

IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation  
Évaluation indépendante du développement



African Development Bank

# Independent Evaluation Strategy

2013–2017



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

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# Executive summary

The Independent Evaluation Strategy links the ultimate goals of the Independent Evaluation Policy with IDEV's work program. While the policy defines the authorizing environment for independent evaluation in the Bank, IDEV's annual rolling work programs provide the framework within which IDEV activities are framed, resourced, and implemented. Linking policy to programming is critical to managerial accountability and effective use of resources. The strategy forges the needed links between long-term policy goals, on the one hand and evaluation activities, evaluation skills, and budgets on the other. It focuses IDEV management on results and facilitates Board oversight of the function.

This Independent Evaluation Strategy is grounded in the new evaluation policy.<sup>1</sup> But to secure results and make a distinctive contribution to the Bank's development effectiveness in an evolving operations environment, substantial changes in IDEV's product mix, evaluation methods, outreach to stakeholders, evaluation processes, and organization are necessary.

## Serving the three objectives of evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Policy identifies three complementary objectives for independent evaluation: learning, accountability, and promoting an evaluation culture. These objectives provide the guiding framework for the strategy. They are intended to support one over-

arching goal—to improve development effectiveness. The products and services that IDEV provides must enable it to deliver on all three objectives.

Most products contribute to more than one evaluation objective. Rather than pigeonholing products as primarily for one purpose or another, IDEV will maximize the benefits and reach of each product and rebalance its overall product mix to deliver on the three main objectives.

IDEV will provide a range of products that are responsive and relevant. Given resource constraints, the product mix must be selective to ensure that topics and product types address the Bank's priorities and challenges. Selectivity will be driven by demand from stakeholders and priority needs identified by IDEV, while also balancing coverage of Bank activities and functions.

Consultation on IDEV's three-year rolling work program will help ensure that topics are responsive, relevant, and timely. Recent feedback, including a self-assessment, was characterized by greater demand for products that support learning and look at high-level themes, sectors, or countries, using individual project evaluations as building blocks.

Table ES1 summarizes the number of different types of evaluations that will increase or decrease in response to the needs identified. In making these

Table ES1 | The multiple roles of different evaluation products

Evaluation type	Accountability	Learning	Evaluation culture	IDEV direction
Project Completion Report Validation Notes	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	Continue
Extended Supervision Report Validation Notes	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Continue
Project Performance Evaluation Reports (public sector)	✓	✓	✓	Reduce
Cluster project evaluations	✓	✓✓	✓	Increase
Project Performance Evaluation Reports (private sector)	✓	✓✓	✓	Continue
Thematic evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	Continue
Sector evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	Continue
Country Strategy Evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	Increase
Country Strategy Paper Completion Report Validations	✓✓		✓	Remain discontinued
Regional Integration Strategy Evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	Start to conduct
Corporate evaluations	✓✓	✓✓	✓	Increase
Impact evaluations	✓	✓✓	✓✓	Start to conduct
Evaluation synthesis		✓✓	✓	Increase

✓ = ???, ✓✓ = ???, ✓✓✓ = ???


decisions, IDEV has considered a range of options. Fundamentally, IDEV needs to increase the coverage and number of its products to respond to growing demand.

### Raising the bar on quality

It is not only the types of evaluations that IDEV produces that will help it fulfill its evaluation objectives and contribute to development effectiveness—evaluation approaches and instruments also matter. IDEV will vary its final evaluation products and the tools that it employs to create them. Methodological rigor will be the governing concept when identifying appropriate tools and techniques. Assuring rigor will be part of the quality assurance process. IDEV will also be much more open to conducting quick and focused studies that address a specific issue in a limited period.

Whatever products IDEV provides, if they do not have an impact on what the Bank does, they cannot contribute to the ultimate goal of improving the Bank’s development effectiveness. There are two main factors that determine impact: (i) quality, including timeliness and relevance, and (ii) knowledge-sharing and follow-up—getting the messages to audiences that can use the evaluation knowledge and identifying tools that will ensure the knowledge is used. By codifying key processes and agreeing on evaluation quality standards, IDEV will raise the quality of its evaluation products so that all reach an equally high level. In doing so, IDEV will minimize inter-evaluation variability.

### Using evaluation knowledge

Knowledge is power. Good policies are based on evidence. To extract the most 

from the knowledge it generates and collates, IDEV will need to approach knowledge management in a more dynamic, proactive, and integrated manner.

Disseminating evaluation findings is at the core of knowledge sharing, but it is only part of knowledge management. IDEV will build knowledge-management thinking into its process from the early stages of each evaluation and will include a dissemination strategy in each approach paper that identifies key target audiences. IDEV will also look across the evaluation portfolio to identify cross-cutting knowledge themes and identify, organize, and share relevant, usable, and actionable knowledge from a range of sources.

We need to know that evaluations have an impact on Bank policy and practice. Evaluations make recommendations. Not all of these are likely to be acceptable to management or the Board, but ensuring that agreed recommendations are actually implemented strengthens accountability. IDEV, in concert with management, will introduce a Management Action Reporting Mechanism to help IDEV apply the important principle of transparency and to assist the Board in its oversight role.

### **Increasing the impact of evaluations in regional member countries**

There is an increasing thirst for evaluative knowledge in regional member countries. Ensuring that the knowledge IDEV generates is made available to them is crucial to ensuring that this

knowledge has impact and can be used. As part of this effort, IDEV proposes to support the development of an evaluation culture in regional member countries in three ways. It will:

- Engage regional member countries in the process of individual evaluations.
- Practice outreach, particularly by targeting regional member countries in communication efforts.
- Support the efforts of regional member countries to develop national evaluation capacity.

### **Making it happen**

IDEV needs an organizational structure that will allow it to deliver the right mix of products and services, while at the same time increasing their number, raising quality, and enhancing the impact of evaluative knowledge. To achieve its policy objectives and deliver the products and services outlined, IDEV will be reorganized into three divisions.

The two divisions in charge of evaluation products will be structured to better reflect the Bank's own structure and priorities. One division will focus on infrastructure and the private sector, and the other on agriculture; governance; human development; and country, regional, and corporate evaluations. This will not only allow more efficient use of resources by increasing the synergies among different evaluation products, but will also facilitate longer-term engagement with the regional and operations departments of the Bank at various stages of the cycles for both projects and evaluations.





The third division will address the importance of knowledge management, support self-evaluation in the Bank, and strengthen evaluation capacity in regional member countries. These services can no longer be considered an optional add-on—they are now central priorities for IDEV.

## Resource management

IDEV will strengthen its results-oriented budgeting and present its rolling work programs to the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness on the basis of three scenarios: a low case, a base case, and a high case. Each scenario will specify the expected deliverables. IDEV will also seek out opportunities for additional sources of funding, including trust funds within the Bank and external funding opportunities.

IDEV's budget should be viewed against the background of the comparison of IDEV with other multilateral development banks' independent evaluation units presented in the self-assessment. This analysis made clear that IDEV's total resource envelope is modest and that its level of staffing is lower than that of comparable institutions.

IDEV will broaden and deepen its skills mix, enabling it to reduce the ratio of consultant costs to total budget, in line with other comparable multilateral development banks. IDEV will use several complementary approaches to achieve the optimal size and makeup of its team. It will:

- Integrate more staff positions, in total, into the work program, compared with 2011–12.

- Review the mix of staff skills and expertise to achieve a closer fit with departmental requirements.
- Invest in staff skills. Training and personal development opportunities will be identified.
- Adjust the balance between more experienced and more junior staff.
- Consider fixed-term secondments to and from other organizations.

## Measuring Progress

With this strategy in place, the evaluators themselves will be held accountable, monitored, and evaluated. IDEV will track its progress in implementing this strategy and will report back to the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness on that progress as part of the Annual Report on Independent Evaluation.

IDEV will use the proposed results framework (at midpoint and at the end of the strategy period) to report on its progress (see appendix 3). The framework identifies outcome-level indicators for each of the three objectives of evaluation—learning, accountability, and evaluation culture. At the output level, many of the key indicators identified contribute to more than one of the evaluation objectives. In addition, the results framework will ensure that IDEV is held accountable for putting in place the key processes and inputs needed to ensure delivery of evaluative products that have an impact.



# Setting the stage

The ability to adapt to change is crucial in our fast-moving world. This certainly holds true for the African Development Bank and its independent evaluation function, entrusted to IDEV. The context for independent evaluation in international development has changed. Demand for relevant development knowledge and more effective development cooperation processes and results is at an all-time high. Citizens in developed and developing countries alike are pressing development agencies to be accountable for results.

At the same time, the priorities and instruments of the Bank are evolving to promote more inclusive growth and to help African countries transition toward greener economies. The independent evaluation function needs to reorient its products and methods to meet the emerging challenges associated with these policy shifts and the heightened expectations regarding evaluation use.

