

IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation
African Development Bank

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

Evaluation of the AfDB's Support to its Regional Member Countries in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

What did IDEV evaluate?

The Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB or 'the Bank') evaluated the Bank's support to its Regional Member Countries (RMCs) in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. This evaluation covers all the Bank's lending and non-lending activities, processes and procedures that are part of its support package, including the COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility (CRF), the Feed Africa Response to COVID-19, emergency assistance to the World Health Organization, and a US\$3 billion Social Bond.

The AfDB identified three immediate priorities: (i) supporting the RMCs' health response and health capacity; (ii) social protection of vulnerable populations and small businesses; and (iii) economic resilience and recovery. The evaluation focused primarily on learning and informing the Bank's future approaches to similar crises but also looked at results achieved, if and where such results were present.

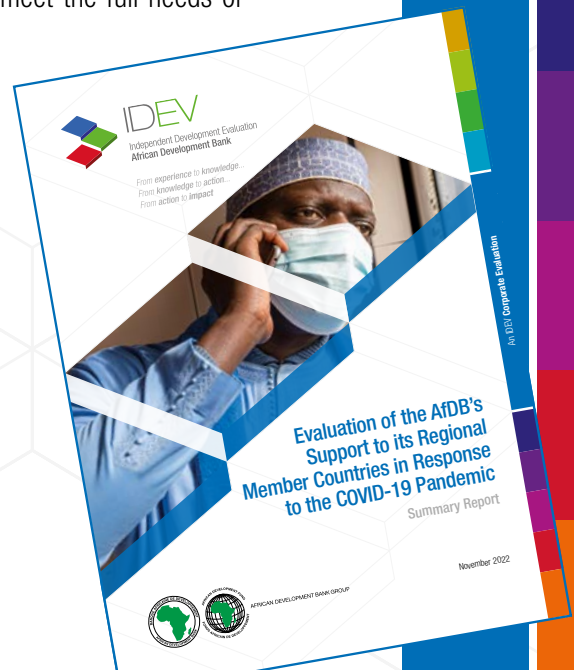
What did IDEV find?

Preparedness: The Bank's systems were not well prepared for the COVID-19 crisis, but it reacted quickly and approved the CRF to provide support to RMCs.

Relevance: The Bank's CRF was relevant, but there were some shortcomings in terms of preparedness and resource mobilization.

Adequacy: The Bank approved 25 Crisis Response Budget Support and investment operations in a short period, but it could not meet the full needs of all RMCs.

Adaptation: The Bank adopted a short-term and static approach, which limited its ability to adapt to the evolution of the pandemic.



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Coherence: Internal coherence with other Bank operations was limited, but external coherence was strong.

Effectiveness: Performance in three priority areas was mixed. The Bank met and even exceeded targets for health and social support, but performance for economic resilience and recovery was modest.

Efficiency: Overall, Bank efficiency was satisfactory despite shortcomings, such as uneven workload distribution and a malfunctioning monitoring and reporting system.

What lessons did IDEV draw?

- A single quick-disbursing short-term instrument may not be sufficient to respond to a crisis. A multi-stage and multi-instrument approach is more effective.
- The Bank's "Delivering as One" model can improve operational efficiency, but it is important to distribute the workload evenly.
- Country ownership and leadership are critical to the success of any crisis response.
- The Bank can collaborate with specialized agencies if it lacks comparative advantage in a crisis.

- Monitoring capacity and timely data are essential for ensuring that interventions are responsive to country needs and are effectively delivered and reported.

What did IDEV recommend?

- Improve the design and implementation of future crisis response.
- Capitalize on the lessons and experience from previous crises to improve preparedness.
- Enhance the Bank's results monitoring, reporting, and learning throughout the response cycle.

What did Management Respond?

Management welcomed IDEV's evaluation of the AfDB's Support to its Regional Member Countries within the framework of the COVID-19 Response Facility and other initiatives, including support to the World Health Organization, Feed Africa Response to COVID-19 and a USD 3 billion Social Bond. Overall, Management agrees with IDEV recommendations and notes relevant findings and lessons supporting efficient and effective responses to future crises.

About IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) at the African Development Bank conducts independent evaluations of Bank operations, policies, and strategies, working across projects, sectors, themes, regions, and countries. By conducting independent evaluations and proactively sharing best practices, IDEV ensures that the Bank and its stakeholders learn from experience and plan and deliver development results to the highest possible standards.

Evaluation Task Managers:	Clément Banse, Chief Evaluation Officer, IDEV.1 and Khaled Ibn Waleed Hussein Samir, Principal Evaluation Officer, IDEV.1
Publication coordinated by:	Dieter Gijbrecchts, Principal Knowledge Management Officer, IDEV.3; Olive Bonga, Communication Consultant, IDEV.3, Najade Lindsay, Knowledge Management Officer, IDEV.3
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IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation
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African Development Bank Group
Avenue Joseph Anoma 01 BP 1387, Abidjan 01 Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: +225 27 20 26 28 41
Email: idevhelpdesk@afdb.org

