What did IDEV evaluate?
IDEV evaluated the African Development Bank Group’s Country Strategy and Program in Mauritius for the period 2009–2018. Over this period, the Bank’s assistance to the country was about UA 618 million (USD 854 million), which was spread over 10 operations. Most of this assistance was channeled through multisector lending (budget support), followed by the finance and power sectors (see Figure 1).

The objectives of this evaluation were (i) to assess the extent to which the planned development outcomes from key Bank interventions in Mauritius were achieved, and the reasons they were achieved (or not); and (ii) to provide recommendations and lessons learned to inform the Bank’s next Country Strategy and Program in Mauritius.

What did IDEV find?

Relevance: The relevance of the Bank’s strategies and programs in Mauritius was rated satisfactory. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the Bank’s strategies addressed the critical needs that were key for the continuity of the country’s economic performance, and they were aligned with the vision and plans of the Government of Mauritius (GoM) for the country’s future. However, the Bank lacked strategic perspective and a coherent sectoral approach, which limited the leverage effect of its assistance.

Effectiveness: The effectiveness of the Bank’s assistance was deemed unsatisfactory. While the Bank managed to deliver most of the outputs of the approved operations, many other planned operations did not materialize, limiting the Bank’s contribution to the country’s development outcomes. This was due in part to the GoM’s changing priorities and to its reluctance to use AfDB sovereign loans.

Efficiency: The efficiency of the Bank’s assistance was also found unsatisfactory. The Bank’s operations in Mauritius during the evaluation period faced significant implementation delays. The main reasons were related to changes in the country context,
What did Management respond?

Management welcomed the IDEV report on the Bank’s operations in Mauritius for the period 2009-2018. It attributed the progressive improvements and flexibility in implementing the Bank's programs over the period to the combined effort of the Bank and the GoM, with support from development partners. Management noted that the report was timely and of great relevance, and that it would inform the design of the Bank’s next strategy in Mauritius.

Crosscutting issues: The sustainability of Bank’s support to Mauritius was rated satisfactory. Overall, the Bank's interventions in various sectors have either been sustainable (e.g. energy) or have the potential to enable the country to continue implementing bankable and sustainable infrastructure and other projects (e.g. dams, ports, Mauritius Commercial Bank, etc...).

Knowledge and policy advice: Few of the planned economic and sector works were actually undertaken, although those that were delivered did inform policy dialogue. During the evaluation period, the Bank’s policy dialogue and advisory services did not meet the GoM’s expectations, especially in terms of the speed and quality of technical knowledge transfer.

What did IDEV recommend for the next strategy?

1. Strategy alignment: In designing the strategy, the Bank should critically review the country’s willingness to use Bank resources and intensify strategic dialogue with the country stakeholders, especially when there are changes in leadership or policy.

2. Private sector development: The Bank should consider suitable financing mechanisms including partial risk guarantees, loan syndication and private equity participation in Mauritian firms that have investments in the country.

3. Use of program-based operations: The Bank should adopt a programmatic approach to budget support to allow it the flexibility to adjust to the country’s changing environment.

4. Policy dialogue and advisory services: The Bank needs to devise alternative instruments and mobilize adequate resources to enable it to respond effectively and rapidly to the expectations of the country in terms of advisory services and policy dialogue.

5. Crosscutting issues: The Bank should strengthen the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in the design and implementation of its next strategy in Mauritius, including youth employment and gender equality in the labor market.