Against this background of change, the Bank's Independent Evaluation Policy was revised in 2012. The policy consolidates the core content of current guidelines and takes full account of IDEV's functional responsibilities. In particular, it outlines the mission and guiding principles; identifies IDEV's main stakeholders; highlights independence, usefulness, credibility, and transparency as key principles of the evaluation function; and articulates the governance

structure, including the Board's oversight role.

These basic policy guidelines and parameters are designed to facilitate the achievement of three main objectives for independent evaluation: learning, accountability, and supporting the development of an evaluation culture. Taken together, these three objectives support the overarching goal of all evaluation and related quality assurance, oversight, and monitoring activities carried out within the Bank—to improve development effectiveness (see figure 1).

This Independent Evaluation Strategy is grounded in the new evaluation policy. But to secure results and make a distinctive contribution to the Bank's development effectiveness in an evolving operations environment, substantial changes are needed in IDEV's product mix, evaluation methods, outreach to stakeholders, evaluation processes, and organization. Change is imperative for evaluations to be credible, relevant, and effective and for evaluation findings to be used. The policy establishes the destination—greater development effectiveness through accountability, learning, and supporting an evaluation culture. The strategy provides the roadmap needed to reach this destination.

## **Managing the evaluation function for results**

The strategy links the ultimate goals of the Independent Evaluation Policy with



Figure 1 | Independent evaluations' contribution to development effectiveness



IDEV's work program. While the policy defines the authorizing environment for independent evaluation in the Bank, IDEV's annual rolling work programs provide the framework within which IDEV activities are planned, resourced, and implemented.

The work programs specify the clients, products, schedules, and funding requirements of IDEV evaluation activities. They are conceived as flexible documents that can be adjusted to respond to changing needs and priorities, and thus facilitate management and oversight of IDEV activities. They provide guideposts for deploying evaluation skills and managing budget resources.

Linking policy to programming is critical to managerial accountability and effective use of resources. The strategy forges the needed links between long-term policy goals on the one hand, and evaluation activities, evaluation skills, and budgets on the other. It focuses

IDEV management on results and facilitates Board oversight of the function.

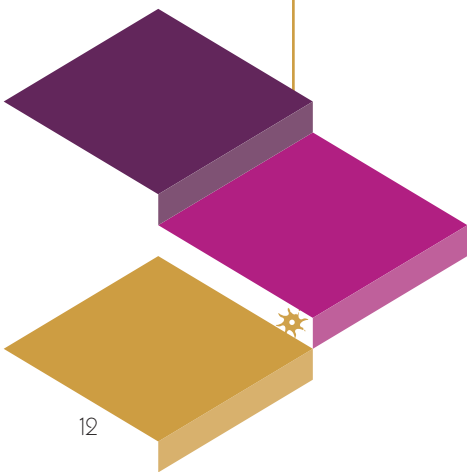
To this end, the strategy provides a useful framework for measuring progress. In evaluation, as in all other Bank functions, it is critical to track performance. With effective work programming that is deliberately focused on priority tasks, evaluators can be held to account for the resources and tasks entrusted to them, and IDEV management can make timely adjustments to work program objectives by redeploying skills and resources. Put another way, effective work programming ensures that the evaluators themselves are evaluated. Thus the strategy helps achieve evaluation relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and results.

### The structure of the strategy document

The strategy contains four sections. The first identifies the internal and external drivers for change. The second sets out

the range of evaluative products and approaches needed to deliver on the strategic evaluation objectives. The third highlights how important it is not only to produce evaluative findings, but also to ensure that they are shared and used and that there is follow-up to ensure

that they affect development outcomes and impacts. The fourth looks at how IDEV will be structured and managed and how progress will be measured in order to transform the strategic vision into reality.



# Responding to the changing context

Evaluation at the Bank has a long pedigree—a history of growth, change, and adaptation. An evaluation unit was first established in 1980; seven years later it became IDEV, a department, and began reporting directly to the Bank's President. In 1993 the independence of the department was strengthened when it began reporting directly to the Board. In 2007 a first policy for independent evaluation was agreed, in line with international standards. Today, following a self-assessment<sup>2</sup> and a changed context, an explicit strategy for implementing the new Independent Evaluation Policy is needed.

There have been important changes in the context of evaluation, both within and outside the Bank. These factors are the drivers of change for independent evaluation at the Bank.

## The global drivers

There has been a worldwide push for results and learning in development. From Monterrey in 2002, Rome in 2003, Paris in 2005, Accra in 2008, to Busan in 2011, the growing emphasis on mutual accountability in managing for development results in an increasingly interconnected global system has changed the development evaluation agenda.

- First, the very concept of development has expanded well beyond growth to encompass a wide range of economic, social, environmental,

and governance factors that affect human well-being.

- Second, the imperatives of country ownership and alignment with domestic priorities and processes have shifted the focus of development evaluation to the country level.

*Achieving concrete and sustainable results involves better managing for results, monitoring, evaluating and communicating progress.*

*-The Busan Partnership*

- Third, the emergence of a wide range of development threats and opportunities that transcend national borders has put the spotlight on assessing multicountry collaborative programs that deliver global and regional public goods.

- Fourth, the advent of new private and official donors is inducing deep changes in the harmonization and coordination of development cooperation programs.

The ongoing global economic crisis has led to belt-tightening around the world. This is raising the bar for evaluators and development professionals everywhere. In developed and developing countries alike, stakeholders want firmer assurances that the funds directed to development are achieving results that



can be measured in the quality of human lives, that everything possible is being done to ensure that scarce development resources are managed well, and that these investments deliver the best possible outcomes in terms of reaching the Millennium Development Goals and responding to other global challenges.

## **The African context**

In contrast to the global economic trend, some African countries are on an upward trajectory. The past decade has been one of unparalleled growth: 6 of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies in 2010 were in Africa. The International Monetary Fund predicts that 7 of the 10 fastest-growing economies over the next 5 years will also be in Africa. Nevertheless, this growth is not universal—some African countries are finding it difficult to surmount stagnation and fragility. This contrast is contributing to rising popular expectations throughout the region. Thus, the call for accountability and greater development effectiveness increasingly originates within African countries—from parliaments, states, civil society organizations, and individual citizens. The sharp increase in connectivity—thanks to mobile phones and the Internet—bolsters this demand by ensuring better access to information and greater potential for transparency.

Similarly, many African countries have taken greater ownership of their own development processes and assumed leadership of a wide range of development initiatives. Regional member countries reflect the new attitude: they expect visible results from development expenditures. They are demanding bet-

ter information about outcomes as well as improvements in monitoring, both of which can be used to make progress toward development objectives.

## **Changes in international evaluation**

The Bank is not the only organization that is expected to adapt to a changing context for evaluation. Shifting directions are evident across the international evaluation community. Other multilateral development banks and evaluation leaders have identified the constraints and opportunities associated with a changing and more demanding environment. They are using more multifaceted techniques and new technologies, focusing on broader evaluations designed to extract strategic lessons, diversifying the range of their products, and targeting their outreach more precisely. As a result, the mix of products and services has become more varied, and the approaches and methods are growing increasingly sophisticated.

## **Internal drivers of change**

The Ten-Year Strategy will guide all Bank work over the coming decade; this means it must also be a key driver of independent evaluation activities. In the past, the Medium-Term Strategy helped direct the topics covered in the evaluation work program. Looking ahead, the link to the Ten-Year Strategy will be tighter and more explicit.

The Ten-Year Strategy focuses on broad challenges such as inclusive and green growth, and it emphasizes the Bank's role as a knowledge broker, a catalyst, and a convener. In response to demand



from regional member countries, the Bank is seeking to provide more tailored and flexible assistance. Implementation will require not only a shift in how resources are allocated, but also changes in how the Bank works. In turn, the Bank's independent evaluation function needs to focus on new themes, report against higher-level goals, review more complex interventions, work on themes that cut across sectoral boundaries, and provide a suitably sophisticated basket of products and services that respond to the Bank's strategic objectives.

The Bank as an organization is also changing; it is modernizing and decentralizing, which entail specific evaluation challenges. Just as independent evaluation should look at progress toward the Bank's development priorities, it must also examine the organization, the corporate structure, and the processes required to deliver on those priorities.

Within the Bank, there is wide recognition of the need for a change in the working culture. Many have acknowledged the need to move away from a culture of project approval to one of

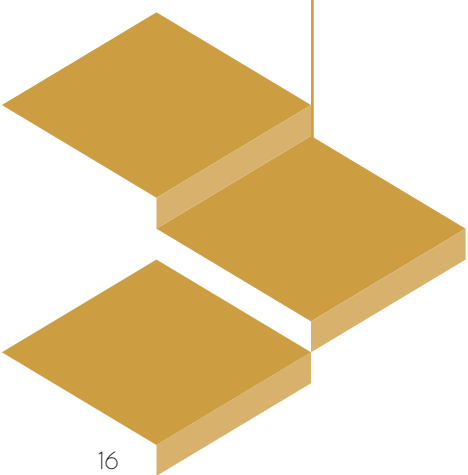
results. Bank staff and management are increasingly aware of the crucial role that both self-evaluation and independent evaluation can play in making this happen.

