global effort dubbed the ‘Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030’, to speed up the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a contribution to this initiative, IDEV organized the fourth edition of the African Development Bank (AfDB)’s Development Evaluation Week from 2 to 4 December 2020 under the theme “From Learning to Transformational Change in Africa: Accelerating Africa’s delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Decade of Action”. The event 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 Global Sustainable Development Report of 2020 declared that progress had been made in many areas of the 2030 Agenda, but it was not likely that the Agenda’s goals and targets would be met by the year 2030. The Report called for improved collection and dissemination of reliable, accessible, disaggregated and timely data, and urged for better evidence-based policymaking to support progress on the SDGs. Gaps in timely data translate into poor planning and, consequently, poor decision-making and weak development results. Hence, the vital role of effective learning from evaluation for transformational change to take place cannot be overstated.
Development initiatives (projects, programs, plans, etc.) that are alike are often executed under diverse contexts and resources, even in the same country, and the ways by which they are implemented may vary. Through evaluation of past initiatives, development agencies can derive lessons on what works (or doesn’t work) and under what conditions so as to improve similar ongoing or future initiatives. For example, learning from evaluations of previous crisis response programs could strengthen the global response to COVID-19 and inform the adaptation of programs to changes due to the pandemic. However, many agencies conduct evaluations for accountability purposes only and hardly for learning. Their evaluations’ findings at times do not make their way into the process of programming for the future - either influencing decision making, or fixing initiatives that are already under way.

This edition of Evaluation Matters aims to share ideas and knowledge around learning that leads to transformational change, to complement the presentations, discussions, key takeaways and lessons from the recently concluded AfDB Evaluation Week. In collaboration with a number of speakers from the Evaluation Week, it explores how learning from evaluations can best be applied to enhance the design and implementation of development projects and programs, and can help improve policies, strategies and processes, and thus pave the way for improved sustainable development outcomes. It also explores how the move from learning to action occurs and how organizations can learn from the successes and mistakes of the past in order to improve in the future.

Peter Van Rooij from the ILO shared some of his thoughts on knowledge management and the importance of considering knowledge needs as a starting point, complementing his keynote speech at the conference. In particular he focuses on what he considers 4 key questions: (i) What knowledge do we need? (ii) What knowledge do we need but actually already know? (iii) What knowledge do we need that we can find elsewhere? and (iv) What knowledge do we need that needs to be generated?

Two other speakers, Burt Perrin and Penelope Jackson, accepted to be interviewed on why evaluations need to be influential and what we can do to make sure they have an impact on programs, policies and strategies of organizations, and on what kinds of institutions are able to learn from evaluations and what factors contribute towards institutional learning, respectively.

Coming back to the SDGs, Government officials from Uganda shared their experience on the practical challenges of collecting data on, monitoring, reporting on and evaluating the SDGs - and some successes.

The AfDB believes that better quality operations will lead to better development results. As part of the Evaluation Week, consultations were held with AfDB operations staff and presentations were made on the challenges of quality at entry of operations and the expertise and support available in the AfDB to improve the quality and results of operations. Colleague Debazou Yantio reflects on the session and what kind of support IDEV could continue to provide to Bank staff. Jacqueline
Nyagahima gives an example by applying the finding from the IDEV evaluation of *Quality at Entry of AfDB Operations* that *evaluability and implementation readiness are the key quality at entry factors that can lead to a greater likelihood of project success* to a case study project, thereby putting evaluation knowledge into practice.

I would also like to highlight that this year, 2020, marks 40 years since the creation of an evaluation function at the AfDB – a cause for celebration! The evaluation journey at the AfDB has been an interesting one as showcased in this edition by memories from some former and current team members on how far we have come as an institution, how the evaluation function has evolved over time, and how we can continue to improve.

As indicated, the contributions in this special edition of *Evaluation Matters* accompany the materials from the Evaluation Week, all of which are available on our website: [http://idev.afdb.org/en/evalweek2020](http://idev.afdb.org/en/evalweek2020). These include the recordings of the full sessions, best-of videos, the proceedings, the keynote speeches and presentations made, speaking notes and more. I hope that you will peruse these at your leisure.

*Happy reading!*

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**About the Acting Evaluator General**

Mrs. Karen Rot-Münstermann is the Acting Evaluator General of the African Development Bank. She joined IDEV in 2014 as manager of its Knowledge Management, Outreach and Capacity Development Division, after spending five years at the Bank’s Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Department, where she was among others responsible for coordinating the three-yearly ADF replenishment processes.

Before joining the AfDB in 2009, Karen was a Senior Policy Advisor at the Dutch Ministry of Finance (Treasury, Foreign Financial Relations Department). She holds degrees in Political Science, European Studies, and Economics.

Effective learning from evaluation is linked to the delivery of sustainable development results/outcomes.

In this op-ed, Peter van Rooij contributes to the 2020 Evaluation Week discussions with some of his thoughts on knowledge management and the importance of considering knowledge needs as a starting point. These are meant as an informal conversation starter, rather than an attempt to lay down a rigid thesis.
Introduction

Sustainable development results are three simple words that encompass different dimensions of science and practice and cover important topics, both separately and combined. While this article does not attempt to cover these dimensions (if ever one article could do overall justice), I ask the reader to keep them in mind and bear with me as I attempt to highlight a crucial but often overlooked aspect of sustainable development: How to deal with knowledge. The good ‘news’ (though it is not new) is that substantial knowledge is already ‘out there’, allowing us to focus more and more on capturing and sharing the learning.

There is a beginning to everything, including results. However, ‘the’ beginning often has different starting points. This is one of the key points of this article. It will not come as any surprise that an article on knowledge management (KM) calls for more and better use of existing knowledge. While progress has been made in this regard, from the private to the non-profit sector, further progress can and should be realized, including in a development cooperation context. What is perhaps not new, but certainly not usually part of a comprehensive approach to KM in development, is the starting point of better understanding the knowledge needs.

To begin with, what does the literature say? This is already a classic KM question, pre-empting the content of this article (spoiler alert). If a key point is to start with a better understanding of what knowledge we need, this pertains to this article as well: be clear what we want to achieve on the basis of our ‘needs’.

Let us start with a typical definition of KM: “[it] refers to a deliberate and consistent effort to improve the utilization, transfer and creation of knowledge in organizations”. Such definition does not consider knowledge needs to begin with and in my view, it should.

So what does the literature say about knowledge questions, or more specifically knowledge needs? To state there is a complete overview of this would be incorrect. Therefore, some key notions may be more practical. According to the African Journal of Business Management, for instance, drivers of KM can “mainly be categorized into six important weighing factors: organizational culture, organizational framework, personnel, information technology, knowledge strategy, and ‘innovation’.” Where are the knowledge needs featured in this?

A KM Process, as described by Tutorials Point, distinguishes six steps starting with collecting. Once again, where is the point on knowledge needs, by who and how they are determined? In short, KM seems to ‘skip’ a step in the theory and practice of managing and sharing experience and expertise.

Let this be the starting point for four key knowledge questions.

**Question 1: The Beginning**

KM does not take place in a void. Let us take the example of a project, though...
the principles can be applied to other contexts if not all. In many instances, we have learned to better understand the context, needs of counterparts or beneficiaries, and the importance of some kind of consultation phase, as part of the design of a project. What is less often addressed, if at all, is the implication in terms of the knowledge needs for making a project successful, including the knowledge needs of beneficiaries. Admittedly, this can easily be seen as an academic question, and it is in part. However, we aim to clarify knowledge needs when we state desired outcomes, outputs to be produced and inputs to be identified. I have yet to see a knowledge needs approach that specifies what knowledge is needed to make a project meets its objectives. And yet, isn’t this central to realizing development?

The next sub-question would be to what extent this is possible? What level of detail is needed? And when this would make sense?

Question 2: We, Ourselves and I

Once there is a framework understanding of knowledge needs, we have a direction and can address the following three questions that are all interrelated and dependent on one another – 1) what knowledge do we need but actually already know? 2) What knowledge do we need that we can find elsewhere? And 3) what knowledge do we need that needs to be generated. From the starting point of knowing the knowledge needs, the first follow-up is to assess what knowledge (that is needed) is already availed by ourselves, the entity driving the development engagement. This is yet another example of ‘easier said than done’. Asking oneself what knowledge, experience and expertise an organization has on youth employment for example, is not easy to answer. Does an organization know what it knows? And even when you know relevant knowledge exists, is it known where such knowledge can be retrieved? Furthermore, knowing that relevant
knowledge exists and even its location may not solve the challenge of accessing it. For example, it could concern a hard copy of a document that is stored somewhere in an office elsewhere. And I have not even mentioned the user-friendliness of the available knowledge.

Question 3: It Is Not Me, It Is Them!

