

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP



**OPEV EVALUATION FEEDBACK AND DISSEMINATION:
PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR 2006-2008**

**OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT
(OPEV)**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page N°.</u>
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	i
PREFACE	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and Rationale	1
1.2 Strategy Thrust and Caveats	2
1.3 Document Outline	3
2. OPEV'S EXISTING FEEDBACK AND DISSEMINATION SYSTEM	3
2.1 OPEV Products and Knowledge Generation	3
2.2 OPEV Evaluation Feedback, Dissemination, and Capacity Development: A Brief Review and Problem Analysis	4
3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, INITIATIVES AND ACTION PLAN	6
3.1 Methodology and Preparatory Work	6
3.2 Action Plan Strategic Objectives	7
3.3 Action Plan Details	7
3.4 Linking this Strategy with other Bank-internal Initiatives	16
3.5 Responsibilities and Resources	17
3.6 Expected Outcomes and Self-Evaluation	18
4. CONCLUDING REMARKS	18
<u>Annex</u>	<u>N° of Pages</u>
Annex 1 - Short and Medium-Term Action Plan 2006-2008 (Matrix)	4
Annex 2 - Knowledge Management and Dissemination of Evaluation Products (Potential Extended Activities)	4

This report was prepared by staff of OPEV under the guidance of the Acting Director, Mr. D. A. Barnett. The report benefited from useful comments by Mr. Francois Arsenault of CODE.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADF	:	African Development Fund
ADI	:	African Development Institute
AfDB	:	African Development Bank
CAE	:	Country Assistance Evaluation
CODE	:	Committee of Development Effectiveness
COMM	:	Internal and External Communications Department
CPR	:	Country Portfolio Review
CSP	:	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	:	Development Assistance Committee
DARMS	:	Documents and Record Management System
ECD	:	Evaluation Capacity Development
EDRE	:	Development Research Department
ESW	:	Economic and Sector Work
JAI	:	Joint Africa Institute
IEG	:	Independent Evaluation Group
KM	:	Knowledge Management
M&E	:	Monitoring and Evaluation
OPEV	:	Operations Evaluation Department
ORPC	:	Operations Policies and Compliance Department
PCR	:	Project Completion Report
PDRE	:	Development Research Department
PDSU	:	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Unit
POPR	:	Policy, Planning and Research Department
PPER	:	Project Performance Evaluation Report
PPLB	:	Planning and Budgeting Department
QEA	:	Quality at Entry Assessment
QSA	:	Quality of Supervision Assessment
RBM	:	Results-Based Management
RMC	:	Regional Member Countries
SMC	:	Senior Management Committee
TFIR	:	Task Force for Institutional Reform
UDP	:	United Nations Development Program

PREFACE

This Action Plan on improving OPEV evaluation feedback and dissemination in the short- to medium-run (2006-2008) is intended as a first step in the preparation of a more comprehensive OPEV Evaluation Feedback and Knowledge Management Strategy. Such a strategy should be closely informed by and aligned with the Bank's overall planned new Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy, which is under development and expected to be completed by mid-2007. OPEV's new Evaluation Feedback and Knowledge Management Strategy would be developed concurrently as the Department is re-defining its role in the Bank's new vision, organizational structure, and revised processes. This Action Plan therefore focuses on improving the feedback of evaluations into the Bank's operations, and other immediate actions to expand OPEV's outreach over the next two and a half years. In addition, it provides a road map to potentially intensified and extended activities of general dissemination and knowledge management, as well as evaluation capacity building and partnerships in the longer-term future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Rationale for Evaluation Feedback and Dissemination Action Plan

1. Producing high quality evaluations and useful information (knowledge) for accountability and learning is the primary goal of OPEV. Yet, evaluation derives value in particular from the extent of its utilization by operations. Thus feedback and dissemination of evaluation findings, knowledge management, and evaluation capacity building are important elements of OPEV's role and responsibilities. Independent evaluation and appropriate feedback and dissemination play a critical role in ensuring and communicating Development Effectiveness, that is the extent to which the Bank is successfully contributing to economically sound, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable growth, jointly with its partners in the framework of the Millenium Development Goals. This Evaluation Feedback and Dissemination Action Plan focuses on short-to medium term actions for OPEV for 2006-8. It is expected that over the next year or so this action plan will be further focused and if necessary redirected in line with the planned new overall Bank Strategy on knowledge management and a related new OPEV knowledge management strategy.

2. One of the key recommendations by the Independent Evaluation of ADF VII-IX is to improve the feedback process of evaluations into project, program, and policy cycles; to learn from difficulties faced in operations; to better disseminate Bank successes; and, to track the use of OPEV's findings, lessons, and recommendations. This Action Plan was prepared as a direct follow-up to the ADF-X Action Plan and ensues from the need:

- To better meet the demand for relevant, timely, accessible, and usable evaluation results;
- To improve OPEV's evaluation feedback processes and provide sustained dissemination to the various end users of evaluation products;
- To support operations staff and other internal clients in incorporating lessons and good practices into the design, implementation and supervision of operations as well as policy revisions;
- To provide timely advice to the Boards and management and to improve follow-up on the implementation of CODE approved evaluation recommendations; and to some extent
- To assist RMCs in improving the quality of evaluations and their utilization, jointly with other development partners.

3. In recent years, OPEV has made some progress in the feedback and dissemination of its evaluations. However, existing practices and processes need to be further improved and formalized to better address Bank needs, and, to a lesser extent at this stage, RMC needs. This Action Plan also tries to alter perceptions in the Bank that OPEV may have been too isolated and too little client oriented in the past.

4. The overall intention of this Action Plan is to foster a more open, lessons-learning and knowledge-sharing culture within the Bank and in RMCs and to expand knowledge-sharing as a way of doing business -- not a separate line of business. OPEV intends to do this in close coordination with the ongoing Task Force on Institutional Reform (TFIR) and other efforts of

developing cohesive knowledge management and communication strategies at the Bank as a whole, and in partnership with other international and regional development organizations operating in RMCs. With this Action Plan OPEV contributes to the President's vision of turning the Bank from a *'Project Bank'* into a *'Knowledge Bank'*. The Action Plan emphasizes the need to align with the evolving conclusions by the Knowledge Bank Working Group of the TFIR and related activities. This Action Plan is a first step to position and define OPEV in this new environment and to assess OPEV's potential contributions and comparative advantage on knowledge generation, organization, and sharing (dissemination) viz-a-viz other departments and divisions at the Bank.

5. This second draft of the Action Plan incorporates suggestions from extensive discussions in CODE in January 2006 on a first draft of this Action Plan (which at that time was presented as a 'Strategy'), and on other related OPEV papers on the 'Independence of OPEV' and on 'Closing the Evaluation Gaps at the African Development Bank'. The thrust of this Action Plan is to concentrate on short- and medium-term actions with expected high and immediate impact for the Bank ('quick hits'), and on aligning the proposed Action Plan realistically with current staffing and budgeting opportunities and constraints at OPEV and the overall expected resource envelope in the coming years. But the Action Plan also lays out a number of activities that could and should be pursued under expanded resource scenarios. OPEV will adapt and further concretize this Action Plan over time as the new overall Bank Knowledge Management and Communications Strategies take shape, and the planned new internal networks are being set up. It will periodically introduce refinements to this Action Plan in response to new developments, feedback received, the Bank's operational environment, technology advances, and RMCs' priorities.

Objectives

6. This Action Plan is organized around three major strategic objectives that correspond to three main *pillars* of actions to address existing shortcomings on evaluation feedback, dissemination and knowledge management, and evaluation capacity building. These are:

1. To better meet the internal needs of the Bank for more accessible, relevant, timely, and usable evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations, and to increase their relevance and utilization in operations (*Pillar 1: 'Bank Internal Feedback'*)
2. To fully exploit advanced information technology and develop new evaluation products in order to enhance knowledge-sharing and lessons-learning for various evaluation user groups within the Bank and in RMCs (*Pillar 2: 'General Dissemination'*).
3. To improve the quality of evaluations, M&E, and Results Based Management in RMCs and at the Bank through targeted capacity building and partnerships (*Pillar 3: 'Capacity Building and Partnerships'*).

7. The actions proposed at this moment focus on more short- and medium term activities in 2006 and early 2007 (*Phase I*). These actions emphasize improvements in Bank internal feedback. They also include actions to initiate work and carefully assess a range of potential extended activities on general dissemination and knowledge management, as well as capacity

building and partnerships. Extended activities may be implemented in a second phase, which would likely be starting in 2007 only.

Specific Actions

8. The following short- and medium term initiatives and actions are proposed for 2006-08, ie. Phase 1 as summarized in Annex 1 and described below. Specific actions for a second phase (2008 and beyond) would be defined during the course of phase 1.

Pillar 1 - Feedback of Evaluation Findings, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations into the Bank's Operational Activities

9. The first pillar aims to enhance the overall evaluation feedback with end users within the Bank; to mainstream lessons-learning and knowledge-sharing in Bank processes; and to tailor evaluation feedback more to client demand. This will be done while ensuring OPEV's institutional and analytical independence. In order to facilitate the feedback and utilization of its findings in Operations OPEV would proactively

- (1) assess demand for OPEV evaluation products and input into policy, program, and project design;
- (2) enhance the overall dialogue with Operations to improve the relevance and quality of OPEV products, publications, and future evaluations;
- (3) organize regular feedback workshops for operational staff and management on major evaluation products;
- (4) enhance OPEV presence in SMC meetings and other similar inter-departmental working groups; and
- (5) increase collaboration between OPEV, POPR, PDRE, PDSU¹ on Economic Sector Work and other products relevant for enhancing the Knowledge Function of the Bank.