Finally, IDEV itself is a driver for change. IDEV management and staff are continuously seeking to improve what they do and how they work, applying lessons from years of experience. In 2012 IDEV commissioned its first self-assessment, which highlighted how the department should consider reprioritizing and rebalancing its product mix, while improving the quality and impact of its work (see box 1).<sup>3</sup> This self-assessment has been a major driver in formulating the new policy and this strategy.

## Box 1 | Key messages from the self-assessment

In 2012 IDEV commissioned its first self-assessment. It was conducted by an independent consultant and involved extensive consultations within IDEV and across the Bank. It identified several challenges for IDEV. The strongest messages included calls for a shift in the balance between IDEV's accountability and learning roles, in favor of learning; to undertake more high-level evaluations that address major development challenges and impacts; to deepen stakeholder engagement; to generate a broader range of evaluation knowledge and disseminate it more widely; to make evaluations more effective by improving their relevance, quality, credibility, timeliness, and impact; and to strengthen the learning and evaluation culture in the Bank and in regional member countries.







# Striking a new balance: relevant and responsive products and approaches

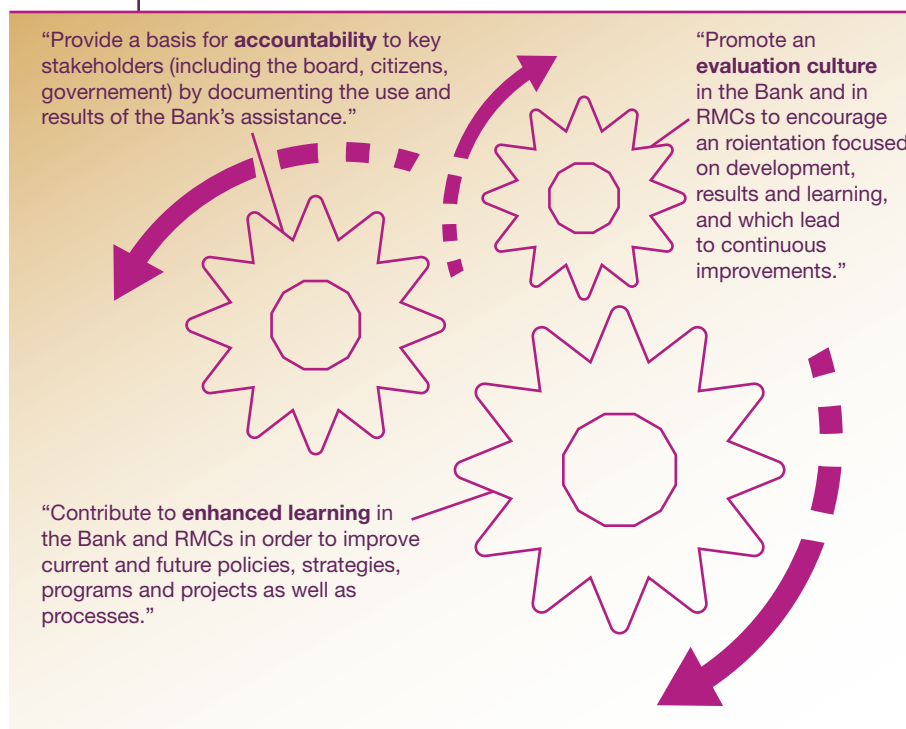
The Independent Evaluation Policy identifies three complementary objectives for independent evaluation: learning, accountability, and promotion of an evaluation culture (figure 2). These objectives also provide the guiding framework for the strategy.

## Serving the three objectives of evaluation

To deliver on all three objectives, independent evaluation at the Bank needs to be adjusted. It has traditionally focused mainly on accountability. And while inde-

pendent evaluation must vigilantly guard accountability, the changing context demands that it also play a stronger and more effective role in learning and in nurturing an evaluation culture across the Bank and in regional member countries. Fine-tuning this approach requires increasing the number and variety of evaluations and adjusting the balance of the portfolio to ensure that its work supports all three objectives, since they are all integral to increased development effectiveness.

Figure 2 | The three objectives of independent evaluation in the 2012 Independent Evaluation Policy





## Strategic choices to rebalance the product mix

Most products contribute to more than one evaluation objective. Rather than pigeonholing products as primarily for one purpose or another, IDEV will maximize the benefits of each product and rebalance its overall product mix to deliver on the three main objectives.

IDEV will provide a range of products that are responsive and relevant. Given resource constraints, the product mix must be selective, to ensure that topics and product types address the Bank's priorities and challenges. Selectivity will be driven by demand from stakeholders and priority needs identified by IDEV, while balancing coverage of different Bank activities and functions. Consultation on IDEV's three-year rolling work program will help ensure that topics are responsive, relevant, and timely.

In 2012 IDEV launched a highly participatory process for planning its work program (involving consultation with some executive directors, management, and staff), which will be further refined in the future.

IDEV's proposed shift in product mix will be guided by consultations. Recent feedback was characterized by greater demand for products that support learning and look at high-level themes, sectors, or countries, using individual project evaluations as building blocks.

Table 1 captures the extent to which different products serve the three evaluation objectives, although clearly the design and implementation of each eval-

uation affect this balance. The table also summarizes the number of different types of evaluations that will increase or decrease. In making these decisions, IDEV has considered a range of options. Fundamentally, IDEV needs to increase the coverage and number of its products to respond to rapidly growing demand for evaluative information.

This will require identifying efficiencies and changes in how IDEV works. However, there are limits to what is feasible, and decisions need to be made on what can and cannot be delivered within a reasonable budget. For example:

- While identifying a demand for more country-level evaluations, IDEV will not seek resources to conduct such an evaluation in every regional member country within a single strategy cycle, because doing so would be highly resource-intensive. Comprehensive coverage could support increased accountability, but there are diminishing returns from a learning perspective. Country-level coverage starts from a low base: in the last decade, IDEV delivered, on average, one Country Assistance Evaluation a year, falling short in terms of accountability and learning. The challenge is to find the right balance between comprehensive and patchy coverage.
- IDEV could have argued for a more substantial increase in the number of impact evaluations, perhaps creating a line of experimental and quasi-experimental products. But such products are costly, and work is going on elsewhere in this area, much of



**Table 1** | The multiple roles of different evaluation products

Evaluation type	Accountability	Learning	Evaluation culture	IDEV direction
Project Completion Report Validation Notes	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	Continue
Extended Supervision Report Validation Notes	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Continue
Project Performance Evaluation Reports (public sector)	✓	✓	✓	Reduce
Cluster project evaluations	✓	✓✓	✓	Increase
Project Performance Evaluation Reports (private sector)	✓	✓✓	✓	Continue
Thematic evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	Continue
Sector evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	Continue
Country Strategy Evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	Increase
Country Strategy Paper Completion Report Validations	✓✓		✓	Remain discontinued
Regional Integration Strategy Evaluations	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	Start to conduct
Corporate evaluations	✓✓	✓✓	✓	Increase
Impact evaluations	✓	✓✓	✓✓	Start to conduct
Evaluation synthesis		✓✓	✓	Increase

✓ = ???, ✓✓ = ???, ✓✓✓ = ???

it through international partnerships. IDEV will play an active role in these partnerships and share findings from such research where it is most relevant to the Bank’s priorities and challenges. Additional impact evaluations conducted by IDEV will need to be carefully selected to contribute to learning in areas where knowledge is required and where it will support operations planning.

- While IDEV could have withdrawn from project-level evaluations, feedback from the self-assessment indicated that the Bank’s main unit of operation and analysis is the project. From a learning perspective, project-level evaluative data are critical building blocks for evaluations that look at sectors, themes, and countries. Project-level assessment is also

crucial for accountability. And in terms of supporting an evaluation culture, for operations staff the primary focus is at the project level. IDEV needs to adjust how it generates and uses project-level information, not withdraw from project evaluations altogether.

### Individual project validations and evaluations

The majority of the Bank’s assistance is delivered through projects; independent evaluation is needed to examine, assess, and understand performance of the overall project portfolio. This is crucial for accountability. However, independent evaluation of every Bank project is neither practical nor affordable. A more cost-effective option, where IDEV has experience, is to validate self-evaluations (Project Completion Reports). An additional benefit of this approach is





that it can support the development of a culture of evaluation in the Bank. IDEV will raise the quality of Project Completion Reports and Extended Supervision Reports through the validation process, feedback, and overall reporting. Indeed, as the quality of these reports improves, IDEV will consider further reducing their sample size over time.