Question 3 derives from the second question: what is the knowledge that is needed and that we ourselves do not have but can find elsewhere? It is simply the difference between what is needed and what we do not avail of ourselves. Starting from clear needs once again, this is about identifying existing, relevant knowledge elsewhere. It is about reaching out to other organizations and persons. This has the additional benefit of identifying and investing in partnerships and synergies. While partnerships as such are not the focus of attention in this article, more and better cooperation allows for something that is still missing in terms of impact: scaling up. Being familiar with the situation of having had 250 projects in one country over five years on a single topic, I wonder about scale, in addition to efficiencies, cooperation and, once again, knowledge cooperation.

Other organizations (and persons) could in turn benefit from more and better access to ‘our’ knowledge. Such engagement may also pertain to the sharing of knowledge needs, resulting in a better understanding of knowledge needs for others. Of course, such engagement can also include sharing our relevant experience and expertise with others, truly win-win.

Knowledge challenges in one organization may also be reflected in others. If the question of ‘knowing’ what one knows, and where and how easily relevant knowledge is accessible comes up in one organization, this may likely be the case elsewhere too, albeit that there are organizations that have their ‘knowledge act’ better together, and some less so.

Question 4: Research Validated!

Question 4 finally addresses the knowledge gap: what is the knowledge that we need, but neither we nor others avail, i.e. what knowledge needs to be generated. There is no guarantee that all required knowledge can be mobilized, through existing and future sources. There may simply be knowledge needs that cannot be met at a certain point in time and in a certain context. The latter, the knowledge residue in a way, is important for a number of reasons. This includes identifying knowledge needs as well as prioritizing them. In addition, this could also include a focus on better understanding the time and context of the constraints to generating or at least retrieving knowledge that by itself may be of value.

Crucially, knowledge generation, including through research and (project) pilots, needs to be justified. This justification, among others, centers on the core question of knowledge needs and what already exists, i.e. the gap.

How much research is conducted on the basis of unclear knowledge needs, assuming there is a need for something? Prioritization of knowledge needs comes into play as well. How often do we assume knowledge does not exist whereas as a matter of fact it does? This is one frequent observation over an almost 30 year career in development: the wheel gets reinvented time and time again, with serious repercussions, including time and other resources wasted and not necessarily coming up to the ‘quality’ of already existing knowledge, thus posing an additional cost to development. Some people, including consultants, can make a career out of this, so perhaps we should look at some of the countervailing benefits of reinventing the wheel, especially if the wheel gets adapted to different contexts and evolves, literally.

This relates to the point of context, including time. Knowledge needs...
are specific. Copy-and-paste is not the recipe, neither in question 2 nor 3. Inspire-and-adapt is a better approach to knowledge generation.

**So What?**

“So what?” you may say. Four questions on KM, brought together as an integrated concept. Is this a new insight and complementing theory of KM? Think of it more as a ‘nice theory on knowledge management’, hopefully pushing the frontier of applied KM somewhat further.

How practical is the above though? This is a good question that deserves more attention. The full answer cannot be provided in this brief context. What is clear is that both theoretically and in practice, follow-up is required to the ‘four questions for KM’ concept. The latter by testing the theory and the former by further deepening the concept academically.

Let’s look at the framework of the four key KM questions critically. One point of concern may be the rather theoretical nature of the concept. To what extent can you identify the knowledge needs of say a project in detail, upfront? This is an important question, however, we need to look at our current approaches to the management of our knowledge needs through time and work cycles. To what extent have we tried? What are the implications for not doing so? If there is one lesson that we are learning in program design, it is the usefulness of an identification as well as appropriation phase from the onset, part of which that could continue upon actual start of a project. We know this is a valuable time for better understanding and we are increasingly devoting time and other resources as an investment in impact and sustainability. There is at least a parallel in terms of identifying knowledge needs. Perhaps these two could be combined and mutually reinforced.

John Naisbitt is credited for the quote, ‘we are drowning in information but starved for knowledge.’ So true. KM is not about the quantity of information or even the quality. While these dimensions are important, it is also about the _relevance_ of information. The risk with all the attention to KM and numerous other initiatives is that we could substitute information with KM: we are drowning in KM but we are starving for relevant knowledge.

So let’s turn to the context of this article: effective learning from evaluation. How is this relevant for the four KM questions? Is this just stating the obvious or does this merit some reflection and unpacking? Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are key to the success of project implementation, including efficiencies. M&E processes are very relevant for the four KM questions and their application. The starting point of evaluation is similar to understanding the knowledge needs. Understanding this will help both effective evaluation and the added value beyond. Evaluation does not happen in a vacuum either, there are both internal and external dimensions to contend. And finally, evaluation can identify knowledge gaps as well as fill some. How we deal with the results of evaluation, including how we ensure the learning, has a number of similarities with the four KM questions.

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**Endnotes**


On the first day of Evaluation Week 2020, IDEV partnered with the AfDB’s statistics department to hold a knowledge session on how countries monitor and evaluate their progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This knowledge event’s objective was to discuss the role of learning in advancing the delivery of the SDGs.

Two representatives from the Government of Uganda demonstrated how the country set up its systems and institutions that collect SDG indicators and evaluate progress. The focus was on how Uganda monitors and evaluates progress towards the SDGs through Voluntary National Reviews and other mechanisms, and how this serves as a basis for learning. Following a discussion on the presentations from Uganda, the AfDB statistics department showcased its Africa Information Highway and SDG tracking data portals. The session concluded with a reflection on data collection in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, presented by the SDG Advisor at the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa.

The following excerpts of participants’ interventions capture the flow of the session.
Presentation of Uganda’s SDG monitoring

Pascal Byarugaba, Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, SDG Secretariat Office of the Prime Minister, and Margaret Kakande, Head, Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit at Ministry of Finance, both from Uganda, presented how the country tracks its implementation of the SDGs and evaluates its progress. Following their presentations, two experts in the field, Stefano D’Errico, Head of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, International Institute for Environment and Development, and Roza Mamuye Bora, Senior Statistician, AfDB Statistics Department, reflected on the Uganda case study and provided insights on issues of data collection and what to do with the data, from their perspectives and experiences.

Pascal Byarugaba:

A highlight of what the government of Uganda has been doing regarding monitoring and reporting of the SDGs.

To contextualize and map out the SDGs, Uganda set up its coordination framework in 2016 and allocated relevant national institutions to each SDG. Out of the 232 established SDG indicators, 201 were applicable to the Ugandan context.

With the AfDB and the United Nations Statistics Division’s help, we set up a portal housing all indicators of the SDGs. To populate the portal, a matrix was set up that shows which indicator needs what kind of data and who is responsible for producing this data. As a result, in 2020, Uganda presented its second Voluntary National Review and reported data for 92 indicators.

SDG indicators should be localized. One often doesn’t see district or regional averages. We mapped out which indicators are relevant at the local level to ensure that districts and local government entities can track these. We hope to roll this out in early 2021.

Margaret Kakande:

On the alignment of the national development strategy with the 2030 agenda

Leaving no one behind requires us to empower people through civic engagement and voice, enacting equity-focused SDG policies, interventions and budgets, as well as using data that is disaggregated and people-driven. Uganda has embraced all three levels.

First of all, we have much civic engagement in Uganda and we generate constructive debate on the SDGs. We have what we call Barazas, where government officials discuss within the community, issues such as sustainable development. These are public discussions where they hold officials to account.

The National Development Strategy and Plan is very well aligned with the 2030 Agenda. We looked at how the SDGs can be made part of the national development plan. Although we agreed that the best way forward was to implement all the SDGs, we realized that it is better to focus on a few accelerators. We agreed that the focus would be on the environment, governance, and industry. The current national development plan has been able to develop 18 programs that all speak to those three categories.

Also, we are looking at how we can improve the coordination and collaboration of institutions. We are looking to minimize wastage and duplication, and have a program for community mobilization and mindset change.
We are going through a public sector transformation, looking at how we can run the government more like a business and not just take things for granted. We are also focusing more on sequencing, ensuring that this complex SDG framework can be implemented, making sure intersectional linkages are optimized. We know that with the SDG agenda and leaving no one behind, we cannot have business as usual.

On the role of evaluation in SDG reviews in Uganda

There was a review in 2016 to assess Uganda’s readiness to implement the SDGs, looking at policy frameworks, institutional capacity, budgetary operations and M&E practices, in other words, “what are the guts”. When we had our second review completed in 2020, the evaluation role took on more importance. Several evaluations were among the 300 documents reviewed for the Voluntary National Review. We are very proud that we have been able to establish baseline indicators for those where we have data. This is important because if you don’t have baselines, you cannot really talk about evaluation.

There are still challenges. We have some areas where we have no evaluation practice, such as poverty reduction, climate change, and infrastructure development. These take a lot of the government’s investments. Evaluation of the SDGs is critical for meaningful national reviews, but we need to have significant funding levels to connect evaluation studies and fit into these reviews. Effective integration of the SDGs into national policy, planning, budgeting, and M&E frameworks is one sure way to achieve the complex and integrated SDG objectives.

