

► European Commission

Joint Evaluation unit for the Directorates: General Development, External Relations and EuropeAid

Please note: This profile is subject to change upon entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty for the European Union.

Mandate

The Evaluation Unit is a unit common to the Directorates-General for Development, External Relations and Europe Aid. The Evaluation Unit is in charge of the evaluation of the Commission's co-operation and development programmes in third countries with the exception of enlargement candidate countries and humanitarian aid. It covers all geographical regions and the corresponding EC external co-operation programmes: Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP), Mediterranean Region (MED), Asia (including Central Asia) and Latin America and Eastern Europe. The evaluation service is accountable to the Group of RELEX Commissioners, which decides on the work programme of the evaluation service and acts on its reports and recommendations. The budget of the Joint Evaluation Unit is determined by the EU Parliament and the EU Commission.

Independence

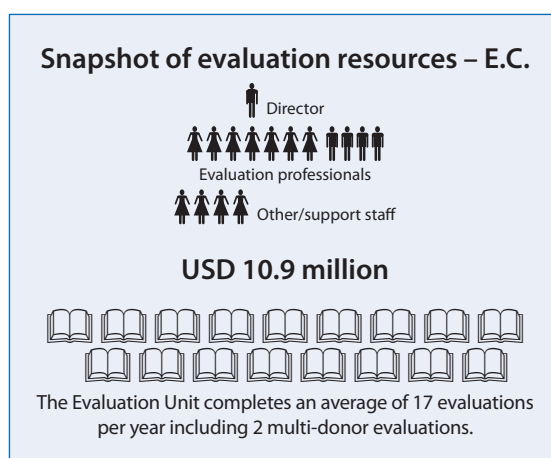
All evaluations are carried out by external consultants, under the quality control of the Evaluation Unit. The unit reports to the two Commissioners (equivalent to Ministers) in charge of External Relations and Development. Independence is ensured by reporting directly to the political level, without any interference from operational and administrative levels. The head of evaluation is at the highest level of seniority before political function. Presentations of evaluations in management meetings are done on an *ad hoc* basis.

Quality

Various evaluation guides and methodological notes help ensure quality of evaluation, which are also subject to the European Commission Standards, set up in 2000. During the period 2007-2013 about 75% of aid expenditures should be covered by evaluation.

Co-ordination, planning and stakeholder involvement

The unit operates on a multi-year evaluation strategy. The unit manages geographical (country and region) and sectoral/thematic evaluations, such as health, education, transport etc. It deals with evaluations of instruments for example: sector-wide approach, budget support, or channels for delivery of aid for example, development banks, UN Agencies, Non-State Actors etc. Project evaluations are carried out in the field; the evaluation unit is not involved.



The EC has two parallel planning structures; the financial perspective that covers several years, the current financial perspective is 2007-2013 and the multi annual programme covers the financial perspective period. The unit confirms the programme every year, with some room for some flexibility. The programme for 2007-2013 was set after 15 months of discussions and negotiations, between the three DGs. The ideas and suggestions for evaluations are to some extent determined by EC regulations; the evaluation unit has to carry out a fixed number of the different types of evaluations (country, policy etc.) per year. Based on these requirements, the head of evaluation puts together a list of all potential evaluations in a plan which is presented to the three Directorates for final negotiation to determine the budget and number of evaluations to be completed.

The evaluation unit does not work together with partner countries on evaluations, though partner countries may be involved in project-level evaluations done outside the unit. The unit has tried to collaborate with partner countries both the EC delegations in the countries and the partner countries organisations that were involved lacked evaluation capacity. The EC has had really good experience combining European consultants and consultants based in the partner countries in a mixed evaluation team.

Use and follow-up

There is a mechanism to ensure management responses to and follow-up action on evaluation recommendations and management responses are made public. All reports are made available on the unit's public web site and are disseminated to organisation management and staff at headquarters and in the field, as well as presented to beneficiaries and media in the EU. Seminars are held in-country for presenting the evaluation report, and there has been strong interest from governments and NGOs in these presentations.