### *Different approaches will be applied for public sector and private sector projects.*

Given the importance of this work in fulfilling its accountability role, while supporting the development of an evaluation culture within the Bank, IDEV will:

- Continue to validate a sample of Project Completion Reports and Expanded Supervision Reports. The size of the stratified sample will be based on achieving an acceptable confidence level and margin of error that allow the overall performance of the Bank to be assessed.
- Highlight the disconnect between scores given in self-assessments and in IDEV validations and work with management to define a target.
- Continue to work toward improving the evaluative content and quality of both Project Completion Reports and Extended Supervision Reports and their validation notes to make them more credible tools for accountability—for example, by conducting ground-truthing field visits for a sub-sample.



- Maximize the use of the evaluative knowledge collected in the process—for example, by feeding it into country and thematic evaluations and synthesizing findings relating to emerging themes.
- Report annually on the results of this work to the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness and to the public.

Different approaches will be applied for public sector and private sector projects—largely because the Bank has substantial experience in the public sector and self-evaluation of that work and limited experience in such work in private sector operations. For private sector operations, free-standing and comprehensive project evaluations are still justified on the basis of the potential for learning, especially for areas new to the Bank. For the public sector, stand-alone project evaluations will be the exception to the rule.

### **Cluster project evaluations**

Beyond accountability requirements, there is potential to capture more value from project-level evaluative information for learning purposes. At an operations level, lessons grounded in the reality of individual projects are useful. Project-level analysis is also an important component of broader evaluations that cover whole themes or sectors. However, the self-assessment and other feedback have demonstrated that individual Project Performance Evaluation Reports play a very limited role in harvesting and sharing lessons from project experience. In contrast, cluster evaluations, which

look at a group of similar or related interventions, have greater potential for the extraction of broader lessons.

Cluster project evaluations will be designed and timed to contribute to broader thematic or sector evaluations. They will address specific questions by examining a group of individual but similar projects. For example, IDEV recently launched a cluster evaluation to examine the question of sustainability in road building; the results will inform the broader transport evaluation. Cluster evaluation reports will also be made available as stand-alone products, targeting those who can use the operations-level lessons. Following the pilot stage, IDEV will review the extent to which it uses cluster evaluations over the strategy period.

### Country Strategy Evaluations and Regional Integration Strategy Evaluations

To provide useful feedback about how the Bank works and interacts with its stakeholders, country-level evaluative information is needed. Country Strategy Papers are the primary instrument guiding Bank assistance to regional member countries, and with the Bank well on the path to decentralization, growing numbers of decisions and analyses will take place at the country level.

Moreover, in a context of stronger country ownership, country-level evaluation is required for mutual accountability. And if it is managed well, there is also potential for this work to contribute to the development of an evaluation culture at the country level, both for the Bank's

country offices and for regional member country officials.

IDEV will increase the number of Country Strategy Evaluations. Resources are not available to evaluate every Country Strategy Paper within a five-year period, but IDEV will aim to cover every country at least once during the course of three strategy cycles. The level of coverage will depend on the resources available.

IDEV will develop an approach that allows these evaluations to be conducted efficiently but robustly, and it will carefully time the results to be available early enough to inform the design of new Country Strategy Papers. The selection of countries will be crucial and will be decided on a consultative basis. IDEV will look at the feasibility of phasing groups of Country Strategy Evaluations by country type (such as middle-income countries, fragile states, and others) to maximize learning potential. IDEV will also retain the flexibility in its programming to respond to urgent requests for specific Country Strategy Evaluations or for reviews across Country Strategy Papers or Country Strategy Paper Completion Reports.

In addition, as the Bank's involvement in regional integration increases, IDEV will undertake selective evaluations of Regional Integration Strategy Papers to provide feedback on the results achieved and on the added value of this instrument. These Regional Integration Strategy Evaluations will be a new product line, and their usefulness can be reviewed during the course of this strategy.



### Thematic and sector evaluations

Demand for evaluations of major development themes and key sectors is very strong. These products will help IDEV align to the priorities in the Bank's Ten-Year Strategy. Such evaluations should thus remain a central feature of IDEV's product mix. The Board and management value strategic-level evaluations for their oversight function and as evidence for decision making, and operations managers and staff appreciate the lessons of experience these evaluations offer. Thematic and sector analyses also inform corporate policy making. Finally, engaging during thematic or sector evaluations offers opportunities to support the development of an evaluation culture among operations staff with particular expertise.

*Improving organizational effectiveness is crucial for development effectiveness.*

IDEV will deliver broad evaluations that examine key sectors and themes and will improve their timing to ensure that they fit more closely with planned policy and strategy revisions. The themes and sectors to be covered by these major evaluations will be agreed on in the annual work programs, with the goal of delivering thematic and sector evaluations relevant to the priorities of the Ten-Year Strategy.

IDEV will change the way it approaches these large evaluations, looking at ways to produce more tailored and varied products. Some evaluations will be broken down into component parts or phases, allowing lessons to be shared

more promptly and targeted more accurately; others will adopt a tighter focus, to allow for speedier delivery of a targeted product. In addition, feeding cluster project evaluations into broad evaluations will deepen their evidence base.

### Corporate and process evaluations

Improving organizational effectiveness is crucial for development effectiveness. The Bank is facing important organizational challenges and changes that affect both efficiency and effectiveness. IDEV has conducted a limited number of corporate, process, and institutional evaluations, but these have been recognized as particularly useful and influential. Examples include the evaluations looking at the decentralization process and at project supervision. Stakeholders have expressed a high level of interest in corporate evaluations that focus on key challenges faced by the Bank.

IDEV will increase the number of corporate and process evaluations. It will also consult on the key corporate issues where evaluation can add the most value. The variation among these products will be significant, with some looking at broad issues and others focused on specific corporate challenges, and delivered in a tighter time frame.

### Impact evaluations

All stakeholders are interested in impacts. But impacts are difficult to measure and attribute. Experimental and quasi-experimental methods are especially costly and skill-intensive. They are not feasible for adaptable operations, and they raise difficult statistical and ethical issues.



The aim of impact evaluations is to demonstrate that development interventions lead to development results, to make the link between cause and effect.<sup>4</sup> They do not focus on the distinctive accountabilities of development partners. However, full impact evaluations are costly, and their lessons usually relate to very specific issues. Thus IDEV needs to be strategic in identifying where it can add value, both for learning purposes and to support the development of an evaluation culture within the Bank.

In addition to trying to distill impact within some of its larger evaluations, IDEV will conduct a small number of impact evaluations, taking full account of policy research currently under way through collaborative international partnerships. The topics for these evaluations will be selected on the basis of the potential for lessons in key areas where the Bank has unmet information needs or is seeking to change direction. In addition, the topics they examine should contribute to thematic or process evaluations. IDEV's impact evaluations will thus be conducted in close collaboration with relevant operations teams and regional member countries and seek to have a demonstration effect and to promote an evaluation culture.

### Evaluation syntheses and systematic reviews

In today's world we suffer from information overload, and the right pieces of knowledge are not always getting into the hands of those who can apply them. An enormous amount of evaluative knowledge has not yet been prop-

erly applied. Evaluation syntheses and systematic reviews can draw together key lessons on issues and challenges the Bank faces. This means that new evaluations are not always necessary or most appropriate, particularly in areas where the Bank has limited experience but is looking to become involved. Syntheses that present existing knowledge from a variety of sources can play a central role in learning. Past examples of IDEV syntheses, such as the gender mainstreaming report, have been cited as useful learning products.

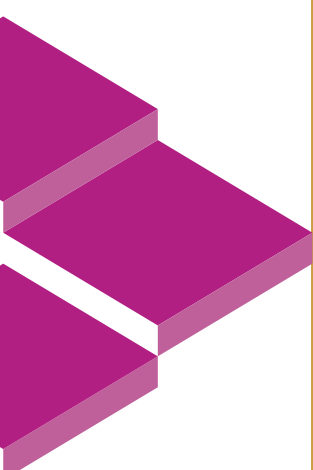
*In today's world we suffer from information overload, and the right pieces of knowledge are not always getting into the hands of those who can apply them.*

Evaluation syntheses and systematic reviews will look at existing evaluations from all relevant sources, including work by others, to extract knowledge most relevant to the Bank. Each one will focus on a key theme of particular relevance and importance for the Bank and may also feed into or precede sector or thematic evaluations. Robust techniques for evaluation synthesis will be needed to ensure that lessons extracted are based on strong evidence. Final products will be designed to emphasize key messages of greatest use to target audiences.