Roza Mamuye Bora:

Reflecting on the Uganda experience – principles of the global framework of SDG follow-up and review.

Looking at how the Ugandan experience fits into the global framework, the global follow-up and review framework has principles, among them the voluntary country national review process. These are the foundation for the regional as well as the global review processes. These frameworks also suggest that monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as indicators and targets, need to be tailored to the country context. The second principle I would like to highlight is an open, inclusive, participatory, and transparent review process for all. The same principle is followed for the global SDG monitoring framework. In addition to those frameworks and tools, the global agenda suggests mainstreaming the SDGs into national plans and strategies. This is what many countries have done, including Uganda. Noteworthy is that only half the countries have comparable data for 4 out of the 17 goals and there are country deficits. Also, with some data, there is a significant time lag.

In terms of Uganda, we can see that it is very much in line with the framework and the country has taken the appropriate steps in integrating the SDGs into its national plans.

Stefano D’Errico:

On Uganda’s tracking of SDG indicators and the use of data at the national level

I was impressed by the level of effort made to set up the national statistics system in Uganda and fine-tune the system with the SDG indicators. I was particularly impressed to hear that there are now 201 SDG indicators.

A vast amount of data is being generated since the Agenda 2030 was signed in 2015. This can be credited as an achievement of the SDGs so far, producing data on sustainable development. I want to provoke a bit of discussion with the question: what are we going to do with all this data at the national level?
There is the risk that we will create a massive amount of fascinating and vital information, but then just use all of it for global aggregation, on whether we have achieved the target or not. I’m not sure that would be very useful.

Data collection is only helpful if used for decision-making at the national and local levels. We are only ten years away from our 2030 target and we have spent a lot of time developing this data, and it was a necessary exercise to map all national policies to the SDGs. But are we going to use this data? How will we do that? What is taken on board?

One of the significant challenges is to make sure we can derive some meaning from the data to understand what is progressing well and what is progressing less well. The complexity of the agenda can be very cumbersome, and we do not always understand in which area we need to make more progress.

**On the use of data for the SDGs**

The big question for our discussion today is then: how are we going to use this data? How can we make sense of it? At IIED, we have been producing resources on evaluation of the SDGs, and evaluation is a great tool to make sense of the data. However, the critical element is prioritization. There is a significant risk that, because we have too much data, what we are tempted to do is cherry-pick the most useful data to tell the story people want to hear and that fits into the agenda we have. The SDGs should be the opposite - we should understand all the data linkages and make decisions on that basis.

So we have two key questions. The first question is how can we use all this data for national planning and prioritizing urgent issues at the national and local levels? Priorities must be different for different contexts, realities, and countries. The second question is how do we use evaluation and statistics to make decisions and and choose good priorities to progress as fast as possible towards the SDGs? Since the inception of the SDGs, the role of a robust integrated and effective follow-up and review framework has been recognized as one of the SDGs’ pillars and tracking its progress. This process in turn is a central building block of the evaluation process.

**Presentation of the Africa Information Highway portal**

In the second part of the knowledge event, **Momar Kouta**, Statistics Information Systems Officer, AfDB Statistics Department and **Rafik Mahjoubi**, also of the Statistics Department, showcased the Bank’s network of live open data platforms called the Africa Information Open Highway, including the regional SDGs hub.

**Rafik Mahjoubi:**

**On the Africa Information Highway:**

The AfDB was requested by Heads of State to put in place a system for data dissemination. The objective of the open data portal by the Bank was to facilitate access to data and statistics to improve evidence-based decision-making. Simultaneously, we still wanted to harmonize data on a regional level to compare among countries. So all these indicators should be standard-driven. That is the spirit in which we produced the [Africa Information Highway](https://www.afdb.org/en/themes/sustainable-development-agenda/sdg-mapping-and-monitoring) and introduced this portal-a network of systems across the continent that share the same standard.

It is the first time that this has happened on a continental scale. We have one platform with 54 portals for countries and 16 more for regional and sub-regional organizations. So that results in one platform with 70 data portals, all connected. Having this platform is important for the countries as
well as our partners. We have a partnership with organizations such as IMF, IFAD, UNICEF, and UNSD and with countries such as Uganda for the reporting and dissemination of data. We have also been providing support in the form of workshops on the use of international standards and training so that countries can update and include data in the portal.

Momar Kouta:

On the Regional SDGs hub:

The Bank has also developed a portal to support our efforts in countries in attaining the SDGs. We have an [SDG regional hub] with the aim of disseminating global SDG data. We have also implemented a country-level SDG database portal and developed the portal to see the data per goal and all indicators by target. We plan to expand our technical support to RMCs in the coming years, including helping to automate data reporting to reduce the reporting burden. We will also assist countries in coordinating SDG data and provide support for modeling data using international standards.

COVID-19 and SDG data collection

The last part of the knowledge session featured Ambrose Rwaheru Aheisibwe, SDGs Advisor at the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa. He reflected on the problems and possible solutions for data collection compounded by COVID-19.

Ambrose Rwaheru Aheisibwe:

On the effects of COVID-19 on Africa’s progress towards the SDGs and monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

Figure 1: Effects that COVID-19 has on SDG indicators in Africa

Source: 2020 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report, SDGs Center for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network
Before COVID-19, the SDG situation in Africa was mixed and not a good one. We expect some SDGs to be affected more than others.

Crucially, meeting SDG reporting requirements will be a challenge for African countries in light of COVID-19. The traditional means of data collection are no longer possible. We need to build capacity when it comes to national statistical offices. Beyond that, we have also seen African countries facing financing constraints for data collection. We thus need to take advantage of the revolution in information and communication mechanisms. Geo-referenced data collected by mobile phone applications could be beneficial for this purpose—especially government locations, water points, or issues to do with climate change.

To meet this challenge, we will need to engage national statistics and planning offices to ensure we have comparable accurate and real-time data. The only way we can do that is to use the existing regional database systems, like the one presented here today and the monitoring and reporting system database developed by the SDG Center for Africa.

**Conclusion:**

As we continue to understand how and how well African countries are progressing towards the SDGs, the availability of accurate and relevant data will remain crucial, as well as the need to make proper use of the data we collect. The additional challenge of COVID-19 implies that innovative solutions for monitoring and evaluating the SDGs are needed. For possible solutions and relevant topics, read the edition of eVALUation Matters Magazine on "Preparing Evaluation for the Future: Big Data, modern technologies, and shifts in global development priorities".
In a first for the African Development Bank, IDEV held a special series of one-on-one consultation sessions with operations staff entitled “Operations Clinic” during Evaluation Week 2020. The overall aim was to help operations task managers improve the quality of their projects. To prepare for the clinic, IDEV conducted a Bank-wide operations staff survey on project design.
The operations clinic had a plenary session and three one-on-one consultation sessions with task managers. During the plenary, staff from IDEV and other Bank departments involved in the quality assurance of operations made presentations on prevailing issues with quality-at-entry, lessons on project delays, and the frameworks and tools available to support task managers at the design stage of their operations. It created an opportunity to discuss the role of IDEV in strengthening quality-at-entry, the expectations of task managers vis-à-vis IDEV, and the support services availed by the departments involved in quality assurance of operations. In the one-on-one sessions, IDEV guided task managers on designing operations and helping to ensure that proposed projects meet the Bank’s selectivity requirements, have greater evaluability through enhanced results-based logical frameworks, and sound implementation arrangements including a monitoring and evaluation plan.

What emerged from the survey?

The survey targeted 80 task managers of public sector operations and investment officers of non-sovereign (private sector) operations, with an operation at the early stages of preparation. Thirty-one staff responded to the questionnaire administered. Box 1 below presents key characteristics of the respondents to the survey.

The survey provided a comprehensive overview of the issues faced by operations staff, as well as some insights and lessons. In fact, the numerous initiatives undertaken across the Bank to improve quality-at-entry are paying off.

Box 1: IDEV operations staff survey:

- **Period:** July 29 – August 19, 2020 (22 days)
- **Target:** 80 Task Managers and Investment Officers with current projects at concept note stage
- **Response rate:** 56%
- **Sector:** Work on public sector (65%)/non-sovereign operations (35%)
- **Location:** HQ (52%)/Region (19%)/Country offices (29%)
- **Sector involved:** Financial sector (17%), Agriculture (15%), Energy (13%), real sector* (8%), Transport (8%) Others (39%)
- **Operations Academy:** Have completed (33%)
- **Prior training in project management:** 80%
- **Experience:** Less than 3 Operations (17%)/ 3-5 Operations. (17%)/More than 5 Operations (66%)
- **Already received support for improvement of quality at entry (QaE):** Yes (40%)/No (60%)

* In the context of non-sovereign operations, all sectors other than finance and trade

Source: Survey data, August 2020
majority of respondents reported that the implementation preparedness/readiness of projects, the identification of beneficiaries, the incorporation of lessons learned and the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues had improved. At the same time, challenges remain, as also found by IDEV’s Evaluation of the Quality at Entry of Bank Operations in 2018. These include issues with results-based logical frameworks, weaknesses in risk identification and management, workload, deadlines, templates, and directives, norms & standards.

