

AFD's Evaluation Policy

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AFD'S EVALUATION POLICY

This document constitutes a reference text for AFD staff, at both headquarters and in the field offices, for the supervisory ministries, for AFD's counterparts, partners and interlocutors, *i.e.* all the stakeholders who implement AFD's financing or work with it, including NGOs, consultants and the other donors. AFD's evaluation policy document is a public document and is published in French and English.

Evaluation at AFD is part of the French ODA evaluation system, in which the supervisory ministries participate. This document aims to contribute to the overall consistency of this system.

France's Official Development Assistance evaluation system

France's Official Development Assistance evaluation system relies on the evaluation services of the three main public cooperation actors, thus reflecting France's development cooperation apparatus :

- The Evaluation Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attached to the Programmes Department and the network of the Directorate General of Global Affairs (DGM);
- The Evaluation Unit for Development Activities (UEAD) of the Directorate General of the Treasury, which reports to the head of the Multilateral Affairs and Development Department;
- AFD's Evaluation and Capitalisation Division, within its Research Department.

The Framework Document for Development Cooperation promises to develop the development evaluation. It states that evaluation is *"designed to measure the effectiveness of bilateral actions and contributions to European and multilateral institutions in order to better manage intervention modalities and pilot the financial channels used to achieve French cooperation objectives, to improve the functioning of the institutions responsible for cooperation (...), and inform the public*

and Parliament about the use of public funds and the results achieved by this cooperation policy."

The primary mission of the three evaluation services is to conduct or supervise the evaluation of the interventions that their organisations manage or implement. However, AFD's supervisory ministries may evaluate projects and programmes implemented by AFD.

While these three services are independent, they do work in a similar manner. They refer to the same evaluation principles and criteria of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and their evaluation protocols are similar: evaluation management bodies open to the various stakeholders in the evaluated intervention, contracting out evaluations, dissemination of evaluation results and publication of evaluation reports. Joint evaluations and cross-participation in the evaluation steering committees established by each structure are also a convergence factor for evaluation approaches and methods.

The three structures work together on their evaluation programme, which is subject to an annual validation by the co-secretariat of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (cosec-CICID). AFD's multi-year performance contract with supervisory ministries states that the supervisory ministries must be consulted every year on AFD evaluation programme. According to the decision made by the CICID of 31st July 2013, the three services are required to prepare a consolidated multi-year evaluation programme. They agree together on the programme of joint evaluations conducted at national, European or international level, such as the evaluation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Evaluations of France's cooperation policies and strategies for Official Development Assistance are

conducted as part of this joint evaluation programme. The last such exercise is the evaluative review of France's development cooperation policy between 1998 and 2010, which was completed in December 2012.

AFD reports on its evaluation activity to its supervisory ministries which, since the cosec-CICID meeting of 15th December 2008, have undertaken to submit a consolidated report on the evaluation of ODA to Parliament. The CICID of

31st July 2013 reaffirmed this commitment to produce a report every two years on the evaluation of the results of France's Official Development Assistance interventions.

The evaluation mechanism for France's Official Development Assistance was examined by the Court of Auditors in 2010 as part of its inquiry on France's Official Development Assistance policy. The Court of Auditors' report was released in June 2012.

1

Why an evaluation policy?

1

Why an evaluation policy?

1.1 | Background

In 2010, France's cooperation strategy was stated in a framework document "Development Cooperation: A French Vision", based on four interdependent priorities: sustainable and equitable growth, fight against poverty and inequalities, preservation of global public goods and promotion of law and stability. The strategy identifies four areas of partnership where France does not pursue the same objectives and does not implement the same financial instruments.

The third AFD Strategic Orientation Plan (POS3) for 2012-2016 provides a framework for the action of AFD – defined as the main operator for France's cooperation – to allow it to achieve the objectives set out in the framework document. One of the objectives of POS3 is to strengthen knowledge production and sharing, an objective to which evaluation contributes. POS3 also stresses the need for AFD to be an exemplary agency, which requires efforts to be made in terms of transparency and accountability. The Inter-ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) meeting of July 31st 2013 while recognising the significant progress achieved by France in terms of enhancing effectiveness, accountability and transparency, defined this improvement as one of the priority areas for the reform of the development assistance policy.

The formalisation of AFD's evaluation policy fits into this context. The following contextual elements confirm its relevance:

- The current economic and budgetary situation means that it is more than ever before necessary to assess public policy performance;
- AFD has experienced significant changes in recent years: its volume of activity has seen a fivefold increase in ten years, its geographical area and intervention sectors have been extended, and there has been a diversification in its counterparts and range of financial products. Consequently, the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the relevance and performance of AFD's interventions are increasingly necessary; they also require responses that are more and more complex to implement;
- The commitments made in Busan towards mutual accountability require an increased effort to evaluate AFD's interventions. POS3 commits AFD to implement the principles of the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and the principles of the coordination and division of labour agreed upon by European Union member countries. Such commitments can only materialise provided there is an improvement in monitoring and evaluation practices.

1.2 | Objectives of the evaluation policy document

The evaluation policy document sets out the evaluation principles, standards and approaches to which AFD refers.¹ Its overarching objective

is to demonstrate, both in-house and externally, the emphasis the institution places on the evaluation of its action.

The OECD defines evaluation as “The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results.² Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program. An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going, or completed development intervention.”

[Source: DAC, Evaluating Development Cooperation: Summary of Key Norms and Standards.]

The aim of this document is to inform the different stakeholders in evaluation by setting out the rules followed by AFD in designing, conducting and using evaluations.

It also seeks to give clarity to this activity within AFD and to improve the consistency and complementarity of the mechanisms that contribute to the evaluation function or interact with it.

The document is also designed to serve as a framework for AFD’s evaluation procedures and any methodological documents that may specify how to implement them.

The evaluation policy document focuses on:

- The design of AFD’s interventions*;
- The monitoring of interventions, particularly of their results*;
- The programming of evaluations;
- Their design and conduct;
- The use of their results.

The evaluation policy covers:

- All projects and programmes conducted at AFD (including financing of NGO initiatives and financing allocated in the French Overseas Territories);³
- The geographical, sectoral and thematic “frameworks for interventions” which they fit into;
- The instruments that AFD implements.

Policy review

Approaches to Official Development Assistance and public policy evaluation evolve rapidly. While certain principles – which are rooted in the commitments made at international level or in the evaluation policy for France’s public action – provide a solid foundation on which AFD’s evaluation policy is based, it is highly likely that this policy should evolve in the coming years. The evaluation policy document will be reviewed in the context of the preparation of the next AFD Strategic Orientation Plan in order to take account of these developments and the lessons learned from its implementation.

¹ The document includes a glossary of the terms used in the appendix. The words for which there is a definition are marked with an asterisk.

² To avoid any confusion, this document uses the term evaluation to refer to the assessment of the relevance and performance of ongoing or completed interventions OR operations and the term *ex ante* evaluation to refer to the appraisal of the interest of an intervention OR operation when the decision to launch it is taken.

³ The activities of PROPARCO and AFD’s subsidiaries in the French Overseas Territories are not covered by this policy document.

2

Evaluation at AFD

Evaluation at AFD

2.1 | Evaluation objectives at AFD

Evaluation at AFD first serves to improve future aid strategies, programmes and projects thanks to lessons learned from experience.

It contributes to both AFD's in-house knowledge capital and external knowledge capital and thus feeds into the debate on issues related to development and ODA.

In addition, evaluation contributes to AFD's accountability towards its supervisory ministries, the various stakeholders in the cooperation process in France and abroad, and towards the general public.

The evaluation policy document describes how evaluation contributes to these three objectives: improve interventions, build knowledge on development and accountability.

EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Evaluation is one of the tools used to meet AFD's accountability requirement. According to the OECD, accountability is the *"responsibility to provide accurate, fair and credible monitoring reports and performance assessments [of interventions]"*. Indeed, the first aspect of accountability is a matter of monitoring and refers to the ability to provide performance indicators* and results indicators and to aggregate them.

