

DANIDA'S EVALUATION POLICY

Danida's evaluation policy has two objectives: 1) Accumulation of Experience; thus making future activities more effective. 2) Documentation; thus providing decision makers and the public professional documentation. Read more below.

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1. Objective:

According to DAC's definition, evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of on-going or completed aid activities, their design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Danida's evaluations have two objectives:

Accumulation of Experience (lesson learning)

The evaluations shall contribute to the improvement of aid by the collation, analysis and dissemination of experience from current and completed aid activities.

Evaluations shall seek the causes and explanations as to why activities succeed or fail to succeed and produce information that helps make future activities more relevant and effective. The target group is Danida's management and staff, interested parties in recipient countries and the resource base of Danish and foreign aid professionals.

Documentation

Further, evaluations shall provide political decision makers and the general public with professional documentation as to the use and results of aid resources and also contribute to a better understanding of development aid, its potential and limitations as an instrument for economic and social change.

Both objectives must be satisfied in Danida's evaluation activities, though individual evaluations shall not necessarily fulfil both objectives to the same degree.

2. The tasks of the Evaluation Secretariat are to:

- plan, formulate and carry out evaluations of Danida-financed aid activities;
- disseminate and contribute to the dissemination of evaluation results and experience by other departments to Danida staff, authorities in recipient countries, other interested bodies and to the Danish public;
- contribute to the development of strategy and policy in Danida on the basis of own and other donors' experience;
- build and maintain an electronic database of evaluations;
- develop and improve methods of evaluation and evaluation guidelines;

- contribute to the development of evaluation capacity in Danida Programme countries;
- participate in international co-operation on evaluation.

3. Planning of Evaluation

Danida's Evaluation Secretariat is responsible for presenting multi-annual plans which, over a number of years and taking their point of departure in the overall objective of aid, shall cover:

- Ongoing or completed projects and programmes;
- Danish aid to a particular country, one or more sectors in a recipient country or a sector in a number of recipient countries;
- Aid instruments (project and programme aid, aid via NGOs, mixed credits, balance of payments support, emergency aid, research support, fellowship programmes), and
- multilateral aid, primarily in co-operation with other donors.

The evaluation programme shall contain a brief rationale for each evaluation: the primary objective (documentation or accumulation of experience), the target group and which features in particular the evaluation shall comprise.

Documentation evaluations are planned in order to achieve a suitable coverage of geographical areas, large and small recipient countries and sectors over time.

Evaluations to accumulate experience are planned on the basis of the strategic and operational needs of the aid administration. They can cover the above subjects but will, in addition, often incorporate multidisciplinary subjects (i.e. strategies, capacity building, planning and implementation of projects and programmes, consideration of the environment, gender aspects) or elements of these.

The individual evaluations should normally consider the following issues:

Relevance - Is the activity relevant to Danish aid policy, goals and strategies: poverty reduction, a sustainable environment, gender equality and democratisation and human rights? Is the activity relevant in relation to the needs and priorities of the recipient country? Is the activity relevant to the development issues it aims to solve?

Achievement of objectives - Have the primary objectives which have been defined for the activity been achieved? Have the specific results planned been achieved?

Sustainability - What are the long term effects of the activity? Can the activity be continued and can it provide acceptable returns, when Danish aid is terminated? Is local ownership established?

Efficiency - Are the investment and recurrent costs justified? Could the same results have been achieved with fewer resources?

Process - Is aid organised in the most appropriate way possible? Are the relevant parties

and authorities in the recipient country involved in preparation and implementation?

Experience - Can specific or general experience be gained that is relevant for the preparation and implementation of aid?

4. Implementation of Evaluations

Evaluations must be:

Objective and transparent - Assessments must be clearly separated from factual statements; assessments must be based on reliable data or observations. Relevant parties in Denmark and the recipient country must be consulted in connection with the preparation and implementation of evaluations, drafting of Terms of Reference (ToR) and discussion of the draft report.

Impartial - Evaluations must give a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses. In the event that interested parties have different views these should be incorporated in the evaluation.

Independent - Members of evaluation teams must not in person have been engaged in the activities to be evaluated. Companies involved in the preparation or implementation of the activities to be evaluated are not eligible.

Preparation

The management and staff of Danida as well as the relevant representatives of recipients (the country, NGO or multilateral organisation) should be involved in the preparation of evaluations by participating, to the greatest possible degree, in the formulation of TOR with a view to focusing the evaluation on relevant subjects.

