

Evaluation Programme 2020-2021

Introduction

In accordance with the policy for Evaluation of Development Cooperation (February 2016), the purpose of evaluation is to provide accountability for Danish development assistance and to generate learning based on evidence of what works and what does not work in which contexts, and hence improve future development cooperation.

In January 2020, the former Evaluation Department (EVAL) was merged with the technical advisory part of the Department for Quality Assurance (KFU) into the new Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK). The mandate is to improve and expand the quality within management and delivery of Danish development assistance. The vision is to maintain existing operational systems within evaluations and quality assurance, and at the same time increase synergies between the systems, adding a stronger and more systematic approach to the uptake and application of knowledge, learning and analytical capacity.

The evaluation function maintains its independency, impartiality, transparency and quality by adhering to OECD/DACs principles, norms and standards as set out by the evaluation policy. Evaluations are still undertaken by external consultants who are responsible for the contents of the evaluations and their recommendations. All evaluations are published with a Danish summary on a dedicated web site (www.evaluation.dk) and with a management response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. MFA management undertakes a systematic follow-up on the recommendations two years after each evaluation. An annual budget of DKK 15 million is available for evaluations and explorative evaluation studies. ELK has also been assigned the responsibility for MFA's support to development research and the fellowship programme administered by Danida Fellowship Centre.

The establishment of ELK is also seen as a huge opportunity for increasingly bringing evaluations into the learning circles of MFA in order to support the adoption of the Doing Development Differently (DDD) concept currently being developed.

A major challenge for implementation of the current evaluation program is the recent **covid-19 pandemic**. It will influence **methodological aspects** for ongoing and near-future evaluations. There will be restrictions on empirical data collection due to travel restrictions and access to institutions and key stakeholders, not available for interviews. Evaluative exercises will be significantly constrained due to the inability to conduct on-site data collection. New ways of using remote interviewing and desk-based reviews and analyses need to be applied, also new sources of evidence (e.g. "big data"), but transforming the evaluation methodology at least for the next year will still be a challenge. It is also anticipated that we will realize a **conceptual shift** for evaluations in the near future. We will have to reflect on, and factor in, both the direct and indirect causal effects of covid-19 in any type of sector or any type of thematic issue that is subject to planned (and ongoing) evaluations and studies in the current evaluation program. ELK will take these reflections in close dialogue with the evaluation community globally, e.g. within OECD/DAC EvalNet and the Nordic+ evaluation network. It is also expected that a

number of covid-19 specific analyses and studies will be commissioned in the next years, not at least to support adjustments within the portfolio of Danish development assistance.

Recently concluded evaluations and studies

ELK undertakes programme evaluations, thematic evaluations and real-time evaluations. A number of evaluations have recently been finalised (with end dates indicated in brackets, all available at www.evaluation.dk):

- Evaluation of the Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU) 2004-2017 (May 2019).
- Evaluation of the private agricultural sector support (PASS) Tanzania (August 2019).
- Joint Nordic Organisational Assessment of the Nordic Development Fund (NDF) (November 2019).
- Evaluation of the Danish National Action Plans for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (November 2019).
- Joint Evaluation of the Integrated Solutions Model in and around Kalobeyei, Turkana, Kenya (December 2019).
- Evaluation of Agricultural Growth & Employment Programme (AGEP) Bangladesh (January 2020).
- Evaluation de la Coopération au Développement du Danemark avec le Niger (February 2020).

Furthermore, a number of studies/working papers have been finalized, in some cases based on a specific request from a department/embassy:

- India and China in Multilateral Economic Governance (January 2019).
- Use of Organisation Strategies and Results Reporting for Danish Multilateral Partners (December 2019).
- Domestic Pension Funds in Africa: Can they finance the SDGS? (January 2020).
- Recent Trends and Issues in use of Personnel and Partnering for Development (February 2020).
- The Role of Bilateral Development Partners in supporting the Humanitarian-development nexus work in respect of forced displacement (April 2020)

Linked to the work on new trends in development finance, and in collaboration with DIIS and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Secretariat, a number of other publications have also been published or are under preparation. These include a study on use of guaranties within development financing as well as a paper on additionality as part of the ongoing work on evaluation of Blended Finance, coordinated by the OECD/DAC Evaluation Network.

