

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP



**FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON STRENGTHENING THE
FEEDBACK SYSTEM**

**OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT
(OPEV)**

30 June 1998

STRENGTHENING THE FEEDBACK SYSTEM

FOLLOW-UP REPORT

1. Following the review by the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness of the study on the Bank's feedback system: "Evaluation of Development Assistance: Survey of Users of Evaluation Products" (Reference: ADB/BD/WP/97/111 – ADF/BD/WP/97/135 of 03 November 1997), members of the Committee requested the OPEV Department to prepare a follow-up report on the actions proposed to strengthen the Bank's feedback system.
2. The study, which was within the scope of the -work carried out jointly with the Working Group on aid evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), was included in the OPEV Work Programme for 1997, and sought to collect and analyze the users' viewpoint of the evaluations produced by the Bank's Operations Evaluation Department (OPEV); to consider their priorities with a view to enhancing the quality and efficiency of evaluation works; to fine-tune the strategy for disseminating and utilizing the lessons drawn from evaluations and to improve the system of incorporating the lessons retrospectively into the design and implementation of future Bank Group operations. The specific objective is to examine OPEV evaluation products and their impact on the design of Bank Group policies, programmes and projects, and to assess the degree of compliance with DAC's evaluation principles which should normally serve as guidelines for evaluation works.
3. The independent Consultant's report was prepared on the basis of fifty or so individual *or* group discussions with prospective users of evaluations (members of the Bank Group Boards of Directors, Heads of Organizational Units, staff members of operational departments), and of questionnaires sent to 22 member countries on a regional basis.
4. The findings and recommendations contained in the Consultant's report mainly concerned the following areas:
 - (i) Integration of lessons learned from experience and interaction between OPEV and the other departments of the Bank during internal workshops, seminars and working groups for the discussion of operations documents;
 - (ii) Dissemination of evaluation results within the Bank;
 - (iii) Broadening of the current evaluation framework to include policy reviews, **sectoral** impact studies and country assistance reviews;
 - (iv) Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness;
 - (v) User-friendliness and access to the System of Post-Evaluation Information (SPEI);

- (vi) Interaction based on the findings of evaluations between regional member countries and the Bank and strengthening evaluation capacities (organization of seminars on evaluation techniques and dissemination of results for officials of regional member countries);
 - (vii) Active participation and organization of periodic events to share, on a continuous basis, results from the experience and greater coordination with the donor community (DAC), United Nations Agencies and other multilateral development banks.
5. In his presentation note accompanying the Consultant's report, OPEV proposed a series of actions to strengthen the evaluation function within the Bank:
- (i) Integration of lessons learned from post-evaluation into the design and implementation of the Bank's current and future operations;
 - (ii) Instruments for feedback and utilization of evaluation findings;
 - (iii) Evaluation products;
 - (iv) Post-evaluation information systems;
 - (v) Interaction between the bank, regional member countries and other development institutions;
 - (vi) OPEV's operational capacity.
6. This follow-up report on strengthening the feedback system contains the actions planned as approved by the members of CODE, the achievements to-date, as well as the actions proposed with a view to further strengthen the system and to enhance its effectiveness.
7. In general, considerable progress has been made in integrating the post-evaluation lessons following the creation of the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness, whose meetings enabled the active participation of the Vice-President for Operations as well as that of managers of Organizational units. Furthermore, the distribution of records of meetings and the dissemination of CODE's report on **policy**-based lending operations had the effect of sensitizing, however little, the operational departments to the need to take into account the lessons from experience in the design and implementation of future operations. Nonetheless, although OPEV participates regularly in inter-departmental meetings for the discussion of projects or operational policies, the progress made in integrating the lessons from experience into the conception of the Bank's new operations cannot be ascertained.
8. Another area in which significant progress have been made concerns the development of instruments for feedback and use of evaluation findings through the redistribution of the "Retrospective" Bulletin as well as the extracts from performance audit reports, summary reviews of evaluation findings, and more recently, through the creation of a specific evaluation page on the Bank's Internet site.

9. With regard to broadening the scope of OPEV's activities, review studies of **sectoral** policies and operational procedures such as the quality of economic analyses and supervision process as well as thematic studies were launched in the course of 1997 and 1998. However, projects and programmes performance audits remain the main activity which takes up to 75% of the overall OPEV time (professionals and consultants).
10. Considerable progress has also been achieved in joint operations with other development institutions within the scope of cooperation and coordination programmes with DAC or with multilateral development banks. OPEV actively participated in the preparation of follow up reports on the recommendations of the Group of Experts of the Development Committee with a view to improving the effectiveness of multilateral development institutions and other initiatives are underway to launch joint **sectoral** evaluations.
11. Areas in which the actions envisaged were limited or had little impact concern, in particular, the system of post-evaluation information (SPEI) as well as OPEV's operational capacity. With regard to the SPEI system, the migration to a new platform was not implemented due to the delay in the delivery of the new computer equipment and in the choice of the database software. The accessibility and **user-friendliness** of the system have not improved; in addition to this, there is need to systematically update post-evaluation data. Concerning OPEV's operating capacity, the annual budget did not make sufficient provisions for OPEV to carry out its work programme especially with respect to the budget for consultants.
12. The proposed actions (see Matrix in Annex) for strengthening the feedback system and enhancing its effectiveness are as follows:
 - (i) Workshops and/or working groups between OPEV and operations departments should be organized to discuss the implementation of CODE's decisions as well as the follow-up actions to be undertaken with respect to specific projects in the countries or sectors concerned.
 - (ii) Country operations departments should be in a position to respond explicitly to the findings of projects and programmes evaluations as well as **sectoral** or impact reviews and country assistance surveys, and especially to the recommendations and follow-up actions recommended by OPEV.
 - (iii) Formal instructions should be given by Management to implement CODE's decisions and to incorporate the evaluation findings in the design and implementation of the Bank Group's future operations.
 - (iv) The reports of CODE (or the reports of its Chairman) as well as the records of the meetings should be distributed to all professionals in operations departments.
 - (v) OPEV should ensure the follow-up of the implementation of CODE's decisions and the integration of evaluation findings through the selective evaluation of ex-ante appraisal reports of projects and programmes. The Central Operations department (OCOD) would be responsible, within this

scope, for the requisite coordination and follow-up of actions to be carried out by country operations departments.

