

# eVALUatiOn Matters

A Quarterly Knowledge Publication of the Operations Evaluation Department  
of the African Development Bank Group

May 2012



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*I am calling on all Bank staff and management to strengthen uptake of evaluation findings and lessons to ensure that our operations have the greatest possible impact.*

*“This is our joint responsibility.”*

## eVALUatiOn Matters

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# A New Beginning ...

Welcome to the premiere edition of *eVALUatiOn Matters*, our quarterly knowledge publication. The site and timing for the launch could not be better. Despite its socio-political challenges and an overhang of the global economic gloom, the African continent continues to record strong economic growth. Approaching 50, the African Development Bank is showing signs of vigor rather than middle age: its lending muscle strengthened by a sharp capital increase; its legitimacy reinforced by an excellent understanding of client needs and trust relationships; a visible maturity, strong leadership and humility. The necessary ingredients for the Bank to play a critical role in support of the continent are present. If all goes well, the BRICs will have a new partner marching alongside.

Within this setting and growing optimism, the future looks almost too bright. However, we ignore history at our own peril. *eVALUatiOn Matters* aims to bring us the lessons of experience so we learn from it and use our abilities and resources wisely. Shrinking resources and the ensuing need for greater frugality are pushing us towards a renewed focus on results and a determination to improve on development effectiveness. History and its lessons are key to success.

In this edition, we focus on the role independent evaluation can play in this effort. A view from our President, Donald Kaberuka, highlights the central role of evaluation in the knowledge agenda, while the Chair of CODE, Christoph Kohlmeyer, shares his perspective on how evaluation contributes to development work. These perspectives are complemented by those of Caroline Heider, Director General of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank; Cheryl Gray, Head of the Office of Evaluation and Oversight at the Inter-American Development Bank; and Franck Perrault, Director of Regional Operations (ORWB) at the AfDB, and former acting director in OPEV. We also bring to you some lessons of experience from projects around Africa: policy-based operations, the Bank's assistance to Fragile States and much much more.

Enjoy !

**Rakesh Nangia**

Director, Operations Evaluation Department  
African Development Bank

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

## Evaluation Concerns us All

Donald Kaberuka, AfDB President

An effective and efficient evaluation function is crucial for the African Development Bank's efforts to continuously strengthen the development effectiveness of its initiatives. This is why the Operations Evaluation Department (OPEV) was created about 25 years ago.

I am pleased to note that over the years, OPEV has indeed played an important role in helping the Bank achieve its objectives. I recall, for example, that valuable analysis and recommendations contained in OPEV's evaluation of ADF VII, VIII, and IX were incorporated into the design of ADF X. Other examples include OPEV's work on decentralization, agriculture, policy-based operations, and the Joint Africa Institute. All these evaluations have helped shape the Bank's policies and initiatives in these areas.

The critical role of evaluation is even more relevant today as we strive to become the leading



knowledge bank in Africa. In this regard, OPEV must continue to generate knowledge about development work and continue to lead the way in developing evaluative capacity and culture in both the Bank and Regional Member Countries. This calls for action on a number of fronts.

### Greater integration in the Bank's development knowledge agenda

Knowledge is at the center of our development model and I consider the evaluation function a key link in our knowledge chain. As I indicated during my second inaugural speech in September 2010, I am committed to enhancing the functionality and usefulness of the Bank's knowledge functions. This includes

*Knowledge is at the center of our development model and I consider the evaluation function a key link in our knowledge chain*



strengthening the critical role that OPEV must play in the success of our knowledge agenda going forward. But this also depends on all of us who are involved in the Bank's work. Knowledge management is everyone's business.

The Bank's Board, Management and operational staff have an increasing need for credible, timely, evidence-based knowledge from OPEV as we work to improve the quality and effectiveness of our operations. And because the Bank relies so heavily on candid and evidence-based information, OPEV should not be shy about 'speaking truth to power.' Management needs a realistic understanding of both its successes and failures if we are to make more effective decisions and support operations that have greater development impact. Indeed, we depend on OPEV to help us understand not only whether we are effectively and efficiently contributing to changing people's lives in Africa, but also what, why, how, and under what circumstances—we can do better.

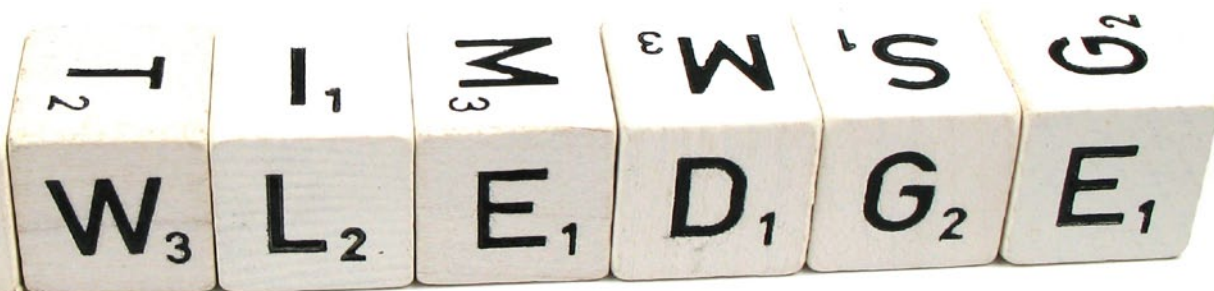
### Balanced and constructive engagement for mutual benefit

In addition to informing the decisions of the Board and Management, OPEV must also continue to be more responsive to changes

in the Bank's internal and external operating environments. OPEV is in a unique position to ensure that strategic issues of concern to the Bank are incorporated into a client-driven work programme. While maintaining its objectivity and independence, OPEV must continue to actively and constructively engage with the operational complexes at strategic points in evaluations and operations programming processes.

I am calling on all Bank staff and management to strengthen uptake of evaluation findings and lessons to ensure that our operations have the greatest possible impact. This is our joint responsibility:

- OPEV and operations must develop even stronger ties to create a 'backward knowledge loop'. This loop can also be strengthened by OPEV's participation early in the project cycle, such as in country team and Operations Committee discussions.
- OPEV evaluators and colleagues in operations—especially task managers at Headquarters, in Regional Resource Centers, and in field offices who prepare projects, programs, strategies and policies—should interact formally and informally with each other to ensure that we are learning from the past to improve future operations.





- OPEV, operational Vice-Presidents, and Regional/Sector Directors should have in-depth discussions on best and worst cases identified by OPEV, as such cases have a unique ability to influence the future.

### Improved knowledge sharing and use

To foster uptake of evaluation findings and lessons, OPEV must also strengthen the relevance, timeliness and accessibility of its knowledge products. This is of the essence. There is no advantage in presenting evaluative findings after a policy or strategy that could have benefited from them has been finalized and approved. We operate in an increasingly dynamic and diverse regional context. OPEV must therefore provide Management and staff alike with ready access to credible and appropriate knowledge about what works (and what does not), while at the same time increasing our accountability and transparency.

To this end, OPEV must continue to strengthen its dissemination mechanism and further diversify its knowledge sharing formats and channels to include user-friendly publications and perhaps a knowledge help desk to

meet the various needs of Management, the Board, RMCs and the public at large. I also encourage the use of new technologies and social networking tools to improve outreach. Bank Management and staff must also assume responsibility for using the knowledge that is thus made available.

Notwithstanding the challenges of making effective use of evaluative knowledge, I am greatly encouraged by OPEV's progress in support of the Bank's knowledge function and its increasing engagement with the Results Department, the operational complexes, and senior Management. I look forward to a reinforcement of this engagement as all Bank staff, and stakeholders understand, appreciate and use knowledge gleaned from evaluation of the Bank's work. Evaluation concerns us all.

*Donald Kaberuka became the seventh President of the AfDB in 2005. He is now serving his second term.*

*Prior to joining the AfDB, he worked in the banking and international trade sectors for close to ten years.*

*A trained economist, he studied in Tanzania and the United Kingdom, where he obtained master's and doctorate degrees in economics from the University of Glasgow, Scotland. ■*



## Why Evaluation is Important

**Christoph Kohlmeyer**, Chair of the Bank's Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness (CODE), shares his thoughts on independent evaluation at the Bank. CODE has oversight of the Operations Evaluation Department



Evaluation at the AfDB is about development effectiveness. Evaluation can help tell us whether the Bank is working effectively and efficiently; whether it is really achieving results; and, crucially, what lessons we can learn to improve our future performance. These issues matter to stakeholders who want to know that their financial support to the Bank makes a difference; and to the countries that are using Bank support to achieve their development objectives.

Development is a complex business and it is not always obvious what support will achieve key development results. Evaluation can help the Bank select the most effective option or approach by assessing the results achieved by the Bank and by looking at the experience of others. Evaluation can draw lessons from experience by identifying factors that enable and constrain the implementation of projects and the achievement of objectives. These lessons are also useful for our regional member countries:

they face similar challenges in identifying the best path to reach their development objectives and they need solid evidence to make sound policy decisions.

Evaluation must also hold a mirror to the Bank. The image of what the Bank is doing has to be presented candidly: good practice and not so good practices have to be truly reflected.

It is often said that evaluation plays a dual role – learning and accountability. Like learning, accountability is important for those who contribute as well as for those who use Bank funds. Evaluation is therefore an important part of our commitment to increased mutual accountability. For both the learning and accountability roles, evaluation needs to

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*Evaluation is enlightening and we should use it, whether it brings positive or negative messages.*”

present an impartial view. It needs to be independent from the influence of operational concerns. **An important part of CODE's role is to defend and protect the independence of the evaluation function in the Bank.**

In addition to providing an independent voice, evaluation has to provide an evidence-based, well informed assessment. Indeed, the quality of an evaluation is crucial, if the findings are to be recognized and used.

