

ACTORS, PARTNERS, BENEFICIARIES

PRODUCING EVALUATIONS IN COMMON

Report
2019-2020



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Report 2019-2020

PRODUCING EVALUATIONS IN COMMON

The trajectory of evaluation at AFD is a sure sign of how the evaluation of official development assistance (ODA) has gradually gained importance over the past forty years.

Whilst the evaluation culture is now more embedded in practices, appropriating and disseminating it still presents a challenge and a priority in the current institutional context, where the demand for the evaluation of public policy has grown, echoing the increasing challenges for accountability to the general public.

The momentum has been launched and is clearly visible in the regular demands from AFD's Board of Directors, the highlights pointed up by the evaluation of AFD's evaluation policy, and the adoption of the new programming Act on inclusive development and combating global inequalities – one of its major thrusts being the drive for more transparency and better monitoring of results on the ground.

To implement projects tailored to our partners' contexts and issues and to continue learning from our successes and failures, our evaluation practice

increasingly calls on a close dialogue with all of the stakeholders involved in the project cycle. And we are also working with them to encourage their take-up of an evaluation culture.

These stakeholders include our partners, particularly in the global South, who being involved collectively take part in implementing our actions. They also include the beneficiaries, who are invited to take part in the evaluations so that their critical views on a project's progress and the results achieved can be gathered and taken into account. And, finally they include AFD's operational staff who are systematically integrated in the evaluation to enable improvements to our future operations.

By setting them at the heart of this second biennial evaluation report, we wanted to show not only the key role they play in producing the evaluations, but also make their voices heard. Together, they contribute to the utility of these evaluations with the objective of helping decision-making to respond in a coherent and concerted manner to the needs of the communities that we support.

EVALUATIONS MAP





EDITO

RÉMY RIOUX, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AFD GROUP

With over forty years of experience in evaluating its actions, AFD is unabatedly pursuing its efforts for increased transparency, accountability and effectiveness. This is the purpose of our second biennial report: a comprehensive report, published every two years, detailing the impact of the projects we support and evaluate across the globe.

This issue follows on from the first meeting of the Presidential Council for Development, which I had the honour of attending on 17 December 2020. On this occasion, the President of France called for a paradigm shift in French development policy, by doing more – with the target, now attained, of devoting 0.55% of gross national income to official development aid – and by doing better – to serve the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This dual thrust resulted in the French Parliament's unanimous adoption on 21 July of the programming bill on inclusive development and combating global inequalities, which specifically aims to strengthen the evaluation of development aid. To this end, an independent evaluation committee reporting to the Court of Auditors will have the task of evaluating the effectiveness and impact of French development policy. AFD welcomes this move and stands ready to cooperate very actively with this new body, in particular by enriching the public debate with results and questions in order to secure greater backing for development policy from our citizens, 70% of whom judge it effective when they consider themselves adequately informed.

Certainly, as development policies have a long-term horizon, their results are seldom visible in the very short term. This is especially true in fragile territories, faced with multidimensional challenges and risks. Impact can be difficult to measure as well when development policies aim to address global and complex challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and inequalities. This reinforces the need to develop the right tools to measure results and share as widely as possible the knowledge produced and the questions raised, bearing in mind the effects of the applied measurement itself.

As early as 2016, I decided to reinforce AFD's evaluation teams – whose rigorous work I applaud – by doubling their headcount and redefining the principles of our evaluation policy. As of now, 50% of completed projects must undertake an independent evaluation. In addition, cluster evaluations and impact evaluations are carried out on a selection of strategic subjects.

“WITH FORTY YEAR OF EXPERIENCE IN EVALUATING ITS ACTIONS, AFD IS UNABATEDLY PURSUING ITS EFFORTS FOR TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS.”

