

# Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Policy



GOBIERNO  
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO  
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES  
Y DE COOPERACIÓN

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO  
DE COOPERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL  
Y PARA IBEROAMÉRICA

SECRETARÍA GENERAL DE COOPERACIÓN  
INTERNACIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO



cooperación  
española

Spanish Cooperation  
**Evaluation Policy**

Edición: Noviembre 2013  
© Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, 2013  
Secretaría de Estado de Cooperación Internacional y para Iberoamérica  
Secretaría General de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo

NIPO: 502-13-026-6

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

A AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AEVAL	National Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services
AGE	General State Administration of Spain
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CCAA	Autonomous Communities [regional administrations] of Spain
CICD	Interterritorial Commission for Development Cooperation
CIPCD	Interministerial Committee for Development Cooperation
CRUE	Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCC	Development Cooperation Council
DEEEP	Development Education Exchange in Europe Programme
DEGCO	Division of Development Policy Evaluation and Knowledge Management
DGPOLDE	Directorate General for Development Policy Planning and Evaluation (eliminated in 2011)
EELL	Local Administrations of Spain
FCAS	Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation
FEMP	Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces
FONPRODE	Development Promotion Fund
GENE	Global Education Network Europe
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GID	Gender in Development
GTEC	Working Group on Effectiveness and Quality
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network
HRBA	Human-Rights Based Approach
MAEC	Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation



MAE	Strategic Association Framework
MAP	Country Association Framework
MDO	Multilateral Development Organisation
MfDR	Management for Development Results
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SECIPI	State Secretariat for International Cooperation and for Ibero-America
SGCID	General Secretariat for International Cooperation for Development
UN	United Nations

# Presentation



Evaluation should be a major element in any public policy as it is essential to promote learning and continuous improvement and to drive change and accountability. Spanish Cooperation has made significant progress in this direction, but we still have much to do to strengthen the evaluation process, providing it with the tools to enable us to meet the needs of our cooperation system and be on par with neighbouring countries.

In response to this challenge, the 4<sup>th</sup> Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation (2013-2016) advocates a more selective, strategic approach to evaluation so as to optimise available resources and increase the use of conclusions and recommendations. To this end, its measures include establishing the need to revise and update the Evaluation Policy of Spanish Cooperation through a participatory process.

The response to that mandate has consisted of consideration of such initiatives as: a series of consultations with various specialists; a literature review; a comparative analysis of other donors' evaluation policies; a study on the state of evaluation in decentralised cooperation; the holding of the Conference on Evaluation and Development Cooperation on 10-11 December, 2012, which included a workshop on a first draft of the Policy; a consultative process with different actors of Spanish Cooperation; the creation of a website through which comments and suggestions have been received; and the presentation of the Policy to the Development Cooperation Council.

As a consequence of this process, and by virtue of the powers conferred on the State Secretariat for International Cooperation and Ibero-America (SECIPI), the senior body which is directly responsible for the evaluation of development cooperation policy and for the cooperation interventions financed with state funds, as well as for the accountability of Spanish Cooperation's activities and results to Parliament and Spanish society, I am pleased to approve this paper on the Evaluation Policy of Spanish Cooperation.

It is essential for all the actors of our cooperation system to participate in order to ensure that this is a living document which will have a satisfactory impact. Therefore, I encourage Spanish Cooperation as a whole to join in this task.

Jesús Gracia Aldaz  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION  
AND FOR IBERO-AMERICA





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Evaluation is at the heart of the General Secretariat for International Development Cooperation's efforts to more effectively and more efficiently meet the ultimate purpose of Spanish Cooperation: contributing to human development, reducing poverty, and achieving the full exercise of rights.

In the framework of the 4<sup>th</sup> Master Plan—which is committed to redesigning our cooperation, steering it more clearly towards development results, and promoting greater transparency and accountability—it was imperative to revise the 2007 Evaluation Policy.

On the one hand, as reflected in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, development scenarios are becoming increasingly complex, involving a growing number of stakeholders. Therefore, it is essential to work on the basis of shared principles that include issues such as: leadership and ownership of development strategies by the countries receiving assistance; a results-based approach; the creation of inclusive partnerships for development; and increased transparency and shared responsibility, which means strengthening mutual accountability. Although evaluation is facing important challenges in responding to these issues, it has much to contribute.

On the other hand, especially in a situation like the current one, evaluation should provide feedback for decision-making and enable greater transparency and accountability, bearing in mind different audiences and interests. For this reason, even though evaluation is not the only source of knowledge and learning, Spanish Cooperation needs to strengthen its evaluation process to generate sound information enabling us to assess whether we are doing the right thing, whether we are doing it well, and if it would be possible to do it better.

Even though many challenges still lie ahead, this updated version of the Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Policy should be seen as an important step towards achieving better and more useful evaluations and, ultimately, towards improving our cooperation. Increasing the effectiveness and quality of our work, reflecting critically on what we do, drawing and sharing lessons learned, and adequately communicating our results are not only firm commitments, but also a response to the demands of Spanish society, of the societies in our partner countries, and of the entire international development community.

Gonzalo Robles Orozco  
SECRETARY-GENERAL  
FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION

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# Introduction



## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background

1. The approval of the International Development Cooperation Act 23/1998, of 7 July, provided a significant boost to the evaluation process in the Spanish Cooperation system. That year, the first Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Methodology was published. It was revised in 2001.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Master Plan (2005-2008) recognised the importance of evaluation in improving aid quality and expressed the need to strengthen Spanish Cooperation's evaluation system. Based on these premises, and in the light of international consensus like the Rome, Marrakech and Paris Declarations, the Directorate General for Development Policy Planning and Evaluation (DGPOLDE), which at that time was responsible for evaluating development cooperation in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC), published in 2007 two reference papers for the system as a whole: the Evaluation Policy and the Manual for the Management of the Evaluations of Spanish Cooperation.
3. The first express formulation of this Evaluation Policy made reference to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Division of the DGPOLDE; accepted the definition of evaluation and the five evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC); established the aims and guiding principles of evaluation in our system; and identified the central elements of the evaluation cycle, which were set out in greater detail in the Manual.
4. This period saw the approval of Order AEC/1303/2005, of 27 April, which regulated the requirements for the awarding of grants to Non-Governmental Development Organisations (NGDO), so as to carry out interventions in international development cooperation. This Order, which established the obligatory nature of performing evaluations depending on the type and cost of the interventions, resulted in a notable increase in the number of evaluations administered by NGDOs.
5. In addition, Decentralised Cooperation made progress in integrating evaluation into the regulations on development cooperation, into the management cycle of interventions and, to a lesser extent, into the different administrative structures. All this contributed to a significant increase in the evaluations conducted in our system.
6. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Master Plan (2009-2012) strongly advocated further progress in promoting the culture of evaluation, with the dual purpose of supporting the consolidation of a knowledge management system which contributes to the continuous improvement in the effectiveness and quality of our cooperation and of facilitating greater transparency and accountability. While it was in force, some actors in our system made significant progress in evaluation.
7. However, despite the sizeable increase in the number of evaluations in recent years, they have not been used enough to provide feedback for decision-making and to take advantage of the knowledge generated. As indicated by the 2011 DAC Peer Review by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Spanish Cooperation should be more strategic when deciding what to evaluate and how to learn from the results of evaluations.
8. With this in mind, and taking into account the recommendations with regard to Intermediate Evaluation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Master Plan, in 2012 the General Secretariat for International Cooperation for Development (SGCID) promoted a review which led to identification of some of the internal factors that have limited the consolidation of evaluation within our cooperation system:
  - While Spanish Official Development Assistance (ODA) was in the midst of a growth cycle, political leadership and management focussed on planning and implementation, whereas monitoring and evaluation were afforded secondary status.
  - The multiplicity of actors enriches the perspectives and sensitivities of Spanish Cooperation, but it requires extra effort in coordination, articulation, role clarification, capacity building and creation of incentives for joint work, and also in the field of evaluation.
  - Moreover, the dispersal of available resources and the weakness of evaluation units have hindered the consolidation of an organisational and institutional structure for the evaluation



process commensurate with the size and needs of Spanish Cooperation.

- Despite efforts to articulate the selection of strategic evaluations through Annual Plans of International Cooperation, it has been difficult to generate an overview and to match the products of evaluations with the timeframes and requirements of decision-making. The result is a large body of evaluation reports, but one which is highly fragmented in terms of its scope, quality and usefulness.
  - Although the final reports for the evaluations managed by the Evaluation Division are available on the MAEC website, fragmentation in evaluation planning and practice has been partnered by a scant, piecemeal dissemination of findings, which impact negatively both on transparency and accountability and on the possibilities of feedback, learning and improvement.
  - Finally, the failure of the mechanisms aimed at ensuring the quality of evaluation processes and monitoring the recommendations formulated acts to the detriment of the credibility and professionalism of evaluation practice, with the consequent risk of creating vicious circles.
9. Therefore, and in response to the mandate contained in the 4<sup>th</sup> Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation, this Evaluation Policy is a guide for action which establishes a set of guidelines based on four pillars:
- Improved articulation of the evaluation process in the Spanish cooperation system as a whole.
  - Increased quality, credibility and usefulness of evaluations in order to promote learning and feedback.
  - Responding to the new challenges raised by the development agenda.
  - Enhancement of transparency and greater accountability.
10. From this perspective, this Evaluation Policy aims to:
- Clarify the institutional framework of the evaluation process and the roles and responsibilities in the area of evaluation within the SECIPI, and develop mechanisms which strengthen coordination, complementarity and joint work in the field of evaluation between the different actors of the Spanish cooperation system.
- Define how evaluation is understood in Spanish Cooperation and explain the functions evaluation performs in the management cycle of interventions and with regard to the cooperation system as a whole.
  - Formulate general principles, cross-cutting approaches and guidelines for action which serve to guide all the people and entities involved in the practice of evaluation of Spanish Cooperation.
  - Establish a common procedure and some general criteria for planning evaluations which, based on the information needs of the different actors, provide an overview and enable a more strategic prioritisation of evaluations.
  - Establish the implementation of systems for quality control and monitoring of evaluations.
  - Define mechanisms and guidelines for publishing, standardising and disseminating evaluation reports and other relevant documents, so as to centralise information, facilitate access to it, strengthen accountability and promote learning from the capitalisation of knowledge generated.
11. Given its orientational nature, which is based on establishing ways of doing more than on strategic planning of the implementation of specific activities, this paper is intended to be definitive, although it should be revised periodically to ensure that it remains useful and relevant.
12. Notwithstanding the above, the Policy's practical implementation will require the creation of additional complementary documents and the undertaking of specific actions. Therefore, this paper does not aim to provide a detailed account of everything involved in the design and management of evaluations, as well as in the implementation of all actions linked to the evaluation process. For this reason, the Policy should be contextualised in a broader framework,

which includes the 4<sup>th</sup> Master Plan itself, Biennial Evaluation Plans, the Manual for Management of Evaluations of Spanish Cooperation and the strategies, guidelines and action plans for evaluation created by the various actors.

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## 2. Context and challenges to which the Evaluation Policy responds

### Challenges presented by the current international situation and the development agenda

**13.** The growing complexity of scenarios and the increase in the number and variety of actors involved have led to a review of the theoretical concepts of development and a transformation in cooperation practices, which, in turn, involve new demands and challenges for evaluation:


- Epitomised by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011), the renewed articulation of partnership relations in the field of development affords a greater role to partner countries and this should translate into the strengthening and increased use of their own evaluation systems. It also supposes an increase in joint evaluations, which enables the information needs of the different partners to be incorporated and transaction costs to be reduced. At the same time, the need for mutual accountability means it is also necessary to expand the audience for these evaluations and adapt the transmission and dissemination of findings and recommendations to them.
- In turn, results-oriented development entails shifting the focus of attention from activities and products to the transformations which really take place and to medium and long-term impacts. This has meant seeking increasingly sophisticated planning and management models, whose implementation requires significant technical changes and adaptations

as well as those relating to organisational culture and decision-making.

- These transformations are also reflected in the increased complexity of aid instruments in which traditional projects and programmes possess increasingly less relative weight. At the same time, other types of modality and partnership are emerging and the importance of certain cross-cutting dimensions, such as gender, human rights and cultural diversity, is underlined. All this tends to increase the number of actors involved and enlarges and complicates the type of relationships between them.
- Finally, recognition of the multidimensionality of development and the acceptance of the relative weight of international aid within it entails the need to evaluate not only cooperation policies, but also the coherence of all the policies which impact on development processes.

