

## ► Finland

### Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the Under-Secretary of State, Evaluation of Development Co-operation (EVA-11)

#### Mandate

Recent institutional reforms resulted in evaluation being separated from the internal audit and performance review functions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Evaluation of Development Co-operation (EVA-11) is now an independent entity attached to the office of the Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy and Co-operation.

The role of the Evaluation of Development Co-operation (EVA-11) entity is to manage large or strategically significant work, such as thematic and wide programmatic evaluations and evaluations of cross-cutting issues including human rights and democracy, poverty reduction and protection of the environment. The unit operates according to a Ministry by-law on evaluation, which is currently being updated to reflect the new institutional setting. Further direction is provided by the *Evaluation Guidelines: Between Past and Future* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2007) which outlines basic principles of development evaluation. The unit seeks to comply with DAC evaluation principles in the organisation and process of its development evaluations.




Decentralised evaluations are built in to all project and programme plans. The unit will, on occasion, undertake evaluations which would normally be done by the decentralised systems when capacity is low, the evaluations are complex or independence and externality of the evaluators is of special value.

#### Independence

The Evaluation of Development Co-operation (EVA-11) is an independent, separate entity in the office of the Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy and Co-operation. The Director of EVA-11 reports directly to the Under-Secretary of State. EVA-11 develops the evaluation plans and discusses these with the Under-Secretary of State.

Evaluation is independent from operational development co-operation and the Department for Development Policy. EVA-11 has its own budget line (shared with internal audit) and the annual allocations are decided by Parliament. All evaluations are carried out by external consultants selected through competitive bidding. EVA-11 has access to the documentation of senior management and while it does not regularly attend management meetings, it may bring important issues to the agenda and participate in these meetings as needed.

#### Snapshot of evaluation resources – Finland

 Director
  Senior evaluator + one senior capacity building/evaluation expert to join in 2010  
 One junior staff, one trainee, one office assistant

**USD 1.7 million** (2009)

**0.2% of ODA**  
(2008 disbursements)



Produces an average of 6 to 9 evaluations per year;  
in 2008 four joint evaluations were completed.

Quality

DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and the EU quality standards are both regularly included as annexes to the contracts of external consultants performing evaluations to ensure quality outputs and a credible process. These Standards are also used during the discussions of and feedback on draft reports.

According to a 2007 meta-analysis (looking at decentralised and centralised evaluation reports from 2006) the quality is fairly good, with an average rating of 3.44 out of 5 (for a total of 29 reports). The “design of evaluations” scored lowest of all criteria, at 3.15. None of the 29 reports received an overall rating of “poor”. A new meta-analysis for 2008 and 2007 development evaluations was being carried out at the time of writing.

Reporting and use

All evaluation results are made public and the budget includes the cost of publishing and distributing evaluation reports. The current distribution (free of charge) of printed reports is wide and reports are regularly made available to Ministry staff at headquarters and in the field, as well as to Parliament and, upon request, to media and civil society groups. Reports are also distributed in partner countries via Finland’s embassies.

A mechanism to ensure management response and follow-up action has been in place since 2008. The management response is presented in a table, prepared by the evaluation manager, which includes recommendations, the response decision and stakeholders’ comments.

Since piloting this function in 2008, the Development Policy Quality Group also serves as a platform for a horizontal discussion of the results of evaluations and the possible management response actions proposed by EVA-11. The members of the Quality Group are derived from the various units and departments administering development co-operation funds. The group is not a decision-making body but can provide recommendations.

On the basis of the formal decision by the senior management, the EVA-11 issues an official request for action to the relevant units and departments. Management response documents are available through the archive information service.

Summary of the evaluation process and reporting