Despite the global health crisis, the goal of doubling the number of evaluations, which I had announced in the first edition of this report,^[1] was almost achieved in 2020, with 45% of completed projects being evaluated, even reaching 88% in the Sahel region. Between 2019 and 2020, 61 project evaluations were carried out, compared to 44 over the two previous years. Consistent with our requirement for transparency, all these evaluations are published on the AFD website, and very regularly presented to our Board of Directors.

Underpinned by a learning approach so that we can progress alongside our clients and partners, feed the lessons learnt in our future projects and improve our ways of working together, this report also reflects our determination to evaluate better.

First, by using methodologies that are the most relevant and best adapted to evaluation questions. Then, by increasingly involving our global South interlocutors in order to fuel the public policy dialogue and strengthen their own evaluation capacities. Lastly, by initiating a dialogue with the 500-strong community of public developments banks from across the world – these are the focus of one of the report's chapters – with a view to sharing our experience of evaluation practices and advancing our collective practices. These like-minded institutions – which convened for the first time on 11 November 2020 for the Finance in Common Summit organised by AFD – have a combined investment volume of 2,500 billion dollars a year, equivalent to over 10% of global investment. Being able to evaluate the impact of

“THIS REPORT CONFIRMS OUR CORE PURPOSE: ACT “BY YOUR SIDE”, MEANING AT THE SERVICE OF OUR CLIENTS AND WITH OUR PARTNERS, CONSTANTLY SEEKING TO LEARN FROM THEM AND THUS IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND IMPACT OF THE PROJECTS WE FINANCE.”

these investments would be extremely informative and decisive. This is the reason why we started by evaluating the activities of five of these banks, which proved to be key to enhance the quality and impact of their actions on the global challenges of this century.

To conclude, this 2019-2020 report on the evaluation of our projects confirms our core purpose: act “by your side”, meaning at the service of our clients and with our partners by continually seeking to learn from them and thus improve the quality and impact of the projects we finance, and move towards a “world in common”.

[1] The first biennial report is available at: <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/evaluations-report-2017-2018>

From the beginning of his five-year term, the President of France decided to set out a new ambition for France's development policy, allocating it increased resources and setting the objective of raising official development assistance (ODA) to 0.55% of gross national income (GNI) by 2022.



William Roos, Assistant Secretary for Multilateral and Development Affairs at the French Treasury, French Ministry of the Economy, Finance and the Recovery

Michel Miraillet, Director-General of Global Affairs, Culture, Education and International Development, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

This re-engagement was crucial to strengthen not only the credibility of France's diplomatic and financial action in response to major global challenges, by investing in international organisations and multilateral funds, but also the credibility of its action in partner countries, particularly in Africa, in order to assist the most vulnerable populations.

The programming Act on inclusive development and combating global inequalities, spearheaded by the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs on behalf of the government, marks a new phase in France's re-engagement in development policy.

As a follow-up to the French President's 2017 speech in Ouagadougou, this law overhauls the methods applied to development policy as it means not only doing more but also doing better. In a world of interdependencies, international solidarity is an imperative of effectiveness

“IN A WORLD OF INTERDEPENDENCIES, INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IS AN IMPERATIVE OF EFFECTIVENESS AS WELL AS A MATTER OF JUSTICE.”

as well as a matter of justice. This is why the law promotes a culture of partnership and shared responsibility with partner countries. It also ensures the mobilisation of all development stakeholders, including those in partner countries, who deliver results on the ground (local and regional governments, NGOs, foundations, private sector, etc.).

To better evaluate the results, the effectiveness and the impact of France's action, this new law provides for the creation of an independent evaluation commission in charge of evaluating the implementation of bilateral and multilateral ODA. Considering the increase in resources allocated to ODA, the strengthening of our evaluation policy addresses a democratic imperative. In committing €1.2 billion of grants and €9.6 billion of loans in 2020, the Agence française de développement (AFD) has committed to improving its project evaluations by taking greater account of the lessons learnt from previous evaluations to fully contribute to better transparency and accountability.