The survey found that only 10 of the 31 respondents had so far completed the Operations Academy Gateway, a recently introduced internal training program to improve the quality of operations, which is mandatory for all operations staff and will soon be rolled out to Project Implementation Units in Regional Member Countries (RMCs) as well. Many task managers and investment officers also did not feel fully informed of recent developments, particularly in the area of sharpening selectivity.

Regarding the technical support requested by operations staff to improve the quality of their operations, ad-hoc training and advice were identified as the preferred channels. Therefore, IDEV developed and piloted several tools during Evaluation Week 2020 that aim to assist task managers and investment officers identify weaknesses and address related issues.

What emerged from the Operations Clinic?

The operations clinic yielded a lot of interest from staff in improving the quality of the Bank’s work. Furthermore, operations staff found the evaluator’s perspective on quality at-entry useful, complementing that of the task manager and implementing partners. One issue that was highlighted during the session concerned start-up delays, which contribute significantly to prolonged disbursements for Bank operations and increase the real and opportunity costs of projects at completion. There is a decision-making tool, the Additionality and Development Outcomes Assessment (ADOA), but participants felt it could be more effective if the feedback loop between ex-ante and ex-post assessments is strengthened. To this end, they suggested to improve the coordination and communication among relevant stakeholders across the Bank.

Another tool showcased during the session was the Gender Marker System - a pivotal instrument for categorizing and mainstreaming gender across operations. While progress has been made in gender mainstreaming, participants recommended that more should be done to disseminate gender knowledge products and results achieved within the Bank and across RMCs.

What lessons did IDEV draw?

The IDEV team concluded that there can be a role to play for evaluation knowledge in helping to improve the quality at entry of Bank operations. However, any work in this area by IDEV should be in close collaboration with the Bank’s Quality Assurance Department, which is leading in this area. The team also learned that the clinic proved to be a much larger undertaking than envisaged. In particular, the initial plan largely underestimated the staff time required to prepare and undertake the clinic.

The way forward?

As the Bank pursues its quality agenda, and IDEV continues to support it with evaluative knowledge, one-on-one operations clinics are a viable tool to provide support to staff at the Bank if set up properly. However, it will need additional human resources or more
Debazou Yantio, Principal Evaluation Officer at IDEV who was in charge of the survey and clinic, feels that, although the sessions provided a lot of useful feedback as well as a better picture of knowledge needs, IDEV should not get involved directly in the design of operations. Nor should it carry out staff training to improve the quality of their work. “These are roles that are assigned to other departments,” said Yantio. “Furthermore, doing so may create a conflict of interest and compromise the independence of IDEV” he added.

There are however opportunities for IDEV to support the Operations Academy managed by the Quality Assurance Department by providing knowledge from evaluations that could inform training design. It can also share the tools developed for the clinic, for further testing by various groups of staff involved in project preparation and the quality assurance process. Finally, it can exercise its mandate of promoting an evaluation culture across the Bank by furthering evaluative thinking.

Whatever the scenario, IDEV will be able to use the tools it developed for the clinic to assess evaluability, M&E arrangements, risk management practice, and selectivity of operations and Country Strategies and Programs (CSP) as part of its regular work program of Project Completion Report validations and CSP evaluations.

Endnotes

1. These departments include Gender, Women and Civil Society (AHGC), Macroeconomic Policy, Forecasting and Research (ECMR); Delivery, Performance Management and Results (SNDRI); Operations Committee Secretariat and Quality Assurance (SNOQ); and Safeguards and Compliance (SNSC).
Projects of Good Quality at Entry Are Destined for Greater Success - The Story of The Nairobi Outer Ring Road Improvement Project

Travel time along a 13 km stretch of Nairobi’s Outer Ring Road has been eased considerably, with the opening of the two-lane dual carriageway in early 2019. This road improvement was thanks to an AfDB-funded project that was launched in 2015. As a bonus, the intervention led to reduced road fatalities, encouraged the establishment of new businesses, and restored security for the people who use the road. These outcomes come as no surprise given that the project was found to have had good “Quality at Entry” by a recent IDEV evaluation. This article argues that in particular evaluability and implementation readiness are the key quality at entry factors that can lead to a greater likelihood of project success.
Introduction

Quality at entry is defined as the state of preparedness that makes a project likely to succeed. When it is being designed, a project should fulfill certain conditions before it can be started. These conditions prepare the ground for the project to be executed as smoothly as possible. Most of all, they set the stage for the project to be able to deliver on its planned development outcomes.

Best practices in the development arena agree on four key dimensions (Figure 1) to assess quality when a project is being designed, to ensure that it meets good quality at entry standards. They are Evaluability, Implementation Readiness, Economic Analysis, and Risk Analysis.

Of these four dimensions, Evaluability and Implementation Readiness were found to be key factors in predicting the performance of public sector investment projects by an IDEV Evaluation of the Quality at Entry of Operations funded by the AfDB.

Evaluability looks at the logical framework of an intervention or project. It reflects the extent to which: (i) the intervention logic is clear, responding to both the development problem and country context; (ii) the design of the intervention is supported by evidence; and (iii) the outcomes of the intervention are clear and measurable.

Implementation readiness, on the other hand, assesses the extent to which different implementation requirements for a project have been finalized, issues that could otherwise contribute to start-up delays for a project (see Figure 2).

The evaluation demonstrated that by assessing two dimensions of a project...
during the design stage – *Evaluability* and *Implementation Readiness* – it is possible to predict whether the project is likely to successfully deliver on its expected development outcomes.

A case in point is the AfDB funded Nairobi Outer Ring Road Improvement Project, which we will use to illustrate this evaluation finding.

### The Nairobi Outer Ring Road Improvement Project

By 2013, traffic congestion on the Outer Ring Road in Kenya’s capital Nairobi was a nightmare for residents. Traveling along this road, especially during peak hours, was not only a great agony for commuters who spent long hours in traffic jams, but it led to the loss of revenue for businesses that plied the road as commuters rarely got out of the traffic to shop. At the time, a 13 km stretch of single carriageway crossed a densely populated area of Nairobi, linking Nairobi city to various economic activity centers, such as the industrial zone, and providing secondary access to the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, as well as to major highways across the country.

To relieve congestion on this highway, the government of Kenya approached the AfDB for a loan to expand the single carriageway into a 2-lane dual highway. Thus, the *Nairobi Outer Ring Road Project* was born.
According to the project design document, the Project Appraisal Report, the development objective was to “enhance economic efficiency through improved mobility and accessibility to businesses, thereby supporting economic and social development of the Nairobi city and the country at large.”

The expected outcomes were:

1. Improved mobility and accessibility of the city of Nairobi and reduced congestion on Outer Ring Road;

2. Local jobs created (youth from the nearby informal settlements would receive skills training under the project);

3. Improved economic and social welfare of people living along the road corridor;

4. Improved air quality to travelers and residents along the road.

The project was expected to cost about USD 133.7 million, with the AfDB covering 90% of the funding, while the government of Kenya would contribute 10%. The project was approved in June 2013 and projected to end in September 2018. The president of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, officially launched the road improvement project on 22nd January 2015. Four years later, the road corridor was almost fully completed and opened to traffic. [The project was extended to December 2019 to cater for added works that were not in the initial project design].

Evaluation’s Assessment of the Project’s Quality at Entry

From the outset, the Outer Ring Road Improvement Project was designed to be a success. It was found to have one of the highest ‘quality at entry’ ratings among the AfDB projects that IDEV evaluated for its evaluation of quality at entry. In particular, the Project Appraisal Report got a high rating on the two key dimensions of quality at entry, namely, evaluability and implementation readiness.

Evaluability

The project’s evaluability was assessed as highly satisfactory by the evaluation. The development problem was very clear: “Traffic congestion in and around the city, which resulted in economic uncertainty and mobility problems for the people who ply the road”. The project design responded to the identified problem, along with the main factors contributing to it, which were backed by evidence.

There was a clear linkage between the project’s outputs and outcomes in the project Results-Based Logical Framework. The causal linkage - from activities to outputs to outcomes, then to impacts - had been well demonstrated (Figure 3).

Furthermore, the indicators and targets for the outputs and outcomes were realistic and achievable during the lifetime of the project. (See Table 1).