### Theoretical and methodological challenges

- 14.** In this context of increasing complexity and continuous change, evaluation is challenged with ensuring the robustness of its procedures. For conclusions and recommendations to be valid, they should be solid and coherent in their findings and analyses. For them to also be useful, they should be sufficiently specific and respond to real information needs. In many cases, this response will require not only accounting for the level of achievement of certain results, but also interpreting, understanding and explaining how and why interventions work in practice in a certain way within a specific context.
- 15.** To address this challenge, it is necessary to opt for innovation and continuous learning; to implement a varied range of approaches, methods and techniques; to integrate cross-cutting dimensions properly; to possess multidisciplinary evaluation teams, capable of integrating expertise in highly diverse thematic areas; and to accept the limitations of each case honestly and explicitly. Ultimately, the more complex the interventions and the weaker the monitoring and information management systems, the greater the difficulty for evaluation to analyse the relationships between interventions and their effects and the greater the risk of



gaps occurring in the logical concatenation of different levels of analysis.

### **Ethical and political challenges**

**16.** The need to respond to the multiple interests and actors involved in development processes entails expanding their role in the management of evaluations while respecting their independence and credibility, which requires negotiation skills and a search for balance. Moreover, if it is assumed that an evaluation may contribute to the “empowerment” of certain groups, it needs

to be ensured that evaluation processes properly incorporate such approaches as human rights, gender and development, and cultural diversity from the very moment that they are conceived and designed.

**17.** Finally, the complexity of development processes makes it harder to establish unequivocal attribution relationships and find simple and practical evidence about what works or not in each context. This translates into an important challenge when it comes to accountability and the transfer of the appropriate messages to different audiences.

# Content



# 1. DEFINITION AND FUNCTIONS

## 1.1. Definition

18. Spanish Cooperation draws on the definition of development evaluation agreed in the DAC of the OECD<sup>1</sup> and adopts the work of the DAC Evaluation Network (EVALNET) as its principal benchmark for evaluation.
19. With this in mind, the 4th Master Plan of Spanish Cooperation 2013-2016 states:

Evaluation is a systematic and planned process of information gathering which aims to analyse, interpret and assess critically and objectively an intervention, policy or strategy of development cooperation, including its design, its implementation, its management structure and its results.

20. Acknowledging its specific nature, this Policy is also a reference framework for the evaluation of humanitarian action and development education. The evaluation of humanitarian action will take as its starting point the principal international consensus and be based on the DAC guidelines for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies and for Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility. Moreover, different approaches, methodologies and guides which have been widely agreed in international networks such as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) and in international communities of practice like the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN), will be used as a benchmark.
21. The evaluation of development education will include the four cornerstones of action:

awareness, education/training, research, and political impact and social mobilisation. Among other national and international benchmarks, the work of the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) and the Development Education Exchange in Europe Program (DEEEP) will be taken into account.

22. In all these areas, evaluation is not only a final phase in the management cycle. Rather, the evaluation approach should be integrated into all interventions from the moment they are conceived and designed so that where necessary this helps their evaluation to respond to their needs and rhythms and encourages effective feedback. This does not mean that all interventions need to be evaluated, but it does entail conceiving them in terms of evaluability<sup>2</sup> from the outset.
23. Moreover, evaluation does not replace monitoring systems or, by itself, fulfil all information needs. Therefore, it is essential for the identification and design phases of interventions to incorporate diagnoses which establish baselines and for tools which gather and standardise information to be created during implementation. Not only does this improve monitoring, but it also provides greater added value to evaluations and, by facilitating their implementation, optimises available resources.

## 1.2. Purposes

24. The evaluation process shares the ultimate aim of Spanish Cooperation of contributing to human development, poverty reduction and the full exercise of rights. Accordingly, evaluation is a means of generating learning which improves the effectiveness and quality of our cooperation system. Furthermore, evaluation helps to transform reality and provides elements for transparency and accountability.

<sup>1</sup> "The evaluation of development is a systematic and objective assessment of a development intervention which is in progress or already concluded, from its conception, its implementation and its results. In the context of development, evaluation is understood as the determination of the value or importance of an intervention of this type".

<sup>2</sup> The evaluation of evaluability involves assessing the reasonableness and possibility of carrying out an evaluation in terms of opportunity, availability of information, existing resources, associated costs, etc. Basically, it attempts to respond to the question "is it worth evaluating?" and, if the response is affirmative, of providing guidance as to how to perform that evaluation.



## Purposes of Evaluation



- 25.** Evaluation is a relevant element in the knowledge management system of Spanish Cooperation as it enables understanding and critical assessment of the elements and dimensions which comprise Spanish international development cooperation policy. This favours learning and the drawing of consistent and useful lessons, both about the evaluation targets themselves and their contexts. For this, the learning process should involve those people and organisations who are responsible for the management and administration of this policy, the set of actors who take part in its design and implementation, and those people and organisations to eventually receive Spanish Cooperation.
- 26.** Evaluation also plays a key role as a tool for generating evidence which can provide timely feedback for decision-making in the various levels and components of cooperation policy (strategic, programmatic, operational, organisational, etc.) and of the management cycle of interventions, thereby supporting the increase in quality and effectiveness of our cooperation system.
- 27.** Evaluation facilitates transparency and contributes to responsabilisation through accountability. To this end, it is necessary for evaluations to be balanced and rigorous.

Evaluation reports should be public and accessible and provide relevant information to explain the workings and results of development cooperation policy to the Spanish public and Spanish Cooperation partners.

- 28.** Evaluation contributes to social transformation, not only through the use of its products, but also as a catalysing process for changes at the personal, organisational and systemic levels. To favour this transformative potential, Spanish Cooperation will support capacity building for the different actors involved, promote their effective participation in the different phases of evaluation processes, and promote dialogue, critical reflection and the review of practices and assumptions.
- 29.** It should also be noted that, given the specific nature of its aim, evaluation in itself does not exhaust the potential of all these functions. That is why, although it shares some elements with other activities aimed at generating knowledge, accountability or improved management, evaluation differs from diagnosis, monitoring, standardisation and the observatory, research or audit.
- 30.** Notwithstanding the above, the evaluation process in the SECIPi will not be restricted to the management and implementation of evaluations and meta-evaluations<sup>3</sup>. It may also promote and carry out standardisation, research, diagnoses and other similar exercises which complement and enhance the scope of evaluations.

### 1.3. Methodological considerations

- 31.** Throughout its historical evolution, the field of evaluation has experienced changes in its theoretical approaches and methodologies of application, so that at particular times certain approaches have taken precedence over others.
- 32.** In the field of development cooperation, results-orientated management and the search for greater accountability are shifting the focus of attention increasingly towards the evaluation

<sup>3</sup> Meta-evaluation is systematic research aimed at issuing a judgement about the quality or merits of an evaluation. The evaluation therefore becomes the object of study for the meta-evaluation.

of results and impacts. Acknowledging the importance of understanding interventions comprehensively, the SGCID, in partnership with other actors, will promote capacity building and the incorporation of tools which improve analysis of these dimensions and strike the right balance among evaluation's different purposes.