But quality is not only about the final outputs of evaluations; it is also about the process, which in itself can be an important learning or reflection exercise. This is one reason why it is crucial for evaluators to engage with the relevant complexes of the Bank, throughout the evaluation process.

But how can independent evaluators add value to the work of specialists who may have 20 years of experience working in a specific sector? **An evaluator brings an independent and external assessment, a fresh perspective, but one that is evidence-based and goes beyond anecdotal evidence while also comparing the Bank's experience with that of others.**

### A vision for independent evaluation in the Bank

The evaluators are being evaluated too: OPEV has launched a self assessment exercise which will soon be completed. Indeed, OPEV needs to ensure that it continuously improves how it operates and what it delivers, and management needs to respond too. From the CODE perspective:

*By looking at the experiences of others, by understanding what works and what does not, in which context, evaluation can take a step back and provide food for thought for people who are immersed in their day to day business. This is ultimately how evaluation will help the Bank improve its performance.*





- Evaluation at the Bank needs to become more relevant and timely. It needs to be more closely aligned to the strategic priorities of the Bank, but it must also be flexible enough to respond to short term demands. This is something OPEV needs to ensure.
- The Bank needs to fully own and respect evaluation, so that evidence-based findings lead to appropriate action. The Bank needs to provide clear, time-bound and actionable management responses to evaluation recommendations. And we need a system to track implementation. This is something Bank management needs to take in hand.

- The biggest challenge is to share the knowledge generated by evaluations across the Bank. **Evaluators need to disseminate lessons better, but then how can we be sure that those lessons are used by task managers?** Do we have the right incentives in place to become a results-based learning organization? Does this require adapting the Bank’s operational key performance indicators? This is surely food for thought for everyone at the Bank.

*Christoph Kohlmeyer is Executive Director representing Germany, Portugal, and Switzerland at the AfDB. Prior to coming to the AfDB, he worked in the rural development and agricultural development sectors for the German government. He has a degree and doctorate in agricultural science. |*

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### Role of the Board in Evaluation

The Board oversees the independent evaluation function through its Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness (CODE) and assesses the overall quality and impact of the Bank’s programs and projects.

The mandate of CODE in relation to the Operations Evaluation Department’s functions is to review OPEV reports, as well as Management responses to such reports, identify or review general policies for consideration by the Board, submit to the Board selected operations evaluations on development effectiveness, and monitor implementation of Board decisions on matters within its mandate.

*Independent Evaluation Policy and Functional Responsibilities of the Operations Evaluation Department.*

## Evaluation is Everyone's Business

Franck Perrault, Director,  
Regional Department West B (ORWB), AfDB



Official development assistance for member countries is on a downward trend. The Bank is adapting to this trend by focusing on the effectiveness of its action and on results orientation. This is reflected in the continuous improvement in the quality of the design and implementation of its projects and programmes.

However, given the Bank's quest for efficiency, relevance and, ultimately, legitimacy, as well as its desire to be a partner of choice, it must do more than ascertain the appropriate use of resources entrusted to it or ensure accountability.

In addition to the development goals directly related to

its activities, the Bank must now routinely seek to produce demonstration effects that can convince stakeholders that success is possible and can be replicated elsewhere; that success factors are known; and that the risks of failure

can be controlled. Such concrete evidence will be a condition for the mobilization of new resources in the future and for the Bank to be considered the continent's premier development institution.

To achieve these ambitious goals, the Bank must continue to assess its actions; demonstrate their relevance; and identify factors of success and failure—in a nutshell, evaluate. **Evaluation is therefore no longer just an accountability requirement; it is a key factor and a prerequisite for the Bank's success and legitimacy in member countries in coming years.**

The few months I spent at OPEV convinced me of the importance of this goal and of the fact that OPEV cannot carry out the evaluation function by itself. The Department's statutory independence, and the relatively modest resources allocated to it, must be primarily devoted to (1) evaluating the most critical issues for the institution—issues on which a fresh and independent look is absolutely necessary, as Caroline Heider explains on page 12; and, (2) enhancing and developing the knowledge generated so as to have real impact on the Bank's work.

The Bank must therefore find a way to assume greater responsibility for the evaluation function, largely through self-evaluation, in a credible and verifiable manner. Project completion reports, currently the only routine self-evaluation exercise, are a rather positive experience, while some “independent reviews” that have been attempted by the operational departments are less convincing.

Strengthening self-evaluation could initially involve delegation of post-project evaluations to operational complexes. Evidently, this should be done in such a manner that the requisite fresh and independent look is maintained and the objectivity of the work ensured.

It may be possible to both preserve OPEV’s supervisory role and responsibility for accountability while “shortening the learning loop” as mentioned by the President in this publication. This requires closer collaboration between OPEV and operational complexes, based on ownership of evaluation methods by operational staff, and a pedagogic and maieutic approach by OPEV.

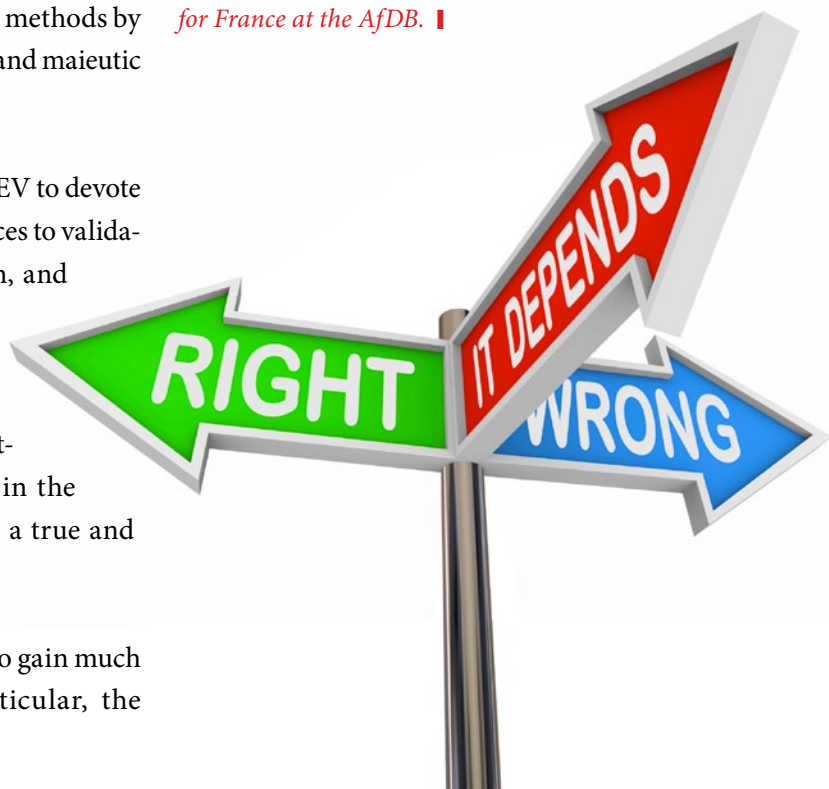
In this case, one would expect OPEV to devote more human and financial resources to validation, organization, dissemination, and promotion of the information produced to leverage its use by both the institution and member countries. This is how the department can participate decisively in the transformation of the Bank into a true and vibrant knowledge centre.

Operational complexes would also gain much from such a situation. In particular, the

opportunity to spend a significant amount of time reviewing the results of a project or programme managed by someone else – reflecting on the conditions that account for success, the reasons for failures, and how to address them – can be highly instructive and useful to the institution, especially if its decentralized units are involved.

The merit of such an initiative is that it will focus a significant part of the work of operations complexes on results in the field by making evaluation everybody’s business. This would finally distance the Bank concretely and in an easily measurable way from the so-called approval culture from which it is struggling to extricate itself.

*Franck Perrault is the Director of the Regional Department West B at the AfDB. He served as Acting Director for OPEV in 2011. Before joining the Bank, he worked as an economic counselor and occupied several positions in the Statistical Institute (France) including as Regional Director. He also served as Executive Director and alternate Executive Director for France at the AfDB. |*



OPINIONS

## What is the Value of Independent Evaluation?

Caroline Heider is the Director General of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) at the World Bank.



We all evaluate all the time. When you cross the street, for instance, you evaluate the speed of oncoming traffic, and maybe even the degree of madness of drivers; as a driver you probably scan pedestrians to assess whether and which of them will dash across the street at an untoward moment.

This example is about day-to-day survival: you make the wrong choice and an accident happens. That the choice is yours alone, and a life-and-death matter, make the evaluation process and feedback loop short and easy. The choice is instinctive, what Kahneman in his book *Thinking, Slow and Fast* calls a “System response” whereby our pre-programmed knowledge leads us automatically to our choices.