Ongoing and planned evaluations for 2020-2021.

The following context and criteria have guided the outline of the evaluations proposed for 2020/2021:

- The general rule for coverage: over a 5-7 year period the aim is to cover most bilateral assistance – including modalities, large aid programs and countries.
- Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action: “The World 2030”
- Key trends within global development.
- The Danish Government’s 4 years plan for development assistance.
- A mix of cross-cutting thematic and initiative/programme focused evaluations

Against this backdrop, the Evaluation Program for 2020-2021 will see the completion of a number of already initiated evaluations (expected date of finalization indicated):

- Evaluation of Support for Development Research (May 2020)
- Evaluation of the Danish Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) Facility (May 2020)
- Evaluation of Danish Support for Climate Change Adaptation in Developing Countries (October 2020)
- Lessons Learned from Piloting Real Time evaluations (April 2020)
- Evaluation of Danida Sustainable Infra Structure Finance (DSIF) (June 2021)
- Evaluation of the Danish support to climate change mitigation (May 2021)
- Evaluation of Danish support to civil society: Three thematic evaluations to support joint learning (June 2022)

To this, we will launch some additional evaluations and studies. Most are/will be clustered around a number of themes we believe will be highly relevant to learn from in the coming years:

➤ **Theme 1: Development Finance**

Following the evaluation of IFU published in 2019, a new evaluation will investigate the performance of the **Danida Sustainable Infrastructure Finance (DSIF)** programme, earlier implemented as the Danida Business Finance Programme. DSIF was transferred to IFU in 2017, and the evaluation will in this way continue the dialogue with IFU on Danish development financing, DSIF being an important instrument for Danish financing of infrastructure in development countries. The evaluation will focus on capturing learning on results and development outcomes obtained since the first evaluation in 2001, although with emphasis on the last ten years of operation.

ELK is deeply involved in the **Working Group for Evaluation of Blended Finance under OECD/DAC EvalNet** as one of four initiators (together with Norway, Germany and the OECD Secretariat). The goal is to improve the international consensus on several issues within blended finance operations which are important for quality and evaluations. Three workstream

look into definition of concepts, working with additionality and finally evaluation of different financial instruments. There will be a number of international workshops during 2020/21, with one hosted by ELK in late 2020 on evaluation of additionality. It is the plan in 2021 to combine the results of the three workstreams into an OECD/DAC guidance note on evaluation of blended finance operations. The wider coordination body now involves a comprehensive group of international donors and financial institutions (all in all 18, e.g. WB, ADB, IMF, EIB, AfDB), and there is also strong coordination and knowledge sharing with blended finance operators within OECD/DAC and MDBs.

ELK has in collaboration with DIIS and Copenhagen University commissioned an evaluation study on use of different financial instruments (grants, loans, equities, guarantees) within three Danida-supported financial entities in Africa. The study will be published in spring 2020.

➤ **Theme 2: Climate change**

The **Evaluation of Danish support for Climate Change Adaptation** to developing countries was initiated in 2019 and will be finalized in the autumn 2020. Country studies and a comprehensive portfolio analysis will capture learning on results and impact achieved within the period 2008-2018. One of the key issues for the evaluation is to provide evidence on how climate adaptation can be mainstreamed into conventional development assistance and move closer to the primary objective of effective and sustainable aid delivery. DIIS has for ELK produced three discussion notes (to be published in one volume mid 2020) on effective support for climate change adaptation.

To continue the evaluation focus on climate change an **evaluation of the Danish support to climate change mitigation** in developing countries within the period 2013-2019 is initiated. The evaluation will start in summer 2020 and will run for 12 months. Four country studies are planned, and a wide-ranging portfolio analysis will cover the extensive Danish support for climate mitigation, including the full range of support for low carbon development with a particular focus on the achievements in the energy sector which has accounted for the bulk of funding through both bilateral and multilateral channels.

Both evaluations are timely opportunities to consolidate learning from former and current Danish support for climate change in developing countries and hereby inform the ambitions of the Danish Government to accelerate efforts to tackle climate change as a high priority.