Implementation Readiness

Figure 1 shows the elements of good implementation readiness at the design phase of any project. The cost estimate (in the Project Appraisal Report) of the Outer Ring Road project was based on up-to-date feasibility and detailed design studies, and a detailed work plan was established for the first 12 months of implementation. The project had a well-established implementation agency - the Kenya Urban Road Authority (KURA). KURA’s Financial Manual was found to be well suited to guide the financial management and disbursements, as well as the procurements for the project. Furthermore, KURA’s financial management capacity was assessed as adequate for the project.
At the design phase, managing environmental and social risks for the project was an important issue that had to be addressed. According to the Bank’s Environmental and Social Impact assessment study, the project was “likely to cause significant environmental and social impacts”. It was crucial to have a management plan for the likely adverse social and environmental impacts, including the involuntary resettlement of more than 200 people. The project, therefore, included a Full Resettlement Action Plan.

Overall, the evaluation rated the implementation readiness of the project design as highly satisfactory.

Development Outcomes Registered so far

According to the September 2019 Implementation Progress and Results Report, the project was set to deliver on its development outcomes as planned. The progress of the civil works was on course –87% complete as of September 2019.

Outcome 1 of the project was the reduction of the congestion on the Outer Ring Road. The indicator for this outcome was the volume to capacity ratio. At project design (in 2013), the volume to capacity ratio along this road was 0.8. The target for this indicator
was to bring the volume to capacity ratio down to 0.4 at the end of the project. By September 2019, a large section of the roadway had been opened up for public traffic use and the congestion relief was quite apparent. Recent traffic studies (2020) have shown that there has been an unanticipated increase in traffic levels along the project road. The current volume capacity ratio of the road is 0.83. Nevertheless, reduced travel times have been recorded. At project design, the travel time was between 2 and 3 hours; currently, this has been bought down to between 15 and 30 minutes. The increased traffic levels have been due to the increase in developments within the project corridor and the city. These developments include new shopping complexes (Moutain, Shujaa Malls) and residential estates (Greenspan, Komarock Heights) amongst others, which are among the impacts of the road improvement project.

Outcome 2 of the project was ‘Local jobs created’. By September 2019, a total of 2,100 people had been employed on the project, which was not far off the target of 2,800 set for the indicator. (See Table 1).

**Lessons**

It was important to carry out the feasibility and technical studies that informed the design of the Nairobi Outer Ring Road project. The studies provided evidence about the gravity of the development problem to the country, as well as the rationale for the project design. Most importantly, the studies helped to get the buy-in of the relevant authorities in the country.

While the expected target volume/capacity ratio (of 0.4) for the Outcome 1 indicator of the project has been deemed unlikely to be achieved, it is important to appreciate that the projected impacts (namely reduced travel times) are being achieved nonetheless. This shows that indicator targets may not tell the full story, because the project’s context can change over time. Thus, the non-achievement of set indicator targets may not have the same significance.

### Table 1: A Selection of Outcome indicators specified in the Project’s Results-Based Logical Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline value (value at project design)</th>
<th>Most recent value</th>
<th>End Target (expected value at project completion)</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Congestion on Outer Ring Road reduced</td>
<td>volume/capacity ratio</td>
<td>0.8 (2013)</td>
<td>0.83 (2020)</td>
<td>0.4 (2018)</td>
<td>Unlikely to be achieved due to unanticipated increase in traffic levels and localized congestion in some sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Local jobs created</td>
<td>Cumulative number of persons employed on the project</td>
<td>0.0 (2013)</td>
<td>2100 (2018)</td>
<td>2800 (2019)</td>
<td>Likely to be achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from AfDB Implementation Progress and Results Report, September 2019
targets does not imply that a project is not successful.

The existence of the implementing agency, KURA, was a huge plus for the project. For similar investment projects in other countries, the Bank has had to facilitate the setting up of a project implementation unit. This usually introduces bottlenecks such as delays in project start-up and more red tape in the running of the project.

**Conclusion**

The importance of establishing good quality at entry for development projects during the design phase cannot be over-emphasized. A project team and the quality assurance reviewers, or quality control measures of the project, must ensure that all the elements of good quality at entry are well articulated in the project design document. As mentioned at the start of this article, the four dimensions of good quality at entry are evaluability, implementation readiness, economic analysis, and risk analysis. However, of the four, evaluability and implementation readiness are the key ones to establish for a greater likelihood of project success. The Outer Ring Road Project showed that addressing these two dimensions at project design set the stage for the project to be executed as smoothly as possible. It also laid the groundwork for the project to deliver on its planned development outcomes and expected impact.

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**Endnotes**

4. Volume to capacity ratio (V/C) is an index used to assess traffic status in cities. V is the total number of vehicles passing a point in one hour and C is the maximum number of cars that can pass a certain point during moderate traffic. As the V/C ratio approaches 1.0 and above, traffic delays and queues become longer.

**References**

4. AfDB Kenya Nairobi Outer Ring Road Improvement - Project Appraisal Report
5. AfDB Implementation Progress and Results Report, September 2019
What makes an evaluation influential? How can we ensure that it is read, understood, and used in decision-making? For this article, we interviewed a well-known expert in evaluation, Burt Perrin. In it, he discusses why evaluations need to be influential and what we can do to make sure they have an impact on programs, policies and strategies of organizations.
Q: What should we consider an influential evaluation? How do you measure its influence?

An influential evaluation is one that contributes, in one way or another, to improvements in people’s lives. A good starting point here is the African Development Bank’s (AfDB) Mandate. Its objectives are to achieve inclusive growth, deep reductions in poverty, an increase in jobs, and equality of treatment and opportunity. From this starting point, evaluations should influence the directions of policies and programs towards these objectives.

Beyond this, it is important for evaluations to be as meaningful as possible, to think beyond strategies and look at impact, the changes in peoples’ lives, in accordance with the AfDB’s mission and overarching objectives.

Assessing the extent of the use or influence of an evaluation, however, can be tricky. There is extensive literature on what is called ‘evaluation utilization’, which looks beyond the direct use of evaluation at other ways in which evaluation leads to different forms of thinking and approaches.

Evaluations can be both formal and informal, so understanding their influence is complex. One way of looking at it is the Theory of Change approach, to look at the entire process of evaluation, including its use by the institution, and to see if people are really better off at the end of it.

Q: In some institutions, if not many, evaluators find that people are not always very open to the evaluation process and it is seen as quite a formal process. Can you give an example of an informal approach that can be influential?

An evaluation can be very formal, but its use can be informal. In the interaction between people involved in projects and people involved in evaluation, for example, there may be opportunities to share insights on how things can be done differently. This is in addition to the final evaluation report that you end up with. Thus, learning can be informal where going through the process of an evaluation can be instrumental in helping to create learning within an institution like the Bank.

Q: Why is it important that evaluations are influential?

Evaluation by itself has no intrinsic value. It only has value if it is used in some way to help to make a difference. Indeed, if it is not used in some way, an evaluation can even be negative, for example consuming human and financial resources.

Furthermore, there are no easy answers to most development challenges. Since there is no such thing as the perfect program or strategy, we look at the extent to which the right approaches are being used to address the challenges faced and whether they can be improved in some way. Evaluation has the potential to be an important resource, a tool to learn what is working well and why, by contacting and getting insights from...
beneficiaries for example and to help identify ideas about what else might be done or might be done better.

For example, the AfDB’s mission to achieve sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth that leads to poverty reduction is challenging. Evaluation has the potential to play a significant role in helping the Bank. No single program will achieve these things by itself, but by learning from one piece of the puzzle you can help make the other ones work better.

It is important to bear in mind that evaluation is often viewed as a negative thing, something that identifies problems. But evaluation can and should also identify what is working well and this can validate good practices that should be continued or even expanded, and can also help generate energy in being even more effective.

Q: What are the factors that contribute to evaluations’ influence?

The first and arguably most important factor is the need to think about impact from the very start. Too often the evaluation process is focused on developing a report and going through the motions. But really thinking about how your evaluation impacts people’s lives sets the stage for impact and influence. Often, without thinking in those terms it just doesn’t happen.

**" the most important factor [contributing to an evaluation’s influence] is the need to think about impact from the very start. Too often the evaluation process is focused on developing a report."

Secondly, we need to recognize that meaningful change rarely happens just as a result of a single intervention. It’s important that evaluators look at what they can and can’t accomplish, bearing this in mind.

Another important factor that contributes to influential evaluations, is taking a positive and constructive approach. This doesn’t mean ignoring the things that are evidently not going well in a project, but rather to frame these in a constructive context, such as what could be done more or better. Furthermore, we need to document what is working well because we need to also be looking at what we can do, not just what we shouldn’t do.

Another important way to make evaluations influential is to actively engage key stakeholders throughout the evaluation, the intended users, other stakeholders such as Regional Member Countries and civil society, and intended beneficiaries of the projects or strategies being evaluated. It is helpful and important to hear their perspectives. This engagement needs to involve far more than sharing terms of reference or draft reports, or asking for comments or just interviewing people. It needs close collaboration throughout the entire evaluation process. This can include for example joint discussions on the focus of the evaluation, which questions should be answered, or also on emerging findings and potential implications.

