

▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Independent Evaluation Department

Mandate

The mandate of the Independent Evaluation Department (IED), formerly the Operations Evaluation Department or OED, is to carry out independent and objective evaluations of ADB's policies, strategies and related operations. IED staff conducts studies, using consultants to complement in terms of required sector or thematic skills. IED staff reviews project concept and draft documents to enhance their quality in terms of content and evaluability. About 15 to 20% of IED's resources are used for engaging the consultants. ADB has a system of evaluating consultant performance after each assignment is completed.

Self-evaluations of bank projects are conducted by those responsible for designing and implementing country strategies, programmes, projects, or technical assistance activities. These are validated by IED. Some self-evaluations are done in the field offices. Independent evaluation is undertaken exclusively by IED.

The Development Effectiveness Committee (DEC) was established by ADB's board of directors. It consists of not more than six members of the board and meets about 12 times a year. Its general mandate is to assist the board to carry out its responsibility of ensuring that the programmes and activities of ADB achieve development effectiveness, i.e. (i) whether ADB's programmes and activities in furtherance of its policy goals and objectives have resulted in the desired outcomes, and (ii) whether these programmes and activities have made efficient use of ADB's available resources.

The DEC reviews and endorses the work programme of IED; discusses selected evaluation reports and ADB Management responses on them; reports to the board on high-priority evaluation lessons and issues, if any, that have a significant bearing on the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of ADB, and makes recommendations on such issues to the board; monitors and reports to the board on the implementation of its decisions; and reviews the annual evaluation review, the annual report on acting on recommendations, and the annual report on loan and technical assistance portfolio performance. The DEC has also suggested topics of strategic interest for inclusion in IED's work programme, helped to get the timing right for policy studies, encouraged the discussion of country assistance evaluations by the DEC before country partnership strategies are finalised, and initiated measures to strengthen ADB management responses, and monitoring of their implementation.

Independence

Originally known as the Post-Evaluation Office, and established in 1978, IED has since undergone several organisational changes, culminating in the establishment, on 1 January 2004, of an independent department reporting to the board of directors through the DEC. In 2008, a further review of OED's independence and effectiveness was undertaken and OED was renamed the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) to reflect its enhanced independent status.

The board appoints IED's Director-General upon the recommendation of the DEC, in consultation with the ADB president. ADB's management responds to evaluation findings and recommendations. ADB management's responses and the DEC Chair's summaries of discussions are appended to evaluation reports and disclosed as they become available.

To avoid conflict of interest IED evaluators and management exclude themselves from evaluating or approving a report on any project/program/activity/entity that they worked on, appraised, or had decision-making or approval responsibility for in a previous capacity, or when they expect to have such involvement in the future. Similar care is also taken in the selection of consultants. In addition, IED budget allows flexibility within the budget across line items. The head of IED is a Director-General (DG), the same level as heads of department (Director-General) of operations departments.

Quality

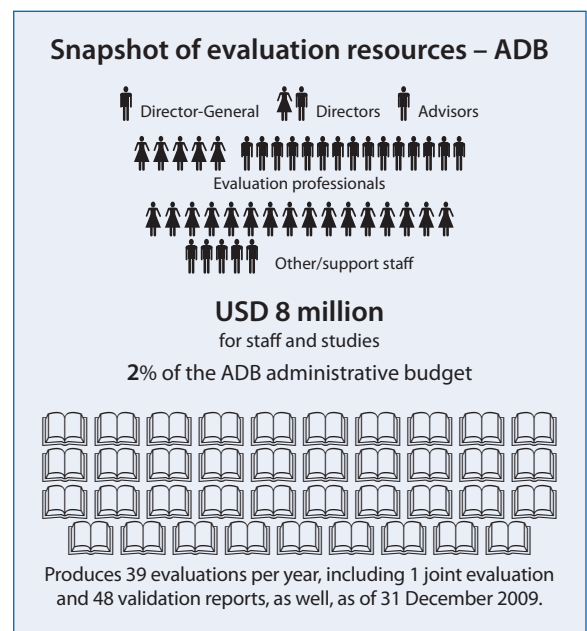
Independent evaluation reports are reviewed by selected IED peers then forwarded to operational departments and governments (executing agencies) for comment. External expert reviewers' comments are also sought for some major evaluations. For complex evaluations, a second stage of discussion at the Director-General (DG) level focuses on understanding of and a reality-check on recommendations. Final reports are approved by the DG of IED and circulated to the board and management and disclosed to the public simultaneously, inviting a management response. Major reports are discussed by the DEC.

One hundred percent of bank operational activities are covered by self evaluations/project completion reports (PCRs) conducted by operating units. The quality of the PCRs has improved since 2000. IED independently reviews and validates the PCRs. IED selects a purposeful sample of about 13 projects to evaluate each year, and IED's work programme has a focus on about 17-20 broader, more complex evaluations.

Co-ordination, planning and stakeholder involvement

IED uses a three-year rolling work programme, updated annually. The DG proposes a three-year rolling work of evaluations, after consultations with the DEC, management, and other departments, taking into account the issues of relevance to developing member countries and the current institutional priorities. The board is responsible for final approval of the coming year's IED work programme, after this is reviewed and endorsed by the DEC. The work programmes are publicly disclosed on the ADB website.

The IED regularly uses evaluation work of other development partners as reference material and consults other donor plans to look for opportunities for collaboration, particularly on project level joint evaluations, synthesis work and meta-evaluations. Partnering with countries in evaluations has been limited thus far, though the department is working towards being more proactive in seeking partner involvement. IED has also initiated several actions to build evaluation capacity of developing member countries.



Reporting and use

IED staff participates in management review meetings to examine new lending, policy or strategy proposals before these are completed and finalised for board submission.

An online Management Action Record System has been recently brought into effect. IED reviews, validates and reports to the DEC on its progress. Management responses are available to the public online. All public sector evaluation reports are publicly disclosed on the ADB website at the time of circulation to the president and board of directors. A redacted version of private sector evaluations is disclosed, with certain commercially confidential parts removed from the report. Printed reports are also distributed to country counterparts.