**33.** To do so, the evaluation of Spanish Cooperation will draw on different theoretical and methodological approaches; it will consider the variety of existing types of evaluation; it will take advantage of the wide range of scientifically-accepted research techniques; and it will seek complementarity and triangulation between different methods and techniques. Methodological selection will

depend principally on the specific evaluation target, on the questions for which a response is required, and on the purposes to be achieved with it.

**34.** In the same vein, criteria are considered to be useful tools, but they are not essential to the evaluation exercise. Consequently, the criterion-oriented evaluation model is identified as one of those possible and, in any case, is not restricted to the set formulated by the DAC (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability). Rather, it should be guided by the characteristics of each intervention and the information needs of the different actors involved.

## 2. PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES

### 2.1. Principles

- 35.** Principles are an essential element of this Evaluation Policy. They are not mere generic approaches or desirable guidelines, but they form patterns of behaviour to achieve a proper guarantee of quality in compliance with the evaluation process. Therefore, their implementation is specified throughout the different sections of this Policy and they should permeate the management and execution of every evaluation of Spanish Cooperation.
- 36.** Taking the international regulatory instruments ratified by Spain as a reference, the consensus on development expressed in the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Alliance, the DAC Quality Standards, and the Professional Code of Ethics of Spain's National Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services (AEVAL), the evaluation of Spanish Cooperation will be governed by the following principles:

#### Independence

- 37.** Independence involves safeguarding the evaluation process within the system itself. To do so, the organic differentiation of the units responsible for evaluation should be guaranteed and the validation of evaluation reports should not depend on those directly responsible for the design, management or implementation of the interventions which are subject to evaluation. Those who comprise evaluation units and teams should be able to work freely and without interference and should not be pressured into changing their reports or ratings.

#### Impartiality

- 38.** Ensuring impartiality requires evaluation teams to be selected competitively, to possess the knowledge and experience necessary for carrying out the tasks entrusted to them, to be unbiased. In turn, members of the evaluation units and teams should give prior notice of potential conflicts of interest, provide all people and groups involved in evaluation processes with

respectful and non-discriminatory treatment and perform their duties with integrity and honesty.

#### Transparency

- 39.** Ensuring transparency of the evaluation process requires evaluation plans to be made public and evaluation teams to be recruited in accordance with clear, previously established criteria and procedures. In addition, the main products of evaluations should be accessible and disseminated to all interested parties through the appropriate means.
- 40.** During the evaluation process, respect for privacy and the proper treatment of personal data should be guaranteed. Measures will be tightened to avoid possible harm resulting from the identification of those involved in evaluations, especially in situations where there is conflict or risk to personal safety.

#### Credibility and usefulness

- 41.** For their results to be credible and acceptable to the different actors involved, evaluations should meet differing information needs, be carried out in a timely manner, and be performed in a systematic and methodologically robust way. Each phase should be undertaken in a clear and sufficiently reasoned manner so that findings and recommendations are well-founded.
- 42.** Evaluation teams will receive the appropriate cooperation and be guaranteed access to all the available information necessary for their work. The products of evaluations should acknowledge their own limitations, reflect the different views on the evaluation target and present a balanced picture of it, allowing identification of its achievements and strengths as well as its possible shortcomings and weaknesses. If there are major discrepancies, a record will be made of them in the final evaluation report.
- 43.** With the aim of improving the processes and products of the evaluation process, evaluation exercises will be subject to quality checks. Furthermore, the incorporation of the actors involved in evaluation governance structures will be encouraged in order to increase the

possibilities of ownership and use of the results. In addition, systems to monitor the measures taken will be established and findings and recommendations will be clearly, concisely and specifically communicated, using formats tailored to the different audiences.

### Efficiency

44. Available resources will be optimised in the planning, management and performing of evaluations. Reasonable balance will be ensured between the means required to carry them out and the expected use of their results.

### Participation and capacity building


45. Evaluation processes will provide Spanish Cooperation with the spaces and structures needed for key actors to participate properly, both in Spain and in partner countries.
46. Capacity building linked to the evaluation process will guide relations among the actors of the Spanish cooperation system and between Spanish Cooperation and its partners. The use of the evaluation systems of partner countries will be enhanced and support will be provided for the development of local capacities, both at the institutional level and through evaluation associations and networks.

### Coordination and complementarity

47. Information exchange, coordination, harmonisation and the search for complementarities will be promoted in the planning, management and development of evaluations, both among the actors of Spanish Cooperation and the international development community. The aim will be to reduce transaction costs and avoid duplication and promote a division of labour in accordance with respective comparative advantages. Provided that it is verified that the evaluation target, the context, the time and the resources available ensure the overall quality of processes, participation in joint evaluations will be encouraged, with the DAC Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations used as a benchmark.

## 2.2. Cross-cutting approaches

48. Spanish Cooperation will promote the mainstreaming of human rights, gender, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability into the evaluation process.
49. Mainstreaming is both a political process of social transformation and an instrumental technical procedure for improving evaluations and interventions. Therefore, the incorporation of cross-cutting approaches into the evaluation not only involves the assessment of interventions from different angles, but it should also permeate the evaluation process itself. In addition to helping to understand reality in all its complexity from the critical analysis of social relations, this reinforces the transformative potential of the evaluation in its contribution to human development. To this end, it is not enough to apply certain techniques or procedures; it is also necessary to develop specific capabilities and sensitivities to observe and understand reality in its multiple interpretations.
50. The integration of cross-cutting approaches should be considered in every evaluation and be present at every stage of the evaluation, from the very moment they are commissioned and designed through to their dissemination and use of results. While each approach needs to be treated differently, all share the need to understand the structural situations which lead to inequality and those which contribute to full human development. They also need to analyse the interventions evaluated and the reality they are intended to affect, to pay special attention to the processes, and to perform the evaluation by involving all groups, especially those who face situations of greater vulnerability, discrimination or exclusion.
51. Given the close interrelationship between these approaches, their simultaneous application presents a major methodological challenge and should be tailored and balanced according to the characteristics of the different contexts. To help them to integrate effectively into the evaluations of Spanish Cooperation, the Evaluation Division will consider the work of the DAC and other international forums and networks. In collaboration with other actors, the Evaluation Division will promote specialised training and the development of methodological guidelines and will ensure that all the evaluations in which



it participates incorporate these approaches. Below are some initial guidelines, although the list is not exhaustive.