ELK will continue dialogue with international partners on the evaluation of support for climate change interventions in developing countries, including the German evaluation office Deval, and evaluation departments of the Green Climate Fund, GEF and the World Bank. It is still the intention to seek opportunities for joint evaluations with multilateral climate funds, hopefully in 2021/22.

➤ **Theme 3: Humanitarian aid, Civil Society support and fragile contexts.**

ELK is, in close dialogue with the Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement (HCE), launching a **thematic evaluation of the Danish Support to Civil Society** that over the next couple of years will entail three thematic sub-evaluations addressing issues central to Danish civil society support; 1) Danish public engagement in the international cooperation agenda promoted by Danish CSOs, 2) strengthening civil society partnerships in the global south, and 3) the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus – results achieved. Themes such as localization, livelihoods and resilience will be examined in thematic evaluations number 2 and 3.

For 2021 it will be considered to look further into the issue of peace and security, building on recent evaluations of the African Programme for Peace and the UN SCR 1325. One idea is to re-visit the operations of the **Peace and Stability Fund** in the Sahel as well as in the Horn of Africa. The last evaluation was in 2014.

EVAL has renewed the Danish contribution to the international humanitarian network for **Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP)**, being an important source for information to evaluate humanitarian interventions.

➤ **Theme 4: Multilateral cooperation**

Multilateral organisations have their own and well-functioning systems for evaluations outside the remit of bilateral donor's evaluation departments, including ELK. They are also regularly assessed as part of the Multilateral Organisations' Performance Assessment Framework (MOPAN), a system that has gained increased recognition, effectiveness and professionalism over the years.

ELK will continue to explore ways to evaluate the outcomes of Danish multilateral assistance to meet the need for systematically capturing the development results required by MFA for accountability and dialogue. This will be closely linked to the current MFA project on results reporting and revision of the OpenAid platform. The recent ELK evaluation study of Danish **multilateral organizational strategies** provided relevant learning on the usefulness of the strategies for dialogue with the multilateral organizations and how they support the need for documenting development outcomes of the Danish support. This study informs the ongoing revision of the guidelines for organizational strategies.

There is an increasing trend of entering into partnerships or delegated cooperation with multilateral organisations under the country programmes or as part of centrally managed programmes. ELK will consider an evaluation of a selected number of **Danish-supported multi-bi programmes** with the aim of assessing 'the Danish side' of these partnerships in terms of Danish influence both in preparation, under implementation and the results harvesting.

The Department for Multilateral Cooperation (MUS) has requested ELK to investigate ways of assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of the **Danish support to several global funds**, e.g. within health. ELK will consider an evaluation framework for this purpose.

ELK will in 2020 join the **Global Evaluation Capacity Initiative** (GECI), which is a partnership between the evaluation departments of the World Bank, UNDP, and a number of bilateral donors (including Norway, Sweden and Finland). The partnership will be an opportunity for ELK to improve learning on M&E within MFA, Embassies and Danish-supported programmes. It will increase the dialogue and exchange of good practices and provide a platform for increased collaboration, not at least with multilateral organisations. GECI will have special focus on the SDGs.

Other evaluation activities in 2020-2021

The evaluation of **Danish Support to Development Research** is now in its final stage. It provides a very thorough analysis of Danish support during the last 10 years and provide options for strategic considerations for the future. The evaluation will be an important reference document for a new strategy on Danish support for development research, expected to be elaborated during 2020. The final evaluation will be published in May 2020.

The comprehensive evaluation of the **Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) Facility** was initiated in autumn 2019 and will be finalized in May 2020 to inform strategic discussions between stakeholders on the continuation of the programme. The evaluation has collected data in four SSC programme countries and had extensive dialogue with involved Danish public authorities and counterpart institutions in growth and transition economies.

Danish development assistance is continuously adapting to new challenges and new international trends, priorities and realities. Within this process, the administration of Danish development assistance is constantly reviewed with respect to effectiveness and focus. An important feature of the Danish development assistance administration is the profound decentralisation that took place in 1999 and was evaluated in 2008. To capture essential learning from a decade of decentralised administration it has been decided to carry out a pre-evaluation study with the purpose of determining the objectives for an **evaluation of the decentralisation of the Danish development administration**.