### An annual evaluation report

IDEV needs to report on what it is doing, what it has learned, and what it has achieved. IDEV itself needs to be held accountable and monitor progress





against the objectives set out in this strategy. An annual report will serve this accountability role and provide a learning loop for IDEV—which, like the rest of the Bank, must continuously learn and adapt in light of experience. Limitations in resources and data will make a rigorous annual report on the Bank’s overall development effectiveness impossible to deliver during the next few years but, given the high potential for accountability, will remain an option in the future.

IDEV will explore the feasibility of producing an Annual Review of Development Effectiveness within three years. In the meantime, it will prepare an annual report on evaluation to support the accountability role of independent evaluation—not simply accountability of the Bank, but also of IDEV itself. It will include findings from Project Completion Report and Extended Supervision Report Validations and report on the implementation of recommendations (see section 3). It will also showcase particularly important pieces of evaluative knowledge generated through IDEV’s work during the year. Finally, it will report on IDEV’s own progress in implementing its strategic objectives (see section 4). The report will be presented to the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness and disclosed to the wider public.

### **Forward-looking approaches**

It is not only the type of evaluation that IDEV produces that will help it fulfill its evaluation objectives and contribute to development effectiveness—evaluation approaches and instruments also mat-

ter. The most appropriate methods and tools will be identified for each evaluation on a case-by-case basis. More on the basket of tools available will be set out in the upcoming Evaluation Manual (see section 3), and their application reinforced through staff capacity (see section 4).

Two key areas where IDEV will focus on adjustment include strengthening the forward-looking perspectives in its evaluations and increasing the diversity of its techniques.

IDEV evaluations will normally include a formative (forward-looking) perspective: an understanding of history helps inform the future. While reporting on the results achieved by the Bank will remain at the core of IDEV’s mandate, a deliberate focus on learning will help feed lessons from the past into new operations and improve future outcomes.

Objective assessment of past performance (the summative dimension) is crucial to accountability, but it needs to be supplemented by real-time analyses that inform future policy directions. This link will be made more explicit in IDEV work. While retaining a focus on ex post evaluation, many IDEV evaluations will include formative aspects, which ideally will feed into new policies, programs, and projects. For example, IDEV will conduct more midterm evaluations—midway through the implementation of a Bank strategy or policy—to ensure that evaluative lessons can be used and applied to realign and allow midcourse adjustments, thereby improving future performance.





One size does not fit all: IDEV will vary its final evaluation products and the tools it employs to create them. Methodological rigor will be the first priority when identifying the appropriate tools and techniques. Assuring rigor will be part of the quality assurance process (see section 3).

This does not mean, however, that IDEV will conduct only long, in-depth, and comprehensive evaluations. IDEV will be much more open to conducting quick and focused studies, addressing a specific issue in a limited period. Some larger evaluations will be broken down into component parts or phases, and these will be published individually to allow findings to be relayed in a more timely and targeted way.

IDEV evaluations already employ a variety of evaluation techniques. Most evaluations use and analyze secondary data—for example, in portfolio, literature, and systematic reviews. At the same time, primary data are generated through qualitative methods, including interviews and focus groups with stakeholders. Tools such as short, targeted surveys will be used more often to generate additional quantitative primary data. Country and project case studies are useful tools, as are benchmarking and mapping, and all of these have already been used by IDEV in selected evaluations. IDEV will continue to broaden the basket of methodological tools available and ensure appropriate variety in each evaluation to guarantee the strength of the evidence base.

## **Supporting an evaluation culture through engagement, processes, and products**

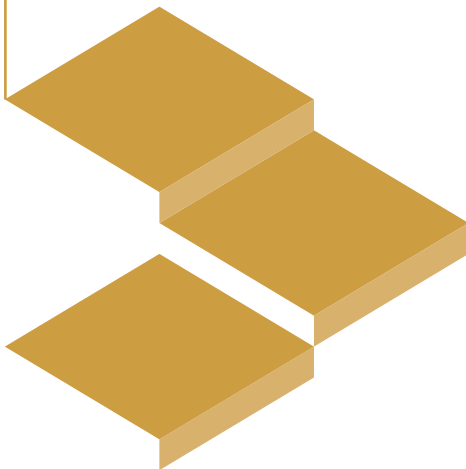
IDEV evaluation processes and products will be used to support the development of an evaluation culture, in line with the third objective of the evaluation policy. The Bank and its stakeholders want to embed a culture of results; this can happen only if evaluation is at the heart of that effort. Despite the growing commitment to results already evident in the Bank, promoting an evaluation culture across the organization is a broad agenda, and IDEV will need to engage selectively to maximize the impact of its limited resources and to ensure its work complements other initiatives, such as the work on quality assurance conducted by the Bank's Quality and Results Department.

*The Bank and its stakeholders want to embed a culture of results; this can happen only if evaluation is at the heart of that effort.*

IDEV's primary contribution will be made through its own evaluation work and products and the associated engagement and discussions, but it will complement this with additional efforts (see figure in appendix 1). For example, broadening involvement in discussion forums such as the Evaluation Community of Practice will also support the development of evaluative thinking among Bank staff. In addition, IDEV will engage in different stages of the project cycle. It will examine the evaluability and integra-

tion of evaluative lessons into project design—for example, by reviewing the quality-at-entry system. IDEV will conduct its Project Completion Report Validation in a way that ensures maximum learning for the staff involved.

The follow-up of recommendations (section 3) will also support an evaluation culture and ensure that policymaking and programming draw on lessons from evaluations (that is, that they are evidence-based).



# Independent evaluation that makes the difference

Whatever products IDEV provides, if they do not have an impact on what the Bank does, they cannot contribute to the ultimate goal of improving the Bank's development effectiveness. There are two main groups of factors that determine impact: quality, including timeliness and relevance, and knowledge-sharing and follow-up—getting the messages to audiences that can use the evaluation knowledge and identifying tools that ensure this knowledge is used. This means strong knowledge management, greater engagement with stakeholders, and consistent follow-up to evaluations. While IDEV's primary target is the Bank, ensuring that evaluations make a difference in regional member countries is also crucial.

## Raising the bar on quality: processes and standards

By codifying key processes and agreeing on evaluation quality standards, IDEV will raise the quality of its evaluation products, so that all reach an equally high level. In doing so, IDEV will minimize inter-evaluation variability.

To bring structure to its processes, IDEV will codify, improve, and formalize its practices and processes in an Independent Evaluation Manual. In addition to raising quality by formalizing and seeking improvements in existing processes, IDEV will enhance efficiency and transparency in how it operates, improve the timeliness of its work, and

provide a clearer basis for budgeting and accountability for time and resource use. Codifying processes will help IDEV identify and reduce inefficiencies, leading to improved timeliness of its evaluation products.

*We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.*

*-Aristotle*

Timeliness is crucial to ensuring impact on Bank policy-making processes. The manual will include:

- The main processes involved in various types of evaluations and the expected duration of each stage. This will support robust planning and project management, reducing cost and time overruns.
- Requirements and modalities of engagement with stakeholders, as well as feedback processes. This will help ensure that engagement and consultation take place at key stages, including during planning, thus increasing both the relevance and timeliness of evaluations.
- Evaluation quality standards that make clear what is expected at key stages of the evaluation process to assure quality. Mechanisms set out will include internal and external checks (box 2).



IDEV will apply evaluation quality standards to all its evaluations, taking into account Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee quality standards, Evaluation Cooperation Group guidelines, and practices at other multilateral development banks and institutions. The evaluation quality standards will help IDEV apply the principles of credibility and impartiality and highlight requirements for evaluation quality at key stages of the evaluation process, such as formulation of approach papers and completion of reports for the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness.

Quality standards will relate to methodology, scope, content, analysis, engagement, presentation of the report, and usefulness of the recommendations. Mechanisms for quality assurance will be made systematic and codified in the Independent Evaluation Manual. The main mechanisms will include internal peer review and external expert review, as well as IDEV management oversight at key stages in the evaluation process. IDEV will also investigate the feasibility of establishing a sitting expert panel or external quality assurance function, which would provide feedback on the quality of all approach papers and reports, based on agreed quality standards.

- Guidance on integrating cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, and on opportunities for joint evaluations.

each approach paper. This strategy will identify key target audiences. IDEV will also look across the evaluation portfolio to identify cross-cutting knowledge themes by identifying, organizing, and sharing relevant, usable, and actionable knowledge from a range of sources. Knowledge sharing will be crucial to fulfilling the learning objective while supporting the development of an evaluation culture.

Knowledge is like a garden; if it is not cultivated it cannot be harvested.

–African proverb

### Using evaluation knowledge

Knowledge is power. Good policies are based on evidence. IDEV is already increasing its emphasis on knowledge management. To extract the most from the knowledge it generates and collates, IDEV will need to approach knowledge management in a more dynamic, proactive, and integrated manner. Disseminating evaluation findings is at the core of knowledge sharing, but is only part of knowledge management. IDEV will build knowledge-management thinking into each evaluation from the early stages and include a dissemination strategy in

### Knowledge management and communication

IDEV will review the tools and technologies available to deliver evaluative knowledge to those who can use it.