### Human rights

**52.** An evaluation which is sensitive to the human rights-based approach (HRBA) explores the extent to which a specific intervention has helped to correct inequalities and discriminatory practices and transform the unfair distribution of powers which hinders progress in development (UN: 2006). Furthermore, the incorporation of the HRBA into evaluation involves promoting, respecting and ensuring the effective enjoyment of human rights by the whole population, taking into account the existing diversity and accepting that people are subjects of rights and should be treated as such.

### Gender

**53.** The incorporation of the gender and development approach (GAD) into evaluation involves analysing interventions in terms of their contribution to effective equality between men and women and focusing analysis on the different factors which promote equality or feed and reproduce gender discrimination in each particular context. As well as analysing the social structures and power relations between

men and women in a critical and differentiated manner, a gender-sensitive evaluation should incorporate into the evaluation process the diversity of voices and the visions of women, whose participation should be encouraged.

### Cultural diversity

**54.** The incorporation of this approach involves identifying the different cultural groups and understanding the context and the cultural categories of the intervention, together with adapting the evaluation process to the different contexts and to the characteristics of the actors involved in the evaluation.

### Environmental sustainability

**55.** Environmental sustainability will be mainstreamed into all evaluation processes regardless of whether specific environmental impact analysis is conducted, and notwithstanding the fact that evaluations may explicitly include sustainability criteria, understood in their different dimensions. This involves considering the environmental impact of different decisions and actions on the context in which interventions are introduced, as well as analysing how the satisfying of the present needs of certain groups or collectives affects the environment of others or the satisfying of future needs.

### 3. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS IN SPANISH COOPERATION

#### 3.1. Regulatory framework

- 56.** The Spanish cooperation system is characterised by its complexity. This is due to the presence of multiple actors and different administrative levels with responsibility for international development cooperation, including its evaluation.
- 57.** In the area of the General State Administration of Spain, the regulatory framework relating to the evaluation of Spanish Cooperation is generally covered by International Development Cooperation Act<sup>4</sup> 23/1998, of 7 July, and Royal Decree 342/2012, of 10 February, which establishes the basic organisational structure of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation<sup>5</sup>. In both cases, the SECIPI is given a mandate to evaluate Spanish development cooperation policy and state-funded operations, as well as the accountability to Parliament and Spanish society regarding the activities and results of Spanish Cooperation.
- 58.** There are also some specific provisions for certain instruments, as in the case of the Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation (FCAS)<sup>6</sup>; the Development Promotion Fund (FONPRODE)<sup>7</sup>; and the international cooperation grants to NGOs awarded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)<sup>8</sup>.
- 59.** With regard to consultative and coordinating bodies, both the International Development

Cooperation Act and its specific provisions include in their scope knowledge of the results of the evaluation of Spanish Cooperation. There is also express provision for the Development Cooperation Council (DCC) to be consulted during the creation of the FONPRODE<sup>9</sup> evaluation plan.

#### 3.2. Evaluation duties and responsibilities within the SECIPI

- 60.** The titular head of the SECIPI is responsible for the senior management of the evaluation process and, as such, formally approves the Evaluation Policy.
- 61.** The SGCID is responsible for assisting the SECIPI with the formulation, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of international development cooperation policy and coordination of cultural action abroad. Within this scope of authority, the titular head of the SGCID is responsible for creating the Evaluation Policy and approving Biennial Evaluation Plans and the Annual Evaluation Report.
- 62.** To maintain its independence from the units responsible for the planning and implementation of ODA, the Division of Development Policy Evaluation and Knowledge Management (DEGCO) reports directly to the titular head of the SGCID and is assigned with the duties granted to it by Royal Decree 342/2012, which include, among others, the following tasks:

<sup>4</sup> See Articles 15.3, 9.4, 21.3 and 24.2. on Act 23/1998.

<sup>5</sup> See Articles 9.1., 9.2d, 10.1, 10.2.k and 10.4 of RD 342/2012.

<sup>6</sup> See Article 1.b of Royal Decree 822 of 16 May 2008, which creates the Office of the Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation and Articles 5.2.d and 21 of Royal Decree 1460 of 28 September 2009 on the organisation and functioning of the Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation.

<sup>7</sup> See Article 11 of the Development Promotion Fund Act 36/2010, of 22 October, and Articles 14.2.j, 29, 31.c, 31.d, and 32c of Royal Decree 845/2011, of 17 June, which approves the Regulations of the Development Promotion Fund.

<sup>8</sup> See the 13th and 17th requirements of Order AEC/2909/2011, of 21 October, which establishes the requirements for the awarding of international development cooperation grants.

<sup>9</sup> See Royal Decree 2217/2004, of 26 November, on the competences, functions, composition and organisation of the Development Cooperation Council; Royal Decree 22/2000, of 14 January, which regulates the composition, competences, organisation and functions of the Interterritorial Commission for Development Cooperation; and Royal Decree 1412/2005, of 25 November, which regulates the Interministerial Committee for Development Cooperation.



DEGCOduties	Tasks
Programming, coordination and monitoring of the evaluation of strategies, instruments, interventions, programmes and projects of international cooperation	Programming of evaluations through the creation of Biennial Evaluation Plans.
	Management of evaluations in the sphere of competence of the SGCID, especially those relating to the Master Plan, to sectoral and cross-cutting strategies, to country programmes, to the MAP and the MAE. Participation in joint evaluations with other international donors.
	Monitoring and quality control of all evaluations promoted within the scope of the SECIPI and creation of the Annual Evaluation Report.
	Technical coordination between the SGCID and the rest of actors in the area of evaluation.
Issuing recommendations for the improvement of interventions, knowledge management and publication of evaluation reports	Permanent advice to Spanish Cooperation about evaluation, especially with regard to evaluations provided for in Biennial Plans.
	Publication of the final reports of MAEC-funded evaluations, centralisation of the information on evaluations published by other actors.
	Standardising and dissemination of lessons learned.
	Meta-evaluation of the evaluations of Spanish Cooperation.
Strengthening of the evaluation system of Spanish Cooperation and promoting the culture of evaluation	Creation of manuals, guides and methodological tools.
	Promotion of research and exchange of evaluation experiences.
	Training and capacity building in the area of evaluation for all the actors of Spanish Cooperation.
	Creation of incentives for the promotion of evaluation.
Strengthening of the evaluation system of Spanish Cooperation and promoting the culture of evaluation	Nexus between the Spanish cooperation system and international evaluation networks.