The testing of a **real-time evaluation** (RTE) pilot instrument, initiated in 2014, will be finalized in 2020. All four pilots are now coming to an end, some as planned, other terminated before time. A final report on the experiences across all pilots will be published in spring 2020. Experiences have been mixed. There is a general acknowledgement of the relevance of an evaluation lens to be applied during implementation, supporting a regular verification of the risks and assumptions, and harvesting results on outcome level. But, the application of real-time verification has had little traction in “classic” Danida country programmes.

ELK is now involved in developing a revised MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Evaluation) approach to support the introduction of a more flexible and adaptable

approach to aid delivery (“Doing Development Differently”) with a focus on documenting ‘outcomes’ and ‘adapting to the context’ throughout the program implementation. The RTE pilot and MEAL support initiatives to Embassies, e.g. in Kenya, provides valuable experiences for this process.

The options for evaluations within the DDD approach will also be informed by the new partnership established with **BetterEvaluations**, an internationally recognized network of evaluators providing technical and professional skills development and knowledge exchange among the members. The partnership will provide training and product development within ELK and MFA, including how evaluation evidence can support the use of Theory of Change and scenario planning.

Additional Evaluation studies in 2020-2021

The **evaluation study on technical assistance personnel** was finalized in March 2020. It has provided a valuable status for the use of technical advisors within a diversity of Danish development assistance programmes, bilateral as well as multilateral. It will now feed into discussions in the MFA and with the Danish resource base. There is currently no plan to follow-up with a full evaluation on the topic.

The Danish Government is currently embarking on a new 4-years plan for development assistance. To support design of new interventions ELK will proactively initiate a number of evaluation studies of relevance for the new plan, and on demand from operational departments in charge of developing strategies and actions plan within the relevant issues. At the moment the following evaluation studies are in the pipeline and may in the years to come call for full evaluations:

- **Water in Africa.** Follow-up on the 2005 evaluation of Danish support to Water Supply and Sanitation. Evidence gap mapping on what works with respect to sustainable provision of drinking water (rural and urban), intervention design, targeting, novel financing, private sector involvement, collaborating partners and SDG M&E.
- **Development assistance and renewable energy in Africa.** Evidence gap mapping on what works with respect to provision of renewable energy in Africa (rural and urban context), intervention design, targeting, novel financing and private sector involvement.
- **Tax and revenues in Africa.** Opportunities for aid support, options for institutional building, track record for introduction of tax systems.
- **Inequality.** State of the affairs for inequality in Africa. Inequality as barrier for development. Progress for SDG10.

Aspects of these issues, or additional issues, will be studied with external partners and experts, including the **institutional partnership with DIIS** that will continued throughout 2020/2021. In 2020 the following studies will be carried out: 1) How are evolving definitions of fragility

informing stabilization efforts? 2) Devolved climate finance and governance of climate change adaptation activities, 3) Technology and development, 4) Aid and moving renewable energy projects to scale, 5) Global performance indicators and foreign aid, and 6) The political effects of energy projects (to be finalized in 2021).

Communication and outreach

The ELK has a responsibility for communicating the findings and conclusions of evaluations and studies both within the ministry and to a broader audience. Apart from the formal requirement to inform the Danish Parliament by providing members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Finance Committee with Danish summaries of all evaluations, evaluations and their management response are posted at <http://evaluation.um.dk>.

ELK is in ongoing dialogue with KOM on how to integrate evaluation results into the overall communication platform of the Ministry, including social media. Also the use of evaluation results in connection with the 4-years plan for Danish development assistance will be explored.

There will be a continued effort to improve the communication products from evaluations. As a test, communication objectives are integrated from the very start in the Evaluation of Support to Climate Change Adaptation. Dedicated communication people follows this evaluation closely, e.g. during parts of the country level field work to gather case stories, interviews, film spots etc. to be used in later communication efforts when the evaluation is to be published.

ELK