

► Austria

Directorate for Evaluation, Development Policy and Strategy (Unit VII.2)

Ministry for European and International Affairs

Evaluation Unit, Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

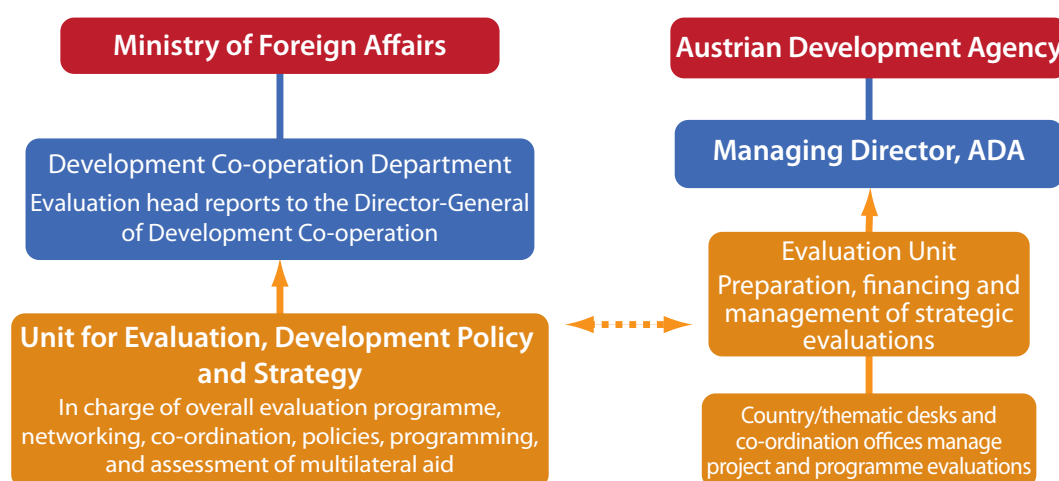
Mandates and work programme

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (MFA) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) are responsible for strategic evaluations of country programmes, country strategies, instruments and sectors of the Austrian Development Co-operation (ADC). A two-year evaluation programme for strategic evaluations is jointly developed by MFA and ADA evaluation units, based on suggestions from other MFA/ADA departments and units. The evaluation programme aims at achieving a balance between evaluations of country programmes strategies, instruments and sectors.

Austria distinguishes between three different types of evaluations: (a) strategic evaluations managed by MFA/ADA evaluation units (external), (b) programme and project evaluations managed by ADA country desks, thematic desks and co-ordination offices in the field (external), and (c) programme and project evaluations managed and/or conducted by implementing partners (internal).

Besides financing and managing strategic evaluations ADA's evaluation unit supports ADA country desks, thematic desks and co-ordination offices providing feedback to draft Terms of Reference and evaluation reports as well as supporting the selection process of evaluators. ADA's evaluation unit also conducts evaluation trainings.

Summary of the institutional set-up of evaluation



Independence and quality

Within MFA the evaluation head reports to the Director-General of Development Co-operation. ADA has a separate evaluation unit reporting directly to the head of the agency (Managing Director). In order to ensure independence all strategic evaluations and all project/programme evaluations managed by ADA are conducted by external consultants who are hired on a competitive basis. All evaluations adhere to the DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation; a reference is stated in the terms of reference.

The evaluation work of MFA and ADA including ADA's country/thematic desks is guided by the "Guidelines for Evaluation in Austria's Official Development Co-operation" and a multilingual set of "Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations" (German, English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese).

Resources

There are currently three evaluation managers, one in the Ministry and one in ADA with a second evaluation professional. Just over USD 500 000 is available for strategic evaluations in ADA. Project and programme evaluations are funded by their respective programme budgets. The total budget of these evaluations varies from year to year.

Reporting and use

Draft final evaluation reports are presented by the external evaluator to interested parties. The final evaluation reports can be downloaded on the website and are also made available to the general public via links with libraries, civil society groups and are submitted to the DAC Network on Development Evaluation. Reports are shared broadly within MFA and ADA. Links to relevant reports are also shared with Parliament.

A structured management response process and follow-up action has been developed over the past few years and is being adhered to. Management response matrices are updated once a year but are not made public.


Co-ordination and stakeholder involvement

Because of its current focus on evaluating new instruments and aid modalities Austria does not yet participate in many joint evaluations, though it participates actively in Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), was involved in the UNIDO DAC Peer Review jointly with other donors in 2009/2010 and participates in the evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, Phase II (headquarters study and Uganda study) in 2010.

The evaluation programme is shared with the DAC Network on Development Evaluation and the group of German-speaking evaluation services "DACH". Evaluation plans of others are consulted regularly. Evaluation reports of donor agencies are often utilised.

When possible national partners are involved in the design of the terms of reference; those contracted to conduct evaluations are requested to involve national experts in the evaluation team.

Snapshot of evaluation resources – Austria

 Full-time managers

USD 576 950 for strategic evaluations in ADA

USD 1 million for project and programme evaluations

0.4% of ODA



Produces about 3 to 4 strategic evaluations per year.