**"...engage key stakeholders throughout the evaluation, the intended users, other stakeholders such as Regional Member Countries and civil society, as well as intended beneficiaries of the projects or strategies being evaluated."

Having credible evidence for the different stakeholders who might be using it,
contributes to evaluations’ influence, as well as adding voice to the voiceless. An evaluation can show how strategies affect people for whom they seem pretty remote.

Engagement need to compromise the independence of the evaluation. Ultimately, the evaluator has an obligation to tell the truth, but invariably through discussing these things, an approach can be found that everyone can live with. Engagement throughout the evaluation process can help develop ownership in evaluation, with stakeholders more likely to be interested in investing time and energy in acting upon it. An active approach such as this requires an investment of time but there is the potential of a strong payback.

Flexibility and responsiveness are also very important. Programs do not operate in a static environment and things are changing at a rapid pace. The COVID-19 pandemic is a great example of how we just can’t assume the ongoing appropriateness and relevance of objectives, indicators and targets set in advance. As the context changes, new opportunities inevitably emerge as well. It is important that the evaluation responds to the changes in the program and adapts to its context.

For evaluations to be influential, it’s also important to explore explanations and generate an understanding of why something has been happening or not. You cannot inform future directions without knowing why.

**On evaluation for accountability vs. for learning:**

We often view accountability and learning as polar opposites. But it depends on how we approach accountability. Asking difficult questions and acting upon these, not only doing evaluation but also using evaluation to improve, these are really high standards to have. Accountability in this way is part and parcel of learning.

**Q: What kind of a relationship and collaboration are needed between the evaluator and the evaluand?**

It is about establishing a collaborative process, not just sharing TORs. Sometimes evaluation is seen as a necessary evil, something to endure. However, if it is viewed and approached in the right way, it can represent a real asset and an opportunity, which in addition to providing ideas about program effectiveness, can also identify barriers outside the program’s direct control.

Ideally, there needs to be some form of partnership process where the program being evaluated and the evaluator are working together to enhance the value of the evaluation, to make it as meaningful as possible. This way the evaluation can be viewed as a tool that can help programs improve, to learn to better address the needs of the intended beneficiaries.

“Evaluation is too important for just evaluators to do.”

It is not just the evaluator who has an important role to play. Evaluation is too important for evaluators to do just by themselves. We found that looking at those evaluations that have made a difference, invariably there was someone to champion it. Sometimes this was someone at a senior level who can encourage his or her staff to support the evaluation, or sometimes it was someone part of the program that became
a natural champion. Users are also the ones that can embed evaluation and evaluation thinking within the program. Finally, the users of an evaluation often have better ideas than the evaluators in terms of how best to engage with key stakeholders, improving the influence of an evaluation.

Therefore, engagement is key. The benefits can flow both ways: On the one hand, the right engagement provides an opportunity for those involved in what is being evaluated to influence the direction of the evaluation, ensuring that it is asking the right questions, making it more relevant. On the other hand, the engagement also increases the ownership by key stakeholders, making them much more likely to act upon the recommendations.

What can also follow from the engagement of users in the evaluation process is referred to as process use. One often thinks of an evaluation exercise as ending with someone reading a final report, looking through the recommendations and the lessons learned. However, there is extensive literature that says that how an evaluation is done is an important factor in how it is used. When users are engaged in the evaluation process, they often can gain insights well before they are listed in a final report, as well as other small details that may not make it into the report.

Q: At the AfDB Evaluation Week, you will interact with young and emerging evaluators, evaluators from the African Development Bank as well as the global evaluation community. What will your message be, thinking about what we discussed today?

I want to leave you with three key points to remember:
Firstly, we need to recognize the strong potential for evaluation to be influential, to make a difference and to play a contributing role to better programs, policies and directions – and for improved lives of people living in Africa.

Secondly, this influence is not automatic – there are many things that an evaluator can do to help make an evaluation useful and influential.

Thirdly, there are key roles, not just for evaluators but also users of evaluation. These roles could be to help support influential evaluations that in turn can help them enhance the impact of what they are trying to do.

For more information

For more ideas about how evaluation can help to make a difference, see the publication Evaluations that Make a Difference: Stories from Around the World, available in both English and French at https://evaluationstories.wordpress.com/evaluation-story-publications/

Burt Perrin’s most recent publication: Changing Bureaucracies: Adapting to Uncertainty, and How Evaluation Can Help has just been published by Routledge. For more information go to https://bit.ly/3353qJk

Burt can be contacted at Burt@BurtPerrin.com
1. Why do you think it is important for development institutions to draw learning from monitoring and evaluations? We have been doing this for so long, surely we should know all there is to know by now?

Any successful organization has to learn continuously. Learning is not a one-time event. What there is to learn—like the real world—evolves. Most importantly, we must also apply the lessons to enact change. Monitoring provides us with real-time information to help adapt, and if needed, redirect our efforts. Evaluation looks deeper and even questions, not just how are we doing, but why we are doing it. That’s an important role.

2. Which institutional factors (e.g., corporate structure and hierarchies, ownership, client relationships etc.) enable or inhibit learning from evaluations? How so?

Of course, many institutional factors come into play. Two factors you didn’t mention in your question are time and resources. Many staff are very interested in learning from evaluations, but carving out the time to do so is not always easy. However, barriers to learning are just as much about the evaluations themselves. Is the evaluation on a relevant topic about which we need new information? Is it delivered at the opportune time to inform a new direction or strategy? Is it credible—meaning is it of high enough quality, based on solid evidence, and offering practical recommendations that will help to address the issues found?
3. Does a culture of learning in an institution automatically imply a culture of evaluation?

Not necessarily. An evaluation culture is more specific from a learning perspective, but can also involve aspects other than learning. Sometimes evaluations have been much more focused on accountability than learning, even if on paper they seek to cover both. The current focus on rating even at sector, country and theme level, can be a distraction from the learning objective, as discussion inevitably centers on that. For evaluation to really be about learning it needs to focus on what has worked and what has not worked, including why not, and what do we need to do differently.

4. How do you convince staff to see evaluation as a beneficial process that leads to improvement of the Bank’s work, rather than a necessary evil?

I believe it was Winston Churchill who said “I like learning but I don’t like being taught”. I think evaluators sometimes under-estimate the extent to which the organization wants and values evaluation and broader learning. Staff are interested and want to be implicated both in learning and in generating the knowledge. Yes, people may find it hard to fit in their busy schedules, but my experience is that if the evaluation is of high quality and well-timed, staff certainly do see it as beneficial. Often a good evaluation will ring true to those dealing with certain challenges day-to-day and they appreciate that an external party has taken time to examine, reflect, and offer possible solutions. It can also open doors to obtaining answers they know are needed, but have not been able to get traction on themselves.

5. As institutional learning evolves, what are some of the trends or directions you see organizations such as the AfDB moving into, in terms of learning and knowledge management, and what role will evaluation play in these changes?

We are all digital champions now, right? Online learning, workshops, seminars, etc. are important and they have pros and cons. For operations staff at the AfDB, we are investing in online training, but that has to be supplemented by the kind of discussion which solicits broader learning. And most importantly, the real learning happens not by talking about it, but by doing it. Benjamin Franklin is quoted as saying: “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn”. It’s true. The best learning is by doing.

But evaluation can bring important evidence to the fore, and pull out specific lessons from past experiences. Targeting those lessons on specific issues (avoiding the highly generic lessons) and disseminating to the right, well-targeted audience, is key.
This year, IDEV celebrates 40 years of evaluation at the African Development Bank (AfDB). Ever since the first dedicated evaluation unit was established in 1980, evaluation has become an integral part of how the Bank operates, how it is held accountable and how it learns from what works and what does not. What was a small unit grew into the Operations Evaluation Department (OPEV) and eventually the Independent Development Evaluation function (IDEV) with over 40 staff. We spoke to some current and former team members and asked them for their reflections on their time at IDEV.
What has been the biggest change since you joined?

Mohamed Hedi Manaï, Former Division Manager, IDEV

I joined the Bank on 4 March 1991 as Senior Evaluation Officer at what was to become IDEV, then the Operations Evaluation Department (OPEV). From first being part of research and planning, reporting to the President in the 1980s and 1990s, the department changed its reporting line to the Board, through its Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness (CODE), in 1996. In 2002, OPEV’s mandate was clarified by a presidential directive and in 2007, the first independent evaluation policy was approved. It stressed the full compliance of the evaluation function with international norms and good practice standards across the Multilateral Development Banks. This was the biggest change since I joined the Bank, as the department became structurally independent.

