

► Belgium

Special Evaluation Office (SEO)

A Royal Decree of 25 February 2010 merges the Internal Quality Control and Evaluation Office of the Directorate General for Development Co-operation with the Special Evaluation Office, creating a new office with the following mandate.

Mandate and institutional set-up

The Special Evaluation Office (SEO) of International Co-operation is part of the Federal Public Service (Ministry) of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation. It sits under the administrative – not the hierarchical – authority of the President of the Management Committee (Secretary General).

The Special Evaluation Office is mandated to evaluate all activities of the Belgian Federal Government that are recognised as ODA by the DAC. It applies the DAC Evaluation Principles as well as the norms and Quality Standards for evaluation. Its main evaluation criteria are the DAC-criteria and the Paris Declaration principles.

The Office draws conclusions from evaluations and formulates operational recommendations to improve and adapt the development co-operation policy. The Office also makes use of evaluation results to annually report to the Belgian parliament and the public about Belgian development policies and the use of funds. It participates in international joint evaluations and in initiatives to support evaluation capacity in partner countries.

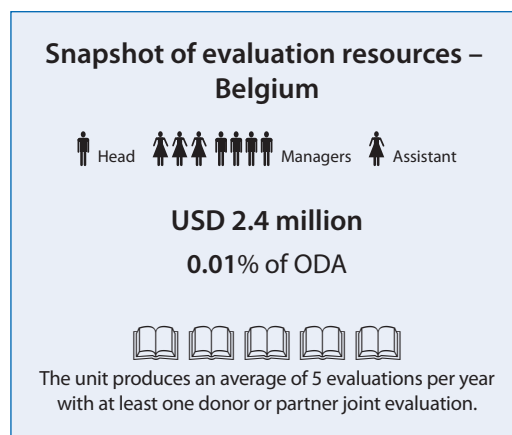
Taking over the former mandate of the internal evaluation office, the Special Evaluation Office also provides support to the internal network on RBM and to geographical and thematic desks in the design of their evaluations. Following the recommendations of a recent peer review, the Office will soon draft its own evaluation policy and strategic guidelines.

Independence and Quality

The SEO is structurally independent. After consultation with stakeholders and partner countries, it draws a multi-annual strategic evaluation plan, an annual evaluation programme and a budget. The evaluation budget is part of the larger budget of development co-operation. The Special Evaluator, who is head of the Special evaluation Office, has financial delegation to contract the expertise required for achieving credible evaluations.

Apart from the evaluation programme established by the SEO, the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Development co-operation and the Secretary General of the ministry of FA may also request the SEO to undertake specific evaluations.

The SEO uses a quality grid to measure the quality of evaluation processes and reports.



Co-ordination and planning

The multi-year indicative evaluation plan is shared with the DAC Network on Development Evaluation. The SEO undertakes joint evaluations with other donors and partner countries and is active in the DAC Network on Development Evaluation and other evaluation groups.

Reporting and use

Evaluations are so far reported in writing and published both in hard and electronic copy. They are available on the DReC website: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork/derec.

It is the responsibility of the managers and stakeholders to ensure that the evaluation conclusions and recommendations are validated and used. Evaluation reports are communicated to relevant stakeholders, including field staff in partner countries and occasionally to the Belgian media. The SEO systematically organises restitution seminars at the end of the evaluations processes, in Belgium and whenever appropriate, in the partner countries concerned.

There is commitment from management to respond to SEO evaluations. If management were to fail to respond, the Minister or Parliament could be informed. After one year a matrix is presented by the Special Evaluator with the main conclusions and corresponding follow-up actions to be completed by management. A discussion takes place on the basis of that matrix.

Summary of the evaluation reporting lines and set-up