Before an evaluation is set in motion, the Evaluation Secretariat prepares, in consultation with relevant interested parties, a description of objectives that clearly describes:

- The main objective of the evaluation: accumulation of experience or documentation;
- What the evaluation must cover: the entire or part of a project, a programme, a sector, an instrument of aid or a particular issue;
- Which subjects or features the evaluation shall specifically cover;
- Data basis for the evaluation, primary and/or secondary data, interviews, field work etc., and
- time schedule

On this basis, the actual Terms of Reference are prepared which forms the basis for the selection of the evaluation team. The terms of reference must be presented as a number of specific questions.

Choice of Evaluation Team

The criteria for the selection of the evaluation team are professional competence, experience in relation to the task and impartiality. The team must constitute a representation of the relevant professional fields. Professional expertise from the recipient country shall as far as possible be represented on the team.

Implementation

Evaluations are typically carried out in two phases. In the first phase, the evaluation team drafts, on the basis of studies of documentation and interviews in Denmark and, where necessary, in the recipient country, a preliminary report that puts forward hypotheses, provisional conclusions and identifies areas where further documentation must be gathered.

Based on this, the evaluation team and the Evaluation Secretariat elaborate a detailed plan for the future work in the second phase that may cover further documentation studies, interviews, primary data collection, field observations etc.

In connection with accumulation of experience evaluations, Danida management and staff plus the relevant representatives of recipients must be involved in the implementation of evaluations to the greatest possible degree to:

- participate in the analysis. On the basis of documentation studies and the information gathered, the evaluation team presents the problems and/or the hypotheses put forward with a view to discuss and analyse the material produced together with relevant staff, and
- participate in the formulation of lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations.

This will often take place in a number of workshops or seminars in the course of the evaluation.

In evaluations with a documentation objective, the participation of staff will typically be less intensive: procuring documentation, participation in interviews, debriefings and discussion of draft reports.

5. Reporting

The evaluation team has the final responsibility for the contents of the report. Any differences of views among the evaluation team, authorities in the recipient country and Danida must be included in the report, either in the form of comments in the text or as a special section.

Evaluation reports must be brief and concise. The normal language is English and the presentation must be clear and adjusted to the target group.

For every evaluation a brief resume in both English and Danish must be compiled with a

view to publication. The resume must cover the most important observations and conclusions of the evaluation. The presentation must be made in plain language accessible to non-professionals.

If an evaluation is thought to be of interest to a broader public, a Danish language version will be produced (possibly abbreviated) and edited with a view to readers that are not professional specialists.

6. Follow up

At the conclusion of an evaluation, a follow up memo is prepared taking note of Danida's position on the conclusions and recommendations as well as identifying which departments are responsible for the agreed follow up activities. The Evaluation Secretariat undertakes to control the implementation of the follow up activities at regular intervals.

The Evaluation Secretariat contributes actively to the dissemination of Danida's own as well as other aid organisations' evaluation experience via workshops and seminars for staff in co-operation with the Foreign Ministry's education section. Further, the Evaluation Secretariat assists Danida's Training Centre in the dissemination of evaluation experience.

On the basis of own and others' evaluation experiences, "best practices" will be compiled and formulated.

Further, the Evaluation Secretariat will contribute to the incorporation of evaluation experience in policies, strategies and guidelines etc.

7. Publication

All Danida evaluations are published in the form of printed reports, summaries and electronically, in the Foreign Ministry's web-site.

Further reading: A Review of Evaluation in Danida - the reports are only available in PDF-format.

All annexes

Annex 1 Organising Evaluation: A Review of Danida's Evaluation Practice Compared to Practices in Other Danish Policy Areas

Annex 2 Evaluation in Bilateral and Multilateral Development Assistance Organizations and Danida's Evaluation Program and Set Up

Annex 3 Survey on the independence of evaluation teams

Annex 4 Analysis of Consultancy Contracts for Evaluations 1993 - 2001

Annex 4a Evaluation Contracts with Danish Firms

Annex 4b Evaluation Contracts with Foreign Firms

Annex 5 The Costs of Evaluation

Annex 6 Danida's Evaluation Policy

Annex 7 Danida's Evaluation Process

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<http://www.um.dk/en/menu/DevelopmentPolicy/Evaluations/Policy/>