10. This would include an assessment of OPEV's capacity to contribute more to the accelerated demand by Management and Operations for up-to-date expertise and information on evolving thematic issues, such as post-conflict situations, fragile states, corruption, and assistance to mineral-rich countries. This could possibly be achieved by embarking on a new set of 'just-in-time' evaluations and reviews (as has already been started with an on-going review of Joint Assistance Strategies and Harmonization) or by adjusting OPEV's regular evaluations thematically to better address evolving issues.

11. Under this pillar OPEV would also improve its reporting relationship to CODE and help ensure the tracking of implementation of CODE approved evaluation recommendations.

Pillar 2 - Improved OPEV dissemination of evaluation products to better serve internal and external users

¹ Or the relevant future departments into which these current organizational units will be transformed on July 1, 2006 under the Bank restructuring plan, ie. EDRE (Development Research Department) and ORPC (Operations Policies and Compliance Department)

12. OPEV intends to gradually expand its electronic dissemination of evaluation activities and new products from 2006 to 2008, with a first step of improving OPEV's intra-net web-site starting immediately. The exact scope and priorities of activities under this second pillar depend on various factors that are still uncertain and largely outside of OPEV control, including the future human and budgetary resources available for the knowledge management function at OPEV and the evaluation product demand analysis still to be carried out. Therefore this pillar contains only one major action, that is the development by OPEV of two demand- and resource-aligned specific action plans for this pillar 2: one on electronic dissemination strategy, and a second one on the expansion of the range of OPEV publications. Identified specific actions would be implemented in subsequent years.

13. In general, activities under this pillar would aim at strategic expansion of databases, websites and publications; at harnessing existing lessons at OPEV and elsewhere and disseminating them broadly; and at better dissemination techniques and product options tailored to the needs of various evaluation end user groups. Effective knowledge-sharing requires the systematic capture of lessons and best practices from evaluations; excellent organization and storage of development knowledge, lessons, and information for easy access; and, transfer and dissemination of these outputs to internal and external end users with appropriate methods.

Pillar 3 - Targeted and coordinated efforts to improve the quality of evaluations, M&E, and RBM, in RMCs and at the Bank through capacity building and partnerships

14. The main thrust of this third pillar is for OPEV to contribute selectively and catalytically, i.e. 'targeted', to evaluation and M&E/RBM capacity development in RMCs and at the Bank, in line with OPEV's mandate. OPEV just finished a training-needs assessment for RMCs on M&E, particularly in the context of national level PRSP M&E. This assessment will form a basis for further activities. An important objective under this pillar is to enhance RMC and Bank capacity for and quality of self-evaluations of Bank policies, programs, and projects (including PRC's), and to ensure the evaluability of major Bank activities. Capacity building would happen in partnerships with international and sub-regional development and evaluation organizations, commensurate with OPEV's comparative advantage in this field. Expansion of M&E and RBM capacity is a long-term task for OPEV.

15. Specifically OPEV envisages to improve evaluation capacity in RMCs by carrying out annual training weeks of RMC officials on M&E, in collaboration with JAI and ADI. This effort would be supported by annual evaluation seminars and the development of better links with national program and evaluation offices. In the coming months OPEV would also devise a strategy to play a more 'catalytic' role within the Bank for improved self-evaluation, M&E, and RBM. In addition, OPEV would expand development partnerships on evaluation and M&E with international and sub-regional organizations in RMCs, and assess the possibility of increasingly carrying out joint or parallel evaluations in RMCs.

Resources and Measures of Success

16. Most activities listed in this Action Plan, particularly those of phase 1, are expected to be financed and implemented within the current resource envelope of the Department's FY2006-FY2008 Three-Year Rolling Work Program, particularly if the recruitment of a new Knowledge Management Officer should materialize in 2006. Suggested extended dissemination options under pillar 2 as well as some of the more ambitious evaluation and M&E capacity building efforts of pillar 3 hinge not only on the installation of a permanent staff KM officer, but also on the mobilization of additional resources.

17. With implementation of this Action Plan the following outcomes and measures of success will be expected (1) better utilization of evaluation findings and lessons learnt by Bank operational units; (2) a coherent strategy for expanded reach of a variety of clients, internally and externally, incl. clients in RMCs and other development partners; and (3) a contribution to enhanced RMC capacity for evaluations, M&E, and RBM, particularly through collaboration with development partners on capacity building and joint evaluations. OPEV will carry out a periodic review of the Action Plan's implementation. Translating this Evaluation Feedback and Dissemination Action Plan into concrete initiatives and actions is expected to increase OPEV's visibility and effectiveness within the Bank and to enable the department to be recognized as a major contributor to knowledge on development interventions in Africa.

18. OPEV submits this Evaluation Feedback and Dissemination Action Plan to solicit CODE's views and directions, and approval.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

1.1.1 There is now full agreement in the development community that learning from evaluations of past and on-going projects, programs, and policies and the incorporation of lessons learnt into the design and implementation of new operations is imperative to maximize the outcomes and impact of development operations. Producing high quality evaluations and useful information and knowledge is the primary goal of OPEV. Yet, evaluation derives value in particular from the extent of its utilization in operations. Effective feedback and dissemination of evaluation findings are recognized as important elements of OPEV's role and responsibilities. They play a critical role in ensuring and communicating Development Effectiveness, that is the extent to which the Bank is successfully contributing to economically sound, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable growth, jointly with its partners in the framework of the Millenium Development Goals. This Evaluation Feedback and Dissemination Action Plan focuses on a short-to medium-term action plan for OPEV for 2006-8

1.1.2 One of the key recommendations made in the Independent Evaluation of ADF VII-IX is the need to improve the feedback process of evaluations into project, program, and policy cycles; to learn from difficulties faced in operations; to better disseminate Bank successes; and, to track the use of OPEV's findings, lessons, and recommendations. During the ADF-X replenishment consultations, Deputies underscored the need to strengthen the Bank's evaluation feedback process, and the issue has since been adopted as a priority action area². This Action Plan was prepared as a direct follow-up to the ADF-X Action Plan. It ensues from the need:

- To better meet the demand for relevant, timely, accessible, and usable evaluation results;
- To improve OPEV's evaluation feedback processes and provide sustained dissemination to the various end users of evaluation products;
- To support operations staff and other internal clients in incorporating lessons and good practices into the design, implementation and supervision of operations as well as policy revisions;
- To provide timely advice to the Boards and management and to improve follow-up on the implementation of CODE approved evaluation recommendations;
- To assist RMCs in improving the quality of evaluations and their utilization, jointly with other development partners.

1.1.3 In recent years, OPEV has made some progress in the feedback and dissemination of its evaluations. However, existing practices and processes need to be further improved and formalized, particularly to better address Bank needs. OPEV's rolling Work Program of 2006-08 places emphasis on the need to enhance feedback and dissemination of evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations, on assessing the demand from intended users, and on helping to enhance evaluation and M&E capacity, particularly in RMCs. The recent OPEV

² Adoption of the Resolution on the Tenth General Replenishment of the Resources of the African Development Fund (ADF-X) (2005). ADF/BD/IF/2005/83.

document submitted to CODE in Nov. 2005 ‘Toward Closing Evaluation Gaps at the AfDB’ made the recommendation that a dissemination and evaluation capacity building strategy be developed, including the need to ensure better evaluability of all Bank Group activities by enhancing formal reviews of projects entering the portfolio and catalytic internal capacity building on M&E and results-based management. This Action Plan is the first step to a more comprehensive strategy.

1.1.4 The overall intention of this Action Plan is to foster a more open, lessons-learning and knowledge-sharing culture within the Bank and in RMCs and to expand knowledge-sharing as a way of doing business -- not a separate line of business. OPEV intends to do this in close coordination with the ongoing efforts of coming up with cohesive knowledge management and communication strategies at the Bank as a whole, and in partnership with other international and regional development organizations operating in RMCs. With this Action Plan OPEV contributes to the President’s vision of turning the Bank from a ‘*Project Bank*’ into a ‘*Knowledge Bank*’. In this context the Action Plan emphasizes the need to align with the findings by the Knowledge Bank Working Group of the Task Force for Institutional Reform (TFIR) and the draft new communications strategy for the Bank (as proposed by COMM). Positioning OPEV in this new environment and assessing OPEV’s comparative advantage on knowledge generation, organization, and sharing (dissemination) viz-a-viz other departments and divisions, i.e. POPR, PSDU, PDRE³ etc., will be a significant challenge.

1.2 Strategy Thrust and Caveats

1.2.1 This second draft of the Action Plan is the result of extensive discussions in CODE in January 2006 on its first draft (which at that time was presented as a ‘Strategy’), and on other somewhat related papers on the ‘Independence of OPEV’ and on ‘Closing the Evaluation Gaps at the African Development Bank’. OPEV heard and heeded the calls for focusing the Action Plan, particularly initially, strongly on Bank internal feedback, on providing more timely and relevant knowledge and input into Bank operations, and on being more demand and content (rather than technology) oriented.