In business, development or humanitarian issues, we are talking about complex development processes that we pursue collectively through our institutions and partnerships with others. Goals are articulated in sophisticated phrases and in models that explain the logic of our project or the results we aim to achieve with a policy. Achieving complex objectives is much harder for many reasons:

- **Complex relationships.** Complex development processes involve many people. Common, agreed goals are often open to interpretation. Even people on the same team might differ widely without it being known and some will work better together than others. Self-evaluation might uncover those diverse views or, if done from the perspective of one stakeholder, miss them.
- **Complex issues.** The more complex the issues get the more difficult it is to evaluate what is working, what isn't and find the reasons why. Complex projects, policies and strategies involve many more factors that lead to or prevent success. Those who manage and self-evaluate the program will know many of these factors as they deal with them every day, but they might also not have the time and perspective to see larger patterns and interrelated issues.
- **Reality check.** The lofty goals of our projects and policies are often *ideals* that we would love to achieve but are out of reach because circumstances limit our ability to succeed. At IEG, we recently organized a discussion



on evaluation challenges in 12 international finance institutions. The participants spoke for 5 minutes each about their institutions: the details differed, but in every case the goals of our institutions were beyond their means to achieve them. Self-evaluation might take a sympathetic view of the level of effort, knowing that the goals are too lofty to achieve while not seeing opportunities to close the gap between goals and actions taken to achieve them.

- **Blind spots.** People have blind spots. People who work on something for a long time and with conviction that it is right might not see obvious signs of things going wrong, or see less-obvious problems that might require an arms-length appreciation. Institutions have corporate blind spots: culture and norms set a tone that determines which issues can be discussed, which problems can be resolved, and which ones cannot. People know the problems, but also that these are “off limits.” In these circumstances, self-evaluation exercises self-censorship to remain within the boundaries set by the institution.
- **Accountability.** Knowing the above limitations, stakeholders – from donors to civil society and people affected by projects, policies and strategies – want an independent view of what works and what does not to hold institutions accountable for their actions.

#### So, what is the value of independent evaluation?

- **It impartially takes account of stakeholders’ differing perspectives and combines them with technical expertise to generate new insights.** Returning to our road example: a video I saw recently on road safety illustrated

the blind spot of truck drivers. One camera was trained to show the view that the driver had from the side mirror, a second camera was lined up to show how many people were in the truck’s blind spot. The driver could not see 12 people! Whether you are driver or pedestrian, this is a shocking insight, and only the combined perspective resulted in a new solution.

- **It takes a longer-term or broader perspective, looks at issues beyond the project, policy or strategy to understand how the context, overall trends, outside factors play a role in generating success or failure of our efforts.**
- **It seeks to close the gap between the ideal and real by looking for systemic problems in our institutions that, if overcome, would put us in a better position to achieve results.**
- **It has the responsibility to identify blind spots and speak about them, particularly when corporate culture imposes self-censorship.**
- **It owes all stakeholders an impartial assessment to ensure accountability and learning to correct what is not working, while building on success.**

*Caroline Heider is the Director General of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG). IEG evaluates the development effectiveness of the World Bank Group. Prior to this position, she worked with five multilateral organizations, including two international finance institutions, a technical agency and two Funds and Programmes of the UN System.*

*Her experience includes leading and managing evaluations and managing evaluation units. |*

## OPINIONS

# Making Independent Evaluation Useful

Cheryl Gray, Director,  
Office of Evaluation and Oversight,  
Inter-American Development Bank



Strong evaluation helps an organization learn from experience and ensure accountability for results. The MDBs are to be congratulated for setting up independent evaluation offices with the freedom, mandate, and resources to assess the performance of their organizations. The evaluation offices in turn have a responsibility to add value – in the end to be useful.

What makes an evaluation function useful? At least three factors seem essential to me: **a well-considered product mix, high quality in all outputs, and effective dissemination.**

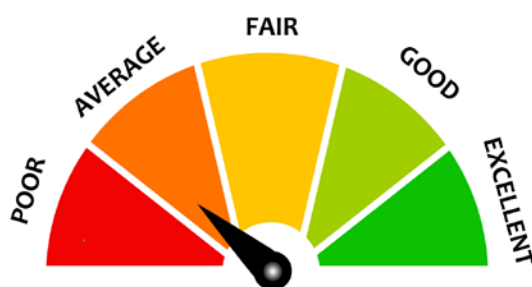
First, consider the **product mix**. An MDB's evaluation office serves multiple stakeholders and should select and tailor its products accordingly. The Executive Board may benefit from evaluations that focus on broad topics – for example, entire programs, corporate objectives, or sector accomplishments of the MDB. These can help the Board monitor and oversee management and chart the broad direction of the organization.

In contrast, operational staff may benefit from more focused evaluations that offer lessons of

experience on what works in particular types of projects and programs. External stakeholders, such as governments and citizens' groups, may seek information on overall project performance to reinforce accountability and influence budget allocation. Finally, some evaluation products have longer-term institution-building objectives – to support the broader institutional architecture for evaluation in the MDB or to help build evaluation capacity in client countries.

Tradeoffs among multiple objectives are inevitable, and a carefully considered mix of evaluation products, decided with input from potential users, is critical to usefulness.

A second essential ingredient is **quality**. Evaluations must be objective and evidence-based,



with a solid methodology and adequate sources of data. They need to be well-timed to influence decision-making, and to be clearly written, in appropriate languages, with a constructive tone and actionable recommendations. Evaluation is challenging work, and ensuring quality in evaluation is a continuous challenge.

A third factor is **dissemination**. Evaluations can only be useful if people read and use them. MDB evaluation offices should take advantage of multiple avenues – including print and electronic media as well as face-to-face events – to reach out to various stakeholders and share results. Recent changes in MDB disclosure rules facilitate this outreach, but it takes energy and proactivity on the part of evaluation offices to bring it to fruition.

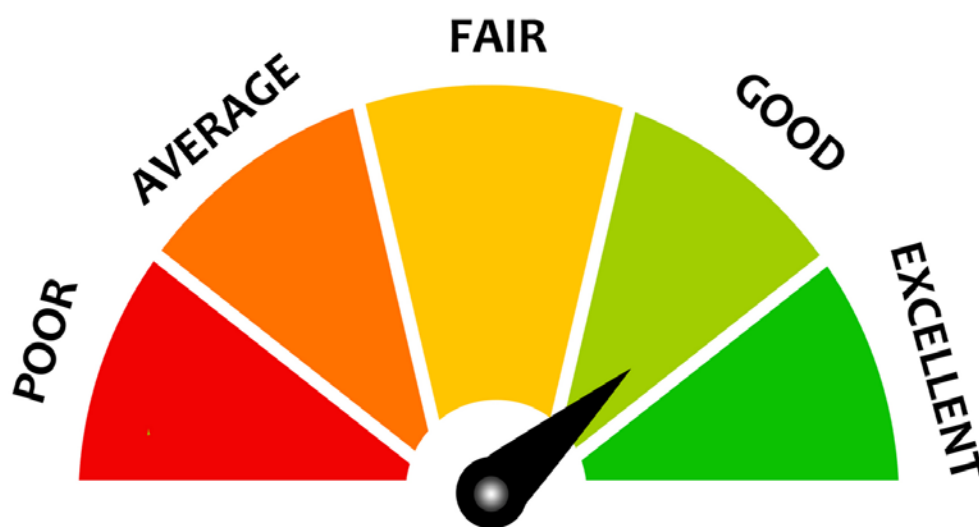
Putting this all together into an effective and useful evaluation function is a tall order. In practice there are many barriers – both technical

and political – to quality, outreach, and ultimately usefulness. Few people like to be critiqued, and from time to time efforts are made to block evaluations or dissemination of unfavorable reports. My ultimate hope is that everyone – Board, Management, clients, evaluators – will keep their sights on the broader goal: an accountable MDB that can effectively serve its clients and help the poor – and an evaluation function that contributes usefully toward that goal.

*Cheryl W. Gray is Director of the Office of Evaluation and Oversight (OVE) at the Inter-American Development Bank.*

*Cheryl joined the IDB in June 2011 after working for 25 years at the World Bank, most recently as Director of Independent Evaluation.*

*Cheryl holds a doctorate and law degree from Harvard University and an undergraduate degree in economics from Stanford University. She has published extensively on legal reform, governance, and enterprise restructuring in transition economies. ■*



## Are Evaluators Always Right?

### *The Intriguing Case of the Kpong Irrigation Project in Ghana*

Guy-Blaise Nkamleu,  
Principal Evaluation Officer, OPEV

*The timing of project completion reports and ex-post evaluation: how soon is too soon? When does a project really end? The complexity and uncertainty of evaluation in a changing context. These were some of the issues discussed during a recent AfDB Evaluation Community of Practice meeting. The backdrop was the case of the Kpong Irrigation Project in Ghana- presented below. Viewpoints on "Are evaluators always right?" are presented on pages 33 and 38. This paper was first presented at an AfREA Conference in January 2012.*



*Project interventions can lead to unexpected consequences well after project activities have formally ended. This raises questions about the timing and sequencing of development processes, and the scheduling of results measurement and evaluation.*

Evaluation work involves searching for the true value of projects and programs. Yet experience on the ground shows us that the concept of “truth” is more elusive than we think. This is illustrated by the evaluation of the Kpong Irrigation Project (KIP), a water management infrastructure project financed by the Bank in Ghana.

This case study documents a dramatic turnaround in the fortunes of the project. At completion, the project seemed to have failed.

However, only a few years later, a new evaluation reported – unexpectedly – different and much more positive findings. So, despite the initial indications of failure, good results were eventually achieved – but not along the lines originally planned.

This case highlights a number of significant issues about development practice and evaluation.

1. Assumption of linearity. Projects are supposed to be a tidy and purposeful way of organizing activity. They are expected to have a beginning, middle, and end. And by the end, we expect to have an indication of whether the promised impact will indeed be delivered. Yet, experience on the ground shows that “project completion” can be a slippery concept, and that project interventions



can lead to unexpected consequences well after project activities have formally ended.