- **Evaluation reports** will be designed to get key messages across clearly and simply. The reports will be supplemented by evaluation briefs, the new quarterly publication *Evaluation Matters*, and short, ad hoc notes for



the Board and senior management that identify important issues.

- **IDEV's website**, its main window to the world, will be redesigned to be more user-friendly and to quickly direct users to the knowledge products they are looking for. This work is already under way.
- **A database of lessons** will be established, allowing evaluative knowledge to be searched and collated under themes or countries. This database will be accessible through the website. IDEV will draw from lessons learned by other organizations in maximizing the usefulness of the database for learning.
- **Face-to-face interaction** will also be enhanced. The successful Evaluation Community of Practice<sup>5</sup> will be strengthened to cover evaluation as well as operations lessons, targeting operations staff where appropriate. IDEV will also look for opportunities to hold other learning events, allowing it to reach a range of audiences (such as staff, management, country offices, and those involved in design, implementation, monitoring, policy, quality assurance, and the like).
- **Outreach to regional member countries** will be increased through regional workshops and video conferences to disseminate and discuss knowledge generated through evaluation work. IDEV will work closely with Bank country teams and offices and regional resource centers in tailoring these efforts.

## Enhancing engagement

Engagement underwrites the usefulness and impact of evaluations. It is also crucial to achieving better stakeholder appreciation of IDEV evaluations and to enhanced buy-in for evaluation findings and recommendations. Engagement is essential in ensuring the relevance of products and in supporting the development of an evaluation culture. It is also important for quality assurance processes, as will be made explicit in the manual. Thus it is crucial for both learning and in supporting the development of an evaluation culture.

IDEV will continue to deepen and broaden its engagement with its stakeholders. The purpose, modality, scope, and timing of engagement will depend on the type of evaluation or activity. Guidance will be provided in the manual. Engagement will take place on three main fronts:

- **As part of the Bank's project cycle.** IDEV will be open to reviewing a selection of projects, policies, and strategies in their formative stages.
- **As part of the cycle of individual evaluations.** IDEV will seek management and staff engagement at key stages of the evaluation cycle. Increased emphasis on sharing evaluative knowledge will involve greater engagement after products are delivered.
- **In planning IDEV's work program.** In 2012, consultation with management and the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness al-





ready had been taken to the core of the process of developing the rolling work program. This will help IDEV apply the principle of usefulness to its work program, while ensuring that the work program is informed by IDEV's independent analysis of Bank needs for evaluative knowledge.

*He who influences the thought of his times influences the times that follow.*

*Elbert Hubbard*

IDEV engagement needs to go beyond the Bank. In line with the principle of partnership outlined in the policy, IDEV's increased attention to engagement will extend beyond its immediate stakeholders to the broader international evaluation community and to organizations interested in supporting evaluation in Africa.

IDEV has already started to deepen partnerships with other organizations in the international evaluation community and will continue on this path. It will build on its involvement in the main international evaluation communities—the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee Evaluation Network and the Evaluation Cooperation Group. It will also continue to build strong and mutually beneficial relationships with selected bilateral aid agencies. IDEV will also engage with evaluation-focused organizations such as the Africa Evaluation Association, Regional Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results, EvalPartners, and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, as well as



philanthropic organizations interested in supporting evaluation.

### **A process to ensure recommendations are implemented**

We need to know that evaluations have an impact on Bank policy and practice. Evaluations make recommendations. Not all of them are likely to be acceptable to management or the Board. But ensuring that agreed recommendations are actually implemented strengthens accountability. Debating the implications of evaluation findings for future policies and operations is central to instilling an evaluation culture. This is where the link between evaluative knowledge and increased development effectiveness is forged. Accordingly, the Bank needs a mechanism to firm up the action plans that emerge from IDEV evaluation recommendations and to follow up on their implementation. The discipline created by such a process is likely to improve the quality and selectivity of IDEV recommendations.

IDEV, in cooperation with management, will introduce a Management Action Reporting Mechanism similar to those used in other development banks and in a range of other development agencies. The mechanism will ensure clarity over which recommendations management accepts, how it intends to respond to them, by when action will be taken, and—crucially—whether it does so in practice. The Management Action Reporting Mechanism will help IDEV apply the important principle of transparency and support the Board in its oversight role.

Ensuring implementation is also crucial for the credibility and usefulness of independent evaluation. The detailed functioning of the mechanism will be agreed with management and the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness. In anticipation of the Management Action Reporting Mechanism, IDEV and management have begun working together to improve the management response process.

### **Increasing the impact of evaluations in regional member countries**

There is an increasing thirst for evaluative knowledge in regional member countries. Ensuring that the knowledge IDEV generates is made available to these countries is crucial to ensuring that such knowledge has an impact and can be used. As part of this, IDEV proposes to support the development of an evaluation culture in regional member countries in three ways. It will:

#### **Box 3**

##### **Evaluation capacity development in regional member countries: how can IDEV contribute?**

Evaluation capacity development in regional member countries has long been part of IDEV's mandate. But how IDEV contributes to this challenge needs to change to better respond to demand for systemic support.

IDEV has witnessed increased demand for evaluation capacity development, yet a range of international initiatives (such as Regional Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results and the International Program for Development Evaluation Training) already exist. IDEV will seek entry points where it can add value with limited resources. Many existing initiatives focus on training in evaluation techniques. The demand IDEV will help meet has other dimensions. Policy makers and planners in regional member countries are seeking support in developing their evaluation system as a whole from assessments of existing systems, gaps, and challenges for national evaluation functions; drawing up of clear roadmaps on how to develop a sound evaluation function in government, taking into account existing capacities and systems; and advice and support for implementing the roadmaps. Developing these systems is about not only generating evaluative knowledge, but also using it and making it influential.

Given this demand, IDEV will work on a pilot basis to support a small number of countries in building their evaluation systems. IDEV will engage only where there is strong ownership and involvement by the government and where the added value and harmonization with other initiatives are clear. IDEV will seek synergies with other support provided by the Bank and avoid straying into areas that are strictly the domain of the Bank's operations arm. IDEV will also seek to work in cooperation with external and internal stakeholders, including ECON.

This type of work is resource-intensive, and IDEV will seek additional resources from outside the Bank to help it deliver.



- **Engage regional member countries in the process of individual evaluations.** For example, engagement in Country Strategy Evaluations would be encouraged (see section 2).
- **Practice outreach, particularly by targeting regional member countries in communication efforts.** For example, some knowledge-sharing events can involve video-conferencing or take place in regional resource centers to facilitate participation by regional member countries.
- **Support regional member countries in their efforts to develop national evaluation capacity.** Regional member countries also want to generate their own evaluative knowledge on their development programs and projects, whether externally funded or not. They are increasingly interested in building national evaluation capacity. Box 3 sets out how IDEV will support the development of an evaluation culture in regional member countries by focusing on support to a select number of country evaluation systems. Such systems help ensure that evaluations make a difference to policy and practice.





# Making it happen

To make this strategy a reality, IDEV itself needs to adjust. The strategy proposes substantial changes in the number, variety, and mix of products and services needed to increase the quality and impact of evaluative knowledge. IDEV needs to ensure that it has the organization and staff in place to deliver, that it manages its resources effectively and efficiently, and that it identifies and manages risks to delivery. This section addresses those issues and proposes a results framework by which progress toward key objectives can be measured.

## A new structure for IDEV Identifying a structure that enables better delivery

IDEV needs an organizational structure that allows it to deliver the right mix of products and services at the right time, while increasing their number, raising quality, and increasing the impact of evaluative knowledge. IDEV's current structure—composed of two departments, one of which conducts project-level evaluations, and the other thematic and sector evaluations, and a director's office, including a small team—is not conducive to achieving the ambitions set out in the strategy, nor has it engendered cross-division work, an issue identified in the self-assessment.

Form should follow function. The organizational structure should better enable IDEV to:

- Respond to the thematic priorities and organizational challenges faced by the Bank.
- Focus more on knowledge management, communication, and building partnerships.
- Ensure more resources can be allocated to key services such as supporting self-evaluation in the Bank and supporting evaluation capacity development in regional member countries.

*Vision without action is daydream.  
Action without vision is nightmare.*

*—Japanese Proverb*

- End the divide between project-level work and other evaluations.
- Encourage cross-divisional work.

## Three divisions prioritizing cross-divisional work

To achieve its policy objectives and deliver the products and services outlined, IDEV will be reorganized into three divisions (figure 3).