**63.** The AECID, which is attached to the MAEC through the SECIPI, aims to promote, manage and implement the public policies of international development cooperation, which are directed at combating poverty and achieving sustainable human development in developing countries. The AECID possesses an Evaluation Unit, which reports directly to the Agency Management.

**64.** To ensure complementarity and coherence, avoid duplication and coordinate efficient mechanisms for joint work, the AECID Evaluation Unit will work closely with the Evaluation Division, especially as regards:

- Coordination of proposals sent by the AECID for the creation of the Biennial Evaluation Plan.

- Monitoring and quality control of evaluations.
- Assessment, knowledge management and dissemination of evaluation reports.
- Capacity building and promotion of the culture of monitoring and evaluation.
- Participation in joint evaluations and in international evaluation networks.

**65.** Notwithstanding the possible creation of other coordination mechanisms, the Evaluation Subgroup created within the Working Group on Effectiveness and Quality (GTEC) will be the privileged space for the coordination of the work between the Evaluation Division and AECID.

### 3.3. Mechanisms of coordination, complementarity and joint work among the different actors of Spanish Cooperation

66. The large number of actors with evaluation duties in the Spanish cooperation system requires the mechanisms for information exchange, coordination and collaboration to be strengthened in order to generate complementarities and synergies and optimise the use of available resources.
67. With regard to the different areas of responsibility, this Evaluation Policy is based on the principle of cooperation between public administrations in terms of information access and participation and the best use of public resources. To this end, it provides general basic guidelines for the entire system and proposes channels and spaces of common information which give all individuals, groups and institutions an overview of areas like evaluation planning, the dissemination of final reports and other relevant documents, as well as knowledge management.
68. In order to implement this task, and to make progress through combined efforts in every dimensions of the evaluation process, it is essential to promote networking and strengthen the evaluation role of the consultative and coordinating bodies established by the International Cooperation Act.
69. To ensure the correct flow of information within the area of the General State Administration of Spain, the Interministerial Committee for Development Cooperation (CIPCD) will promote the establishing of a network of focal points in the different Ministerial Departments to function under the leadership and coordination of the SGCID.
70. Given the importance and relative weight within Spanish ODA as a whole of external debt, investment debt conversion programmes, and Spain's contributions to multidonor funds, multilateral funds and international financial institutions, proper coordination between the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and the SGCID in managing evaluations relating to these areas must be ensured.
71. The SGCID will also foster a close relationship between Spanish Cooperation and the National Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services (AEVAL)<sup>10</sup>, in accordance with the provisions of the latter's Statute. This will cover especially the area of assessment, fostering the culture of evaluation and promoting research, training, the dissemination of experiences and the creation of studies and publications.
72. Besides being important actors in the Spanish cooperation system, universities and research centres also play a significant role in specialised training and evaluation-related research, both in Spain and in its relationship with partner countries. The SGCID will work closely with the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) to promote these actions jointly.
73. Most Autonomous Communities and some Local Administrations in Spain have developed their own regulatory and institutional framework for evaluating their development cooperation. To avoid fragmentation and to capitalise on the experience gained in the field of Decentralised Cooperation, the creation of a network of focal points which includes the General State Administration, the Autonomous Communities and Cities and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) will be promoted through the Interterritorial Committee for Development Cooperation (CICD).
74. Civil society organisations, especially NGOs, are among the actors to have performed the most evaluations in recent years and they have played an important role in promoting the culture of evaluation. Moreover, progress is needed in evaluating the private sector's contribution to development. The Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation, which is part of the Development Cooperation Council, will facilitate dialogue, the exchange of information and joint evaluation

<sup>10</sup> According to Article 1.2. of the AEVAL Statute, contained in Royal Decree 1418/2006 of 1 December, the aim of the National Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services is the promotion and performing of evaluations of public policies whose management corresponds to the General State Administration of Spain (...).