2. Project context: Each project is inevitably underpinned by the social, political and economic conditions prevailing more widely. Equally, the social, economic and environmental impact of project activities often reaches far beyond the physical bounds of the project, and there is often a great deal of interplay between the project and its context: some of it planned; much of it unplanned and often unanticipated. Furthermore, context has multiple layers, it is dynamic and changes over time.

These issues and the evaluation challenges they generate indicate that the true value of projects can be a slippery concept. Project interventions can lead to unexpected consequences well after project activities have formally ended. This complicates the evaluator's task. It raises questions about the timing and sequencing of development processes, and the scheduling of results measurement and evaluation.

First, does it really make sense to measure results at the time of project completion? In the KIP case study, although project completion must be seen as an important milestone, the Project Completion Report was premature (and potentially misleading). Paradoxically, most multilateral development Banks aim to

measure results at this point. While PCRs are important tools in terms of accounting for delivery of outputs, they usually cannot measure impact and sustainability. In this case, in contrast to the PCR, the project post-evaluation found a remarkable transformation in the stream of benefits attributable to the project – although it was largely private investment, building on the foundations laid by the KIP, that made the difference.

While development investments often take considerable time to mature, there is widespread and growing impatience to see quick results. Within aid bureaucracies, there is a desire for instant results and an unwillingness to take a longer term perspective. Yet, in most cases, as in the case of the KIP, it is only several years after project completion that impact can be properly judged. Thus ex-post evaluation provides a better perspective on project sustainability and impact.

*Guy Blaise Nkamleu is a Principal Evaluation Officer in the Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank.*

*Blaise worked for more than 10 years with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture. Prior to that, he worked with several international organizations and lectured at universities in Africa.*

*He has published widely on African Development.*

*Blaise holds a Doctorat d'Etat in Public Economics, a Doctorat de 3eme Cycle in Agricultural Economics and a Master's Degree in Econometrics. ■*

# Measuring the Impact of Multinational Operations: Challenges for Evaluation

Albert-Enéas Gakusi, Chief Evaluation Officer; Operations Evaluation Department, AfDB, PhD in Economics, *Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris*

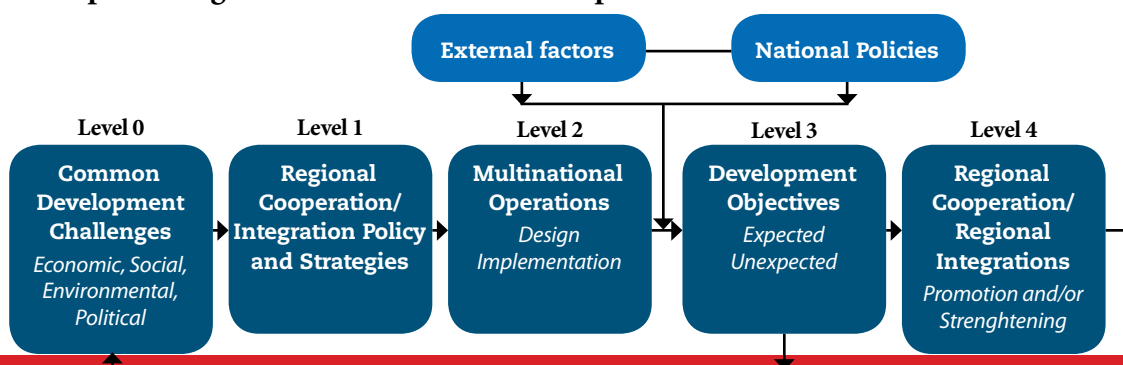
Most multi-national operations are designed to help two or more countries jointly pursue development objectives that cannot be solved by individual countries. They address cross border externalities that no single country has the resources, authority or interest to act all alone. These operations require a high level of commitment and coordination of costs among countries for successful implementation and sustainability. Among stakeholders, especially those with dissimilar levels of development, the risk of free riding may be high, but even more prevalent is the issue of unequal sharing of benefits. This raises the question of how to identify viable operations, finance them, sustain the results, and evaluate them.

The figure below is a simplified logic model of multinational operations. Level 0 might be addressed through research and analytical work undertaken by the Bank, other development institutions and countries, as well as policy dialogue undertaken by the Bank. Levels 1 and 2 correspond to what is

within the direct control of the Bank's management, that is, formulation of policy and strategies and design and implementation of appropriate operations.

Level 3 corresponds to what the operations are expected to achieve and be accountable for at the national and regional levels while interacting with national policies and external factors. External factors include armed conflicts, natural disasters, international market fluctuations, changes in international funding priorities and constraints with respect to resources as well as expertise. National policies include those with regional implications. Level 4 indicates what the operations are expected to contribute to (impacts) at the regional level, including the strengthening and promotion of regional integration. The higher the level (toward the right side of the figure, the more difficult it is to attribute outcomes and impacts to the Bank's operations. In spite of this difficulty, enhanced regional integration should contribute to the solution of development challenges. Existing evidence of completed Bank operations in the forthcoming OPEV evaluation shows that multinational operations perform at least as effectively as single country operations.

## A Simplified Logic Model for Multinational Operations



## Who Evaluates the Evaluator?

Rakesh Nangia, Director, OPEV



Evaluations and evaluators have been in existence since time immemorial. As parents we constantly monitor and evaluate our children – from the first joyous sounds to the first steps into the big bad world (or the real world, depending upon how protective you are). As children, we are constantly evaluated, compared with peers and incessantly bombarded on ways to improve. As adults, the story continues, both at work (those wonderful performance appraisals) and at home (with our loving families). In short, monitoring and evaluation (and advice) is a part of life that we

seem to accept. We constantly evaluate and are constantly evaluated.

Not surprisingly, we seem to accept and readily embrace the positive findings, citing them as often as possible to further our objectives. And we react in different ways to the negative findings – brush them aside, challenge the findings and recommendations, or get defensive. We contest the methodology, suggest bias, look for conflict of interest, and use other tactics to blunt the findings and their implications.



**However, an indifferent observer will advise viewing these objectively with an open mind, learning from the past and focusing on the future so we do not repeat the mistakes.**

All this assumes that the evaluators' findings and recommendations are accurate, based on robust analysis and evidence. A flawed analysis, shoddy evidence or negligent advice can do more harm than good. However, rarely do we ask about the performance of the evaluator. Do we really know the comparisons between Moody's and Standard and Poors, for example? Do we really dig into the methodology and rigor devoted to the

production of indicators – and there are hundreds of them. Instead, the human impulse is to react.

All this underscores the important role of evaluators. While evaluators, through their

findings, push for continuous improvement of those they evaluate, there is no mechanism to hold the evaluators' "feet to the fire", pushing them also towards continuous improvement. The current mechanisms for helping evaluators of Multi-lateral Development Banks (MDBs) to improve are internally driven. In the absence of any system, the MDBs established the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) with broad membership guidelines and mandate.

Since its establishment over 16 years ago, progress has been made towards self-improvement and harmonization of standards. Good Practice Standards and benchmarking exercises with underlying stocktaking exercises of MDBs' experiences have been undertaken for private sector and public sector evaluations as well as for country assistance evaluations and technical assistance evaluations. However, it is hard to judge if these outputs have actually enhanced the comparability of results and the impact on MDBs' evaluation strengthening. But this is the nature of self-improvement – it is driven by internal motivations and desires rather than external pressures.

*Not surprisingly, we seem to accept and readily embrace the positive findings, citing them as often as possible to further our objectives.*



In a bid towards self-improvement, the Evaluation Department at the African Development Bank has launched a “self-evaluation”. Yes, it comes with caveats of self-interest and bias, which we have tried to mitigate by retaining an independent consultant. Not enough, but it is a start. Subsequently, we have also requested a Peer-Review next year. Since the review is conducted by the institutions of the ECG, you could argue it is “within-friends”, lacks independence, and thus may not bring harsh realities to the fore. True, but again, it is a start.

I believe the accountability framework for Evaluators needs strengthening. In the absence of a “supra-national” structure, the ECG may provide a useful start. However, the governance structure needs a closer look, as does the membership. Perhaps the Chairs of CODE (or equivalent) should be taking a proactive leadership role in the ECG. Another possibility is creating an oversight mechanism composed of seasoned evaluators who would refine the charter and help define a clear, medium-term strategy. At a minimum, this must include key performance indicators and a mechanism to

monitor improved performance for each members’ evaluation function.

Finally, the overall benefits of improved development effectiveness through evaluation will only be realized if the effectiveness of the public expenditures, rather than only MDB-supported programs, improve. This implies strengthening the M&E system of the countries themselves. Capacity building in strengthening these systems to help citizens hold their leaders accountable must be part of the overall mandate. To make a difference, we need to start now. Accountability is for all.