Monitoring arrangements must provide information on the resources implemented, achievements obtained and results attained. It is a core instrument of accountability as it can answer the questions that the various stakeholders, including the public, have concerning the development results achieved. This is the objective of the project conducted by AFD to overhaul "aggregated" indicators and of the efforts currently made to improve the quality of project completion reports. Evaluation, for its part, must provide a judgment on key questions concerning the validity,

implementation and effects of an intervention. Its primary aim is not to provide objective data on the results, but to explain and assess the latter. Evaluation is expected to provide a broader assessment of performance than a simple quantitative analysis of the extent to which the objectives have been achieved and, in some cases, to provide an in-depth analysis of the results that can be "attributed" to AFD.

OECD also refers to the "obligation to be accountable to taxpayers/citizens", which requires respecting a number of principles in terms of the scope of evaluations and the publication of their results.

AFD has set out to fulfil this obligation by:

- Undertaking to conduct an *ex post* evaluation programme covering all the projects and programmes it finances, without any selection bias in the choice of which interventions to evaluate, which could be related to the quality of projects. These *ex post* evaluations give an opinion on the rating conducted by operational

departments at project completion stage;

- Reporting on its performance by also conducting an evaluation programme with a broader scope than the funded projects and programmes, covering the instruments and strategic frameworks for interventions that AFD devises and implements. These evaluations are systematically published and are available on AFD's institutional website;

- Releasing a report every year on its evaluation activities, which is intended to be included in a report drafted for the Parliament, together with the evaluation services of the Directorate General of the Treasury and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This document summarises the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations conducted over the period;

- Participating in joint evaluations with the supervisory ministries on France's development assistance policies and strategies.

2.2 | Principles

Evaluation obeys the principles set out in AFD Group's Professional Ethics Charter and in the charter of the French Evaluation Society (SFE) for the evaluation of public policies and public programmes. [The SFE's charter is attached to the present document.](#)

Like other bilateral donors, [AFD adheres to the DAC principles for evaluation](#): impartiality and independence, credibility, usefulness, participation (of local partners) and coordination (with other donors).

However, as the implementation of these principles may vary from one donor to the other, it is important to specify how AFD interprets them:

Independence:

- Evaluations are conducted or supervised by a service independent from the one responsible for designing and implementing the intervention. The level of independence does, however, vary depending on the objective of the evaluation work that is conducted.
- The evaluation system is headed by an Evaluation Committee comprising representatives from AFD's supervisory ministries and independent persons. This Committee delivers an opinion on the relevance and quality of the evaluation work, the programming and the resources allocated to evaluation. The Evaluation Committee reports directly to AFD's Board of Directors on an annual basis.

Quality:

- The quality of the evaluation is assessed in terms of the persons tasked with leading and implementing the evaluation work, the evaluative process and the output of the evaluation. The present document sets out the evaluation quality criteria, the rules for the recruitment of evaluators and AFD's commitments in terms of training its evaluation staff.

Usefulness:

- An evaluation is only planned when it is likely to contribute to the following objectives: improve interventions, contribute to the knowledge capital and accountability. It is organised accordingly.

Partnership:

- AFD is committed to implement the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. It aims to contribute to the establishment of the mutual accountability framework by associating and involving its partners in the evaluation processes it conducts.
- However, as AFD's interventions also serve to promote specific principles, values and interests, the evaluation does not posit a perfect identity of the objectives between AFD and its partners. Consequently, in terms of evaluation, AFD encourages all the objectives to be indicated in the interest of the transparency and clarity of the partnership.

Coordination:

- AFD follows the DAC guidelines for joint evaluations.
- In order to facilitate the implementation of joint evaluations, AFD communicates its evaluation programme to the DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EVALNET). When launching an evaluation, AFD systematically verifies whether it would not be more appropriate to conduct joint work with other donors.

Transparency

- Evaluations are systematically published in printed form and are available to download on its website, in line with its social responsibility policy. In accordance with the new provisions in its financing agreements, AFD also publishes project "performance sheets", which summarise the results of individual project evaluations. These sheets will also be available on AFD's website.

- While respecting legal obligations and the rules set out by SFE, the data used for the evaluation work will also be made available to the public within a reasonable timeframe.

2.3 | Concepts and criteria

Concepts

AFD uses the DAC glossary as the main reference for the definition of its operations and evaluations.

AFD, through training and communication action, ensures that all those who are concerned by the design, conducting, supervision and evaluation of its interventions share the same definitions of the basic concepts used in the intervention cycle.

Criteria

As is the case with the entire community of bilateral donors, AFD bases its evaluation work on the five DAC evaluation criteria : relevance*, effectiveness*, efficiency*, sustainability* and impact*. Relevance refers to whether the objectives of the intervention are consistent with the problem to be addressed and/or the requirements of those who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of it. Relevance also analyses the consistency of the intervention with the beneficiary's strategies and donor's priorities. Effectiveness indicates the extent to which the specific objectives* have been achieved or are in the process of being so. Efficiency judges the resources mobilised in order to achieve them. Sustainability assesses the extent to which the intervention is likely to provide continued benefits overtime, once it has been completed. Impact is all the effects of the intervention, whether positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or not.

The evaluation criteria provide a reference framework that must be adjusted to each evaluation. The importance given to each criterion may vary depending on the objectives of the evaluation.

AFD attaches particular importance to certain specific aspects:

- POS3 makes sustainable development the common reference for all AFD's operational activities. In terms of evaluation, this involves analysing the contribution that the intervention makes to the sustainable development objectives (economic development, fight against poverty, reduction of inequalities, biodiversity preservation and fight against climate change). **Evaluation will pay close attention to the way in which AFD and its partners approach the balance between the economic, environmental and social stakes of the intervention.** In terms of project evaluation, AFD undertakes to systematically examine the environmental and social consequences of projects classified as A, i.e. those where there are activities considered as high risk and/or which are implemented in a "sensitive" area and, as such, warrant specific measures to limit, offset or provide assistance for the negative impacts;

- Because it is first a lender, AFD assesses the impacts that its financial support has on the financial situation of its borrowers and differentiates its appreciation of the evaluation criteria, especially the sustainability criterion, depending on the financial instrument involved;

- The reinforcement of the mainstreaming of gender in France's development policies was confirmed following the submission of the recommendations of the evaluation of France's "Gender and Development" strategy to the Minister for Development in January 2010. AFD includes this aspect in the analysis of the relevance, effectiveness and impact of its interventions.

- Finally, AFD seeks to identify its "added value" in the evaluated intervention. This involves assessing in what way AFD's intervention is different from any other donor who could have financed the intervention. Consequently, the impacts of non-financial input (technical expertise, dialogue with the beneficiary, responsiveness, involvement...) and its specificity to AFD will be systematically examined.

2.4 | Evaluation and other “views” on interventions

AFD’S INTERVENTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO SEVERAL “CRITICAL VIEWS”, WHICH ALL AIM TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE:

1. The first view is given by the project managers themselves when they appraise an intervention, using their expertise, knowledge of the sector, of the geographical areas, of the counterparts and the lessons learned from experience. This view is formalised in the presentation notes for AFD’s decision-making bodies. This work is complemented by capitalisation studies conducted in AFD’s technical divisions.
2. The second view is the “Second Opinion” delivered by the Risk Department . It verifies that the operation has been designed in a manner that does not expose AFD to an excessive level of risk, the notion of risk being defined in rather broad terms. Any failure on AFD’s part to be accountable for the results of its projects increases its image risk. Consequently, the mandate of the Second Opinion is also to ensure that the interventions are designed with specific, clear and quantified objectives, combined with realistic monitoring arrangements.
3. The third view is given by the Internal Audit Department and ensures that operations are conducted in accordance with the legal and regulatory provisions, professional and ethical business standards and practices to which AFD is subject or has undertaken to comply with.
4. The fourth view is supervised by the Operations Department’s Quality Unit and involves an assessment of the quality of the implementation of projects, as well as their prospect of achieving the development objectives, on the basis of a rating carried out by project managers during implementation.
5. The fifth view is that of the operational teams at project completion. It involves making an initial factual and quantitative review of the resources mobilised, the achievements obtained and the results attained in a project completion report (PCR). This review gives rise to a project rating. The annual consolidation of the ratings provides data for an indicator from the multi-year performance contract with supervisory ministries on the proportion of projects deemed satisfactory at their completion.
6. The sixth view is that of evaluation.