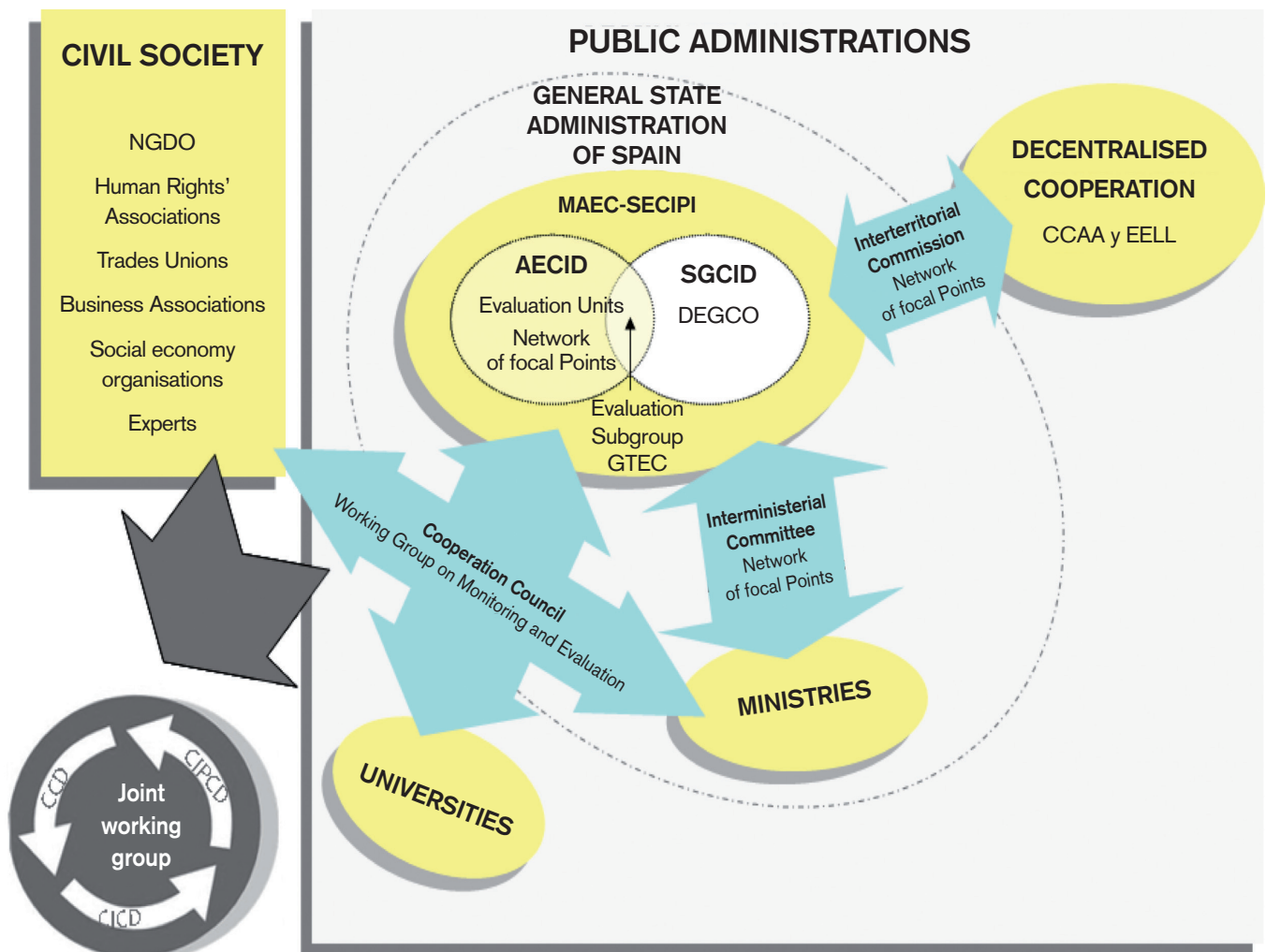


work among NGOs, business associations, social economy organisations, trades unions, human rights associations, universities and the General State Administration of Spain, and will enrich its work with input from evaluation experts.

- 75. To draw these diverse actors and relationships together into a single common meeting space, the SGCID will promote the creation of a Joint Working Group comprising representatives of the three consultation and coordination bodies of Spanish Cooperation.
- 76. It is necessary to keep strengthening the capabilities of our system's evaluation process and

to generate incentives which help to consolidate the culture of evaluation, understood as all the knowledge, values and habits widely assumed to promote and enhance the development of evaluations and the use of their results. To this end, in coordination with the other actors, the SGCID will promote confidence-building measures which recognise endeavour in evaluation positively; it will promote joint evaluations; it will stimulate the involvement of other actors in developing the Evaluation Policy; it will foster partnerships to promote research, training and permanent updating in the area of evaluation; and, as far as possible, it will provide the system as a whole with assessment and support the evaluation work of other actors.

### COORDINATION OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS IN SPANISH COOPERATION



## 4. EVALUATION PLANNING

**77.** The SGCID will create a Biennial Evaluation Plan in order to ensure more strategic planning of the evaluations promoted in the area of the SECIP, to facilitate unified access to the evaluation forecasts of the actors of Spanish Cooperation, to foster complementarity and teamwork, and to optimise available resources.

### 4.1. Content of the Biennial Evaluation Plan

**78.** The Biennial Evaluation Plan will include the general evaluations intended for implementation or commencement in the area of the SECIP while the Plan is in force; joint evaluations in which the SGCID or the AECID participate with other actors; and the evaluations which form part of the evaluation plans of FONPRODE, the FCAS, the open calls for grants to NGOs by the AECID and any others whose regulations establish specific planning.

**79.** While the essential content of the Biennial Plan comprises evaluations carried out in the area of the SECIP, the SGCID will actively encourage the integration into the Biennial Plan of evaluations of Spanish ODA planned by other actors. These will be included in a specific annex.

### Criteria for prioritisation of general evaluations

**80.** The incorporation of general evaluations into the Biennial Plan will respond to two criteria.

**81.** From the viewpoint of coverage, in order to avoid bias and progressively encompass all the actions of Spanish Cooperation, the creation of the Plan will take the following parameters into account:

- Type of evaluation target: this will include a balanced representation of the different types of strategic documents, organisational and management procedures, and the interventions of Spanish Cooperation.
- Geographical distribution: the aim will be for a balanced representation in terms of

the regions and sub-regions prioritised by Spanish Cooperation and of the characteristics of the partner countries involved in the evaluations.

- Content of interventions: the aim will be for a balanced representation of content and sectoral areas according to the strategic approaches defined in the 4<sup>th</sup> Master Plan.
- Variety of modalities and instruments: this will include a balanced representation of the different modalities and instruments through which Spanish Cooperation operates.
- Type of evaluations: the aim will be for the different types of evaluations to be represented.

**82.** From the viewpoint of usefulness and system feedback, priority will be given to the evaluations which respond to the following characteristics:

- Potential to generate timely and meaningful information to fill gaps in knowledge, to feed decision-making or to contribute to accountability, whether at political, strategic or operational.
- Response to prior commitments or the opportunity for evaluation to generate complementarities, strengthen capacities or reduce transaction costs, both within Spanish Cooperation and in the relationship with partner countries and other donors.
- Relevance of the intervention in terms of its timeframe, its level of financing, its geographical scope or its strategic nature for the actors involved.
- The innovative or piloting nature of the intervention and the potential for expansion or replication in other contexts.
- Existence of risks or uncertainties linked to the intervention.
- Absence or shortage of alternative sources of information about the intervention.
- Viability and cost/results ratio of the evaluation exercise.

## 4.2. Procedure for creating the Biennial Evaluation Plan

- 83.** In the final quarter of even-numbered years, the SGCID will notify the AECID and the rest of the actors of Spanish Cooperation of the commencement of the Plan creation process, attaching appropriate guidance in order to elicit their proposals. These proposals for evaluations should include a concise justification based on the criteria defined in the previous section, and, whenever possible, be accompanied by an estimate of both the costs and the dates for when the final evaluation report should be available.
- 84.** The AECID, through its Management, will submit its proposal to the SGCID for evaluations to be included in the Plan. The Evaluation Division will coordinate the consultation process within the SGCID and with other international actors and will consider suggestions made by other actors of Spanish Cooperation through the coordination mechanisms in section 3.2. When

the consultation process concludes, the titular head of the SGCID will formally approve the Biennial Evaluation Plan in the first quarter of odd-numbered years<sup>11</sup>.

- 85.** On approval, the Plan will be published, disseminated and sent to the Governing Body of the AECID, to the Development Cooperation Council, to the Interministerial Committee for Development Cooperation, the Interterritorial Commission for Development Cooperation and the Commissions for International Development Cooperation of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate.
- 86.** The forecasts of the Biennial Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure a certain flexibility. In all cases, the titular head of the SGCID may authorise the exceptional incorporation of unscheduled evaluations into the Biennial Plan at any time, provided their usefulness to Spanish Cooperation is demonstrated sufficiently by those proposing them.

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<sup>11</sup> The creation of the Biennial Evaluation Plan 2013-2014 will depend on when the Evaluation Policy is formally approved.