*Rakesh Nangia is the Director of the Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank. He brings to the AfDB more than 25 years’ experience in development work. Prior to joining the AfDB, he held several positions at the World Bank, including Director of Strategy and Operations for the Human Development Network, Acting Vice President for the World Bank Institute (2007-2009); Manager, Portfolio and Country Operations, in Vietnam; and Lead Operations Officer in Tanzania. He attended the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and Harvard University and holds degrees in business administration and engineering. |*



# Inside the AfDB Evaluation Department

## Snapshot of Completed Evaluations

### In this section:

- *Evaluation of Policy-Based Operations in the AfDB* - Task managers: Odile Keller, Joanne Asquith
- *Evaluation of the AfDB's Assistance to Fragile States* - Task managers: Odile Keller, Jessica Kitalule
- *Evaluation of the COMESA Public Procurement Reforms and Capacity Building Projects* - Task managers: Madhu Mampuzhasseril
- *Evaluation of Zambia Victoria Falls-Katima Mulilo Project* - Task manager, Maria Pataguana

## Evaluation of Policy-Based Operations in the African Development Bank

*Significant progress has been made... But challenges remain....*

During the 1990s, the use of policy-based operations (PBOs) by the international donor community evolved from aid provided on condition that the recipient undertake specific policy reforms to instruments designed to support country-owned development priorities and national budget processes. These evolving donor approaches were reinforced by the increased focus on aid effectiveness and the use of country systems. The AfDB has used PBOs since the 1980s to address short-term macroeconomic problems in Regional Member Countries (RMCs) facing balance of payments difficulties.

OPEV undertook an independent evaluation of the Bank's PBOs to examine how efficiently and effectively the Bank has used these operations to support the development objectives of its RMCs over the period 1999-2009.

The evaluation assesses the Bank's own policies and procedures for the design and delivery

of PBOs: how the Bank is institutionally organized to deliver PBOs in the new (post-Paris Declaration) aid effectiveness climate; and how the Bank's practices compare with those of other development agencies and emerging international best practices. As part of the evaluation, six country case studies were undertaken in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda, Sierre Leone, and Tanzania.

### Evaluation Findings

Significant progress ...

The evaluation concluded that the Bank has made substantial progress in its use of PBOs. It now operates as a significant partner in joint donor budget support arrangements and has designed and implemented operations to meet the urgent financial requirements of its clients.

The Bank has also made important contributions to the development of budget

support in Fragile States, including through the Fragile States Facility.

Challenges...

(1) The Bank still contributes too little to dialogue on substantive policy issues. (2) There are few linkages between the Bank's engagement in PBOs and the rest of the Bank's programme (in particular, investment lending). (3) The concentration of capacity within the Bank's Economic and Financial Management Department (OSGE) has reinforced the tendency for PBOs to be focused on governance.

### Bank response to the evaluation

Following the evaluation, the Bank has adopted a new, consolidated PBO policy and is developing guidelines, both guided by the following principles:

- PBOs provide the Bank with an effective platform to engage in high policy dialogue and to tailor its interventions to the unique circumstances of each client.
- Country Strategy Papers will guide the choice of instruments, including the use of PBOs, to ensure that they reinforce the rest of the Bank's program.
- The Bank will strengthen its field capacity by establishing stronger multi-disciplinary teams. |

#### **View Point** **An Evaluation I Remember.** **Why I Still Remember It**

The main evaluation I worked on was PBOs. I remember it because it was well done and because we put an enormous amount of work into it – it largely found the things operations have been saying for a long time but because it came from OPEV, it meant we were able to get Management to commit to revising the policy and approach.

I also liked the gender study – I found the title and front page photograph in the gender study to be innovative, refreshing and a good way to capture the main message of the study [Mainstreaming Gender Equality: A Road to Results or a Road to Nowhere?]

*Kate Tench*  
*Technical Advisor, OSGE0*  
*African Development Bank*



# Inside the AfDB Evaluation Department

Snapshot of Completed Evaluations

## Evaluation of the African Development Bank's Assistance to Fragile States

*A clearer vision and new channels for increased support*

A 2012 independent evaluation of the African Development Bank's assistance to fragile states was recently completed. This evaluation sought to understand and help clarify fundamental issues concerning the linkages between Bank assistance for economic recovery, reconstruction and transition out of fragility.

The overarching objective of the exercise was to evaluate the extent to which Bank assistance has successfully supported recovery and reconstruction within fragile states and to identify good practice in the design and delivery of such assistance.

### Evaluation Findings

The evaluation finds that the Bank has introduced a more systematic approach, especially with the Strategy for Fragile States (2008); It has responded through various and flexibly applied instruments and modalities to a wide range of country needs and capacities; Its support to recovery and reconstruction in Fragile States was strengthened by new contributions introduced in 2004 with the Post-Conflict Countries Facility (PCCF) and in 2008 through the Fragile States Facility (FSF).

Furthermore, the Bank made a substantial contribution in helping fragile states normalize

their relations with the international community through arrears clearance. Good contributions have also been made to the reconstruction of basic infrastructure, access to public services as well as public financial management reform.

However, in spite of these positive contributions, the evaluation finds that the Bank's strategic contributions fall short of the vision of the 2008 strategy. No explicit links have been made between the Bank's programs and the national peace-building and state-building objectives, as envisaged by the strategy. This is what the evaluation refers to as a lack of a "fragility lens". As a result, the Bank missed opportunities to contribute systematically to capacity-building, reconstruction and reconciliation processes and broader state-building objectives. The evaluation thus calls for a change in direction to allow for this vision to be implemented in practice.

### Change in direction – key points for the Bank to address

- The Bank has not sufficiently developed and implemented the necessary analytical foundations or the adaptive and flexible approaches that are needed in fragile situations.



- The Targeted Support Pillar (or Pillar III) which deals with capacity development has not provided the expected quick and flexible response for supporting capacity in fragile states.
- The criteria used for the allocation of resources to Fragile States needs to be reexamined.

### Bank Response to the Evaluation

Following the evaluation, the Bank has taken the following actions:

- A high-level panel has been created and by July 2012 will identify the appropriate measures to ensure the required change of direction.
- The Performance-Based Allocation (PBA) system will be reviewed and findings presented to ADF deputies.
- Internal incentives and accountability will be reviewed to encourage a more fragile-states oriented approach.
- The capacities of field offices will be strengthened.
- The Fragile States Unit will develop knowledge management tools. ■

#### **View Point:**

#### **An evaluation I remember. Why I still remember it**

OPEV recently published an evaluation report on the Bank's assistance to fragile states - and the Fragile States Unit (OSFU) of the Bank. For me, this assessment of OSFU is a strategic document which makes concrete proposals on how to enhance the effectiveness of that structure. The conclusions of the report concur with the findings of a study that I undertook with the assistance of a consultant one year before.

I still remember OPEV's report, which is an important intellectual and analytical work, because it provides Senior Management with solid materials to enhance the impact of OSFU on the graduation of African countries in fragile situations.

*Gabriel BAYEMI, Ph. D  
Chief Operations Officer  
(formerly with the Fragile States Unit)  
Operations Committee Secretariat  
African Development Bank*





# Inside the AfDB Evaluation Department

Snapshot of Completed Evaluations

## Evaluation of the COMESA Public Procurement Reforms and Capacity Building Projects:

*Relatively Small Investment with Potential for High Impact at Regional Level*



Common Market for  
Eastern and Southern  
Africa (COMESA)

An independent evaluation of the AfDB's assistance to COMESA for public procurement reform and capacity building during 2001-2009 found that the Public Procurement Reform Project (PPRP), 2001-2004, met its key objectives. The projects aimed to improve governance in public financial management and accountability in public procurement to achieve greater efficiency and contribute to increased intra-regional and international trade, sustained economic growth, and poverty reduction in the COMESA region. The specific objectives were to:

- Harmonize public procurement rules, regulations and procedures in COMESA;
- Improve national procurement systems and strengthen the capacity of COMESA member states in public procurement; and
- Enhance awareness of procurement opportunities in COMESA.

The subsequent Enhanced Procurement Reform and Capacity Project (EPRCP), 2006–2011, further enhanced the public procurement systems and management capacity of COMESA member states.

The PPRP and EPRCP were financed with ADF grants of UA 1.7 million and UA 5.66 million, respectively.

### Key Findings

The two projects are aligned with the Bank's policy to promote regional integration, good governance, capacity building, and private sector development; and with the priorities of COMESA. The projects also substantially enhanced the institutional, human and systems procurement capacities of the COMESA states and Secretariat.

### Sustainability and Challenges

The results of the procurement reforms will likely be sustained by the commitment and political will of COMESA member states, the establishment of the Technical Committee on Public Procurement by COMESA, the on-going public sector management reform agenda, support of development partners and the emerging strong civil society organizations engaged in governance issues.

Challenges include inadequate political will for law enforcement; capacity gaps aggravated by high staff turnover; and the pursuit of vested national political and economic interests.

### **Key Lesson**

Effective procurement reforms for regional integration and good governance require a long-term, country-specific perspective with the buy-in of the key stakeholders (governments, political parties, electorate, media, civil society organizations, private sector and development partners).

### **Main Recommendations to the Bank**

- Provide sustained and enhanced support for COMESA public procurement reforms with a long-term perspective to consolidate the gains from the PPRP and EPRCP and take forward the Bank's leadership role in this specific reform area and approach.
- Accelerate programme planning and funding support to fully implement the programme in member states that are lagging in public procurement reforms, with a special focus on developing appropriate capacity building strategies for both the public and private sectors.
- Engage the Bank's Field Offices in regional reform projects through policy dialogue and supervision.

- Coordinate COMESA procurement capacity building efforts with the capacity building and public financial management reform efforts initiated by the member states and other development partners. The Bank's direct assistance to member states should be aligned with the regional public procurement reform programme.
- Support procurement reform M&E capacity building at the country and regional levels. Most of the Oversight Authorities neither have the methodology nor systems to generate data for assessing procurement reforms.