The evaluation policy only concerns this sixth view, but takes account of how it ties in with the five others, in particular:

- ▶ The evaluation does not explicitly consider the way in which AFD manages the “project cycle”. This assessment is made by the Internal Audit Department, whose tasks in a way come under a performance audit. The quality of the appraisal and monitoring of operations is, however, examined during the evaluation and it is taken into account when it affects evaluation criteria.
- ▶ The evaluation does not lead to an independent rating of operations. The rating at project completion is

conceived at AFD as a self-evaluation exercise. However, when the project is subject to an *ex post* evaluation, the evaluator is asked to give an opinion on the rating conducted by the operational departments.

- ▶ While they are fundamentally different, the monitoring and evaluation arrangements are complementary (see box on evaluation and accountability): indeed, the quality of the monitoring determines the quality, even the feasibility, of the evaluation exercise. *Ex post* project evaluations are now conducted after the project completion report has been produced in order to have accurate information on the resources used, the

project’s achievements and its results. The quality of the monitoring depends on the quality of the design of the operation: AFD’s Evaluation Division can thus provide methodological support to the project manager for the design of project monitoring arrangements in order to

ensure the evaluability* of the operation. This anticipation of information and data requirements is essential, particularly in the case of impact evaluations, which require being able to monitor the effects of the intervention from a baseline situation until its completion.

2.5 | The main types of evaluation

The different types of evaluation conducted by AFD are part of a continuum between monitoring, evaluation and research.

The OECD distinguishes between several categories of evaluation depending on their scope of analysis (project, sector, country, thematic...), their objective (summative or formative*), the point at which they are conducted (*ex ante*, *in itinere* or *ex post*), their approach (evaluation compared to the stated objectives of the intervention, participatory evaluation and

impact evaluation) and their relationship with those who are responsible for the evaluated intervention (independent evaluation, self-evaluation). The evaluations conducted by AFD fall within all these categories.

Evaluation categories

AFD mainly conducts four categories of evaluation work, which are defined by the scope evaluated, the approach and methods used, and their objectives:

Type of evaluation	Scope	Approach/methods	Main objective (secondary)
Evaluations <i>ex post</i> de projet	Projects	Goal-based evaluation, reviews (for complex projects)	Improvement of interventions, dialogue on results with contracting authorities
In-depth evaluations	Projects, project clusters, instruments	“Theory-based” methods, experimental and quasi-experimental methods	Knowledge production, (improvement of interventions, accountability)
Strategic evaluations	Sectoral, geographical, cross-cutting frameworks for interventions	Goal-based evaluation, reviews	Improvement of interventions (accountability)
Summaries of evaluations	Project clusters	Meta-evaluation	Improvement of interventions

- *Ex post* project evaluations. *Ex post* evaluations cover all the categories of AFD’s financial support, with the exception of financial support in the French Overseas Territories (see box on French Overseas Territories). These evaluations are rather basic from a methodological perspective and focus on the implementation process and the extent to which the project’s specific objectives* have been achieved. When AFD’s projects do not use specific evaluation methods, they are evaluated following a decentralised procedure: evaluations are conducted by AFD’s field

offices using a defined protocol, under the supervision of the Evaluation Division (see below). Projects for which it is not possible to isolate AFD’s contribution to achieving its development goals (sectoral support *via* a basket fund, global or sectoral budget support...) are subject to analytical reviews, when it is not possible to conduct a joint evaluation (see below). Financing of NGO initiatives is also subject to evaluations by project clusters in a given country or sector. They are jointly managed by the division “partnerships with NGOs” and the Evaluation Division.⁴

⁴ These evaluations complement external evaluations conducted by the NGOs themselves.

DECENTRALISED PROJECT EVALUATIONS

Decentralised project evaluations are led by AFD's field offices and geographical departments, with support from the Evaluation Division.

This mechanism was established by AFD in 2007 and has three valuable assets:

- The proximity to counterparts who are involved in the evaluative process. In this case, evaluation contributes to the development assistance process in the same way as the implementation of operations. One of the core objec-

tives of decentralised evaluations is to gradually organise a dialogue on the results with the stakeholders of the funded operations;

- The possibility to resort to local expertise. AFD mobilises local expertise whenever possible in order to benefit from its sound knowledge of the context and to be able to support the development of local evaluation skills;

- The dissemination of the culture of evaluation in AFD operational departments and to AFD's partners.

- **In-depth evaluations.** Their scope of analysis generally covers a project or group of projects in the same sector, or which implement the same financial instrument. The aim of the evaluation is to address a knowledge gap in terms of the results and impacts of an intervention and, when they are established, to understand the mechanisms that link the intervention to these results and these impacts. In-depth evaluations often concern innovative projects or projects that implement models promoted by AFD. This evaluation work is at the crossroads between research and evaluation. AFD uses a variety of evaluation approaches and methods. In-depth evaluations use "theory-based" methods (e.g. comparative qualitative analysis, contribution analysis) and experimental and quasi-experimental methods that are specific to impact evaluations, based on a "with-without" the intervention comparison. **For AFD, the key requirement in terms of method is the consistency of the methodology used with the type of intervention evaluated, the objective of the evaluation and the type of question asked.** AFD conducts impact evaluations in a specific manner. In their strictest sense, these evaluations seek to assess the impacts that can only be attributed to the intervention. Impact evaluations can rely on a so-called "empirical" approach, which involves comparing the situation of the beneficiaries of this intervention with a "counterfactual" situation, *i.e.* a hypothetical situation that would have prevailed if there had not been an intervention.

- **Strategic evaluations.** Frameworks (geographical,

sectoral and cross-cutting) for interventions reflect the manner in which AFD interprets the missions entrusted to it by its supervisory authorities and provide an analytical framework by which AFD aims to obtain development results from its financial and non-financial production. The scope of strategic evaluations covers frameworks for interventions* or a homogeneous subgroup of these frameworks, or otherwise strategic elements that have not yet been formalised. In return, strategic evaluations should lead to an improvement in the quality of these strategic tools. These formative evaluations* also serve the objective of accountability. Methodologically, these evaluations are often less demanding than the second category of evaluation and can give rise to analytical reviews (see below).

- **Evaluation synthesis and meta-evaluations.** The Evaluation Division conducts project evaluation synthesis by topic, sector or geographical area. They aim to improve operations thanks to the lessons learned from evaluations that have already been conducted. Meta-evaluations which "evaluate evaluations", take a critical view of the evaluative process and its effectiveness in terms of the contribution it makes to knowledge and accountability requirements.

Analytical reviews

The Evaluation Division can also conduct analytical reviews. This work, the aim of which is intentionally formative*, does not strictly meet evaluation criteria

and methodologies and does not necessarily address all the DAC evaluation criteria, but simply questions identified as being useful. It may take different forms: mapping, analyses of clusters of operations, portfolio reviews... This work is conducted when the aim is to assess the performance of complex interventions that

are difficult to evaluate (see below). More specifically, reviews focus on the operational aspects and do not seek as much as evaluations to assess the results and impacts of interventions. This work is disseminated in-house at AFD, but may be published if it presents an interest for the public.

EVALUATION OF AFD'S ACTIVITIES IN THE FRENCH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

The evaluation policy set out in this document applies to AFD's interventions in the French Overseas Territories in an adapted form that takes account of the specificities of AFD's mandate and the "evaluation" missions entrusted to the General Delegation for the French Overseas Territories (DGOM), a governmental agency.

AFD has a mandate to support the Government's public policies for economic and social development in the French Overseas Territories. AFD acts as either an operator or stakeholder in the implementation of these policies, which DGOM has a mandate to evaluate. In terms of evaluation, this specific positioning means that:

- It is not justified for AFD to question the relevance of its operations alone, which requires adjusting the content and interpretation of the DAC evaluation criteria it usually uses;

- AFD's interventions are included in the scope covered by the evaluations conducted by DGOM. However, DGOM and AFD take an approach based more on mutual learning in terms of evaluation, which leads to cross-participation in their evaluation steering committees;

- DGOM may entrust AFD with the conducting of impact evaluations of public policies in the Overseas departments.