1.2.2 Thus the thrust of this Action Plan is to concentrate on short- and medium term activities with expected high and immediate impact for the Bank (‘quick hits’), while keeping it in line with current staffing and budgeting opportunities and constraints at OPEV and the overall expected resource envelope in the coming years. But the Action Plan also lays out a number of activities that could and should be pursued under more optimistic resource scenarios.

1.2.3 Feedback and dissemination should not become a goal of their own. In the end, OPEV will have to ensure the right balance between generation of high quality primary evaluations, synthesis of relevant findings, lessons learnt, and best practices, and the feedback and dissemination of this knowledge.

³ Or the relevant future departments into which these current organizational units will be transformed on July 1, 2006 under the Bank restructuring plan, ie. EDRE (Development Research Department) and ORPC (Operations Policies and Compliance Department)

1.2.4 This Action Plan aims to increase the relevance and utilization from OPEV's independent evaluations in operations which requires more engagement and interactions between OPEV and other parts of the Bank. To make this work it should be acknowledged that there usually exists an inherent creative tension between operations and independent evaluations in any organization. This partly derives from the accountability function of independent evaluations, and partly from subjective perceptions about the relevance and role of such evaluations. It requires from both sides the development of mutual respect and constructive thinking about optimizing the relationship but also pragmatically drawing the boundaries of OPEV engagement.

1.3 Document Outline

The paper is presented in three sections. Section 1 introduces the background and rationale behind the Action Plan. Section 2 provides an overview of OPEV's existing feedback and dissemination system. Section 3 presents the initiatives and actions. The paper ends with some concluding remarks in Section 4.

2. OPEV'S EXISTING FEEDBACK AND DISSEMINATION SYSTEM

2.1 OPEV Products and Knowledge Generation

2.1.1 To advance its accountability and learning mandate, OPEV produces a number of project, sector, country, thematic, and corporate evaluations; it disseminates its evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations in hard-copy and electronic formats, albeit in a limited way; and plays a catalytic role on Monitoring and Evaluation capacity development (M&ECD) of RMCs. In all this OPEV collaborates with other development partners, with the goal of mutual learning and carrying out more joint evaluations in the context of increased harmonization.

2.1.2 The type and volume of OPEV's work may be recapitulated as follows. From its establishment in 1987 to the present (2006), OPEV produced some 230 PPERs, 74 sector, policy and thematic reviews and 10 country assistance evaluations⁴. OPEV also reviewed most PCRs prepared during the period. OPEV's current work plan gives a snapshot of its present engagements. In 2005 alone, OPEV carried out 43 PCR Evaluation Notes following the progress made by operations complexes in self-evaluation (PCR preparation), comprehensively reviewed Bank assistance in one sector (i.e. health, which is currently being finalized), delivered 3 Country Assistance Evaluations, prepared 2 Process Reviews, a Report on Development Effectiveness, which is currently being finalized, and organized a Regional Development Evaluation Seminar for RMCs. The sense that comes through from such enumeration is both the diversity of OPEV's activities, as well as the considerable knowledge ensuing from the analytic evaluation work. Looking forward, the number of high-level evaluations are planned to grow, thereby creating an even stronger rationale for organizing OPEV's dissemination efforts.

⁴ Source: OPEV Directory of Products and Services, February 2006.

2.2 OPEV Evaluation Feedback, Dissemination, and Capacity Development: A Brief Review and Problem Analysis⁵

2.2.1 In 1989 the department developed its first dissemination methodology which was revised in 1996; in 1997 a survey on the use of its products was carried out. OPEV's current *feedback and dissemination* consists of several activities and modalities, some of which have room for improvement.

2.2.2 Report Circulation and Workshops: As it stands now, OPEV's evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations are disseminated, albeit poorly, through the circulation of PPERs and other evaluation reports within the Bank and in RMCs. These are supplemented, at times, by evaluation report summaries. Occasionally, OPEV has organized presentations for major evaluation products in evaluation workshops and seminars organized for Bank operational staff⁶.

2.2.3 Electronic Dissemination: Some promising technical steps have been taken in recent years to enhance accessibility and dissemination of OPEV products. These were aimed mostly at including evaluation products in the Documents and Record Management System (DARMS), and on the department's internal and external websites (which are yet to be developed fully and maintained regularly). Some 164 documents have been posted on the websites as of March 2006. In addition, more than 500 CDs with relevant information about the department and many of its evaluations were distributed at the 2006 Annual Meetings in Ouagadougou. However, much needs to be done to make available all OPEV products electronically in a user-friendly manner, with easy accessibility for staff and external clients.

2.2.4 Operations Review Process: In terms of direct feedback OPEV selectively reviews and comments on Appraisal Reports, CSPs and CPRs. Circulation of reports, comments and subsequent interactions between OPEV and operational staff are expected to trigger an implicit review process that provides for incorporation of evaluation findings and lessons in new and ongoing operations.

2.2.5 Seminars / Workshops: At present, there is no arrangement for regular, well-structured, and focused meetings between OPEV, Country Program Departments, PPLB, POPR, or PRDE⁷ though such meetings could be very useful to better incorporate evaluation findings into strategy papers, policies, guidelines, and project/program formulation.

⁵ A distinction is made between feedback and dissemination. *Feedback* is the process by which important evaluation findings, lessons learnt, and recommendations are provided to internal AfDB planners, project and program designers, as well as external policy makers, planners, and executing agencies to help them improve existing policies, procedures, and the design and implementation of ongoing and future projects and programs. The term '*dissemination*' is used to mean the more general diffusion of information on the department's activities, findings, lessons learnt and methodologies to a wide range of potential users, using various electronic and non-electronic media and methods and a range of user-targeted products.

⁶ OPEV has organized a series of workshops to Bank staff and RMCs on the Independent Evaluation of ADF 7-9 in 2004, on the Review of Environmental Management of Bank Group Category 2 Projects and on Preliminary Findings of Health Sector Review in 2005.

⁷ Or the relevant future departments into which these current organizational units will be transformed on July 1, 2006 under the Bank restructuring plan, ie. EDRE (Development Research Department), ORPC (Operations Policies and Compliance Department).

2.2.6 ADI and JAI Dissemination: The African Development Institute (ADI) and the Joint Africa Institute (JAI) have included some evaluation lessons as teaching materials in courses organized for RMCs. However, OPEV's impact in this area has been modest given the insufficiency of resources for publications, training and data base management.

2.2.7 Feedback through CODE Discussions: Finally, CODE discussions of OPEV evaluation results form another important component of the feedback process. These discussions often initiate ideas that get translated into Bank policies, but follow-up of CODE endorsed recommendations has been less than satisfactory.

2.2.8 Demand Analysis: The overall perception of current OPEV feedback and dissemination practice is that the demand for OPEV's evaluations at different stages of policy formulation and project implementation is only partially met by OPEV's selective involvement in these processes, the policy/strategy formulation process, and the feedback into projects (by closing the project cycle 'loop'). A *Survey of Evaluation Users* was conducted in 1997 and a *Follow-Up Activities on Strengthening the Department's Feedback System* was undertaken in 1998.⁸ At that time OPEV established its own internet and intranet homepage which was revisited with the recent move into the new platform. However, OPEV has not yet systematically undertaken a comprehensive demand analysis for its products, nor created such a demand, or developed new strategic directions. It would be useful to carry out a systematic demand analysis for OPEV products and services and have more periodic and well-prepared meetings between OPEV, the Operations complexes and POPR etc. to assure that relevant lessons are incorporated into strategy papers, policies, guidelines, and project/program formulation.

2.2.9 Evaluability: Such enhanced interaction between OPEV and Operations would also have to address better evaluability of interventions. Evaluability is achieved by a clear identification of intervention goals and objectives. This requires clarity in the identification of measurable performance indicators (PIs) and the causal chain between inputs/activities, outputs and the intended outcomes. It also requires the allocation of adequate resources in the project design to provide for monitoring capability in borrowers/ executing agencies. In recent years, AfDB has taken steps to improve quality of projects at entry. This notwithstanding, there is still a lack of clarity in goals, objectives and PIs, and the monitoring frameworks and plans are weak or absent. Similarly, weaknesses persist in the Monitoring and evaluation (M & E) systems⁹.

2.2.10 Tracking Implementation of Recommendations: Like the weaknesses in feedback, dissemination, and evaluability, follow-up action on evaluation findings is poor and ineffective, being neither institutionalized nor systematic. The recently completed external review on OPEV's independence identified several gaps in tracking implementation of recommendations. The report called for the institution of a formal Management response to every major evaluation report. It also noted that since there is currently no management tracking system, OPEV should undertake an annual review on evaluation findings which could report on implementation of evaluation recommendations and performance in drawing lessons from evaluation findings.

⁸ *ibid.*, *Follow-up Activities on Strengthening the Department's Feedback System* (1998).

⁹ Source: OPEV, "Efficacy and Efficiency of Monitoring & Evaluation Systems for Projects Financed by the Bank Group: March, 2004

2.2.11 Evaluation Capacity Development: The emphasis on results, effectiveness, and impact has underlined the importance of *Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD)*. Beyond its evaluation function, ECD can serve to foster better governance in countries and institutions by promoting transparency, accountability and performance culture. Since the 1990's, OPEV has partnered with others to support Monitoring and Evaluation capacity development (M&ECD) of RMCs through a variety of advocacy and knowledge sharing activities¹⁰. However, AfDB's and OPEV's educational capacity development efforts are at beginning stages and sorely lacking in resources to fully address this great need on the continent. Many of the potential areas for expansion are outlined in the recent OPEV Report "Toward Closing Evaluation Gaps at the African Development Bank" (Nov. 2005). The partnership in this area with the World Bank's IEG and other agencies in RMCs is also limited. Furthermore, ECD is not even formally considered in planning country strategies and policy dialogues. There is too little provision to systematically develop evaluation and monitoring capacity in RMCs and to mainstream it as a part of subsequent program and project operations. Such exclusion is a major gap in the efforts to enhance development effectiveness.