Eneas Gakusi, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

For me the biggest change has been the growth of the department in terms of the number of staff and composition: the number of women (professional and general staff), junior consultants and young staff. Also, the department used to have a horizontal structure where all professional staff reported to the Director. The department was organized into two divisions only in 2009 (Projects & Programs Evaluation and Higher Level Evaluation). In 2013, the division for Knowledge Management, Outreach and Capacity Building was born, which helped the activities and the products of the department to be more visible.

Joseph Mouanda, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

Let me talk about a challenge rather than a change. The biggest challenge since I joined the Bank has been to transform the Bank from an approval culture to an effective results-based culture. For a long time and like other Multilateral Development Banks such as the World Bank, and even after the 1994 Knox report on the quality of projects (AfDB) and the 1992 Wapenhans report on effective implementation (World Bank), the quest for results in AfDB remains a long journey.

Foday Turay, former Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

For me, the most visible change is structural: from a small department with all staff reporting to the Director in 2005 to what it is today, a department with a matrix structure comprising the office of the Evaluator General, and three Divisions with clear lines of responsibilities. The fact that the focus of the third Division is on knowledge management, outreach and evaluation capacity development underlines the importance that the Department gives to providing a basis for accountability and to promoting a learning and evaluation culture within and outside the Bank.
Mohamed Hedi Manaï, Former Division Manager, IDEV

For me, the most memorable moments were the efforts to develop evaluation capacity in regional member countries and the support provided to strengthen national evaluation systems and networks such as the African Evaluation Association (AfReA), the Centers for Learning, Evaluation and Results (CLEAR), and other initiatives such as the Evaluation Platform for Regional African Development Institutions (EPRADI), the African Parliamentarians’ Network for Development Evaluation (APNODE), and the “Twende Mbele” Initiative.

In 1990, the Bank, through OPEV, organized the first conference on evaluation, which attracted attention from developing country governments and donors alike and was followed by other conferences, meetings, and training sessions in other parts of the world. Eight years later, in 1998, it was time to take stock of what African governments and donors had accomplished: a regional seminar and workshop on evaluation was held in Abidjan on 16–19 November 1998. It brought together delegates from 12 African countries, donors, and private sector professionals. The conference stressed that evaluation capacity in a country rests on real demand for evaluation to address real information needs, on appropriate institutional structures, and on the capability of evaluation personnel to provide the information needed in a responsive, professional, and timely manner. Since then, evaluation has been put high on the agenda of government decision-makers, donors, civil society organizations and the private sector in Africa.

Ruby Adzobu-Agyare, Secretary, IDEV

There are quite a number of them but the remarkable one is around 1997–2000 when we worked together as a team of less than 20 and everybody was approachable just as a “Father” and his “Kids” at home; maybe because of the small number at the time.

Joseph Mouanda, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

The most memorable moment was when, as an evaluation assistant, within a short term staff position, I won in 2005 an AfDB award for Best Web Coordinator. I realized later that I had the mindset of a “leader without a title” and as said by the renowned author Robin Sharma “titles don't make leaders”.

Foday Turay, former Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

This concerns an issue from a project evaluation field data collection mission in one of the Bank’s Regional Member Countries (RMCs). The issue was my failed attempt to engage, in a project evaluation, a key project stakeholder with high political power and with little or no interest in the evaluation. The issue has kept me reflecting for a long time on how best to appropriately and meaningfully engage key stakeholders especially the politically powerful in an evaluation. I concluded that we need to (i) understand the typologies of the different types project evaluation stakeholders, (ii) develop appropriate engagement strategy for
each stakeholder subgroup, and (iii) to understand the implementation cost of each strategy, as some of the strategies are unlikely to be cost effective.

What did/do you like most about working in evaluation at the AfDB?

Eneas Gakusi, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

The possibility to lead influential thematic and sector evaluations in different areas: health, education, inclusive finance, regional integration, multinational projects, and finance in general. It gave me the opportunity to interact with the Bank’s internal and external stakeholders, to work in different countries and interview various people from beneficiaries in poor communities to ministries.

One lesson I learned is that it can often be helpful for the evaluator to propose refocusing or broadening the scope of the evaluation initially requested by the authorizing entity (Management, the Board, any other stakeholders). This allows him or her to address the issues at hand while assessing the design, the implementation process, as well as outcomes. The second lesson is to combine quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, to increase the reliability of the findings and to provide a broader framework for their interpretation. The third lesson is that to be influential, an evaluation must address the question of when and how the findings can most effectively be produced and used; studying the context within which the Bank’s operations and programs are implemented is key.

Ruby Adzobu-Agyare, Secretary, IDEV

I love working in evaluation because one gets to know the whole Bank better as one interacts with every level. This broadens your mind and personality as one comes across different cultures internally and externally.

Joseph Mouanda, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

Working in the evaluation department gives me the opportunity to engage with people on the ground. It is the only way you can truly appreciate the impact of the Bank’s interventions and discover the untold stories and people’s real feelings. Also, the fact that my role as an independent evaluator helps the Bank to learn and improve its operations gives me great joy, as it impacts the lives of people.

Foday Turay, former Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

What I liked most is the available space to be innovative in making evaluation meaningful and useful to the Board, Management and operations staff. This space enabled me to build, while maintaining my independence, trustworthy professional relationship with colleagues in Operations Complexes, and to enhance my understanding of development challenges, opportunities and insights.
How do you see evaluation in the next 40 years: Challenges and opportunities?

Mohamed Hedi Manai, Former Division Manager, IDEV

Although considerable investments were made by the department in communication, the creation of an evaluation culture within the Bank remains a challenge. Increased action is still needed on the part of the Bank’s senior leadership and operations complexes to signal their commitment to effective use of evaluation lessons. The Bank needs to promote evaluative thinking to effectively help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Strengthening self-evaluation systems and evaluation capacity building activities in addition increasing real-time evaluations are especially needed during this pandemic, where tight and short feedback loops may overcome difficult lockdown conditions for quality evaluation implementation and use.

Eneas Gakusi, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

In 40 years, it is possible to surmise that the practice of evaluation will continue to increase, using new theories, methods and new information technologies, which will help produce real-time evaluations. The future will depend on the capacity to build on the accumulated achievements. There will be continuously different ways of managing evaluations: relying on the in-house capacity of the staff, consultants, and a mixture of both modalities. I believe that in the future, evaluation will be a fully-fledged discipline exercised by experts who graduated in evaluation and related disciplines with more theoretical and technical skills. Management and development practices will be much more evaluations-based.

Ruby Adzobu-Agyare, Secretary, IDEV

With the changes and achievements I see in only the past 40 years, evaluation is going to be one, if not the most, solicited area in the Bank to improve upon its operations. Evaluation is going to be more understood and embraced in all Bank operations. I am very proud that we have come this far in only 40 years when I look back and see how evaluation was at the time I joined the Bank. Long live Evaluation!!!

Joseph Mouanda, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV

In the next 40 years, algorithms and digital technology will greatly influence the evaluation work, and the evaluator will play a more advisory role in addition to that of analyst, to foster development impact.

References

- Genesis and Evolution of the Evaluation Function at the AfDB
- 40 Years of Evaluation at The AfDB: Memories From Staff
2,078 Evaluation reports

1,142 Independent evaluations
963 Project-level evaluations
936 Self-evaluations
179 Higher-level evaluations

Note: All data as of November 17, 2020
Key dates

Evaluation at the African Development Bank dates back 40 years

- 1980: First evaluation unit established with the creation of a special division within the Bank’s Research and Planning Department
- 1987: The division becomes Operations Evaluation Office reporting to the President
- 1990: The division becomes Operations Evaluation Office reporting to the President
- 1993: The department’s mandate is reviewed and defined by a Presidential Directive
- 1996: The evaluation office is upgraded to a department (Operations Evaluation Department, OPEV)
- 2002: The evaluation function becomes independent, with the Board of Directors assuming oversight through the General Audit Committee
- 2007: The Board approves a substantially revised Independent Evaluation Policy
- 2010: The Board approves the first independent evaluation policy and functional responsibilities of the evaluation department
- 2014: The Board approves the Independent Evaluation Strategy
- 2015: The name of the department is changed to Independent Development Evaluation to better reflect its independence and mandate
- 2018: The Board approves the Independent Evaluation Strategy

Former (acting) Directors of Independent Evaluation

- 1987–90: Wolde-Mariam Girma
- 1990–93: Emmanuel Tetegan
- 1996–2000: Kebedo Teremgoy
- 2000–04: Gabriel Kariku
- 2004–06: Olakoji Ojo
- 2006–07: Olugbenga Oju
- 2007–10: Douglas Barnett
- 2010–13: Mohammad Faruk
- 2013–18: Rakesh Nangia
- 2018–19: Karen Rot-Munstermann
- 2019–2020: Roland Michellitsch

Key IDEV e-Resources

EVRD: Evaluation Results Database
Launched in 2012
- Documents: 2,090
- Lessons: 6,650
- Recommendations: 7,089

Management Action Record System
Launched in 2015
- Evaluations: 61
- Recommendations: 352
- Actions: 1,049

IDEV website audience over the last four years
- Visitors: 54,693
- Sessions: 100,342
- Pageviews: 335,847

Number of products disseminated

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1. Refers to independent, higher-level evaluations to which management has provided a formal response in which it commits to actions.
The first Management Action Record System report on the follow-up of recommendations from independent evaluations is published

IDEV has published its first report assessing the follow-up by the AfDB of recommendations from its independent evaluations, which are tracked through the Management Action Record System (MARS). The IDEV report finds the level of adoption of recommendations, which considers the alignment of AfDB Management actions to evaluation recommendations as well as the timeliness of their implementation, to be very low. Only a quarter of the 198 recommendations examined had a high or substantial level of adoption. This is mainly because Management often implemented actions much later than scheduled.