The objectives of evaluations of activities in the French Overseas Territories mainly concern learning, decision-making and strengthening the dialogue with the stakeholders of the evaluated intervention. Evaluations focus on the participatory dimension, either in the evaluative approach adopted, or the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluative process. The scope of evaluation in the French Overseas Territories includes (i) the geographical frameworks for intervention and the parts of the sectoral frameworks for interventions devoted to the French Overseas Territories and (ii) a limited number of individual projects, where evaluation contributes to enhance AFD's partnership with local authorities and the Local Public Establishments who implement them. In this case, the evaluation covers both the financial support provided by AFD and the support-advisory activities.

The assessment of the impacts of the financial support provided to the French Overseas Territories by AFD can be complex (e.g. budgetary loans). AFD consequently makes a particular methodological effort to evaluate these interventions.

3

Challenges for evaluation at AFD

Challenges for evaluation at AFD

The challenges that AFD is committed to addressing in terms of evaluation are: enhance the evaluability of interventions, improve the resource allocation for evaluation *via* more strategic

programming, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in evaluations, strengthen the quality of work and, more generally, its utility and use.

3.1 | Enhance the evaluability of interventions

An evaluable intervention is ideally an intervention for which the theory of action*, objectives, indicators and monitoring arrangements are clearly formulated right from the design stage and for which the achievements and results have been effectively monitored. [Improving the evaluability of interventions is a priority for AFD's evaluation policy for the coming years](#). This requires a constant commitment on the part of the different persons involved in the design, decision-making and implementation phases for strategies and operations.

In this respect, AFD undertakes to:

- Develop a generally applied culture of evaluation, in the sense that the need to evaluate AFD's action is recognised at all levels of the institution;
- Firmly root evaluation in the project cycle and the cycle for the preparation of strategic intervention frameworks;
- Use approaches and methods tailored to the level of evaluability of the intervention, while recognising that all interventions cannot be evaluated with the same degree of rigour and using the same approach;

- Develop specific methodological work to improve the evaluability of the most complex interventions (e.g. budget support).

The other "views" contribute to this effort, particularly *via*:

- The quality control conducted by the technical department at project "entry" after the completion of the appraisal phase by the project manager;
- The Second Opinion, whose control concerns the monitoring arrangement provided for in the project;
- The presentation notes for the decision-making bodies, which set out the monitoring and evaluation arrangement established for each operation;
- The annual reviews of the results of the quality rating for on-going projects and of supervision performance, which are conducted by the Operations Department Quality Unit;
- The strengthening of the quality of project completion report content and the improvement in reporting at completion.

3.2 | Program evaluations according to their main objective

Evaluation programming is an exercise that aims to optimise the allocation of evaluation resources. Programming first involves assigning a “main objective” to each type of evaluation and organising the process to define AFD’s evaluation programme accordingly.

Program in-depth evaluations according to the knowledge production objective

Evaluation must answer concrete questions raised by the validity, implementation and impacts of the funded interventions. These questions are raised by the Operations Department and, sometimes, by the supervisory ministries or regulatory bodies.

Consequently, programming for in-depth evaluations is initially the result of a consultation process conducted by the Evaluation Division with operational departments, particularly the Operations Department’s technical divisions.

Evaluations are selected on the basis of three criteria: the added value of the evaluation, the evidence gap and the evaluability of the intervention:

- Added value of the evaluation: Has the question not already been addressed by another evaluation conducted by AFD or other donors? In the latter case, under what conditions can the lessons learned from these evaluations be sufficient? Should not a systematic review* exercise be conducted to answer the question?

- Evidence gap: Is there a specific doubt over the relevance or effectiveness of the intervention? Does it have an innovative nature and/or is it intended to be reproduced/extended?

- Evaluability: Can the intervention be evaluated at a reasonable cost, including in terms of methodological investment?

In addition to the requests from operational departments, the Evaluation Division can also take the initiative for evaluation work. This is the case for evaluations concerning instruments whose effectiveness is questioned by AFD’s Board of Directors or regulatory authorities.

In-depth evaluations are submitted to AFD’s Studies and Research Committee, which is a forum for discussions on the programme and content of AFD’s work concerning studies, research, evaluation and forward-looking activities.

In-depth evaluations take up approximately half of AFD’s human and budgetary resources allocated to evaluation (i.e. excluding the 2009 programme). Part of these resources is earmarked for impact evaluations, which are more difficult to conduct. AFD plans to conduct a sufficient number of impact evaluations every year in order to develop in-house expertise and be in a position to influence international debate on impact evaluations. This programme materialises the commitments AFD has made in terms of impacts in its social responsibility policy.

IMPACT EVALUATIONS AT AFD

Impact evaluations are led by the Evaluation Division, working closely with AFD’s operational departments. Through this collaboration AFD:

- Identifies the projects that are relevant for both research (“knowledge gap”) and operational purposes (“use of results”);
- Ensures that the operational conditions allow the most appropriate impact evaluation methods to be used;
- Allows a dissemination and effective use (direct or more strategic) of the results obtained.

The Evaluation Division is actively involved in the identification of research partners, the definition of the protocol for impact evaluations and leading the evaluations (supervision of the different surveys, critical analysis of the methods used, interpretation and dissemination of results, etc.).

This close involvement of in-house teams should enable AFD to actively participate in the international debate on impact evaluations.

Given the research aspect of this type of evaluation, AFD forges research partnerships with the most experienced

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research institutes in this field (IRD – DIAL, J-Pal, University of California, Berkeley, etc.) by seeking, as far as possible, a diversity of approaches and teams. Whenever possible, it involves research institutes in the country of intervention in the evaluation work.

Among the impact evaluations, experimental evaluations are able to establish the causal relationship between the intervention and its results with a high level of statistical

confidence. However, experimental evaluations cannot be conducted in all cases. Quasi-experimental methods can be used in an alternative manner, by taking account of operational and budgetary constraints.

When appropriate, AFD uses the National Statistics Institute for the collection of data required for impact evaluations. Whenever possible, this collection is supported by on-going or planned surveys.

Strategic evaluations are dedicated to improving AFD's intervention frameworks

In view of the resources allocated to evaluation, it is not possible to evaluate all of AFD frameworks for interventions over the 5-year period covered by AFD's POS. The strategic evaluation programming, which in fact complements the systematic reviews conducted with support from the Strategy Department, must be selective and meet an opportuneness criterion: Does the evaluation relate to a priority of the POS? Will the evaluation be useful to the Operations Department for the definition or overhaul of a strategic intervention framework? Does the evaluation provide answers to a specific questioning from the Board of Directors?

Ex post project evaluations serve a learning objective, in association with counterparts

The systematic evaluation of all operations is not an appropriate option as it leads to a dispersal of resources that is not conducive to quality research, and to evaluations that may be of little use. The projects to be evaluated are thus selected according to several criteria: opportunity of a dialogue on the results with the beneficiary, interest of the evaluation in terms of learning... The quality of projects must not, however, influence the choice of the evaluated projects in order to ensure that the selection is not biased in favour of projects deemed as the most satisfactory. In practice, the programming of regular project evaluations is jointly prepared by the Operations Department and Evaluation Division, which ensures that the *ex post* evaluation programme is representative of the portfolio of completed projects in terms of sectors

and geographical areas. By participating in evaluation programming in this way, the Evaluation Division makes sure that *ex post* evaluations can also be an instrument that allows AFD to be accountable for its performance as an operator of Official Development Assistance.

AFD has thus undertaken to extend the scope of ex post project evaluations, but within this scope, AFD does not aim to achieve an exhaustive coverage of projects evaluated after completion.

As provided for in AFD's bylaws, the financing allocated to NGOs is subject to a regular evaluation activity. The relevant area for the evaluation of financing of NGO initiatives is that of the country and sector.