The two divisions in charge of evaluation products will be structured to better reflect the Bank's own structure and priorities. One division will focus on infrastructure and the private sector, the other on agriculture; governance; human development; and country, re-

gional, and corporate evaluations. This will not only allow more efficient use of resources by increasing the synergies among evaluation products, but also facilitate longer-term engagement with the regional and operations departments of the Bank at various stages of the cycles for both projects and evaluations.

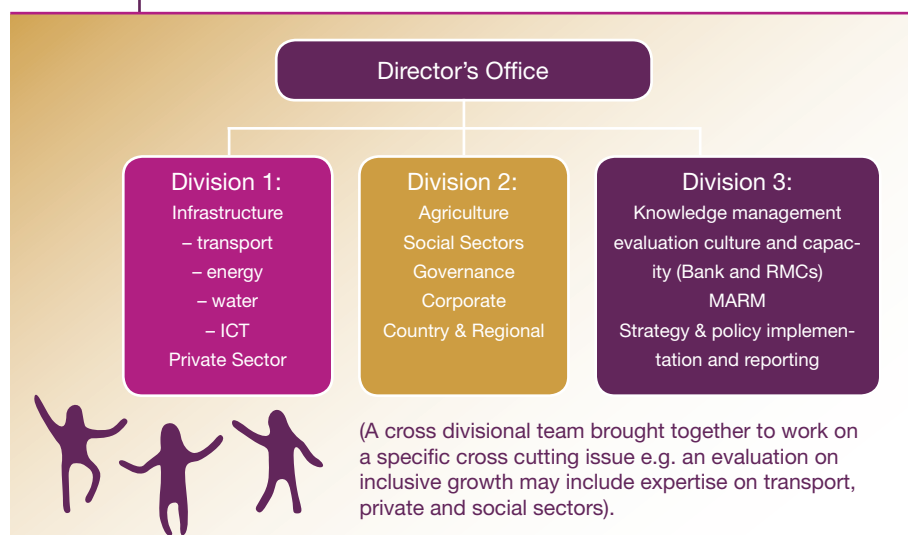
Evaluating important cross-cutting issues—from inclusive growth to gender equality—will be conducted by cross-sectoral teams, bringing together expertise from the different sectors and putting cross-divisional work into practice. In each case, clear line-management responsibility will be established within the division identified as the most appropriate. The effectiveness of this structure can be reviewed and adjustments made during the course of implementing this strategy.

The third division will address the importance of knowledge management, supporting self-evaluation in the Bank,

and strengthening evaluation capacity in regional member countries. These services can no longer be considered an optional add-on, supported with scant resources and housed in the director's office. They are now key priorities for IDEV. For example, knowledge management is fundamental to ensuring that evaluation knowledge is shared, used, and applied—that is, to ensure impact. Compared with the work on knowledge management and capacity development of other multilateral banks' independent evaluation units, IDEV is in danger of falling to the back of a fast-moving pack. A decisive change is needed. The third division will help IDEV close the gap and, in time, lead the pack. It will work closely with the other two divisions, which will have the primary responsibility for IDEV's key products. Box 4 summarizes the third division's main responsibilities.

IDEV must avoid silos and encourage cross-divisional work. Staff and

Figure 3 | A new structure for IDEV



- Knowledge management and communication, including knowledge events, website management, branding.
- Coordinating support to Bank self-evaluation in Tunis, regional resource centers, and country offices.
- Supporting evaluation capacity in RMCs on a pilot basis by developing evaluation systems.
- Promoting IDEV as a center of evaluation excellence and leading efforts to build international partnerships.
- Knowledge products, including “Evaluation matters”, PCR validation syntheses and an annual evaluation report.
- Developing and maintaining a system to ensure minimum quality standards and a management action response mechanism (MARM) to ensure follow up of recommendations.
- Applying international good practice in knowledge management and evaluation capacity development actions
- Reporting to CODE and the public on progress in implementing this strategy.

management throughout IDEV will be expected to work across divisions regularly—for example, for internal peer reviews and for such events as the Evaluation Community of Practice. Cross-divisional teams will also be brought together for specific projects when necessary, to look at cross-cutting issues or in response to emerging demands or short-notice requests for evaluations. Staff and management will be encouraged to identify as members of Team IDEV as a whole and will be provided with incentives to work across divisions.

IDEV will also explore the feasibility and organizational implications of decentralizing a small number of staff in different regional resource centers. Doing so would bring the support for self-evaluation and regional member

country capacity development directly to countries, while facilitating IDEV’s efforts to make greater use of national consultants and to enrich a sample of Project Completion Report Validations with field visits.

### Resource management

IDEV will strengthen its results-oriented budgeting and present its rolling work programs to the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness on the basis of three scenarios: a low case, a base case, and a high case. Each scenario will specify the expected deliverables. The committee will review the options and make choices. Based on this, IDEV will be tasked to deliver. To do so, IDEV will implement its work program through careful management and rebalancing of human resources, while finding efficiencies in products,



services, and processes. IDEV will also seek out opportunities for additional sources of funding, including trust funds within the Bank and external funding opportunities.

IDEV's budget should be viewed against the background of the comparison of IDEV with other multilateral development banks' independent evaluation units in the recent self-assessment. This analysis revealed that IDEV's total resource envelope is modest, and that its level of staffing is lower than that of comparable institutions.<sup>6</sup> The budget should also be viewed in the context of the increasing demand for evaluative knowledge that is evident in the Bank and regional member countries, a demand to which IDEV would like to respond.

By far the most valuable resource that IDEV has is its staff. Staff numbers are important, but even more critical are staff capabilities—that is, their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. IDEV will broaden and deepen the skills mix, enabling it to reduce the ratio of consultant costs to total budget, in line with other comparable multilateral development banks.<sup>7</sup> IDEV will use several complementary approaches to achieve the right size and makeup of its team. It will:

- **Integrate more staff positions**, in total, into the work program, compared with 2011–12.
- **Review the mix of staff skills and expertise** to achieve a closer fit with the requirements of the product and service mix and to garner a combination of operations and evaluation

experience, as well as experience from within the Bank and elsewhere.

- **Invest in staff skills.** Training and personal development opportunities will be identified, including regional and international evaluation conferences, evaluation orientation and training, and specialized training as needed. Systematic ways to underwrite evaluative expertise will be explored. For example, IDEV will investigate the possibility of an evaluation accreditation scheme for new and current staff.<sup>8</sup>
- **Adjust the balance** between its more experienced and more junior staff, noting the finding in the self-assessment that IDEV has few research-support staff. IDEV will investigate options for internships and research fellowships in addition to the young professionals program.
- **Consider fixed-term secondments** to and from other organizations, simultaneously strengthening organizational partnerships and broadening available skills and experience. Each secondment would require clear terms of reference, a results agreement, and a sunset clause.

IDEV will seek to consolidate how it manages its financial (non-staff) resources and identify efficiencies. In particular, IDEV will reduce time and cost overruns in evaluation activities, allowing it to deliver more in a timely way. This work will be supported by more systematic use of project management tools, adoption of standard processes and procedures



(see section 3), and greater variation in products, to include not only large, comprehensive evaluations, but also quicker, more focused products (see section 2).

### Managing risks

As with any change, there are risks that need to be managed. The table in appendix 2 summarizes the main risks involved and how IDEV intends to manage them.

### Measuring progress

With this strategy in place, the evaluators themselves will be held accountable, monitored, and evaluated. IDEV will monitor its progress in implementing the strategy using a simple framework and will report back to the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness on progress as part of the Annual Report on Independent Evaluation. The full results framework in appendix 3 will be used to monitor progress at mid-point and at completion of the strategy period. A lighter set of indicators will be measured annually, largely aligned with IDEV's corporate reporting.

The results framework identifies outcome-level indicators for each of the three objectives of evaluation—learning, accountability, and evaluation culture. At the output level, many of the key indicators identified contribute to more than one of the evaluation objectives. In addition, the results framework will ensure that IDEV is held accountable for putting in place the key processes and inputs needed to ensure delivery of evaluative products that have impact.

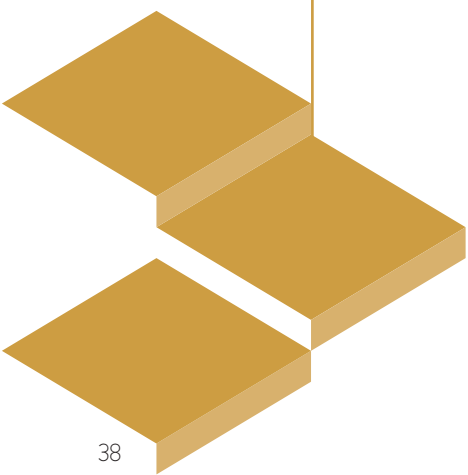
The aim is to keep the results framework slim and easy to monitor. The indicators have been selected to give a good overview of progress, not a comprehensive assessment, and they will likely be refined over time. Some results areas will

*Thinking well is wise; planning well, wiser; doing well wisest and best of all.*

*-Persian Proverb*

be straightforward to measure; others will require a qualitative assessment or additional research. Stakeholder feedback will be obtained through short and focused surveys and semi-structured interviews of a purposive sample of key stakeholders. There are little baseline data. Early on in the strategy period, baseline data will be collected, and IDEV will consider setting targets, as well as revising the framework if necessary. This will depend on the data available and consultation with the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness. Overall, IDEV will seek to demonstrate a clear, positive trajectory over the period of the strategy.