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, INITIATIVES AND ACTION PLAN

This chapter presents major initiatives and priority actions for the new strategy, after briefly describing methodology and preparatory work for developing the strategy, and introducing major strategic objectives.

3.1 Methodology and Preparatory Work

3.1.1 The preparatory work for developing this Action Plan entailed extensive consultations by a consultant with OPEV management and staff; discussions with operational staff on the use of lessons learned in the design and implementation of Bank projects; consultations with Corporate Information Management and Methods (CIMM) staff on web site usage; review of documentation on CIMM's content management system developed as part of the I-NET, Data Warehouse, and Balanced Scorecard projects; review of Bank's existing dissemination and feedback practices and processes; and M&ECD practices of partner institutions¹¹. It also included a critical review of the Department's *1996 Evaluation Guidelines and Feedback System*; the *1997 Results of a Survey of Evaluation Users*; and the *1998 Follow-Up Activities on Strengthening the Department's Feedback System* in 1998. CODE Board members' comments after the presentation of a 1st draft in Jan. 2006 led to a substantial re-focusing and redrafting. Action Plan priorities were also aligned with recommendations from the 2005 OPEV paper 'Toward Closing Evaluation Gaps at the African Development Bank' (see Annex 3 for relevant excerpts).

¹⁰ Source: OPEV "Monitoring and Evaluation of PRSP's in Regional Member Countries: Training Needs", Assessment; June, 2006

¹¹ Practices of organizations consulted for this exercise included the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank, United Nations for Development Program. (UNDP), and the Development Bank of Southern Africa's (DBSA), which notably, undertook major efforts to intensify its knowledge-related activities in the region.

3.1.2 The Action Plan was designed in consultation with Bank officials and consultants who are in charge of Bank-wide or Department specific knowledge management, dissemination, and communication initiatives that are in various stages of readiness for Board approval – namely those related to the *Knowledge Bank Working Group*, the draft *Communication Strategy of the Bank Group*, and the draft *PDRE Proposal for Strengthening the Research Capacity of the Bank and expansion of its research program*¹².

3.2 Action Plan Strategic Objectives

3.2.1 This Action Plan is organized around three major strategic objectives that correspond to three *pillars* of actions. These are:

- I. To better meet the internal needs of the Bank for more accessible, relevant, timely, and usable evaluation findings, lessons, and recommendations, and to increase their relevance and utilization in operations (*Pillar 1: 'Bank Internal Feedback'*)
- II. To fully exploit advanced information technology and develop new evaluation products in order to enhance knowledge-sharing and lessons-learning for various evaluation user groups within the Bank and in RMCs (*Pillar 2: 'General Dissemination'*).
- III. To improve the quality of evaluations, M&E, and Results Based Management in RMCs and at the Bank through targeted capacity building and partnerships (*Pillar 3: 'Capacity Building and Partnerships'*).

3.2.2 The Plan proposes a set of concrete actions for 2006-08, with several 'quick hits'. At the early stages the plan focuses on Bank internal processes, particularly on improving feedback of evaluation into operations and more demand-orientation of evaluation products. It addresses perceptions in the Bank that OPEV may have been too isolated in the past.

3.2.3 The Action Plan plays an important role in realizing the President's vision of transforming the Bank gradually from a '*project bank*' into a '*knowledge bank*' through recognizing evaluation as an important tool for generating knowledge assets and sharing them for improved development effectiveness.

3.2.4 The Plan's concrete initiatives and actions are expected to increase OPEV's visibility and effectiveness within the Bank and to enable the department to be recognized as a major contributor to knowledge on development interventions in Africa.

3.3 Action Plan Details

3.3.1 The actions proposed in this Action Plan focus on more short- and medium-term activities in 2006 and early 2007, ie. Phase 1. These actions particularly address improvements in Bank internal feedback (*pillar 1*, actions 1-11 below). They also include some actions to initiate work and more carefully assess a range of potential extended activities under pillars 2

¹² African Development Bank, Development Research Department. *Strengthening the Research Capacity of the Bank: Towards Making the Bank a Stronger Knowledge-Based Institution* (2005).

and 3, i.e. general knowledge management (action 12); and capacity building and partnerships (actions 13-15). Extended activities could be implemented in a second phase, which would be starting in 2007/08.

3.3.2 In sum, the following short- and medium term actions are proposed for *Phase 1*.

Proposed Actions

Pillar 1: Bank Internal Feedback

1. Assessing the demand for OPEV evaluation products
2. Synthesis of lessons learnt by sector and region
3. 'Just-in-time' evaluations
4. Enhancing relevance and timeliness of regular OPEV evaluations to address 'evolving' topics
5. Expanding OPEV presence and comments in SMCs and IDWG meetings
6. Organizing evaluation feedback workshops for Operations Complexes
7. Enhancing OPEV input into ESW and development effectiveness assessments
8. Improving dissemination OPEV sharing newsletter
9. OPEV intra-bank web-site spruce-up
10. Ensuring OPEV staffing for KM and main-streaming of evaluation
11. CODE, Board, and Bank Management related actions

Pillar 2: General Dissemination

12. Expanded dissemination to internal and external users (technical improvements; range of OPEV products).

Pillar 3: Capacity Building and Partnerships

13. Improved evaluation capacity in RMCs
14. Improved self-evaluation, M&E, and RBM capacity within the Bank
15. Enhanced development partnership on M&E capacity development and joint evaluations in RMCs

Pillar 1: Enhanced Feedback of Evaluation Findings, Lessons, and Recommendations into the Bank's Operational Activities ('Bank Internal Feedback')

Demand-Oriented

3.3.3 Evaluation must interact with the design of new policies, programs, and projects in "real time" to optimize its relevance. Closing the feedback 'loop' involves early identification of operational priorities and demand for information; mainstreaming evaluation, lessons-learning and knowledge-sharing in key Bank business processes; and delivering timely responses.

3.3.4 First and foremost, OPEV will give priority to how evaluations and their feedback can more effectively meet the demands of the intended users within the Bank, in particular in the operations complexes. Rather than *pushing* its products, OPEV will try to follow more the *pull* from Operations and other key clients.

3.3.5 While a clear priority would be given to Bank internal demand, the need of clients in RMCs will have to be better acknowledged in the medium- to long-term. Many questions have been raised why so few Member Governments apparently have little interest in OPEV products?

Action 1

3.3.6 In the coming months OPEV will carefully assess the in-house demand for evaluation information by sector & theme. In this context OPEV's different groups of clients would be better defined and related to specific evaluation 'products'. Who are OPEV's prime target audiences and what products are relevant for whom?¹³ In the medium term, OPEV will make an assessment of the evaluation feedback needs of RMC Governments and other development partners. OPEV intends to involve the Bank's country offices to get to the bottom of this question.

Synthesis of Lessons Learnt

3.3.7 In order to facilitate the utilization of its evaluation findings OPEV intends to improve in the coming months the synthesis of lessons learnt and the compilation of best practices, including those from self-evaluations. While drawing initially mainly from in-house OPEV evaluation products, OPEV would increasingly make use of those lessons and best practices identified by partner evaluation institutions, if applicable for the Bank. Linking up with partners may be done in the form of exchange of visiting scholars, joint evaluations etc.

Action 2

3.3.8 Specifically, OPEV will define for the Bank what constitutes a good 'lesson learnt' and 'best practice' and assess major gaps. The availability and relevance of all available synthesized lessons learnt and best practices at OPEV will be assessed, and lessons learnt and recommendations from OPEV documents that haven't been 'mined' so far will be extracted. OPEV will link up with other evaluation organizations to obtain lessons and best practices on different topics of major interest to AfDB. Overall, OPEV will improve the regular synthesis and updating of lessons learnt and best practices.

Emerging Evaluation Themes and 'Just-in-time' Evaluations

3.3.9 OPEV is increasingly being challenged by CODE, Management, and Operations to address the accelerated demand for expertise and information on evolving political issues. New themes include post-conflict situations, fragile states, corruption, impact of globalization, and assistance to mineral-rich countries. In most of these areas OPEV currently has little evaluative experience and material.

¹³ For example, there are users that require information for decision making such as the Board and top management of the Bank; there are users that seek to apply the lessons learnt from the evaluation to on going or new interventions such as the operations complexes; there are users that an overall policy interest in the study (such as POPR); and there are users that have research interest (such as PDRE).

3.3.10 OPEV may have to better align its evaluations with current themes and provide for more 'just-in-time' information to increase the relevance of its products. This can be achieved by either embarking on a new set of 'just-in-time' evaluations and reviews (as has already been started with the review of Joint Assistance Strategies and Harmonization), as well as by adjusting its regular evaluations to better address evolving issues. As far as the latter is concerned, OPEV could try to refocus its PPERs, country sector evaluations, and other higher level evaluations to better cover evolving and high-demand issues. One idea may be to generate some (semi-) annual themes for PPERs/CAEs and set up small ad-hoc intra-departmental thematic teams etc.. Also, the annual sample of evaluations could be biased more towards projects and programs with 'current topics', e.g. putting emphasis for PCR/PPER production in post-conflict countries, mineral rich countries etc. All this would require moving away from a relatively narrow project and program focus to a broader issues oriented agenda. This also may require a change of evaluation guidelines.

