

▶ Canada

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Evaluation Directorate, Strategic Policy and Performance Branch (SPPB)

Mandate

Canada's Treasury board Secretariat has an evaluation policy to ensure that the government and citizens get timely, strategically focused, evidence-based information on its policies, programmes and initiatives to produce better results for Canadians. CIDA approved its own evaluation policy in 2005. The policy is being reviewed and will likely be revised to further reflect the new legal obligation to implement the Paris Declaration Principles and the fact that since 2006 the Federal Accountability Act requires all departments, including CIDA, to evaluate 100% of all programmes. The directorate has developed a five year work plan indicating how it will undertake this task. At the end of 2009, the Evaluation Division was renamed Evaluation Directorate and the Director appointed as Director-General.

CIDA's programme branches undertake project evaluations while the Evaluation Directorate manages programme, corporate, and policy evaluations. Evaluation Directorate staff provide corporate advice, respond to requests of information from central agencies such as the Treasury board, prepare work plans and terms of reference, undertake scoping missions, supervise evaluations, prepare synthesis reports, obtain management responses, and contribute to joint-evaluations with other development agencies and horizontal evaluations with other Canadian federal departments.

Independence

Organisationally, the Evaluation Division is positioned within the Strategic Policy and Performance Branch. The Directorate reports to the President of the Agency, who is also the chair of the Evaluation Committee. The President approves evaluation reports. The Evaluation Committee is responsible to oversee the evaluation function at CIDA. Two members of the Evaluation Committee come from the programme branches, three committee members are from other Canadian departments and three come from outside the government representing civil society, academic institutions and the private sector. The Directorate has no direct decision-making relations with the programme branches.

Quality

For each evaluation a consultant team is hired on a competitive basis, using a standing offer system. This team shares responsibility for the final report with the Evaluation Directorate managers.

The Secretariat of the Treasury board of Canada undertakes an annual review of the performance of the Evaluation Directorate based on four criteria: quality of the work performed, neutrality, coverage, and usage of products. In 2007, 2008 and 2009 the CIDA Evaluation Directorate was rated as "strong".



Co-ordination, planning and stakeholder involvement

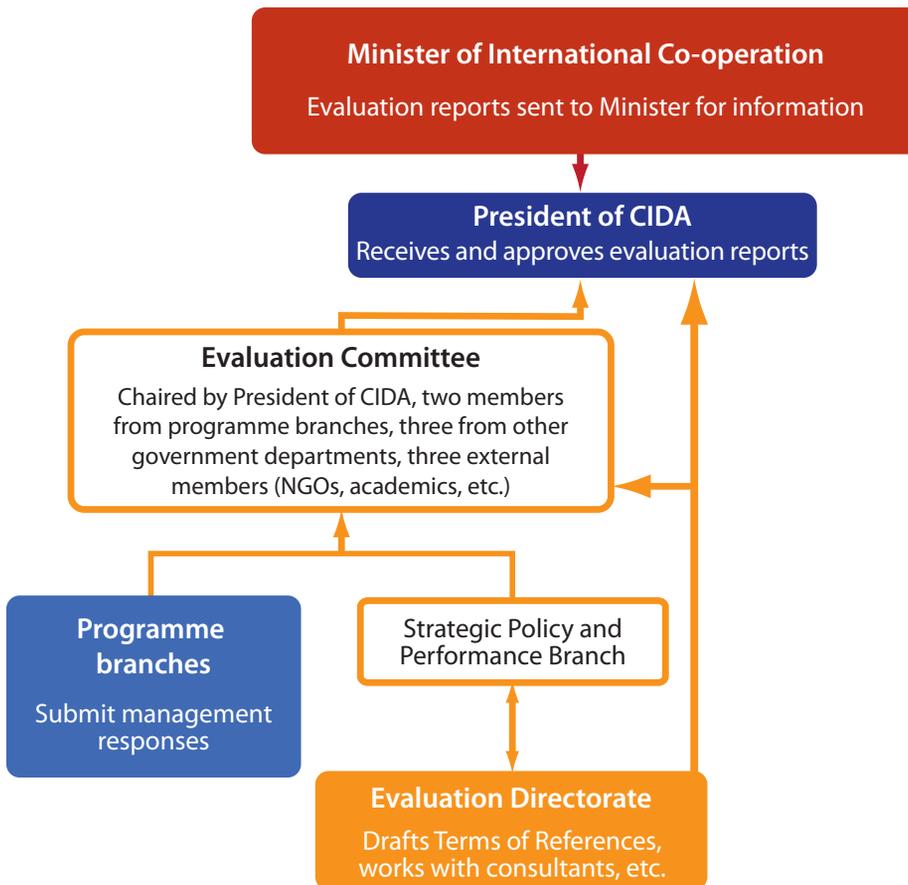
The Evaluation Committee annually reviews a strategic risk-based five-year rolling plan. This plan is approved by the president of the agency each year. The plan is not publicly available but it is shared with other agencies via the DAC Secretariat.

Partner country stakeholders are involved when deciding to undertake a programme evaluation. Local consultants are hired in most programme evaluations as sector specialists or regarding cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and environment.

Reporting and use

All programme evaluations presented to the Evaluation Committee require a management response, stating how recommendations will be implemented. A recent study found that the agency commonly uses evaluations as learning and management tools, particularly during considerations of new submissions or the formulation of new policies. A follow-up process is in place to periodically monitor the extent to which the evaluated programmes are implementing the recommendations. All programme evaluations presented to the Evaluation Committee and approved by the President are translated into English and French and posted on the Internet.

Structure of the evaluation process



Capacity development

CIDA's Evaluation Directorate has limited resources to support capacity development initiatives such as International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET), the African Evaluation Association (Afrea) and The International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). The division also encourages programme branches to use their resources to improve the "performance management systems" (including audit and evaluation) in different partner countries. A major initiative was launched in the Sahel/Sub-Saharan Africa between 2003 to 2008 in collaboration with the Canadian International Development Research Centre to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation units of the Poverty Reduction Strategies in Mali, Niger, Burkina, Senegal, and Benin.