Evaluation programme

The evaluation programme is prepared on a 3-year basis in order to help meet these different objectives. It comprises 3-year orientations specifying the strategic priorities of the evaluation activity and the detailed programme of evaluations for the coming year.

Once it has been prepared, the evaluation programme – together with the joint evaluations with the supervisory ministries – is submitted to [the Evaluation Committee for an opinion, which makes a decision on its contribution to the accountability objective and its feasibility](#). It is subsequently submitted to AFD's Chief Executive Officer for approval, in the form of a list of evaluations to be undertaken during the budgetary period of the coming year. This list is then submitted to AFD's supervisory ministries and to the OECD.

3.3 | Clarify responsibilities in conducting evaluations

The responsibilities in conducting evaluations must be clearly stated in order to ensure their independence and quality. Evaluations in the strict sense – which do not include reviews – are addressed here in two separate groups: evaluations led by the Evaluation Division and evaluations conducted following the decentralised procedure.

Evaluations led by the Evaluation Division

Preparation of the evaluation

The quality of an evaluation is partly based on the work prior to it being conducted. The Evaluation Division begins by setting out the objective of the evaluation (why are we evaluating, but also for whom?). Preliminary work is subsequently systematically conducted in order to specify as far as possible the scope of the evaluation and confirm its interest. This preliminary work may be in the form of literary reviews or analytical reviews* such as project mapping.

The terms of reference are subsequently drafted with support from members of the reference group. They specify the context, scope and propose a limited number of evaluative questions. They define the evaluation approach and methods that will be implemented. The terms of reference comprise the dissemination plan, including the rules for the publication of the results of the evaluation.

Selection of the evaluator

Evaluations are most often outsourced. The consultant selection process must, in accordance with the rules applicable to procurement at AFD, give priority to the quality of bids. The choice of the evaluators gives rise to discussions within the reference group, but is ultimately made by the Evaluation Division, which is responsible for the budget and guarantees the quality of the evaluation. Impact evaluations are conducted within research partnerships (see box on impact evaluations).

Reference group

All evaluations are led by the Evaluation Division in association with a reference group, which meets at the dates set out in the terms of reference. The Evaluation Division is generally assisted by sectoral experts from the Operations Department, who are “made available” to the Evaluation Division.

The reference group comprises a limited number of representatives from the relevant AFD operational departments, stakeholders in the evaluated intervention, experts from the Research Department and qualified persons from outside, included persons qualified in the field of evaluation. The supervisory ministries can be invited to participate in the reference group. The group is chaired by a qualified person or, failing that, by the head of the Research Department or head of the Evaluation Division at AFD.

The diversity of the composition of the reference group is an essential part of ensuring the quality of the work and guaranteeing the independence of the evaluation exercise. AFD promotes the participation in the reference group of prominent figures from the academic and research world, businesses and NGOs.

The reference group is consulted for the selection of evaluators and the supervision and validation of the work conducted by the evaluators. It takes part in the assessment of the quality of the evaluation, according to a grid established on the basis of OECD-DAC quality standards (see Appendix IV).

Evaluations conducted in a decentralised manner

Ex post projects evaluations are conducted by agencies using simple and standardised procedures.

The agency's role is to:

- Lead the entire evaluation process, from the drafting of the terms of reference to the dissemination of the final report;
- Coordinate the activities of the different stakeholders involved in the process, particularly AFD's local partners who are involved in the evaluation reference group.

The Evaluation Division supervises decentralised evaluations, *i.e.* the methodological supervision and quality control of these evaluations in the form of an ex post rating made according to a quality grid using simplified OECD-DAC standards. This supervision includes updating procedures and reference documents, training for operational departments, the formulation of opinions on the terms of reference and deliverables if they are requested, or more direct support, the level of which depends on the capacity and requirements of the field office in question.

Finally, the Evaluation Division has a mandate to exploit knowledge acquired from decentralised evaluations by drafting evaluation syntheses.

The evaluations of NGO financing follow a specific protocol, with the Evaluation Division involved in the

definition of the terms of reference, methodological choices, selection of consultants, validation of deliverables and dissemination of the evaluation report. The Evaluation Division generally takes part in the reference group that is set up.

3.4 | Design practical and useful evaluation products

Evaluations contribute to knowledge and accountability *via* their various “products”: The findings, based on the supervision data and the specific observations made by evaluators and, especially, the conclusions, which are the main product of the evaluation.

- These conclusions may be specific, with a validity confined to the evaluated intervention, or they may have a more general scope. A distinction is made between these two types of conclusion in order to facilitate the use of evaluations: the general conclusions will be identified by evaluators and may be subject to summaries on a sectoral, thematic or geographical basis.

The recommendations drawn from the conclusions establish the link between the evaluation process and the decision-making process. In order to ensure that the departments responsible for designing and conducting operations or strategies take ownership of the recommendations, a different type of relationship must be established between evaluators and operational staff. While it is important to ensure that the conclusions are formulated by evaluators in complete independence, the formulation of the recommendations gains from involving the departments that are likely to implement them, particularly in view of the timing difference between the past period when the evaluated operations were designed and the present, when future projects are being identified.

3.5 | Guarantee the quality of evaluations

AFD ensures that evaluations are of the highest possible quality throughout the process. It specifically undertakes to improve the quality of decentralised evaluations by promoting a more strategic programming. To do so, it involves the technical divisions in the preparation and supervision of decentralised project evaluations and ensures that the project completion reports provide the objective and quantitative information required for conducting high quality *ex post* evaluations.

Quality at “entry” and during the evaluation

AFD relies on the Evaluation Division at an early stage to ensure:

1. A better evaluability of projects right from the design stage;
2. A formulation of high quality terms of reference clarifying the objective of the evaluation, its context and stating a limited number of evaluative questions;
3. A selection of external service providers focused on the quality of their bids;
4. The appropriate methodological approach is chosen;
5. A participation of evaluation experts in the reference groups.

Quality at “exit”

AFD has adopted an assessment grid for evaluation quality. It refers to DAC standards for both the quality of the evaluator’s work and the evaluative process itself.

This grid is given in Appendix IV. It is used by the reference group and Evaluation Division to decide whether to publish a study.

AFD does not support the idea of a project rating in order to avoid biases related to the aggregation of notes on the judgments made by a wide range of evaluators, and on very different types of project conducted in different contexts. It does, however, encourage evaluators to make a synthetic and quantitative assessment of the different evaluation criteria in order to enhance the clarity of the positions they take in their analyses.

Quality control is organised at three levels:

- 1st level: for decentralised evaluations, by the office and geographical department; for evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Division and for evaluations of NGO projects, by the external evaluator’s quality assurance mechanism;

- 2nd level: by the Evaluation Division, for decentralised evaluations; by the Evaluation Division assisted by the reference group for the evaluations it leads and evaluations of NGO projects. Some evaluations may justify recourse to an external service provider specifically recruited for the quality control;

- 3rd level: the Evaluation Committee, which has a mandate to support AFD for the fulfilment of its mission to be accountable and to evaluate its actions in a credible, independent and transparent manner; it gives an opinion on the quality of the evaluation work conducted by AFD.

3.6 | Make evaluations more useful

AFD is committed to systematically scaling up the use of the evaluations it produces.

It follows the distinction between the three types of use for an evaluation made by Rossi *et al.*:⁵

1. Direct or instrumental use, *i.e.* the use of the evaluation’s findings, conclusions and recommendations by decision-makers and stakeholders;
2. Conceptual use, which aims to contribute to the intellectual debate in general;
3. Persuasive or symbolic use of the evaluation, which aims to uphold a political position.

This distinction overlaps with the more classic concepts of feedback, capitalisation and advocacy. The objective of knowledge production on evaluation at AFD overlaps with the first two categories. AFD recognises that evaluation can feed “advocacy” and, in certain cases, therefore intends to make a “persuasive use” of it.

Direct use for feedback purposes

One of the main objectives of evaluation is to improve operations thanks to feedback from the lessons learned from new interventions and possibly from on-going interventions.