3.3.11 While a new 'just-in time' demand orientation is in principle welcome, it raises some other questions. The ability of OPEV to fulfill such often short-term demands by various groups of clients is currently rather limited, and relies heavily on the availability of relevant and recent past evaluations and the assembled lessons learnt and best practices, either at OPEV itself or its sister organizations. More needs to be done to properly position OPEV in this increasingly accelerated and ultimately almost infinite demand for all kinds of information and data. The core functions of evaluation versus those of research and general information and knowledge management and the trade-offs of focusing on various priorities even within OPEV's broad mandate have to be examined and laid out more clearly.

Actions 3 and 4

3.3.12 Action 3: OPEV will better examine the need and capacity for 'just-in-time' evaluations, how to possibly carry them out, and mechanisms how to prioritize issues. It will also assess the comparative advantage of OPEV in providing this kind of information viz-a-viz other units of the Bank (e.g. PDRE, PDSU). Specifically, OPEV will use the current Joint Assistance Strategy / Harmonization Review as a pilot exercise of a 'just-in-time' evaluation/review and prepare a report on lessons learnt from that exercise for future similar studies.

3.3.13 Action 4: In the next months OPEV will also devise a specific strategy to enhance the relevance and timeliness of regular evaluations to address 'evolving' topics and develop some key 'themes' and thematic areas to guide its regular evaluations. In this context it is also proposed to institutionalize 'trigger' mechanisms for Management and Operations Complexes to notify OPEV on upcoming new policy, program, and project initiatives.

In-house feed-back through more interactions ('closing the project cycle loop')

3.3.14 OPEV is sometimes perceived in the Bank as being too isolated from Operations. To overcome this perception (or the real isolation) several ways are envisaged to increase the visibility, interaction, and ultimate impact of OPEV within the Bank. This ranges from better attendance of SMC meetings, thematic workshops for operations, to more specific work inputs

into ESW and other activities. Of special importance would be enhanced evaluability of projects, programs, and policies.

3.3.15 For instance, the department could organize more Evaluation Feedback Workshops for operational staff to support the preparation of project briefs, identification, preparation, and appraisal reports. The workshops would provide a platform to discuss OPEV's evaluation lessons, CODE-approved recommendations, and follow-up on actions that are to be used in subsequent country, sector, thematic, and policy papers. The outcome of the feedback workshops for operational staff would be included as part of the department's Annual Report. Such workshops could be carried out before major project and program activities or when CSPs are prepared by Operations. This entails also closer coordination between OPEV and Operational Complexes to enhance real-time feedback.

3.3.16 It is expected that OPEV would enhance its internal evaluation feedback and dissemination within the Bank, concurrently with planned improvements in quality assurance at entry. This could be achieved through expanded peer and other internal reviews during design and preparation of projects and programs. An effective peer review system would foster cross-department learning from more experienced experts.

Actions 5 - 7

3.3.17 Action 5: OPEV will expand its comments and presence in SMCs and IDWG meetings. OPEV will develop guidelines and targets for more engagement in these meetings, e.g. on the scope of comments (checklists), on sampling and coverage of projects, and on how to enhance evaluability. OPEV would link up with the planned expansion of the peer review system of quality at entry.

3.3.18 Action 6: Starting in the second part of 2006 OPEV will organize Evaluation Feedback Workshops for Operations Complexes. At least two workshops per year will be organized, where evaluation findings will be shared and comments invited. Major issues raised during these Feedback Workshops will be summarized in the annual report.

3.3.19 Action 7: In the coming months OPEV will strategize on how to contribute more effectively to Economic Sector Work (ESW) and report on its conclusions. OPEV will also dialogue with POPR¹⁴ to avoid 'disconnect' in development outcome ratings in APPR assessments and to reduce the over-optimism of operations task manager ratings

Dissemination and Accessibility of Key Evaluation Products and Information

3.3.20 Two activities on dissemination of key evaluation products deserve priority in the next few months, that is, first, the expanded distribution and assessment of the usefulness of the 'OPEV Sharing' newsletter, and, secondly, improvements on the intra-Bank OPEV web-site which would improve accessibility to evaluation products by adding content, changing forms,

¹⁴ Or rather ORPC (Operations Policies and Compliance Department) after the July 1, 2006 restructuring of the Bank.

and improving navigation and search functions. This would be done in cooperation with CIMM under the current redesign of the intra-net site.

Actions 8 - 9

3.3.21 Action 8: OPEV will expand the distribution of the quarterly ‘OPEV Sharing’ newsletter to task managers and invite and analyze comments on its usefulness and possible improvements.

3.3.22 Action 9: OPEV will address major deficiencies on its current intra-net web-site, and improve the availability of information on the site, the form of presentation, and the navigation.

OPEV Staffing and Mainstreaming of Outreach and Knowledge Management

3.3.23 Enhanced quantity and quality of feedback of evaluations into operations depends above all on sufficient, well-trained, and committed OPEV personnel.

3.3.24 The overall responsibility for feedback, dissemination, and M&E capacity building at OPEV will be that of a staff Knowledge Management Officer who is currently being recruited. In the event that the recruitment of the officer should be further delayed, interim assistance through recruitment of a consultant will be sought to focus on the immediate activities that enhance feedback and dissemination within the Bank.

3.3.25 Outreach and knowledge management cannot be left to the Knowledge Management Officer alone, but needs to be mainstreamed among all OPEV staff, particularly the Chief and Principal Evaluation Officers. Awareness would be raised on the necessity of mainstreaming feedback and dissemination in everyday evaluation work and designing evaluations with feedback and dissemination strategies in mind. Officers would be assigned certain fields of expertise, sectors, countries, or regions in which they may become responsible for availability and content of the lessons learnt and best practices. All OPEV staff would be involved in contributing to the preparation of summaries, retrospectives, and “OPEV Sharing” from their respective evaluation products. Thus, the dissemination function will be inbuilt in the staff work program

Actions 10

3.3.26 Action 10: OPEV will ensure appropriate staffing and mainstreaming for enhanced feedback and dissemination. If necessary OPEV will hire interim assistance (consultants) until the anticipated new full-time officer staff would be available. Responsibilities for feedback and dissemination would be mainstreamed among OPEV staff and would become part of their annual workplans.

CODE, Board, and Bank Management Related Activities

3.3.27 Improved access to OPEV's evaluation findings *per se* does not guarantee that the reported lessons learnt and recommendations will be adopted, adapted, and applied. For this to happen, lessons- and knowledge-sharing have to be embedded in work processes and Bank business culture. It is, therefore, necessary that Management exercise more strategic direction and oversight to ensure that evaluation products are well applied in Bank operations and policy formulation and revision.

3.3.28 CODE should request from Management to issue an operational directive to enhance the utilization of major OPEV's findings in Bank lending and non-lending policies, strategies and operational activities and request OPEV to regularly follow-up on their implementation. (This reflects a prior CODE recommendation). This would include the CODE Chairperson's Summaries. The directive should, at the minimum, cover the following actions to be taken by management:

- (1) Define responsibility and accountability for disseminating and integrating OPEV findings (lessons and recommendations) into Bank core business processes and operations;
- (2) Establish a strategic approach in mainstreaming evaluation findings utilization from an operational perspective (the '*demand side*');
- (3) Ensure that incentives are aligned with management responsibilities, down to Task Manager's levels;
- (4) Set monitorable time-bound action plans for implementing OPEV findings; and
- (5) Systematically prepare its response on major OPEV products presented to CODE.

3.3.29 These responsibilities should be shared between POPR and Operations Complexes, depending on the type and scope of the evaluation products. OPEV would have the responsibility to monitor the utilization and implementation of overall evaluation findings in Operations and, in particular, of CODE recommendations in the Chairman's Summaries.

3.3.30 In order to facilitate the work of CODE, the Board, and Management, OPEV would prepare syntheses of 3-4 pages on major OPEV's evaluation reports presented for consideration to CODE. These syntheses would be posted on the websites. They would also be used as "fast track" of lessons learnt for Managers and CODE members. This initiative was piloted recently for the CSP review process and the Ghana country assistance evaluation, which highlighted the implications of the strategy and the policy affected by the evaluation. In addition, an induction program for new CODE members, introducing them to the evaluation framework within the Bank would also be considered, as well as the organization of special Board meetings on critical evaluation issues. This initiative is being practiced by other multilateral partner institutions and worth consideration within the Bank.

Action 11

3.3.31 CODE requested Bank Management to provide an operational directive to implement CODE's decisions and to regularly incorporate evaluation findings in the design and implementation of the Bank Group's future operations. Records of CODE meetings as well as CODE annual reports would continue to be posted in the DARMS. OPEV would ensure the follow-up of the implementation of CODE's decisions and the integration of evaluation findings through the review process of the quality of appraisal reports of projects and programs. It is also proposed that Management action records would take account of and reflect CODE Chairman's concluding remarks and Management's response to the evaluations. This entails the development of a separate OPEV product for easy tracking, the major findings of which will be disseminated as part of OPEV's Annual Report on Evaluation Findings and Results.