# Supporting a culture of evaluation in the Bank



## The main risks and their management

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Management
Insufficient funding for expanded work program	Medium	High	The annual rolling work program will be presented on the basis of three scenarios; the deliverables will be in line with the scenario deemed appropriate and the budget available. IDEV will also investigate alternative sources of funding for specific areas such as regional member country capacity development.
High staff turnover	Medium	High	IDEV encourages staff mobility and will support staff in career development. It will seek to fill vacant positions quickly. IDEV staff will take part in transition planning, including handover notes. It will encourage staff retention by supporting staff in developing professional skills and career paths.
Problems implementing changes to IDEV structure	Medium	Medium	IDEV will draw up change management plan. It will prioritize communication in managing the changes, both internally and externally. Staff preferences and expertise will be taken into account in the restructuring. Responsibility for managing the change process will rest with the director, who will work closely with the Corporate Human Resources Department.
Insufficient data to allow evaluative conclusions to be drawn	Medium	Medium	Data availability remains a constraint. IDEV will continue to work with management on improving data; available information is increasing over time. Evaluations will be designed to draw on a range of complementary evidence sources, triangulating methods to verify conclusions and fill in gaps. IDEV will focus evaluations on areas where there are data and flag areas where the lack of data is a serious problem.
Bank absorptive capacity for evaluative information reached	Low	Medium	IDEV will target the knowledge it shares, spread and group dissemination activities as appropriate, and make evaluation messages easy to digest for staff and management with busy schedules. The work program will be designed to ensure that no one area of the Bank is over-evaluated in a given period. Consultation will also ensure that evaluations address demands for knowledge within the Bank.
Clients not satisfied with evaluation products	Low	Medium	The evaluation quality standards will be applied to all new products, ensuring quality at key stages of the evaluation process. Project management tools will ensure that evaluation products are delivered on schedule, making them timely. Consultation on the work program will ensure the relevance of the topics covered.





# Results framework

This is a provisional results framework. It is selective. It focuses on key indicators identified to help monitor progress for all three objectives of independent evaluation in the Bank—learning, accountability, and supporting the development of an evaluation culture.

The results framework will be applied three times during the strategy period: (i) in 2013 to set the baseline, (ii) in 2015

to measure progress at midterm, and (iii) to measure progress at the end of the five-year strategy period.

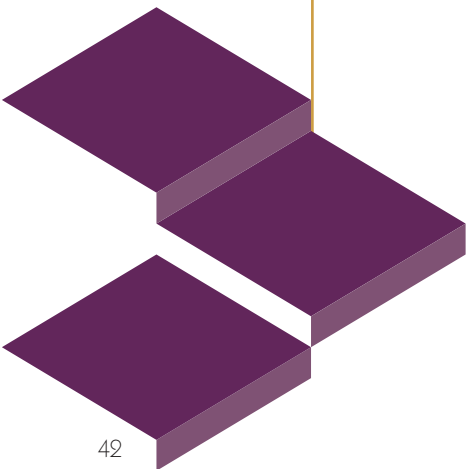
For time-bound one-off deliverables, targets have been set. For those that will be monitored regularly, targets can be set once a baseline is established (during 2013). The means of verification, or data source, is provided in square brackets.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>An effective organization is put in place: <i>Indicator 1a:</i> Re-structuring of IDEV. (By end 2013) [IDEV data] <i>Indicator 1b:</i> Vacancy rate (Annual target TBC) [CHRM]</p>	<p>Work program delivery is efficient and timely: <i>Indicator 2a:</i> Budget execution rate (Target TBC) [Budget data]</p>	<p>Core products are delivered: <i>Indicator 3a:</i> Annual proportion of planned evaluations that are delivered to CODE for (i) information and (ii) discussion. (Target TBC) [IDEV/CODE data]</p>	<p>Evaluation findings are used: <i>Indicator 4a:</i> Share of IDEV evaluation recommendations implemented by Bank management. (Target TBC, annual increase) [MARM]</p>
<p>Staff are equipped to deliver: <i>Indicator 1c:</i> Person days of professional training (evaluation; management; other disciplines) provided for IDEV staff <i>Indicator 1d:</i> Mix of expertise between evaluation and content. (Target TBC) [IDEV data]</p>	<p>Work program delivery is on schedule: <i>Indicator 2b:</i> Proportion of planned reports submitted to IDEV management (Target TBC) [IDEV data]</p>	<p>Evaluation knowledge is relevant and of high quality <i>Indicator 3b:</i> Proportion of IDEV evaluation recommendations accepted by management (Target TBC) [MARM]</p>	<p>Improvement in self-evaluation is observed. <i>Indicator 4b:</i> Disconnect between self-evaluation score (PCRs) and IDEV validation score. (Target TBC, annual decrease) [IDEV data]</p>
<p>Systems are put in place to assure quality, follow up and learning: <i>Indicator 1e:</i> Evaluation manual is finalized (as living document). (By end 2013) [IDEV data/manual]</p>	<p>Evaluation knowledge is shared: <i>Indicator 2c:</i> Share of planned learning and dissemination events held (Target TBC, IDEV data)</p>	<p>Evaluation knowledge is shared. <i>Indicator 3c:</i> Number of participants of learning and dissemination events (i) Bank staff and (ii) RMC officials. <i>Indicator 3c:</i> IDEV website traffic. (Target TBC) [IDEV data]</p>	<p>Improved quality, usefulness and impact of evaluations. <i>Indicator 4c:</i> Stakeholder views on (i) usefulness and (ii) quality of IDEV products and events. (Targets TBC) [Stakeholder survey]</p>
<p><i>Indicator 1f:</i> Management Action Reporting Mechanism is established. (By end 2013) [MARM] <i>Indicator 1g:</i> Evaluation lessons learned database is established (By end 2013) [IDEV database]</p>	<p>Work on RMC evaluation capacity development is taken forward. <i>Indicator 2d:</i> Agreed proportion of budget is allocated and used for evaluation capacity development in RMCs (Target TBC) [Budget data]</p>	<p>Targeted RMCs develop National Evaluation Systems <i>Indicator 3d:</i> Evaluation instruments put in place by IDEV-assisted RMCs (2 pilot countries) (Target TBC) [IDEV data]</p>	<p>RMC target countries' evaluation systems deliver country evaluation programs. <i>Indicator 4d:</i> Number of evaluations produced by IDEV-assisted RMCs (2 pilot countries). (Target TBC) [IDEV project data]</p>

IDEV = . TBC = . CHRM = . MARM = . CODE = . RMC = . PCR = .

# Endnotes

1. Independent Evaluation Policy 2013. IDEV, AfDB.
2. IDEV Self-Assessment. August 2012.
3. IDEV Self-Assessment, August 2012.
4. Stern, E., and others. 2012. "Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods for Impact Evaluations." Working Paper 38. U.K. Department for International Development, London.
5. IDEV's Evaluation Community of Practice was launched in 2011 as an internal knowledge-sharing forum. In 2012 it expanded into a forum for sharing and debating evaluation knowledge with operations staff working on relevant issues.
6. For example, figures included in the self-assessment show that IDEV has lower levels of professional and research assistant staff than the three comparator multilateral development banks.
7. The consultant budget in 2012 was 31 percent for IDEV, compared with 21–27 percent at other multilateral development banks' evaluation units.
8. Examples of recently developed evaluation accreditation schemes include those by the U.K. Department for International Development.





## About this Publication

This Independent Evaluation Strategy links the ultimate goals of the AfDB Independent Evaluation Policy with the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) work program. The policy defines the authorizing environment for independent evaluation in the Bank, while IDEV's annual rolling work programs provide the framework within which IDEV activities are framed, resourced, and implemented.

Linking policy to programming is critical to managerial accountability and effective use of resources. The strategy forges the needed links between long-term policy goals and evaluation activities, evaluation skills, and budgets. It focuses IDEV management on results and facilitates Board oversight of the function.

## About the African Development Bank Group (AfDB)

The overarching objective of the African Development Bank Group is to spur 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 **Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV)** at the AfDB is to enhance the development effectiveness of AfDB initiatives in its regional member countries through independent and instrumental evaluations and partnerships for sharing knowledge.



# IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation  
Évaluation indépendante du développement

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