Current practice

This feedback is organised prior to the evaluation through:

- Involvement of operational departments in programming evaluations and the preparation of the terms of reference, which are drafted to answer operational questions;
- Inclusion of an opportuneness criterion to select the subjects to evaluate, which aims to ensure, as far as possible, that the evaluation is conducted at the right moment to inform AFD’s projects, programmes and strategic frameworks for interventions.

⁵ Rossi, P.H., M.W. Lipsey and H.E. Freeman, “Evaluation: A Systematic Approach”, 7th edition, 2004.

The involvement of operational departments in the choice of the subjects to evaluate, in the preparation of the evaluation and in the conducting of evaluations guarantees the subsequent use of the evaluation. The influence that the evaluative process has on actors is often as important as the influence of the final “product” of the evaluation.

Response to the conclusions of the evaluation (management response)

Management must respond formally to any evaluation. Consequently, the departments concerned by the evaluated intervention adopt an opinion on the evaluation conclusions reached by the evaluators. In accordance with the principles of the DAC, AFD ensures the independence of the evaluation up to the conclusions stage.

In some cases, when the evaluation leads to conclusions that may call into question the continuation of an activity or suggest a radical change in direction, it is for AFD's Executive Committee to provide the management response to the conclusions.

This process, which first concerns evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Division, can be implemented, where appropriate, for certain decentralised project evaluations and synthesis work on project evaluations.

Formulation of recommendations

To promote the direct use of evaluations, **operational departments are directly involved in the formulation of recommendations.**

There are two alternative solutions, depending on the case:

1. A formulation of recommendations by the evaluators. The recommendations are subsequently discussed with the operational departments, the aim being for the different actors to take ownership and be accountable;
2. A joint formulation of recommendations by the evaluators and the relevant departments. This second solution aims to improve the quality of the recommendations, the feasibility of their implementation and ensure that operational staff effectively take ownership of them. Once AFD has expressed its position on the conclusions of the evaluation, the relevant departments take part in the

formulation of recommendations with the evaluators. The evaluators thus act as facilitators to bring out credible recommendations. However, the Evaluation Division ensures that the recommendations that are formulated result from the conclusions and that they are prioritised and classified according to the stakeholder in question.

Supervision of recommendations

As recommended by the Court of Auditors and the Internal Audit Department, **AFD undertakes to establish a mechanism to supervise recommendations.** The supervision mechanism will be set up in the Operations Department (in the NGO Partnerships Division for the evaluation of financing of NGO initiatives).

In addition to this mechanism, where relevant, AFD mentions the lessons learned from the evaluation in the notes to present new projects to the decision-making bodies. The Evaluation Division undertakes to support the operational teams during the appraisal phase in order to increase their knowledge of the lessons learned from relevant previously conducted evaluations.

In order to reinforce the feedback loop between the supervision of recommendations and the improvement in new interventions, the programming should provide for evaluations regularly covering the same object (thematic and instrument). This type of repetition makes it possible to assess how lessons learned are taken into account in new interventions.

AFD's approach to scaling up the use of evaluations for feedback purposes is shown in the table “Evaluation feedback process” given in Appendix V.

Conceptual use for capitalisation purposes

Evaluation also serves to understand situations, debate conclusions and learn lessons from experience. In this respect, it contributes to the production of operational knowledge on development assistance.

AFD is encouraging this “capitalisation” process by strengthening its knowledge management policy. In this context, it works to facilitate the accumulation of, access to and ownership of knowledge from evaluations.

Reports more reader-friendly

The clarity and conciseness of reports is one of the

evaluation quality criteria. In the terms of reference, each evaluation provides for the production of a 4-page summary, which may be published in the "Question de développement" series. This publication will systematically be available in French and English.

Systematic feedback on evaluation work

AFD organises in-house feedback meetings on its evaluation work and, when it is relevant and possible, in the country(ies) concerned.

In addition, AFD communicates on this work through various channels by organising or participating in one-time events, seminars to exchange practices and initiatives taken by other donors and think tanks at international level.

Use of thematic networks

Informal thematic networks have been set up at AFD to share useful information and reflections on these topics. These networks may provide a means of exploiting the knowledge produced by the evaluations.

Publication of evaluations

AFD publishes its evaluations in two series: "Evaluation de l'AFD", entitled *Ex Post* series, and "Joint Evaluations". Some evaluation work that may be useful to an academic public could be published in the Research Department's "Working Papers" series.

These publications are disseminated, particularly via AFD's website, and are distributed free of charge during events organised by AFD or by other institutions or donors.

Evaluation database

In order to more effectively share the resources from evaluations, AFD intends to set up a database available to all its staff and providing easy access to all evaluation reports. This database will have a search engine allowing documents to be sorted by geographical area, sector, instrument evaluated or type of publication.

The Evaluation Division is to move towards a role of "knowledge broker", which involves actively exploiting this database in order to help operational departments access online information and formalise summative content for the departments that request it.

Use of evaluations for advocacy purposes

While all evaluations must be published, they are not all necessarily subject to the same communication effort. Some evaluations that concern interventions or models promoted by AFD are particularly useful: AFD may wish to give greater visibility to their lessons. In this context, an investment in specific communication tools is planned.

Lessons can be learned from both successes and failures. AFD recognises that communication focused exclusively on promoting successes loses its credibility and therefore its relevance. Consequently, the Evaluation Division ensures that a balanced and realistic message is produced and that evaluation results are communicated in accordance with the values set out in AFD Group's Professional Ethics Charter.

Video-based evaluations contribute to the evaluation process, but are mainly an information and training tool. They can also be used for communication purposes and AFD wishes to develop them.

The use of social networks to disseminate evaluation work, and thus contribute to knowledge sharing and the debate on development assistance issues, is an avenue that may be further explored with support from the Communication Division and the DAC EVALNET network.

More generally, the Communication Division is more involved in the evaluation process in order to design communication methods for evaluation work right from the terms of reference stage, and to more effectively include the communication aspect in the evaluation activity. This communication targets as much the operational departments as the outside.

4

Work conducted in collaboration with our external

4

Work conducted in collaboration with our external partners

AFD promotes and develops collaboration and exchanges on evaluation with its external partners.

While capacity building in this field is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AFD's evaluations are nevertheless conducted to ensure they can, as far as possible, contribute to building the evaluation skills of local stakeholders. Decentralised project evaluations mainly use local consultants with the aim of building local evaluation skills. AFD's training centre, CEFEB, proposes an "evaluation" module in its Master's in Public and Private Project Ownership.

The Evaluation Division also plays a support-advisory role for the evaluation entities of its key partners who are striving to improve their own evaluation practices.

In addition, the Evaluation Division maintains sustained relations with the evaluation units of other donors. At European level, it actively contributes to convergence efforts for the evaluation practices of EIB and KfW under the "Mutual Reliance Initiative".

Finally, the Evaluation Division supports and actively participates in the networks of evaluation managers and practitioners: OECD-DAC EVALNET, NONIE and the African Impact Evaluation Network, at international level, and at national level, SFE, of which it is a member, and the F3E (Fund for the promotion of preliminary studies, transversal studies, and evaluations) collective, which targets NGOs and local authorities involved in international solidarity activities.

JOINT EVALUATIONS

For AFD, a joint evaluation is an evaluation conducted jointly with other donors. Evaluations involving beneficiaries are referred to as partnership evaluations.

AFD subscribes to the DAC⁶ principles on joint evaluations: *"Joint donor evaluations should be promoted in order to improve the understanding of each others' procedures and approaches and to reduce the administrative burden on recipients"*. This approach is all the more necessary because an increasing proportion of AFD's financing is implemented using common arrangements, in application of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. AFD also follows the "DAC Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations", published in 2006.

The joint evaluations in which AFD participates concern projects and programmes cofinanced with other donors for which it is not possible to isolate AFD's contribution

to achieving development objectives. They also target cofinanced projects and programmes for which the objectives are genuinely shared between donors in order to facilitate agreement on the goal and scope of the evaluation and evaluative questions. In order to encourage joint evaluations, AFD communicates its evaluation programme to the EVALNET network. When conducting an evaluation, it systematically verifies whether it is not more appropriate to conduct joint work with other donors.