### **Key achievements:**

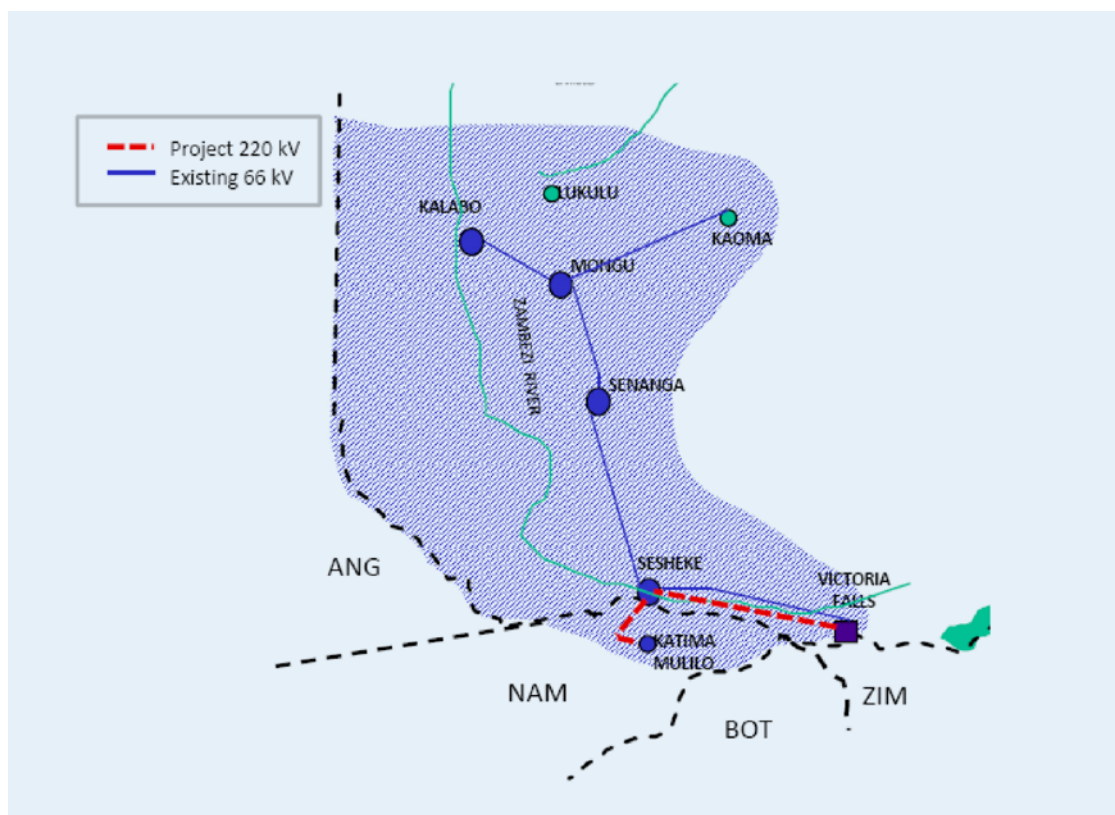
- All member states adopted the COMESA Directive on Public Procurement in 2003.
- All member states adopted the COMESA Public Procurement Regulations in 2009.
- 14 of the 19 states aligned their public procurement systems to the COMESA Directive by 2009.
- All states committed to harmonise their procurement rules, regulations and procedures by 2014.

# Inside the AfDB Evaluation Department

## Snapshot of Completed Evaluations

**Evaluation of the Zambia Victoria Falls-Katima Mulilo 132 kV Interconnection Project (UA11.98 million):** The initial objective of the project, which was co-financed by the NAMPOWER (Namibia), Southern African Development Bank, and the AfDB, 1999-2006, was to provide reliable and affordable electricity to the Western Region of Zambia. It was then extended to the Caprivi Region of Namibia through power trade.

Although the project achievements were modest overall, the project highlights the importance – for successful achievement of desired outcomes – of (i) quality design and stress testing, (ii) functional and responsive monitoring and evaluation systems given the adaptive and complex nature of the project, and (iii) technical, financial and legal support for the promotion and effective use of Power Sales Agreements across sovereign borders.



# Inside the AfDB Evaluation Department

Evaluations in the pipeline

## In this section:

- *Public Sector Projects*
- *Private Sector Evaluations*
- *Economic & Sector Work*
- *Public Financial Management Reform*
- *Multinational Operations*
- *Mainstreaming Environment in the Road Sector*
- *Country Strategy Papers*
- *Transport Sector Evaluation*
- *Integrated Water Resources Management*

**Ongoing evaluations of public sector projects** are mostly focused on the water and sanitation sector in several countries. Preliminary findings from these evaluations show that projects with good quality design and strong social and political commitment, and reliable private sector involvement in public-private partnerships tend to improve the access of rural and urban populations to safe water and better sanitation. However, some of the projects are challenged by issues such as chronic problems of liquid and solid waste disposal mainly because of weak design and implementation, as well as inadequate financial viability of public water utility entities.

**Ongoing private sector evaluations:** emerging findings from an evaluation of the private equity fund show achievements in most of the set objectives, notwithstanding the low return on investment. In particular, the Bank has played a role in developing capital markets –the private equity funds provided funds to the private sector and much needed risk



capital, an important financial additionality. The main problem facing this fund concerns poor selection of projects by the Investment Committee, which failed to spread risks in various sectors and to take into consideration country and sector risks. This evaluation will provide critical lessons to improve the selection, appraisal and management of future Bank projects.

An independent review of the Bank's private sector portfolio is also being conducted to inform the alignment of the portfolio and the Non Sovereign Operations to the Bank's private sector development policy and strategy.



# Inside the AfDB Evaluation Department

Evaluations in the pipeline

**Economic & Sector Work (ESW):** This study aims to evaluate the performance of the Bank's economic and sector work over the period 2005-2010. The evaluation will assess the extent to which ESW activities within the Bank are relevant to the Bank's corporate objectives; evaluate how effectively ESW has contributed to the Bank's effectiveness and borrowers' development objectives; and identify what should be done to improve the performance and relevance of the Bank's ESW.

*Task Manager: Guy-Blaise Nkamleu*

**Evaluation of Public Financial Management (PFM) Reform in Africa:** OPEV is leading and managing this joint donor evaluation. The key questions this evaluation seeks to answer are: Where and why do PFM reforms deliver results in terms of improvements in the quality of budget systems? And how can donor support contribute most effectively to PFM reforms?

Findings and lessons, based on three country case studies, include the following:

- Political commitment is the single most important factor for successful PFM reform.
- Strong co-ordination on the government side and strong technical input and trained staff make a difference.
- External support can help but it has to fit into a government programme and be subject to their co-ordination.

**Mainstreaming Environment in the Road Sector:** This evaluation—Environmental Mainstreaming, Safeguards and Results: A Case Study of the Bank's Road Projects 1999-2010, or The Ecological Footprint of Roads, aims to strengthen the Bank's efforts to ensure that appropriate environmental standards are met in infrastructure activities it finances. The evaluation focuses on road transport projects approved from 1999 to 2010 – which constitute the largest share of the Bank's infrastructure portfolio. The report draws on three country case studies, Uganda, Cameroon and Morocco; their overall environmental performance and specific results in road transport projects.

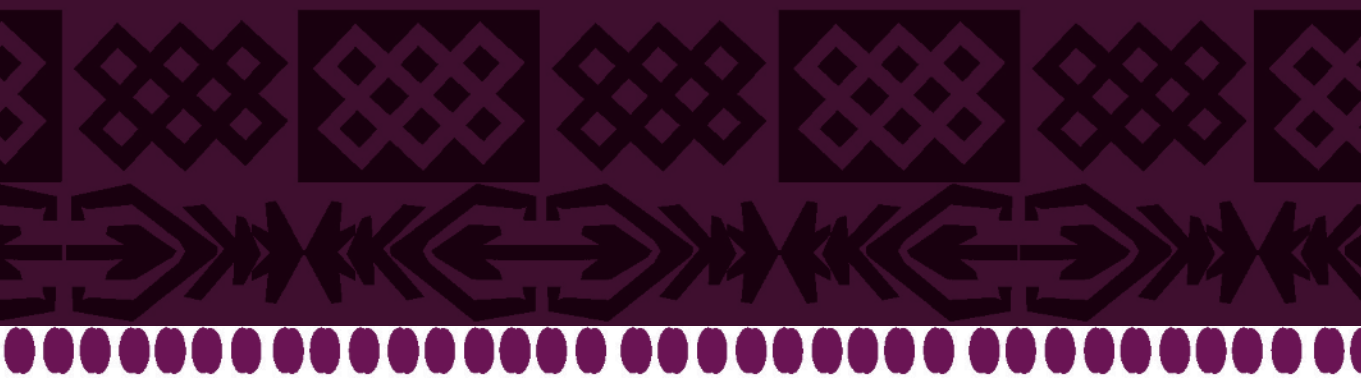
*Task Manager: Detlev Puetz*

**Multinational Operations:** This evaluation—Fostering Regional Integration in Africa: An Evaluation of the Bank's Multinational Operations, 2000-2010—aims to determine the relevance of Bank policies and strategies on regional cooperation and integration in relation to multinational operations. It assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of multinational operations; as well as the performance of the Bank and the borrowers. The evaluation will cover policies, strategies and operations approved during the 2000-2010 period.

*Task Manager: Eneas Gakusi*

**Country Strategy Papers:** The objective of the Evaluation of Country Strategy Papers (CSPs)





as a Programming Framework for the Bank's Assistance— is to assess the extent to which CSPs constitute “the conceptual framework for programming development assistance to recipient countries over a defined period of time, in line with Bank corporate strategic objectives and country development goals” as defined in the Staff Guidance on Quality at Entry Criteria and Standards for Country Strategies and Regional Integration Strategies.