3.3.32 To improve reporting to CODE, the Board, and Management 3-4 page syntheses (lessons learnt) on major evaluation products would be prepared by OPEV in future on a regular basis. To familiarize Board members with OPEV and evaluation new Board members would be systematically introduced to the Evaluation function at the Bank, and special Board meetings would be organized on critical evaluation issues.

Pillar 2: Improved OPEV Dissemination of Evaluation Products to better serve internal and external users ('General Dissemination')

3.3.33 Effective evaluation lessons and knowledge-sharing requires the systematic capture of lessons and best practices from evaluations; excellent organization and storage of development knowledge, lessons, and information for easy access; and, transfer and dissemination of these outputs to internal and external end users with appropriate methods. This second pillar focuses on two areas, first, the enhancement and extension of electronic storage and dissemination of evaluation lessons and, second, the development of new evaluation products through strategic expansion of databases, websites and publications.

3.3.34 Given the rapid advances on usage of technological and electronic tools for dissemination and knowledge management OPEV seeks to advance its electronic evaluation information management and dissemination. Among such efforts are the need to revamp the department's information databases, retrieval systems, and websites so as to more effectively disseminate the department's results to targeted audiences¹⁵, on-demand, and in real-time. With the launch of the Bank's I-NET project, and the impending Data Warehouse and Balance Scorecard initiatives, OPEV now needs to further restructure its information resources to the new technological environment. In addition, new evaluation products would be developed and disseminated to make optimal use of new feedback and dissemination channels and media.

3.3.35 A number of specific activities have been tentatively identified for this pillar (see Annex 2 for details). This Action Plan proposes that OPEV's electronic evaluation dissemination activities and new products be gradually extended from 2006 to 2008, with a first effort of improving OPEV's intra-net web-site starting immediately (Action 9 under pillar 1). The exact

¹⁵ OPEV's targeted audience mainly includes the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank, Operational staff, RMCs, and key partner institutions.

scope and priorities for the remainder of the activities under this pillar depend on various factors that are still uncertain and largely outside of OPEV control, including the ultimate human and budgetary resources available for the KM function at OPEV and the evaluation product demand analysis still to be carried out (Action 1 under pillar 1). Therefore, it is proposed that two more specific resource-aligned action plans will be developed by OPEV on electronic dissemination and expansion of the range of OPEV publications until the end of 2006. They will be implemented in subsequent years.

Action 12

3.3.36 OPEV would develop a specific action plan for extending electronic management and dissemination of its products, assessing technical priorities, prime target groups, and options under different resource envelopes. OPEV would also develop a specific action plan on expanding the range of OPEV publications.

Pillar 3: Targeted and Coordinated Efforts to Improve the Quality of Evaluations, M&E, and RBM in RMCs and at the Bank through Capacity Building and Partnerships ('M&E Capacity Development')

3.3.37 The main thrust of activities under this pillar is for OPEV to contribute selectively, meaning 'targeted', to evaluation and M&E/RBM capacity development in RMCs and at the Bank, in line with OPEV's mandate. Important objectives under this pillar will be to enhance RMC and Bank capacity for and quality of self-evaluations of Bank policies, programs, and projects (ie. PRCs), and to ensure the evaluability of major Bank activities. Capacity building would happen in partnerships with international and sub-regional development and evaluation organizations, commensurate with OPEV's comparative advantage in this field.

Improved Evaluation Capacity in RMCs and at the Bank

3.3.38 The first part of this initiative, the M&E capacity building, would cover among others a week-long training program in 2006 for RMC practitioners of evaluation and M&E that will be organized in collaboration with the Joint Africa Institute and the African Development Institute, and, if successful, be replicated in subsequent years. The focus of this year's training will be on national development / PRSP M&E. Building on a recent needs assessment for M&E capacity building, OPEV will also coordinate and support M&E capacity development in collaboration with other development partners, such as the World Bank and UNDP. This should include building-up and maintaining centers of excellence in evaluation in Africa. OPEV also would expand its activities in supporting the African Evaluation Association and regional/national evaluation networks participation. In addition OPEV strives to enhance links with national program and evaluation offices and encourage borrowers to take ownership of evaluations. Annual evaluation seminars and trainings would be conducted. In-house Bank support for self-evaluation and M&E/RBM and a possible annual M&E/RBM day at the Bank would complement RMC targeted activities of capacity building.

Cooperation with Development Partners

3.3.39 Cooperation with development partners on evaluation and M&E will be crucial for capacity development and improved evaluation in RMCs, given extensive activities by others in this field, ongoing donor harmonization efforts, and OPEV's limited resources. They will take the form of regular sharing of experiences in various fora, particularly at RMC and sub-regional levels, and more frequent joint or parallel evaluations in support of harmonization efforts. This entails in particular working with partners to harmonize evaluation methods and work programs; cooperating in joint or parallel evaluations; and supporting professional networking. OPEV also intends to increasingly play an advocacy role for ECD and work with country departments to mainstream capacity building in RMCs.

Internal AfDB M&E Support

3.3.40 Within the Bank the responsibility for M&E is shared by various departments, with the operations complexes and POPR¹⁶ focusing more on the monitoring and self-evaluation functions, and OPEV on independent evaluation. M&E capacity building and training should be shared along similar lines, with the operational complexes and POPR mainly responsible for promoting M&E and related capacity building and training functions in operations, incl. self-evaluation, and OPEV mainly playing an advisory and catalytic role while at the same time ensuring the evaluability of projects and programs. This division of labour would clearly help to mainstream the M&E function and to ensure ownership by the operations departments.

Actions 13 - 15

3.3.41 Action 13: To improve evaluation capacity in RMCs OPEV will carry out annual training weeks of RMC officials on M&E, in collaboration with JAI and ADI. This effort will ultimately be supported by annual evaluation seminars and the development of better links with national program and evaluation offices.

3.3.42 Action 14: OPEV will devise a plan and strategy in the coming months to play a more 'catalytic' role within the Bank for improved self-evaluation, M&E, and RBM. The organization of an annual M&E/RBM day at the Bank will be considered.

3.3.43 Action 15: OPEV will expand development partnerships on evaluation and M&E with international and sub-regional organizations in RMCs. OPEV will assess the possibility of increasingly carrying out joint or parallel evaluations in RMCs and submit a report on it.

3.4 Linking this Strategy with other Bank-internal Initiatives

3.4.1 The initiatives and activities proposed in this OPEV Strategy are designed to build on and become closely coordinated with several on-going major Bank-wide initiatives on knowledge management, research, support for the new Chief Economist's Office, and communication (*TFIR*

¹⁶ Or rather ORPC (Operations Policies and Compliance Department) after the July 1, 2006 restructuring of the Bank.

- *Knowledge Bank Working Group, development of a new Communication Strategy of the Bank Group, development of a PDRE Proposal for Strengthening the Research Capacity of the Bank and expansion of its research program.*)

3.4.2 There could be substantial benefits from working together and taking account of the departments' complementarities, particularly in light of jointly promoting development effectiveness and results orientation. For example, OPEV, POPR and PDRE¹⁷ could collaborate more closely on topics ranging from the Bank's optimal contributions to attaining the MDGs within the harmonization agenda, better management for RMC national level results and measurement of progress, and ensuring the quality of analytical work for overall enhanced knowledge generation and management at the Bank. This could definitely strengthen the formulation, validation and ultimately utilization of OPEV evaluation findings and lessons learnt.

3.4.3 In assessing the development effectiveness of the Bank's interventions, there is much scope for better OPEV and POPR coordination, particularly in harmonizing their methodologies on how to measure development effectiveness and portfolio performance at the Bank in order to reduce future disconnects in performance ratings. Again, this could raise the credibility, scope for dissemination, and utilization of each department's products. For instance, OPEV's synthesized evaluation findings from PCR notes, PPERs, and other higher level evaluations could be better integrated into the APPR, which could increase their dissemination potential substantially. Conversely, OPEV's evaluations could better reflect findings from the APPR, taking into account Quality at Entry (QEA), Quality of Supervision (QSA), and Quality at Exit Assessments.

3.4.4 As a matter of principle, however, OPEV's independence in its methodologies, arriving at independent conclusions, and disclosure and dissemination of its findings, need to be preserved even while participating in these collaborative efforts.

3.5 Responsibilities and Resources

3.5.1 The specific roles, responsibilities, and funding levels for the implementation of this Action Plan would be included as part of OPEV's FY2006-FY2008 Three-Year Rolling Work Program and beyond to facilitate the Action Plan's implementation by phases. It is expected that most activities listed in the action plan (ie. phase 1) can be financed and implemented within the current resource envelope, particularly if the recruitment of the new Knowledge Management Officer can be ensured for 2006. On the other hand, many of the suggested extended dissemination and publications options under *pillar 2* (Annex 2), as well as most of the evaluation and M&E capacity building efforts (*pillar 3*) hinge on the mobilization of additional resources. The extent to which the proposed activities would (a) be mainstreamed among Evaluation Officers, (b) require special efforts from Evaluation Officers, (c) be carried out by the new KM Officer and/or consultants, and (d) require additional funds is detailed in the Action Plan Matrix in Annex 1 (last column).

¹⁷ Or rather ORPC and EDRE after the July 1, 2006 restructuring of the Bank.