AFD's positioning in joint evaluations can vary from case to case. AFD can lead the evaluation, or it can largely delegate the management and conducting of the evaluation to another donor. However, AFD wishes to participate in the joint evaluation management committee as often as possible, as it considers these joint exercises as a way of learning about evaluation approaches and methods.

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⁶ DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance (1991).

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AFD, with its two partners under the Mutual Reliance Initiative, KfW and EIB, aims to go as far as a real division of labour for the *ex post* evaluation of cofinanced projects.

AFD can also participate in joint evaluations with other countries, alongside the evaluation units of its supervisory ministries. This is the case for evaluations with a broad scope conducted at European or international level, such as the

Paris Declaration evaluation or country evaluations.

For AFD, joint evaluations have the same status as other evaluations and are disseminated in a similar manner: publication in the "Joint Evaluations" series, publication on AFD's institutional website, and translation into French of the summary of the report when it is written in another language.

5

Organisation and resources

Organisation and resources

5.1 | Governance of the evaluation

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors endorses AFD's evaluation policy and deliberates on the evaluation activity at least once a year. It examines the report submitted to it by the chairman of the Evaluation Committee on the quality and relevance of the evaluation work conducted by AFD.

Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee was set up in October 2009 by decision of the Board of Directors in order to *"support AFD in the fulfilment of its mission to be accountable and to evaluate its actions in a credible, independent and transparent manner"*. The Committee advises AFD on its evaluation policy and methods. It comprises heads of evaluation services from AFD's supervisory ministries and independent persons, who are appointed by the Board of Directors. The Committee is chaired by a qualified person, who is also appointed by the Board of Directors.

Senior management

Senior management confirmed its commitment to strengthen AFD's evaluation mechanism in POS3. It regularly takes part in the work of the Evaluation Committee and is attentive to its opinions. AFD's senior management approves the evaluation

programme once the Evaluation Committee has issued its opinion. The establishment of a mechanism to monitor recommendations also strengthens senior management's involvement in the evaluation process. Indeed, this mechanism introduces a response on its part to the conclusions of certain important evaluations, as well as a commitment to implement the resulting recommendations. This involvement reinforces the legitimacy and use of evaluations.

Evaluation and Capitalisation Division

The Evaluation Division has a mandate to prepare the evaluation programme, conduct or supervise the evaluations carried out by AFD, control their quality, encourage their use and, more generally, promote the culture of evaluation at AFD. It ensures that AFD has appropriate methodologies to evaluate its interventions. It participates in AFD's research activity applied to the analysis of the processes and results of development activities.

The Evaluation Division has been part of the Research Department since 2006, which gives it a high level of autonomy, contributes to mobilising expertise in sociology, statistics and economics for evaluation work and facilitates access to AFD's publication services.

The head of the Evaluation Division is appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of AFD.

5.2 | Human and financial resources

Human resources devoted to evaluation

AFD's human resources policy supports the objectives of the evaluation policy set out in this document.

The Evaluation Division currently has 10 officers to carry out the tasks assigned to it. This staff, while slightly lower in number than in other development assistance agencies (15 people on average according

to a survey conducted by OECD-DAC in 2009), will be stabilised in the coming years to allow AFD to produce between 12 and 15 evaluations a year and supervise about fifty decentralised project evaluations. Given the issues involved in assessing AFD's environmental performance in the evaluation activity, the division will continue to have a highly qualified environment and biodiversity expert in its team.

Human resources management efforts will focus on capacity building. Indeed, although evaluations are generally outsourced, AFD must ensure that it maintains a strong in-house capacity in order to be in a position to design and manage complex evaluations, guarantee the quality of the reports produced by the external evaluators and promote the in-house use of evaluations. This requirement is even greater for impact evaluations. This objective to maintain a high level of expertise is also likely to give the Evaluation Division a certain level of attractiveness.

To achieve this, AFD intends to:

- Maintain a balance in the Evaluation Division between officers with two complementary profiles: (i) operational experience gained as project managers in a technical division and (ii) expertise in evaluation using social science methods (economics, sociology, anthropology...). The "competency framework", which is currently being prepared, will facilitate the definition of the core competencies required for evaluation. The Evaluation Division's job descriptions may, in addition, specify the type of experience required, the skills required in terms of tools and methodologies, and the essential theoretical and academic knowledge. This balance will eventually involve establishing parity between in-house and external recruitments in the Evaluation Division;
- Launch a multi-year training programme for the Evaluation Division's evaluators based on evaluation methodologies and practices.

The vast amount of work conducted with the other donors also makes the Evaluation Division a good candidate for staff exchange programmes with other donors.

In order to contribute to the development of the culture of evaluation at AFD, the Human Resources

Department intends to:

- Add new modules to the training plan starting in 2013: "Results-based Project Management", "Ex Post Evaluation", "Decentralised Project Evaluation", "Accountability and Transparency";
- Implement, under the human resources management policy, a kind of evaluation reference system in the different entities of the Operations Department and NGO Partnerships Division.

Budget

The implementation of the evaluation policy set out in this document requires a significant budgetary effort on the part of AFD and its supervisory authorities. It currently stands at some EUR 1.5m a year for expenditure directly related to evaluations in the form of service provision and research partnerships (excluding staff costs).

Decentralised project evaluations and the evaluations of financing allocated to NGOs by the NGO Partnerships Division are financed with credit from the 209 programme "Solidarity Towards Developing Countries" in the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The annual report on evaluation activities, presented to the Evaluation Committee and submitted to the supervisory ministries, accounts for the use of resources earmarked by AFD for project evaluations.

The other evaluations are financed from AFD's general budget. These resources are mixed within the budget of the Research Department to which the Evaluation Division is attached. However, they are subject to a separate supervision, which makes it possible to account for the budgetary resources AFD earmarks for the evaluation activity. This information is also included in the annual report on evaluation activities.

6

Appendix

- ▶ Analytical review: Examination of the performance of an intervention, generally concerning its operational aspects.
- ▶ Effectiveness: Evaluation criterion that assesses the extent to which the expected results have actually been achieved.
- ▶ Efficiency: Evaluation criterion that assesses the extent to which the results are obtained at “reasonable” costs.
- ▶ Formative evaluation: Evaluation intended to improve the performance of the intervention. A formative evaluation can concern both completed and ongoing interventions.
- ▶ General objectives (goals): Expected changes to which the intervention must contribute. They generally justify the intervention.
- ▶ Impact: Positive and negative effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, according to the DAC definition.
- ▶ Impact evaluation: Rigorous evaluation which can identify effects that can be strictly attributed to the intervention by the means of an explicit counterfactual.
- ▶ Intervention: Action conducted or supported by AFD in order to bring about a change.
- ▶ Outcomes: Goods or services produced by the intervention and made available to the beneficiaries.
- ▶ Relevance: Evaluation criterion indicating to what extent the objectives of the intervention are consistent with the problem or issues identified. Relevance can, by extension, include the notion of consistency: extent to which the objective of the intervention is part of a broader strategic framework.
- ▶ Results: Changes generally brought about in the situation or conduct of beneficiaries and directly produced by the intervention.
- ▶ Specific objectives: Changes desired in the situation or conduct of beneficiaries or in their development. These changes are objectively verifiable and project outcomes are the main reason for them.
- ▶ Sustainability: Extent to which the results achieved continue once the intervention has been completed.
- ▶ Systematic review: Literature review focused on a research issue which gathers, selects and summarises all research and evaluation work conducted on this issue.
- ▶ Theory of action: Representation of the way in which an intervention is likely to produce effects (results and impacts), given the underlying assumptions.

Objectives	<p>Clearly defined, quantitatively and qualitatively</p> <p>Specific objectives (expected results) and clearly identified expected outcomes, quantified as far as possible, with target values.</p>
Indicators	<p>Clear, unequivocal and directly related to the different levels of objectives</p> <p>Initial value and target value given for each result indicator</p> <p>Availability, reliability, methods and frequency of collection of information required for the monitoring of the indicators defined and required resources provided for in the budget</p>
Supervision	<p>Supervision mechanism described</p> <p>Observed value of results indicators systematically compared to the initial value, to previous changes and to the objective that is set</p>

Charter of the French Evaluation Society (SFE)

Pluralism

Evaluation is part of the three-fold logic of public management, democracy and scientific debate. It considers, in a balanced manner, the different interests at stake and collects the diverse points of view relevant to the evaluated action of stakeholders, experts and any other person concerned.