## 5. DEVELOPMENT OF EVALUATIONS

- 87.** The development of evaluation processes will follow the guidelines contained in the Manual for Management for Evaluations of Spanish Cooperation. The following considerations will also be taken into account:
- 88.** During the phase of preparation, design and commissioning of evaluations, the information needs of all relevant actors will be considered, especially the most vulnerable. Their incorporation into the process will be structured formally, either through evaluation governance structures, by carrying out mixed evaluations, through consultations or other similar options.
- 89.** The terms of reference should contain at least one clear, appropriate description of the intervention evaluated; the aims of the evaluation and the context in which it is carried out; the scope of the process; some preliminary questions and guidelines; the composition and functioning of evaluation governance structures;
- the requisites to be met by the evaluation team; a tentative timescale; and a budget forecast. The Evaluation Division will develop guidelines and tools to facilitate the creation of the terms of reference and strengthen evaluation management capacity.
- 90.** For the evaluation of bilateral cooperation, the aim will be to harmonise with other donors and to promote the participation of the partner countries of Spanish Cooperation, especially in the case of the evaluation of Country Association Frameworks (MAP).
- 91.** The evaluation of Strategic Association Frameworks (MAE) and other multilateral contributions will consider their specific characteristics and will be performed in coordination with the evaluation units of the relevant bodies in order to optimise efforts and reduce transaction costs. The information resulting from these evaluations will be complemented with that provided by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> MOPAN is a network in which Spanish Cooperation participates with other bilateral donors in order to analyse jointly the performance and results orientation of the principal multilateral organisations to which they contribute funds.

## 6. QUALITY AND MONITORING OF EVALUATIONS

**92.** Improving the quality and usefulness of evaluations is one of the cornerstones of this Policy. To do so, the SGCID will foster capacity building and continuous training.

**93.** In addition, the SGCID, in consultation with the actors of Spanish Cooperation, will promote the implementation of a quality control system for evaluations, including:

- The establishing of criteria and procedures and the creation of tools for reviewing the quality of evaluation reports. As the system is consolidated, quality reports will be published together with the corresponding final evaluation reports.
- The establishing of criteria and procedures for conducting meta-evaluations in order to draw lessons and create guidelines for improvement.

**94.** Moreover, the monitoring of the use of evaluations is essential for checking whether they contribute effectively to feedback, system improvement and accountability. To do so, the SGCID will promote in consultation with the actors of Spanish Cooperation the implementation of a monitoring system for evaluations, including:

- The creation of a management response by the units responsible for the areas evaluated. This will contain comments on the evaluation's findings and recommendations, it will indicate in a reasoned manner which of the recommendations may be adopted and it will give rise to an improvement plan. As the system is consolidated, the management responses to evaluations in the area of the SECIPI will be published together with the evaluation reports.
- The publication of an Annual Evaluation Report, which will be created by the SGCID in consultation with the other actors of Spanish Cooperation. This Report will analyse the degree of compliance with the Biennial Evaluation Plan, it will include a summary of each of the evaluations completed during the previous year and it will provide access to the final reports on these evaluations. The Report will also include other activities implemented in developing the evaluation process and will provide information about the monitoring of evaluations and the state of evaluation in Spanish Cooperation. Once approved, the Report will be published and disseminated. In all cases, it will be submitted to the Governing Body of the AECID, the Development Cooperation Council, the Interministerial Committee, the Interterritorial Commission for Development Cooperation and the Commissions for International Development Cooperation of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate.

## 7. COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING

**95.** A feature of evaluation is the responsibility to provide useful and rigorous information, both to those who have promoted it and to other possible interested parties. Accordingly, the communication of evaluations and the establishing of information systems which group findings and evidence are essential for learning, knowledge management and accountability in Spanish Cooperation.

### 7.1. Communication of evaluations

- 96.** Notwithstanding possible dissemination by other means, the final reports for all the evaluations in the area of the SECIPI included in the Biennial Plan will be published on the SGCID website. In order to foster mutual learning, benefit from existing knowledge more efficiently and facilitate centralised access to available information, the SGCID will promote the use of this website for the dissemination of all the evaluations published by Spanish Cooperation.
- 97.** This website will also provide access to, at least, the Evaluation Policy, Biennial Evaluation Plans, the Annual Evaluation Report and other strategic documents relating to the evaluation process; to manuals and tools for managing and implementing evaluations; to links to international evaluation networks; to the database of evaluations of Spanish Cooperation; to evaluations published by other actors of international cooperation; and to news of interest relating to evaluation.
- 98.** The SGCID, in coordination with the AECID, will develop a communication strategy for evaluations which creates different products and communication formats, tailored to the characteristics, languages and specific information needs of the different audiences and types of interested parties. In all cases, the appropriate dissemination of information about

evaluations will be guaranteed for decision-makers, management units and the groups directly involved in the interventions evaluated or in the evaluation process itself.

**99.** This strategy will foster the relationship with the media and will benefit from the many opportunities offered by information technology and communication to promote the culture of evaluation.

### 7.2. Knowledge management

- 100.** Evaluation knowledge management is a key element for the generation of learning and for the effective feedback of the system. For this, in coordination with the AEVAL and the actors of Spanish Cooperation, the SGCID will promote the following measures:
- Creation of a publicly available database to store and process information relating to the evaluations of Spanish Cooperation.
  - Standardising of the wealth of evaluations financed by Spanish ODA and creation of reference materials.
  - Promotion of research on issues related to the evaluation of development cooperation, development education and humanitarian action.
  - Participation in evaluation associations and networks and promotion of collaboration and information exchange with organisations and institutions related to the evaluation of the development of other donors and partner countries.
  - Periodic courses, seminars, presentations, and other activities promoting training, exchange of information and experiences, and reflection on the evaluation of development cooperation, of development education and humanitarian action.



## **8. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION POLICY**

- 101.** The strategic and planning documents created to make the Evaluation Policy operative will be accompanied by the corresponding monitoring mechanisms. This will enable progress made to be periodically reviewed and the appropriate action taken.
- 102.** Comprehensive monitoring of this Evaluation Policy will draw on those sources and will consider the Annual Evaluation Report

and the aspects relating to the evaluation process included in the comprehensive monitoring system of corresponding Master Plans.

- 103.** The evaluation Policy will be assessed and revised periodically as part of the evaluations of corresponding Master Plans.
- 104.** Coinciding with the mid-term assessment of the 4th Master Plan, in 2014 there will be a preliminary review of the progress made regarding institutional, organisational and capacity changes required for the proper implementation of the Evaluation Policy.

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SECRETARÍA GENERAL DE COOPERACIÓN  
INTERNACIONAL PARA EL DESARROLLO