3.5.2 With regard to other Bank organizational units that may be expected to contribute to activities under this Action Plan, it may be necessary that their work programs include the personnel and resources required to collaborate on some of the planned initiatives and actions. This may call for closer interaction with concerned organizational units in the preparation of annual work programs and budgets to respond to the specific activities under this Action Plan.

3.6 **Expected Outcomes and Self-evaluation**

3.6.1 Phasing: As stated above, the implementation of the initiatives and actions will be phased, with the initial focus on improving the effectiveness of feedback and dissemination within the Bank, and then proceeding to the eventual goal of meeting the needs of external partners in evaluation and users for OPEV evaluation products.

3.6.2 In its initial phase Action Plan implementation is expected to produce three major outcomes that support better-quality Bank operations and improve results on the ground:

- Better utilization of evaluation findings and lessons learnt by Bank operational units;
- A coherent strategy for dissemination techniques and product options to expand the reach of a variety of different clients, internally and externally, incl. clients in RMCs and development partners.
- A contribution to enhanced RMCs' capacity for evaluations, M&E, and RBM, particularly through enhanced collaboration with development partners on capacity building and joint evaluations.

3.6.3 Strategy self-evaluation (review): OPEV will carry out periodic reviews of the Strategy's implementation by assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the activities being undertaken. It will also introduce refinements based on feedback received, the Bank's operational environment, technology advances, and RMCs' priorities.

4. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

4.1 This Action Plan on Evaluation Feedback and Knowledge Management plays an important role in realizing the President's vision of transforming the Bank from a *'project bank'* into a *'knowledge bank'*, through recognizing evaluation as an important tool for generating knowledge assets and sharing knowledge for improved development effectiveness. The Action Plan is designed to more effectively disseminate OPEV's evaluation findings and lessons learnt to targeted users, both internally and externally, in a phased approach.

4.2 The Action Plan proposes concrete activities for 2006-08, with early focus on Bank internal processes, particularly for improving feedback of evaluation into operations and more demand-orientation of evaluation products. It addresses perceptions in the Bank that OPEV may have been too isolated in the past. Importantly, the Action Plan will enable OPEV to effectively follow-up the ADF-X Action Plan and beyond, and to define OPEV's operations better in the context of Bank-wide TFIR and other initiatives to enhance Knowledge Management and

Communications. Obviously feedback and dissemination should never become a goal of their own. OPEV will always ensure the right balance between generation of high quality primary evaluations, synthesis of relevant findings, lessons learnt, and best practices, and the feedback and dissemination of this knowledge.

4.3 This action plan is expected to contribute significantly to increase OPEV's visibility and effectiveness within the Bank and to enable the department to be recognized as a major contributor to knowledge on development interventions in Africa.

OPEV Evaluation Feedback and Knowledge Management Strategy

Short and Medium-Term Action Plan 2006-2008 (Matrix)

Main Actions and Activities	Target Date	Responsibilities	Resources Required
<u>PILLAR I</u>			<i>(see legend at bottom of table)</i>
1. Assessing demand for OPEV evaluation products			
1.1 In-house demand at AfDB	Nov. 2006	OPEV	EO +
1.2 External demand – particularly in RMCs	Sept.. 2007	OPEV / AfDB Country Offices	KMO
2. Synthesis of lessons learnt [by sector and region (country?)]			
2.1 Define for the Bank what constitutes a good ‘lesson learnt’ and best practices; assess major gaps	Oct. 2006	OPEV and other Bank units; in connection with demand assessment (1.1)	KMO EO *
2.2 Assess availability and relevance of all available synthesized lessons learnt and best practices at OPEV	Nov. 2006	OPEV/ Principal evaluators / KM consultant	KMO EO *
2.3 Extract lessons learnt and recommendations from OPEV documents that haven’t been ‘mined’ so far	Dec. 2006	OPEV/ Principal evaluators / KM consultant	KMO EO *
2.4 Link up with other evaluation institutions to obtain lessons and best practices on different topics of major interest to AfDB	March 2007	OPEV/ KM consultant	KMO EO *
2.5 Improve the regular synthesis and updating of lessons learnt and best practices	2006 onwards	OPEV – KM officer	KMO EO *
3. ‘Just-in-time’ evaluations (JITE)			
3.1 Define ‘Just-in-time’ evaluations (JITE) and assess JITE needs, prioritization mechanisms, as well as role and responsibility of OPEV in providing this kind of information viz-a-viz other units of the Bank (e.g. PDRE, PDSU)	Sept. 2006	OPEV and other Bank units; in connection with demand assessment (1.1)	EO +
3.2 Carry out JITE pilot exercise [possibly the ongoing Joint Assistance Strategy Review] and prepare report on lessons learnt with pilot	Oct.- Dec. 2006	OPEV	EO + UA +

EO * Mainstreamed among OPEV evaluators (Evaluation Officers)

EO + Special efforts required by OPEV evaluators; special reports to be prepared

KMO Carried out by new OPEV KM officer and/or consultant

UA + Additional funds required

Main Actions and Activities	Target Date	Responsibilities	Pillars
4. Enhance relevance and timeliness of regular OPEV evaluations to address ‘evolving’ topics			
4.1 Devise strategy to increase relevance	Nov. 2006	OPEV	EO +
4.2 Develop some key ‘themes’ / thematic areas’ to be included in regular evaluations	Nov. 2006	OPEV/ Operations	EO *
4.3 Institutionalize ‘trigger’ mechanisms for Operations Complexes to notify OPEV on upcoming new policy, program, and project initiatives	Second part of 2006	OPEV/ Operations	KMO
5. Expand OPEV presence and comments in SMCs and IDWG meetings			
5.1 Finalize guidelines and targets for more OPEV engagement (e.g. nature of comments, checklist, coverage, OPEV entry point in project approval process)	July 2006	OPEV	EO *
5.2 Increase OPEV presence in SMCs and IDWG meetings	Immediately	OPEV	EO +
6. Organize Evaluation Feedback Workshops for Operations Complexes			
6.1 Conduct at least two workshops per year, disseminate results and solicit comments	At least 2 per year, starting in Oct. 2006	OPEV/ Principal evaluators / KM consultant	KMO EO *
6.2 Synthesize Feedback Workshop results in Annual report	1 st quarter 2007	OPEV/ Principal evaluators / KM consultant	KMO
7. Enhance input of OPEV in ESW and Development Effectiveness assessments			
7.1 Strategize on how OPEV could more effectively contribute to Economic Sector Work (ESW); submit report	Dec., 2006	OPEV / PDRE, PSDU, POPR etc.	EO + KMO
7.2 OPEV to coordinate Development Effectiveness assessments and ratings criteria with POPR	Dec. 2006	OPEV / POPR	EO +

- EO * Mainstreamed among OPEV evaluators (Evaluation Officers)
- EO + Special efforts required by OPEV evaluators; special reports to be prepared
- KMO Carried out by new OPEV KM officer and/or consultant
- UA + Additional funds required

Main Actions and Activities	Target Date	Responsibilities	Pillars
8. 'OPEV Sharing' newsletter			
8.1 Expand distribution to task managers and collect comments on usefulness	July 2006 onwards	OPEV/ KM consultant	KMO EO *
8.2 Consider changes in format and content	2006	OPEV/ KM cons.	KMO
9. Improve OPEV intra-AfDB web-site to increase coverage and accessibility			
9.1 Assess content and form	Oct. 2006	OPEV	KMO EO *
9.2 Improve navigation (search functions etc.)	2006-7	OPEV / CIMM	KMO
10. Ensure OPEV staffing, awareness, and responsibilities for evaluation feedback and knowledge management			
10.1 Hire interim assistance (consultants) until anticipated new full-time staff would be available	June 2006	OPEV	-
10.2 Mainstream some responsibilities for dissemination among OPEV staff	July 2006	OPEV	-
11. CODE and Board related activities			
11.1 OPEV to monitor and report through its annual report on management's adoption of recommendations approved by CODE	Jan. 2007	OPEV	KMO Director
11.2 Disseminate CODE Chair-persons' Summaries and Management's Response to Operations Complexes	July 2006 onwards	OPEV	KMO
11.3 Improve OPEV reporting to CODE: regular preparation of 3-4 page syntheses (lessons learnt) on major evaluation products	July 2006 onwards	OPEV	EO * KMO
11.4 Systematically introduce new Board members to Evaluation at the Bank	Upon necessity	OPEV	KMO Director EO *
11.5 Organize special Board meetings on critical evaluation issues	At least 2 per year, starting in 1 st quarter 2007	OPEV	EO *

- EO * Mainstreamed among OPEV evaluators (Evaluation Officers)
- EO + Special efforts required by OPEV evaluators; special reports to be prepared
- KMO Carried out by new OPEV KM officer and/or consultant
- UA + Additional funds required