This recognition of multiple viewpoints is effected, wherever possible, by involving the various stakeholders concerned by the public action, or by any other appropriate means.

Independence

Evaluation is carried out impartially. Evaluation professionals inform the other partners of any possible conflict of interests.

The evaluation process is carried out independently of programme management and decision-making processes. This independence serves to safeguard the public decision-makers' freedom of choice.

Competence

Those who participate in the evaluation process in a professional capacity use specific skills in designing

and conducting the evaluation, the quality of the order, data collection methods and the interpretation of results. They seek to improve and update their skills, particularly those used by the international evaluation community.

Respecting the integrity of individuals

Those who participate in the evaluation process in a professional capacity respect the rights, integrity and safety of all parties concerned.

They shall not disclose the sources of any information or opinions collected without the agreement of the persons concerned.

Transparency

Presentations of evaluation findings should be accompanied by a clear description of the object of the evaluation, its purpose, its intended audience, the questions asked, the methods used and their limitations, and the arguments and criteria which led to these findings.

The findings of evaluations should be made public. Decisions on how the findings will be disseminated are taken at the beginning of an evaluation. The integrity of findings should be respected, irrespective of the format and methods of dissemination.

Opportuneness

The decision to conduct an evaluation must be taken when it is likely to – and organised in order to – produce results with regard to the objectives mentioned in the preamble of this charter: democratic report, effectiveness of the expenditure, organisational learning, facilitation of subsequent evaluations.

Responsibility

At the beginning of an evaluation, decisions as to the allocation of responsibilities between the different actors involved are made in such a way that clear responsibility is assigned for each function in the evaluation (definition of the brief, management process, research and analysis, formulating findings and recommendations, dissemination of findings).

Persons and institutions involved in the evaluation process should make available appropriate resources and the information required to carry out the evaluation.

They are jointly responsible for properly implementing the guiding principles set out in the present charter.

Evaluation quality criteria

The objectives of the intervention are consistent and evaluable. The evaluation concerns an intervention for which the intervention logic can be interpreted.

The terms of reference for the evaluation are well defined. They describe, in sufficient detail, the objective of the evaluation (for whom and why the evaluation is conducted and why at this point in time), the background information, the scope and approach defined and the objectives of the evaluation. They include a limited number of evaluative questions and give indications on the evaluation methods to use. They specify the judgment criteria and analyses that must be conducted. They comprise a description of the expected deliverables and provide elements on the budget earmarked for the evaluation, including the budget earmarked for the feedback on the results. The terms of reference describe the governance of the evaluation.

The governance of the evaluation is stated right from the start of the evaluation. The responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the evaluation are described in sufficient detail. The composition and role of the reference group are known at the time of the launch of the evaluation.

The selection procedure for the team of evaluators is transparent. The procedure must facilitate the

submission of high quality bids. It complies with AFD's procurement procedures. The negotiated procedure is only used on an exceptional basis.

The team of evaluators selected combines the required evaluation skills, a good level of technical expertise in the type of intervention evaluated and good organisational skills.

The dialogue with stakeholders in the evaluated intervention is effective throughout the process. Beneficiaries' points of view are properly taken into account.

The report produced responds to the requests for information made by the ordering party and corresponds to the terms of reference.

The scope of the evaluation is relevant to the questions of the intervention and type of intervention. It covers the evaluated intervention in a satisfactory manner in order to allow a judgment on its relevance, effectiveness and impacts.

The evaluation method used is justified. It is properly implemented in order to provide all the findings that will serve to answer the main questions of the evaluation. The methodological limitations are described.

The data collected are appropriate

and reliable. They are qualitative or quantitative. When there is insufficient data, the report explains the weaknesses and limitations of using such data.

The findings follow on logically from the analysis of data, interpretations based on assumptions and a carefully presented logic. The cause-effect relationships are described.

The conclusions are unbiased and credible. They follow on logically from the findings; they are based on judgment criteria defined in the terms of reference; they are balanced and equitable *vis-à-vis* all the stakeholders involved in the evaluated intervention; they are prioritised according to their importance and classified according to their level of reliability; they are shared by the various stakeholders.

The recommendations follow on from the conclusions. They are in order of priority and classified by stakeholder.

The evaluation report is clear and concise. It provides a summary of the evaluation and must be readable independently of the appendix. It includes a short 4-page summary.

The results of the evaluation are disseminated in an effective and appropriate manner (feedback, publications...).

How AFD takes account of the results of evaluations led by the Evaluation Division

Evaluation feedback process									
	Stages of the evaluation	Stakeholders	Actions						
<p>Recurrence of evaluations on certain topics</p>	1	Programming	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>EVA</td> <td>Conducts the process, makes suggestions, ensures the programming is consistent with the objectives of the evaluation policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Operational departments</td> <td>Are consulted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evaluation Committee</td> <td>Gives an opinion on the programme's relevance and feasibility</td> </tr> </table>	EVA	Conducts the process, makes suggestions, ensures the programming is consistent with the objectives of the evaluation policy	Operational departments	Are consulted	Evaluation Committee	Gives an opinion on the programme's relevance and feasibility
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	Evaluation Committee	Gives an opinion on the programme's relevance and feasibility							
	2	Preparation of the evaluation	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>EVA</td> <td>Drafts the terms of reference, selects the consultant</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reference group (in which operational departments are involved)</td> <td>Is consulted</td> </tr> </table>	EVA	Drafts the terms of reference, selects the consultant	Reference group (in which operational departments are involved)	Is consulted		
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	Reference group (in which operational departments are involved)	Is consulted							
	3	Conducting of evaluation up to conclusions	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>EVA</td> <td>Manages the external consultant</td> </tr> <tr> <td>External consultant</td> <td>Conducts the evaluation in accordance with the terms of reference</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reference Group</td> <td>Is consulted on the deliverables</td> </tr> </table>	EVA	Manages the external consultant	External consultant	Conducts the evaluation in accordance with the terms of reference	Reference Group	Is consulted on the deliverables
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4	Evaluation quality rating	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>EVA</td> <td>Conducts quality rating</td> </tr> </table>	EVA	Conducts quality rating					
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5	Management response on conclusions	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Operational departments or COMEX depending on the level of decision required</td> <td>Formalise their position in relation to the conclusions of the evaluation</td> </tr> </table>	Operational departments or COMEX depending on the level of decision required	Formalise their position in relation to the conclusions of the evaluation					
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6	Formulation of recommendations, control of their quality and commitment to apply them	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>External consultant</td> <td>Organises and leads workshop</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Operational departments</td> <td>Participate in the formulation of recommendations based on the conclusions of the evaluation and undertake to apply them</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EVA</td> <td>Verifies that the recommendations are consistent with the conclusions</td> </tr> </table>	External consultant	Organises and leads workshop	Operational departments	Participate in the formulation of recommendations based on the conclusions of the evaluation and undertake to apply them	EVA	Verifies that the recommendations are consistent with the conclusions	
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7	Monitoring of application of recommendations	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>DOE</td> <td>Will monitor recommendations</td> </tr> </table>	DOE	Will monitor recommendations					
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8	Consideration of lessons learned from evaluations	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Operational departments</td> <td>Consult and take account of the lessons learned from previous evaluations in the context of project design and intervention frameworks</td> </tr> </table>	Operational departments	Consult and take account of the lessons learned from previous evaluations in the context of project design and intervention frameworks					
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Links to OECD-DAC documents referred to in the document

OECD-DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management:

<http://www.evaluationpolicydocument.org/development/peer-reviews/2754804.pdf>

Evaluating Development Cooperation: Summary of Key Norms and Standards, 2nd edition:

<http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/41612905.pdf>

Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations, collection DAC Evaluation

<http://www.evaluationpolicydocument.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/37681798.pdf>

Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, DAC Guidelines and References

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

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