Read more:

Accelerating transformation of Africa’s agriculture and health through the water sector

From Mozambique in the South to Morocco in the North, 20 million people in rural and urban areas of Africa have been provided access to clean drinking water for the first time, thanks to AfDB projects, an IDEV evaluation report found. This is significant in the COVID-19 pandemic since the spread of the virus is closely related to water and sanitation. Ensuring reliable access to clean water for drinking and handwashing can reduce the transmission of the coronavirus and help people stay healthy.

Read more:
APNODE Vice-Chairperson and IDEV Participate in the 2nd Edition of the Ivorian Evaluation Morning

On Friday 13 November 2020, Hon. Abbas Imbassou Ouattara, Vice Chairperson of the African Parliamentarians’ Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE), and Debazou Yantio, representing IDEV, participated in the 2nd edition of the Ivorian Evaluation Morning hosted by the Réseau Ivoirien de Suivi et d’Evaluation (RISE). The event took place at the National Assembly of Côte d’Ivoire under the theme “Partners at the heart of promoting monitoring and evaluation in Côte d’Ivoire: Roles and actions,” as part of the EvalPartners Flagship Program on Strengthening National Evaluation Systems.

Read more

Webinar: Closing the Action-Learning-Action Loop: Integrating Lessons Learnt from IDEV Water Evaluations into Feed Africa and Water for Health Operations

This two-hour virtual session, which took place on 30 July 2020, aimed to provide a foundation for developing practical and replicable solutions to address policy and institutional constraints related to the Bank’s interventions in the water and agriculture sectors. It was an opportunity for the participants to exchange ideas on the issues that emerged from the selected evaluations, the takeaways from the Bank’s ongoing water sector policy development process, and the linkages between nutrition, water management, and sanitation.

Read more:

After a successful impact evaluation of two AfDB-supported small-scale irrigation projects in Malawi, two learning webinars were organized on 30 October and 8 December for approximately 80 AfDB staff and 40 Malawi Government officials, respectively, to discuss the outcomes of IDEV’s impact evaluation.

This learning event took place on 30 October 2020 and aimed at engaging with the Bank’s Management and operations teams working on agriculture, water, and irrigation projects. Over 80 people from different operations departments participated. The two-hour discussion provided a better understanding of the factors that affect the development outcomes of irrigation projects and existing opportunities to incorporate the lessons and recommendations from evaluations into the design of future Bank irrigation interventions.

Read more at https://idev.afdb.org/en/event/towards-better-design-and-implementation-irrigation-interventions-leveraging-knowledge-malawi

Two APNODE webinars focus on evaluation for decision making in Cameroon and Zimbabwe

A webinar held on 16 November, focusing on Cameroon, looked at evaluation tools and good practices for effective decision-making by parliamentarians. Hon. Sen. Etamé Massoma, Member of the Board of APNODE Cameroon, moderated the webinar. It centered on the lessons and experiences of Cameroonian deputies and senators regarding the use of and benefits of evaluation in their daily activities, and the associated challenges.

On 11 December, a webinar focusing on Zimbabwe highlighted factors that have influenced the uptake of evaluating public policies. Hon. Sen. Langton Chikukwa, Chairperson of APNODE Zimbabwe, moderated the session, which also looked at key challenges in evaluating policies and how the Parliament of Zimbabwe has attempted to mitigate them.

Read more about the Cameroon and Zimbabwe webinars.
**Evaluation Synthesis of Gender Mainstreaming at the AfDB**

IDEV carried out an evaluation synthesis on gender mainstreaming at the AfDB since the beginning of the Bank’s Gender Strategy (2014–2018). The purpose was to draw lessons for the AfDB’s new gender strategy and to enrich the knowledge base about gender mainstreaming. The evaluation examined 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. A synthesis of evaluative evidence from comparator institutions was also undertaken to build on IDEV’s synthesis of external evidence on gender mainstreaming in 2012.

Find out more:  

**Evaluation of the AfDB’s Self-Evaluation Systems and Processes**

IDEV has conducted an evaluation of the Self-evaluation Systems and Processes (SESP) of the AfDB, covering the period 2013–2018. SESP are defined as the assessment made of an activity (project, program, policy or theme) by the entity engaged in the intervention. The evaluation looked at the functioning of the SESP along three main dimensions: relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. It tried to answer the question: “Do the SESP support performance management, accountability, and learning at the Bank?”, and two underlying sub-questions: (i) how well are the SESP performing? and (ii) to what extent are the SESP impacting the quality of development results?

Find out more:  

The African Water Facility (AWF) is 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. After almost 15 years of implementation, during which the AWF had approved 118 operations in 52 countries for a total volume of USD 196 million, the AfDB, the trustee of the AWF, commissioned an independent evaluation of the Facility over the period 2005–2018.

Find out more:

Evaluation of the AfDB’s Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa

IDEV has conducted an evaluation of the AfDB’s Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa for the period 2014–2019, covering 388 operations for a total amount of USD 6.7 billion. The evaluation covered the Bank's assistance to Low-Income Countries eligible for the African Development Fund, and featured on the Bank’s lists of Transition States (countries where the main development challenge is fragility). The evaluation assessed the relevance of the Strategy and the Bank's effectiveness in implementing it. The aim of the evaluation is to inform the development of a new Bank Strategy addressing fragility.

Find out more:
Evaluation of the Bank’s Role in Increasing Access to Finance in Africa - Thematic Evaluation

IDEV conducted a thematic evaluation to assess the relevance and quality of the AfDB’s Financial Sector Development Policy and Strategy. It looked at the relevance, quality of design, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the financial sector development operations approved by the Bank between 2011 and 2018. The evaluation examined 226 of these operations amounting to USD 13,411 million.

Find out more:

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

IDEV undertook a cluster evaluation of 32 Bank financial sector development operations that had been extended to financial institutions and governments in seven countries selected from the five African regions. It informed the thematic evaluation (above) of the Bank’s role in increasing access to finance in Africa. The project cluster evaluation purposefully focused on countries where the Bank had multiple operations during the period under consideration (2011–2018), including Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Cameroon, Namibia, Kenya, Egypt and Tunisia.

Find out more:

The private sector is considered a key contributor to growth and poverty reduction in Africa, as it creates nine-tenths of jobs, three-fourths of economic output and two-thirds of investments. Guided by international evaluation criteria and standards, IDEV conducted an evaluation of the Bank’s 2013-2019 Private Sector Development Strategy to take stock of its implementation and assess its contribution to the Bank’s efficiency and effectiveness, with a view to informing the new Strategy that is currently under preparation.

To establish credible evaluation evidence, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect information from different sources, and the data were triangulated and analyzed. Seven country case studies were undertaken.

Find out more:

Past issues


This edition explores how the fourth industrial revolution, digitization and the associated boom in disruptive technologies are shaping the practice of evaluation primarily in Africa, and its implications for the African Development Bank’s work.

First Quarter 2020: Promoting an Evaluation Culture in 2020 and Beyond

A “culture of evaluation” is often lauded as a key solution to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of governments, development organizations and international financial institutions alike.

Fourth Quarter 2019: Made in Africa Evaluations Volume 2: Practical Applications

This edition and second volume on ‘Made in Africa Evaluations (MAE)’, explores practical indigenous evaluation applications and how they can fast-track the achievement of the continental development compacts – the UN Agenda 2030 and its SDGs and the African Union Commission’s Agenda 2063. Contributors also explore the application of the MAE concept and what MAE evaluations should look like in practice.

Third Quarter 2019: Made in Africa Evaluations Volume 1: Theoretical Approaches

This edition addresses theoretical approaches toward a ‘Made in Africa Evaluation’, reviewing indigenous tools and techniques and how they can advance the achievement of Africa’s development agenda. Contributors address key questions such as: What is meant by ‘Made in Africa evaluation’ and how does it differ from other approaches? What unique insights can an African cognitive lens bring to evaluation? How should countries go about creating indigenous evaluation practices?