*Task Manager: Razfindramanana*

### **The Bank's Assistance in the Transport**

**sector:** The study aims to assess the Bank's transport sector intervention and resultant outcomes, focusing on poverty reduction and regional integration in RMCs, to contribute to the Bank's new transport infrastructure policy. The main focus, in a regional integration context, is on the extent to which the Bank's interventions have contributed to logistics system improvement and cross-border trade facilitation.

*Task Manager: Hajime Onishi*

### **Integrated Water Resources Management**

**(IWRM):** Water resources and water services in Africa are severely underdeveloped with less than five percent of Africa's surface and ground-water harnessed for use. Water utilization for agriculture and energy production is low, constraining economic growth, poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs.

For these reasons, water resource management is a key area of investment for the African Development Bank and is central to the achievement of wider corporate policy objectives.

The evaluation covers the period 2000-2010. It assesses the extent to which the Bank has implemented its IWRM policy and considers its continuing relevance to Regional Member Countries water development needs

*Task Manager: Hajime Onishi*

*Approach Papers are available on the AfDB website ([www.afdb.org/opev](http://www.afdb.org/opev))*

Odile Keller is Manager of the High Level Evaluations Division in the Operations Evaluation Department.

Mohamed H. Manaï is the Manager of the Project and Programme Evaluation Division in the Operations Evaluation Department.

# Inside the AfDB Evaluation Department

## **Viewpoint:** **Private Sector Evaluation**

Evaluation at the AfDB is objective-based, but it also assesses unintended effects. Evaluation helps the AfDB to be accountable to shareholders and to learn from and improve its investments. For private sector evaluations, we assess projects against absolute economic and financial performance. In evaluating private sector investment, assessing profitability is very important, but it is not sufficient, (besides) markets can tell us about profitability but not whether the investment is having an impact on the population. In this case, we look beyond profitability and ability to repay the loan. We are interested in sustainability—whether the investments

contribute to improving private sector development and poverty reduction. We see sustainability being necessary to being competitive.



*Grace Kyokunda*  
*Chief Evaluation Officer,*  
*OPEV, African Development Bank*



## **Viewpoint** **22 invited, 40 showed up!**

### **Evaluation Is an Opportunity for Beneficiaries to Make their Voices Heard.**

Curiously, while evaluators are not always welcomed by governments, they are often received with open arms and great enthusiasm by the beneficiaries of development interventions. This is because more and more beneficiaries see evaluation as an opportunity to make their voices heard by their leaders.

During a project performance evaluation in an AfDB regional member country, beneficiaries insisted that we listen to as many of them as possible to make sure that those who finance development projects understand that beneficiaries are not always well served during implementation.

We asked for a maximum of 16 – 22 people; 40 people showed up, and they did not hesitate to express themselves freely, supported by arguments to make their point : Among other things, they felt that, as beneficiaries, project funds did not reach them significantly; and that there was hardly any of the desired change in their lives.



*Ann Sow Dao, Ph.D*  
*Principal Evaluation Officer, OPEV, African Development Bank*



## “Are Evaluators Always right?”

### Viewpoint

#### **The Kpong Irrigation Project Discussion Underscores 4 Key Points About Evaluation Work:**

##### **1. The complexity and uncertainty of evaluation in a changing context**

The intended objectives of the project were to ensure food security/self-sufficiency by increasing rice production. Although feasibility studies and beneficiary assessments were undertaken, the project did not attract small farmers and did not achieve its objectives. Contextualizing the findings of the project evaluation involves considering factors of change between approval and evaluation by taking into account unanticipated outcomes only if they are properly documented, are of significant magnitude to be consequential, and can be plausibly attributed to the project. Excluding consideration of unanticipated outcomes in the effectiveness and sustainability assessments ensures the accountability of the project for effective and sustainable achievement of its relevant objectives (ECG-GPS).

##### **2. Timing of the PCR and Ex-Post Evaluation: How soon is too soon?**

The PCR has to be done in a timely manner in order to take stock of the achievement of immediate objectives, including outputs, and summarize the project's contribution to the intended impacts outlined in the project's statement of objectives and prospects for sustainability of benefits. PCRs are normally due 6 to 12 months after project closure. A longer time frame may be used in cases where outcomes are not observable within a year after project closure (for example, some PBLs). The timing of an evaluation is longer in order to ensure that sufficient time has elapsed for outcomes to be realized, recognizing that outcomes higher in the results chain may take more time to materialize (ECG-GPS).

##### **3. The role of the evaluator in a dynamic and changing environment**

The role of the evaluator in a dynamic and changing environment is to ensure that the project is evaluated against the outcomes that the project intended to achieve, as contained in the project's statement of objectives. Broader economic and social goals that are not included in the project's statement of objectives are not considered in the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability (GPS). If the objectives' statement is unclear, the evaluator constructs a retrospective statement of objectives using the project's results chain, performance indicators and targets that allow a clear attribution of the results achieved to the project.

##### **4. The correlation or non-correlation between a good project design and the project performance and impact.**

The correlation (or non-correlation) of project design and project performance or impact is encapsulated in the assessment of the relevance of project design (extent to which project design adopted the appropriate solutions to the identified problems) including the links between the project's activities, outputs, and intended outcomes are summarized in the project's results chain or theory of change.

*Mohamed Manai, Division Manager, Project and Programme Level Evaluations*

## Did You Know? *How OPEV Shares Evaluation Knowledge*

OPEV evaluations are a rich store of knowledge about the Bank's work – they tell you what works, what does not work, and why.

The department transforms the information and knowledge it gathers or generates into actionable forms that it endeavors to share with Bank staff, management, and partners in a timely manner and in an appropriate format to help improve the Bank's work. OPEV shares the knowledge it generates through a mix of communications and knowledge sharing tools, tactics, and channels— during and after the evaluation process

- **During the evaluation process:** Learning from and sharing knowledge with stakeholders is embedded in the standard evaluation process. For example, activities such as sharing of approach papers and draft reports for comment; desk reviews; peer reviews; debriefings after field missions; stakeholder meetings, seminars, and feedback workshops are an integral part of the process. They are all geared towards ensuring systematic transfer to and exchange of knowledge with the Bank's stakeholders at different phases of an evaluation.
- **After the evaluation is completed:** OPEV endeavors to share its findings with stakeholders. First, it prepares evaluation reports—with findings, lessons, and recommendations for management, RMC authorities and executing agencies. These reports fall under the following categories. Project Completion Report Evaluation Notes, Expanded Supervision Report Evaluation Notes, Project Performance

Evaluation Reports, Sectoral Evaluations, Thematic Evaluations, Country Assistance Evaluations, Business Process Reviews, Corporate Evaluations, and Public sector project completion report review and synthesis report.

In addition, OPEV frequently shares information about ongoing or completed evaluations in the Bank's in-house electronic newsletter (Bank in Action), and on its intranet and Internet sites, as well as through focal points in different departments.

OPEV presents all completed evaluation reports to CODE, the Bank's Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness. **All completed OPEV evaluation reports are available in the Bank's content management system (Board DARMs) on the day they are presented to CODE.** Board DARMs, a searchable database, is accessible to all staff. These reports are also posted on the Bank's Internet and intranet sites; and uploaded to OPEV Departmental DARMs.

Enhanced versions of the reports are posted on the AfDB intranet and Internet sites ([www.afdb.org/opev](http://www.afdb.org/opev)) as soon as they are ready.

OPEV also repurposes evaluative knowledge in forms that are useful for specific stakeholders and aims to ensure that these and other knowledge products are widely accessible. Some of these instruments include: a one page summary for the President, management fast track, quarterly newsletter, evaluation brief,

sector-specific lessons learned, sector evaluation synthesis, and key lessons from evaluations.

Electronic and hard copies of these products are distributed to all identified stakeholders. They are also distributed at knowledge stands during Bank-wide events.

OPEV also organizes face-to face meetings, dissemination workshops, learning events or other working sessions to share knowledge from evaluation work. Some of the events include:

- Feedback seminars (both towards the end of an evaluation and after the evaluation) – to present evaluation results and recommendations
- Evaluation Week – offers events aimed at sharing evaluation results, strengthening Bank staff capacity in evaluation, and raising awareness about the use of evaluation. **Mark your calendars for AfDB Evaluation Week 2012, December 3-7, 2012.**
- Evaluation Community of Practice (ECoP), which facilitates the sharing of technical knowledge among evaluators.

The department also shares evaluation know-how with partner institutions to contribute to advancements in evaluation work – with a positive impact on evaluation work. It does this by participating in international forums with other partner organizations and collaborating on joint evaluations.

The Department is stepping up its dissemination efforts: in the short term, it is working to engage more with key stakeholders and to make evaluation results available to the identified primary audience for each evaluation in a timely manner and appropriate format; it is also working to ensure that evaluation findings are easily accessible in the public domain for the rest of the Bank's stakeholders. In this light, the department is also enhancing its social media strategy to create greater awareness about its work, share evaluation results more widely, and engage more with its publics.

## Viewpoint

While I strongly believe that evaluation reports are critical to the Bank as a (i) learning/knowledge bank and (ii) critical input/resource for the design and implementation of its operations in order to avoid past mistakes and build on successes and lessons learnt, I haven't used evaluation reports much. This is partly because (i) there is a vast amount of information and reports being produced by and circulated within the Bank. It is not possible to read them all as and when they are produced and; (ii) I may not know that they exist... even if the information is posted by email on ERCU bulletins.