13. With regard to OPEV, the specific actions to be undertaken are mainly the following:
- (i) Initiating new evaluation products such as reviews of the Bank's experience, participative or impact evaluations, mid-term reviews, etc.
 - (ii) Incorporating on the Bank's Internet site all OPEV's evaluation products (while taking into account the Bank's information disclosure policy).
 - (iii) Defining the objectives, outputs and types of intervention in institutional support with a view to strengthening RMC's evaluation capacity etc., in the form of the Bank's strategy paper in that field.
 - (iv) Increased joint operations with other development institutions with which greater cooperation in evaluation should be pursued.
 - (v) Developing cooperative arrangements with sub-regional organizations such as the West African Development Bank (BOAD) and the South African Development Bank. Contacts should also be sought all over the continent with a view to developing evaluation capacities in the region.
 - (vi) Building up OPEV's operating capacity (addition of new staff, review of the department's structure and development of information and communication systems).
14. OPEV awaits eagerly for the comments of the members of CODE, especially on the actions proposed to strengthen the feedback system.

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FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Findings	Actions Planned	Achievements
<p>Inadequate integration of past evaluation lessons into the design and implementation of operations (moderate impact of evaluation on the Bank's operational performances)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. OPEV must participate in operational meetings (Loans Committee, Interdepartmental groups, Operations Review Committee) and focus on the lessons to be learnt from experiences. 2. Decisions of CODE following discussions of OPEV's reports on a thematic or sectoral basis must be used as directives for ongoing or future operations of the Bank Group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. OPEV regularly attends meetings and sends written comments during discussion projects or operational policy documents. 2. Limited progress in integrating lessons from experience into design and implementation of new operations. 3. Distribution of records of meetings and dissemination of CODE's report

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FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Findings	Actions Planned	Achievements
(Cont'd)		
Inadequate capacity of OPEV	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. OPEV should be strengthened through annual budgetary allocations. 2. OPEV's capacities should be strengthened by new expertise in the areas of environment, gender issues, poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The budget did not contain sufficient provisions for OPI needs in order to implement work programme (consultant budget is inadequate compared to the requirements). 2. OPEV made requests for bilateral sources to acquire new skills.

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FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Findings	Actions Planned	Achievements
	alleviation.	
Problems of access and user-friendliness of the post-evaluation information system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the user-friendliness of the evaluation information system (SPEI) . 2. Develop a specific evaluation page on the Bank's Internet site. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved SPEI/PALMS interface but migration to new platforms not carried out. 2. « Evaluation » page function with effect from 31 May 19
Inadequate tools for feedback and use of evaluation results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revive the publication of the quarterly bulletin « Retrospective » and improve the content. 2. Reissue the extracts of evaluations carried out by OPEV as well as the summaries of evaluation findings (1992-1993 and 1994-1995) and activate the preparation of extracts and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The « Retrospective » Bulletin has been reactivated (one has been issued and three are being prepared). 2. Extracts of evaluations and reviews of summaries of evaluation findings have been redistributed.

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FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Findings	Actions Planned	Achievements
	evaluation summary 1996.)	
Evaluation products limited to projects and programmes performance audits (insufficient number of evaluation studies)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend OPEV's areas of activities to include the evaluation of impact studies, policy review, evaluation of non-lending operations: technical assistance, institutional support, research and training. 2. OPEV should produce summaries of evaluation studies by sector and country and disseminate them rapidly. 3. Integrate the techniques and methods of evaluation « in real time » (mid-term review, evaluation-monitoring 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact sector review study initiated in 1998 (energy and sugar); review of the project cycle management process (quality of economic analysis and supervision system); ongoing study of ADF's technical assistance. 2. Preparation of guidelines for preparing completion report technical assistance operations 3. « Review of the Bank's experience » in the sector of the region and focus on the lessons to be drawn.

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FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Findings	Actions Planned	Achievements
	<p>indicators, quick surveys of beneficiaries and participative evaluations).</p>	<p>4. OPEV's 1998 Work Program includes the introduction of impact and performance sector/indicators.</p>
<p>insufficient interaction between the Bank and RMCs with regard to evaluation findings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out joint or parallel evaluations with member countries 2. Disseminate the work programmes of OPEV through the Group of Experts on evaluation of Development Assistance 3. Promote regional or sub-regional groups and organize seminars at regional and sub-regional levels and encourage the creation of association of officials and experts in evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficult to carry out due to low evaluation capacity of member countries. 2. Work programmes disseminated through DAC. 3. Regional seminar on building the evaluation capacity of African countries scheduled in October 1998.

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FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Findings	Actions Planned	Achievements
Joint operations with other organizations to disseminate the findings of evaluations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participate actively in the work of the Group of Experts on the evaluation of DAC's assistance and the MDB's Cooperation Group on Evaluation.2. Conclude cooperation agreements with donors operating in the region.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Half-yearly participation in meetings of DAC and of Cooperation Group and studie contained in the work programmes of these committees.2. Greater cooperation with the World Bank envisaged.