Main Actions and Activities	Target Date	Responsibilities	Pillar
<u>PILLAR II</u>			
12. Expand dissemination and scope of OPEV evaluation products to internal and external users			
12.1 Develop action plan on priorities, prime target groups, and resource needs for extending electronic dissemination of OPEV products	Dec. 2006	OPEV/ KM officer and/or consultants	KMO
12.2 Implement action plan on enhanced electronic dissemination	2007-8	OPEV/ KM officer and/or Consultants	KMO UA +
12.3 Develop action plan on expanding the range of OPEV publications	Dec. 2006	OPEV/KM officer	KMO EO *
12.4 Implement action plan on expanded range of OPEV publications	2007-8	OPEV/KM officer	KMO EO * UA +
<u>PILLAR III</u>			
13. Improve evaluation capacity in RMCs			
13.1 Annual Training of RMC officials on M&E (for 2006: PRSP M&E)	2006 and beyond	OPEV, JAI	EO + KMO UA +
13.2 Evaluation seminars	Periodically		EO + UA +
13.3 Develop better links with national program and evaluation offices	Starting immediately	OPEV; KM officer; all evaluation staff	KMO EO *
14. Improve self-evaluation, M&E, and RBM capacity within the Bank			
14.1 Devise a plan and strategy for OPEV to play a more 'catalytic' role within AfDB for improved self-evaluation, M&E, and RBM	1 st quarter 2007	OPEV	EO + EO *
14.2 Organize an annual M&E/RBM day at the Bank	2007	OPEV / POPR	EO + UA +
15. Enhance development partnerships on evaluation and M&E capacity development in RMCs			
15.1 Expand partnerships on M&E capacity development with international and sub-regional organizations	2007 and beyond	OPEV	KMO EO *
15.2 Assess the possibility of increasingly carrying out joint and parallel evaluations; report on it	Dec. 2006	OPEV	EO *

Knowledge Management and Dissemination of Evaluation Products

(Potential Extended Activities)

1 Intensification of Electronic Dissemination

1.1 Strategic expansion of databases and websites

1.1.1 This initiative would require expansion of OPEV's web-based content beyond the scope of what is currently available online. As part of the ongoing upgrade of the department's websites, some 126 documents were posted on the department's websites out of the 400 documents that the department had produced since 1987. Moving forward, the entire set of documents needs to be made available online in an easily accessible, navigable, and usable format. A systematic electronic collection mechanism needs to be employed to ensure that all of OPEV's evaluation-related outputs are centrally stored and made accessible from an electronic space. This effort would help to enhance the department's information retrieval procedure but would require CIMM's programming support, taking account of the Bank's Disclosure Policy.

1.1.2 The department would update its products in the OECD/DAC Evaluation Inventory, Development Gateway, and create more robust links to other agencies on its websites. OPEV would also assess the coherence between the internal and external sites, incorporate the proposed initiatives, and create dedicated websites. The I-NET project has presented a unique opportunity to undertake this task and granted access to the new environment to effectively implement the proposed initiatives, including building websites for major ongoing evaluations including Approach Papers, specific methodologies employed, information on pre- and evaluation workshops, CODE Chairman Summaries, Bank Management's Response, and feedback from regional member country officials, and other stakeholders.

1.1.3 Better content segmentation needs to occur on the department's website to better align content demand with supply. This can be done by developing dedicated portlets for specific audiences, profiling and segmenting content for specific audiences, to facilitate easier access. This would facilitate web browser efficiency and download time.

1.2 Online discussion space, list serves, and mailing lists

The department would consider using online discussion spaces for some of its evaluations. This tool offers a low cost option for tapping into knowledge for ongoing evaluations. For example, the department may undertake an online discussion space on recent experiences with randomized impact evaluation experiments. The department would use electronic broadcast messaging systems and build e-mail alert functionality on its websites to facilitate the electronic dissemination for new postings on the department's websites. This would ensure sustained dissemination to registered subscribers. The department would create an online option for website visitors to join OPEV's mailing list. Respondents to OPEV's surveys would be provided an opportunity to join the department's mailing list so they can receive information on the department's products and evaluation activities.

1.3 A more accessible and robust lessons retrieval system

1.3.1 Some initiative has been taken in the past to extract and post department's lessons in the intranet. For some reports, the lessons learned, recommendations, and corresponding Project Logical Framework Matrix have been separately extracted and stored in special database, and this retrieval system is available on the intranet. The problem encountered with the system is that at present, it is rarely accessible and needs to remain current with the close collaboration of CIMM. Moving forward,

OPEV's lessons would be vetted and published as stand alone objects, and the background material made more easily accessible. The usage of the lessons learned retrieval system also needs to be assessed to determine whether it is meeting the needs of website visitors.

1.3.2 The department would disclose its project performance ratings data on its external website. Plans are underway at partner organizations. OPEV would consider distributing its performance ratings data as part of sector reviews, CAEs, and RDEs to facilitate use of OPEV's evaluation results in analytic work.

1.3.3 Due to the similarity between this proposal and PDRE's proposal on strengthening the Bank's research capacity, the two departments would work closely together to leverage their complementarities and economies of scale.

1.4 Consolidated data packages for new evaluations

To strengthen the assimilation of OPEV's evaluation results, the department would create standard tables and background materials based on already existing results for new evaluations on a just-in-time basis. OPEV Research support staff assisting with dissemination would work with evaluators and operational staff throughout the evaluation cycle from the evaluation initiation stage to the dissemination stage to facilitate assimilation of key messages into operational work. OPEV Evaluation and Research support staff would be involved in the data analyses and literature review aspects of the evaluation to ensure that existing results are taken into account and/or used in newer evaluations.

1.5 Dedicated websites for major efforts

To provide an opportunity to enhance the dissemination and feedback of interim results during the evaluation process, the department would support preparation of evaluation specific websites that facilitate virtual communication and interaction with stakeholders. It would develop discussion spaces and websites for major products such as the Report on Development Effectiveness, Country Assistance Evaluations, etc., leveraging worldwide evaluation expertise. It would build websites dedicated to these major products as well as the creation of a web space for background papers.

1.6 Development of an Advisory Service and Online Evaluation Resource Center

The department has already made some improvements in its dissemination efforts by setting up the Help Desk (but which is not yet manned). However, given the increased technological sophistication of clients and partners in both developed and developing countries, the Help Desk needs to be transformed into an Advisory Service and Online Resource Center, offering a one-stop-shop on evaluation resources and handling substantive inquiries pertaining to OPEV's evaluations on demand and in real-time. This would require that the department's online resource center is equipped with the right set of tools and skills mix to effectively meet the needs of its web clients.

1.7 Multimedia products: audio and video segments and CD-ROMs

To better capture and disseminate key messages in a stimulating and cost-effective way, the department would undertake multimedia approaches as part of its dissemination efforts. Staff on mission would be equipped with adequate resources to capture evaluation activities on the ground. The department would use video conferencing services for its joint evaluation efforts; and develop CD-ROMs on its performance ratings data, evaluation reports, and video recordings of key evaluation messages. All electronically captured media would be made available online. Their usage would be monitored along with other web performance metrics for cost-efficiencies and management reporting purposes.

1.8 *A comprehensive roster of M&E consultants, national and regional evaluation networks and associations*

The department has just initiated to develop an Evaluation Consultant Directory online that contains names and information on consultants. The database needs to be well developed and to be more robust to include specific technical areas of evaluation specialization, country experiences (not origin), and other important information on national or regional evaluation networks and associations of evaluators in the continent.

1.9 *Dissemination of OPEV Sharing*

The internal dissemination of *OPEV Sharing* would be strengthened and the product would be distributed by e-mail to all Bank staff. *OPEV Sharing* would be externally disseminated to all national program offices, country and regional offices of key partner organizations in Africa, corporate evaluation offices of bilateral and multilateral partner organizations (ECG members), evaluation offices of UN specialized agencies, sub-regional development banks, research institutions in Africa, and other organizations that are involved in evaluation issues and development in Africa. These include university libraries, evaluation associations, etc. *OPEV Sharing* would use the Bank's corporate mailing list (electronic and paper) for its dissemination efforts.

2 Expansion of Publications Options

2.1 *Launch of an OPEV Working Paper Series*

The department would consider introducing new publication products such as a Working Paper series. A lot of information is often generated during the evaluation process, especially background papers produced for major studies. Such products would be converted to Working Papers and disseminated as Working Papers. Besides producing Working Papers on evaluation results, the papers could also include experiences with specific evaluation methodologies in Africa. These could then be used as part of M&ECD efforts, and as part of the proposed Visiting Scholar initiative (discussed later).

2.2 *Institutionalize, Publish, and Disseminate the Bank's Management Responses and Action Record*

The department would systematically capture and store all recommendations derived from its evaluations and monitor management's action. OPEV's annual review of evaluation findings which will include an assessment of Management responses and action record (see Action 3) would also be posted online and disseminated accordingly.

2.3 *Fast track of lessons Learnt and Syntheses of success stories and major evaluation products*

The department would prepare 3-4 page notes on the Bank's success stories and systematically produce syntheses of major evaluation results as "fast track" of lessons learnt to Managers. The department would produce syntheses of good practices and success stories that pull together the main messages of OPEV. Some work has also been undertaken with *OPEV Sharing* and an assessment of its internal usefulness needs to be carried out.

2.4 *Strengthen the department's internal documentation system and evaluation literature collections and repositories*

The department would upgrade the evaluation literature collection at the Public Information Center (PIC) and Bank Library. It would set up information sharing exchange arrangements with libraries and resource centers of multilateral partner institutions, universities, and research centers, in both regional and non-regional countries. This effort would help to strengthen the department's intellectual resource base both in print and online. Currently, the department's documents are in Tunis and Abidjan. The department would undertake an inventory of its documents to determine what is currently available and devise a collection, storage and distribution mechanism accordingly.

2.5 *Report on Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Development (M&ECD)*

To provide a summary of M&ECD activities undertaken by the department during the year, and to monitor progress every year, the department would annually report on M&ECD efforts.