Given the information overload, I would prefer to read the reports as and when I need them or when I am working on related subjects/issues. It would therefore help if there was a way these reports could be availed virtually in an easily searchable and retrievable format for staff to read when they need to. For instance, OPEV could consider posting the reports online and in an organized manner... Something akin to the African Data portal which is constantly updated and staff can access and even do an analysis of the data when needed, and per topic. OPEV could, in a similar way, post its reports by topic/sector (not alphabetically) Staff could refer to these reports when they have time or when designing programs and operations. In addition, OPEV could consider including a feature whereby staff members interested in a particular topic could subscribe to an alert when there is an evaluation in their area of interest.

*Lilian Wanjiru Macharia, Principal Resource Mobilization Officer  
African Development Bank*



## It is All about Dissemination, or is It?

Dissemination of evaluation results as a requirement for the use of evaluation findings is a frequent topic of discussion in development evaluation circles. Indeed, poor dissemination is often cited as the reason for poor uptake of evaluation lessons. But is this really the case? That dissemination often becomes the battle cry of many evaluation departments is an indication of what people think. However, there is another often-neglected side to this story. As the AfDB's CODE Chair asks on page 7, **“Evaluators need to disseminate lessons better, but then, how can we be sure that these lessons are used by task managers?”**

“Evaluators need to disseminate lessons better, but then how can we be sure that these lessons are used by task managers?”

Christoph Kohlmeyer, CODE Chair



This question underscores the need for a more realistic approach to and expectations from dissemination to encourage use of lessons from evaluations. For the most part, the conversation has focused on whether the evaluator disseminates or does not disseminate. Yet dissemination does not guarantee use and it is not in itself sufficient for findings to be used. Efforts to increase use must therefore focus equally on both evaluators

and end users—policy makers, operations complexes, and other stakeholders. We must also be clear about how we define successful dissemination.

Most of those who need evaluation findings are knowledge workers, whose work involves researching, gathering, using, and generating knowledge. Indeed, knowledge workers are adept at finding and using information from the most obscure sources to feed into their work. Why not information from evaluations, especially when it is readily available through databases, published documents, email messages, and feedback sessions and seminars? Knowledge workers must assume greater responsibility for using or not using evaluation results.

The likely reason for the perceived low use of evaluation findings is that in an age of information overload, we have become more selective about receiving and absorbing information. We mostly pay attention to information and knowledge when we need it or when we are required to use it. This “Just-in-time” need perhaps explains the low turnout for feedback workshops or the tendency to ignore other dissemination activities, which are often held at the evaluator’s convenience, not the end-users’.

It also explains why the most frequent examples of successful use of evaluation results at the AfDB (see page 39), for example, are cases where the evaluation was requested and eagerly expected. Hence the importance of evaluation timing/demand; quality; capacity; context; ensuring that evaluations respond to the expressed needs of end-users; and properly

segmenting, targeting, and focusing on our key audiences— to encourage use.

These AfDB examples also show that, at the institutional level, the AfDB gets high marks for uptake of evaluation findings. Painting the dissemination landscape with the same brush obscures this salient fact. It is important to acknowledge successes and to refocus the conversation on where the real challenges lie. In the case of the AfDB, these include ensuring that staff follow the good example set by the institution. The evaluator's key role here is to make evaluation results available through available dissemination channels. Once the evaluator does this, is his/her task done? This begs the question: What is successful dissemination?

Is dissemination considered successful based on the impact of an evaluation on its intended primary audience or on the number of people who are exposed to the evaluation – even when one is not sure these other people are interested in the evaluation or are going to use it? When the primary audience of an evaluation has been presented with the evaluation findings and has drawn on them to make decisions (for example, institution-level policy decisions that will affect hundreds of people), it seems justifiable to say that the evaluator's primary dissemination goals have been met. Communicate knowledge to allow end-users to make informed decisions.

As experience has shown, people look for and use knowledge when they need it—including knowledge from evaluations. This suggests that evaluators should focus on their primary audience for maximum impact—as is often the case— and, for all other audiences, mostly

ensure that evaluation findings are in the public domain and are easily accessible. More work certainly needs to be done here. This is within the evaluator's purview.

Disseminating to a wider audience serves other useful purposes: public relations and demonstration of expertise among peers for the evaluator, the department, the institution; raising awareness so people know where to find the evaluation when they need it. All laudable and necessary goals; but these other dissemination objectives should be clearly acknowledged as such when pushing for wide dissemination. Targeted and focused dissemination is more likely to ensure use. This is often successfully carried out by evaluators.

In conclusion, evaluators must continue to produce high quality evaluations and to disseminate effectively; but task managers and other users of evaluation knowledge must also be held to task if they fail to also draw on evaluation findings and lessons to make informed decisions.

*Felicia Avwontom  
Principal Communications and  
Knowledge Management Officer,  
Operations Evaluation Department,  
AfDB*

Project Level  
Evaluation

Country  
Assistance  
Evaluations

Corporate  
Evaluations

Thematic and  
Sector  
Evaluations

Misc

OPEV  
Sharing

eVALUatiOn  
matters

## “Are Evaluators Always Right?”

### Viewpoint

“**Are evaluators always right?** is a tricky question. Evaluators are obliged to report the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. However, the concept of truth is more elusive than it seems to be. In fact, the role of evaluators has multiple dimensions. The evaluation task requires good research skills to come up with a clear story of what has happened. It also requires good judgment to make useful recommendations. Between reporting the findings as an objective observer, and making judgments as a good counselor, evaluators are often caught in a sandwiched position. In the end, the truth corresponds to the facts and evaluators should always be right on findings based on empirical evidence; but recommendations are based on personal judgments and may not be the absolute truth.”

*Hadizatou Guimba*  
Principal Evaluation Officer  
Operations Evaluation Department

### Viewpoint

#### Project Completion Report (PCR) or Project Implementation Completion Report? Confusion and Where the Story Begins

Why can the term “project completion report” have a negative impact on the results agenda? The answer is simple: Most development practitioners may mistakenly consider project completion as the end of the project. Accordingly, they will pay little attention to what happens afterwards, even if the logical framework of the project includes a set of outcomes (changes) which may not be observable at this stage, since the PCR is sometimes prepared when the disbursement rate reaches 98%.

Therefore, it is always better to call a spade a spade. In this case, it is better to talk about project implementation completion report. Doing so acknowledges the report’s limitations in terms of results reporting and underscores the need for monitoring outcomes after the implementation phase. Outcomes that may be summarized in another more appropriate document to be prepared one, two, or three years later, in order to better assess the level of achievement of development goals.

*Joseph Mouanda*  
Evaluation Officer,  
Operations Evaluation Department



# Afdb Gets High Marks for Use of Evaluation Results —at the Institutional Level

*Select Examples of How OPEV Evaluations  
Have Contributed to the Bank's Work*

## The evaluation

## Bank response to the evaluation

**Evaluation of the Assistance of the African Development Bank to Fragile States**

Following the evaluation, the Bank established a high-level task force to guide its future engagement in fragile regional member countries. The task force draws heavily from the findings of the OPEV report and will present its recommendations by July 2012.

**Quality of Project Results Reporting at the AfDB, 2008-2009  
Synthesis report**

The findings of this review informed the ongoing revision of the Project Completion Report (PCR) template for public sector operations. Some of the deficiencies in the quality of PCRs—highlighted by the evaluation—have been addressed in the revised PCR template.

**Mainstreaming Gender Equality: A Road to Results or a Road to Nowhere?**

This evaluation synthesis is providing input for the design of the Bank's first gender strategy. OPEV is jointly managing—with ORQR (Quality and Results Department)—the ongoing review of gender equality results of AfDB-funded public sector operations, 2009-2011; this review will also inform the design of the Bank's first gender strategy.

**Evaluation of Policy-Based Operations in the African Development Bank, 1999-2009**

This evaluation helped shape the current Bank Policy on PBOs. The new Policy addresses the key short-comings in the Bank's use of PBO instruments, as revealed in OPEV's evaluation.

**Evaluation of the Joint Africa Institute**

This evaluation informed the Bank's current Capacity Development Strategy, as reported in the Bank Group Capacity Development Strategy 2010. The evaluation provided Management with a valid basis for appropriate decisions about the future of the JAI.

**Independent Evaluation of Project Supervision at the African Development Bank, 2001-2008**

This evaluation highlighted key issues affecting the Bank's supervision systems and processes. The Bank's management addressed these issues by revamping the entire system, including the project management information system.

**AfDB-IFAD Joint Evaluation on Agriculture and Rural Development in Africa**

*This evaluation informed the current African Development Bank Group Agriculture Sector Strategy*

# Upcoming Events - Mark your calendars!

OPEV

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(1987 - 2012)

Come celebrate this anniversary year with us during

### AfDB Evaluation Week 2012

December 3-7, 2012

African Development Bank, Tunis

Join us for: conferences, panel discussions, debates, networking, and more under the patronage of AfDB President Donald Kaberuka



**About the AfDB:** The overarching objective of the African Development Bank Group is to foster sustainable economic development and social progress in its regional member countries (RMCs), thus contributing to poverty reduction. The Bank Group achieves this objective by mobilizing and allocating resources for investment in RMCs; and providing policy advice and technical assistance to support development efforts.

The mission of the **Operations Evaluation Department** is to help the Bank to foster sustainable growth and poverty reduction in Africa through independent and influential evaluations. Such evaluations assess the Bank Group's policies, procedures and operations, review performance and report on results in order to draw useful lessons and promote accountability.

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