
What did IDEV evaluate?
IDEV conducted an evaluation of the quality of supervision and exit processes of both the public and private sector operations of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB, or “the Bank”) between 2012 and 2017. The evaluation covers both public and private sector operations that were effective and active between 2012 and 2017, with a total approval value of close to USD 8.2 billion, excluding emergency and equity operations and grants. The evaluation sought to ascertain the relevance, compliance and efficiency of the Bank’s project supervision framework, and how it aligns with best practice; how the Bank’s quality assurance framework performs during project implementation and completion; and the factors that shape its effectiveness. Furthermore, the evaluation sought to draw lessons that would inform the future use of supervision by the Bank under its transformation agenda, to ensure development impact and organizational learning.

What did IDEV find?

**Relevance: Are we doing the right things?**
Supervision policies, guidelines and tools were found to be largely relevant and clear. However, the evaluation noted that the complementarity, use and follow-up of supervision tools and teams require strengthening, and that monitoring and reporting on development outcomes is weak. In particular, with regard to public sector projects, the evaluation showed consistent progress on portfolio monitoring, but also noted that project supervision is not sufficiently proactive, and mechanisms to ensure candid reporting are very limited. The Bank’s project management information system does not adequately support monitoring, knowledge generation and learning.

**Compliance and Efficiency: Are we doing things right and to good quality standards?**
Some aspects, such as supervision team composition and timely submission of supervisions reports, show partial achievements. However, challenges were noted relating to the capacity to ensure that problems identified through supervision are resolved in good time. For the public sector, the evaluation noted challenges in the timely delivery of Project Completion Reports, which did not allow for a systematic approach to recording lessons learned. For private sector projects, the inability to collect reliable information on development outcomes during supervision also affects the quality of reporting. Supervision instruments, especially Project Launches and Mid-Term Reviews, are not used systematically.
Performance and Sustainability: How is supervision implemented and sustained?

The evaluation found that while recent portfolio monitoring efforts have supported risk-focused supervision, attention to project-related issues in monitoring remains crucial. At project level, there is need to put in place M&E systems with sound project logic and to ensure appropriate data collection. The attention paid to supervision at exit is still limited, especially in ensuring quality in the reporting of results and in the capturing of lessons. The Bank does not differentiate supervision based on operation type, levels of risk or country context - a missed opportunity to maximize efficiency in resource planning and budgeting.

The evaluation also found that the Bank has difficulties in institutionalizing a culture of quality and results, like incentivizing staff, mobilizing all the crucial skills, and strengthening accountability in project supervision.

What did Management respond?

Management welcomed IDEV’s efforts to assess the quality of supervision and exit of the AfDB’s operations, and to provide lessons that can improve operational quality and enhance the Bank’s effectiveness in achieving the goals of its Ten-Year Strategy (2013–2022) and the strategic objectives of the High 5s. The High 5s are the AfDB’s five priority areas for transforming Africa - Light up and power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa, and Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa. From its own assessment of the Bank’s quality management systems, Management has identified several reform areas that provide a framework for considering IDEV’s evaluation recommendations.

About IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) at the African Development Bank carries out independent evaluations of Bank operations, policies and strategies, working across projects, sectors, themes, regions, and countries. By conducting independent evaluations and proactively sharing best practice, IDEV ensures that the Bank and its stakeholders learn from experience and plan and deliver development activities to the highest possible standards.

What did IDEV recommend?

The evaluation made the following recommendations to the Bank:

- **Proactive project management.** Promote a proactive approach to supervision according to the project type and level of risk exposure for public sector operations. Strengthen reporting on development outcomes, with special supervision missions for private sector operations.
- **Compliance with Bank rules.** Ensure adherence to the Bank’s quality standards for supervision and completion.
- **Quality reporting.** Increase the evidence-base and credibility of reporting on results through Project Completion Reports, and develop an integrated management information system across the project cycle.
- **Results and quality culture.** Strengthen and align staff capacity and incentives around supervision.

Evaluation Task Manager: Akua Arthur-Kissi, Senior Evaluation Officer, IDEV 2
Evaluation Team Members: Armand Eric Yal, Junior Consultant, IDEV 2
Publication coordinated by: Jacqueline Nyagahima, Principal Knowledge Management Officer, Zilper Audi, Junior Consultant, IDEV 3

Date of publication: October 2018
Full report available at idev.afdb.org