

► New Zealand

Strategy, Advisory and Evaluation Group

New Zealand's International Aid and Development Programme (NZAID) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Please note: At the time of writing the organisation was beginning a change process, the results of which are not yet known and therefore not reflected in this profile.

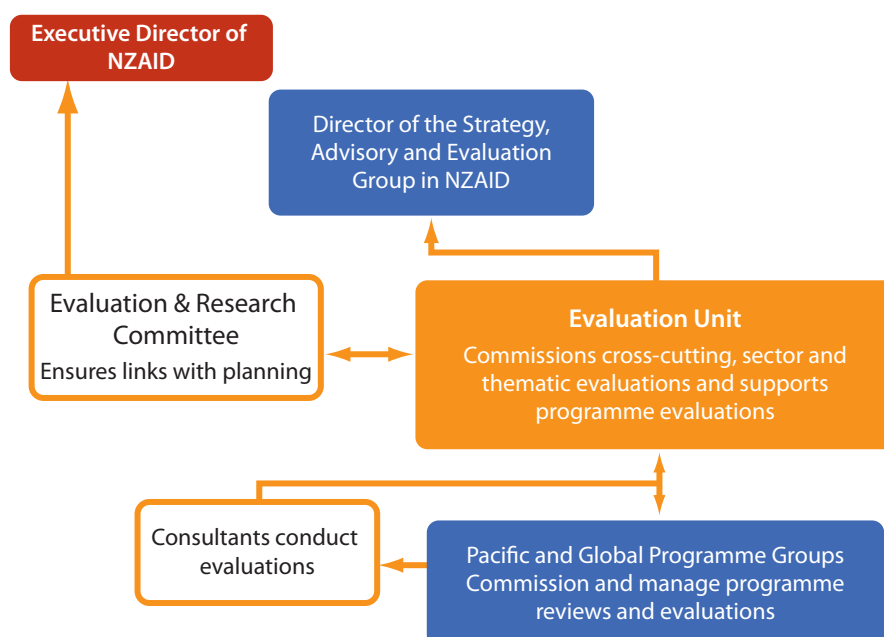
Mandate

The evaluation unit commissions and undertakes cross-cutting, sectoral or thematic evaluations, monitors the agency's rolling programme of reviews and evaluations, and provides advisory support to programme and activity evaluations. The unit is guided by the NZAID Evaluation Framework, which includes a policy statement, evaluation strategy and set of practice guidelines.

An Evaluation and Research Committee, chaired by the Executive Director, was established to provide oversight of reviews and evaluations and to ensure close feedback links between evaluative activities and programme planning and development. Reviews and evaluations commissioned by NZAID are presented to the Committee for advice on any actions to be taken in response to recommendations and to consider any implications for forward planning. This is to ensure that a systematic approach to evaluation is instituted within the agency and that the lessons learned from all evaluations are promulgated throughout the organisation.

Programme reviews and evaluations of development activities are commissioned and managed by the Pacific and Global Programme Groups. Advisers from the Strategy Advisory and Evaluation Group provide support and advice and may participate in some of these studies.

Summary of the evaluation and reporting process



Independence and quality

Evaluations are usually carried out by external consultants. Evaluation has been designed as a process mainly to serve the internal needs of the agency. In the current set up and location of the evaluation unit, independence cannot be ensured.

DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and the Australasian Evaluation Society Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluation serve as reference points for quality assurance. Peer review and appraisal processes are also employed to check draft and final reports.

Co-ordination and planning

The evaluation unit makes available its work plan, regularly consults the evaluation reports of other donors and shares particularly relevant reports from other donors with agency staff.

At the agency level the various evaluation activities are consolidated in a one to two year evaluation plan. The evaluation strategy gives direction for three to five years ahead. Programme teams plan evaluations for their areas. Strategic evaluations; thematic, policy and sectoral evaluations are planned and undertaken by the central evaluation team. The topics for these are determined through a consultative process with the whole agency. The proposed list of evaluations is then put on the intranet for several weeks for comment and then prioritised through discussion by the Evaluation Committee.

Partner involvement

Programme staff, either in Wellington or at Post in-country discuss with country partners to determine interest and willingness to participate in evaluations. This usually includes discussion and negotiation of evaluation purposes, scope, focus etc. Though the timing for this varies, preference is for such discussions to take place at an early stage. Countries with sufficient capacity can choose to nominate evaluation team members.

Reporting and use

The manager of the evaluation unit reports to the Director of the Strategy, Advisory and Evaluation Group. A mechanism to track follow-up action was recently put in place; a spreadsheet of actions is kept for each evaluation and checked regularly by the Evaluation Committee. Management follow-up actions are not made public at present.

One page summaries of evaluation reports are circulated electronically and shared in staff learning workshops. Other agency staff members have access to evaluation findings via the NZAID intranet and reports are fed to management via the Evaluation Committee. Cable messages are sent periodically to agency management in country and there is an annual NZAID report to Parliament, which includes information from evaluations.