In fact, with the help of external consultants, it has evaluated its own evaluation policy, introduced in 2013, with the aim to ensure the usefulness of its evaluations and reflect on the directions for its future evaluation policy. The purpose is not only to report on the implementation of ministerial priorities, but also to support decision-making for future projects. As AFD's line ministries, the

“AFD HAS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING ITS PROJECT EVALUATIONS BY TAKING GREATER ACCOUNT OF THE LESSONS LEARNT FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS TO FULLY CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.”

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Economic Recovery have both provided input for this evaluation, due for completion in the second half of 2021. The result framework appended to the Act will also contribute to this requirement for accountability and transparency vis-à-vis the general public by highlighting the results achieved through French ODA on the ground.

RESULTS

PROJECT EVALUATIONS

61 project evaluations
88 projects covered

These evaluations drive the dialogue with partners and collective learning

Even though the health crisis slowed down the implementation of evaluations, 46 projects were successfully evaluated in 2020, slightly more than in 2019 (42 projects). The projects were covered by 28 evaluations in 2019 and 33 evaluations in 2020, mostly led by the local AFD agencies. These figures indicate a greater use of

evaluating homogeneous project clusters within a single sector. In fact, these cluster evaluations mean that each project can be evaluated individually while also responding to cross-cutting evaluation questions that are highly instructive for the sectoral strategies.

58 projects evaluated in Africa

The growing number of project evaluations in Africa reflect the effort for accountability on this continent

© All the evaluation summaries are available online at afd.fr

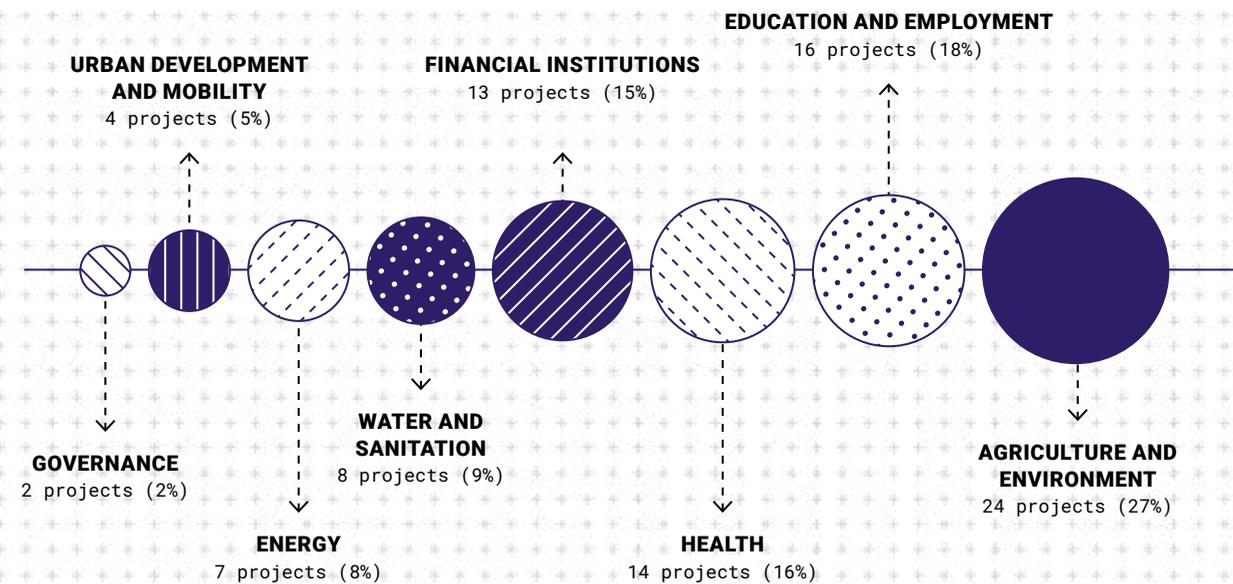
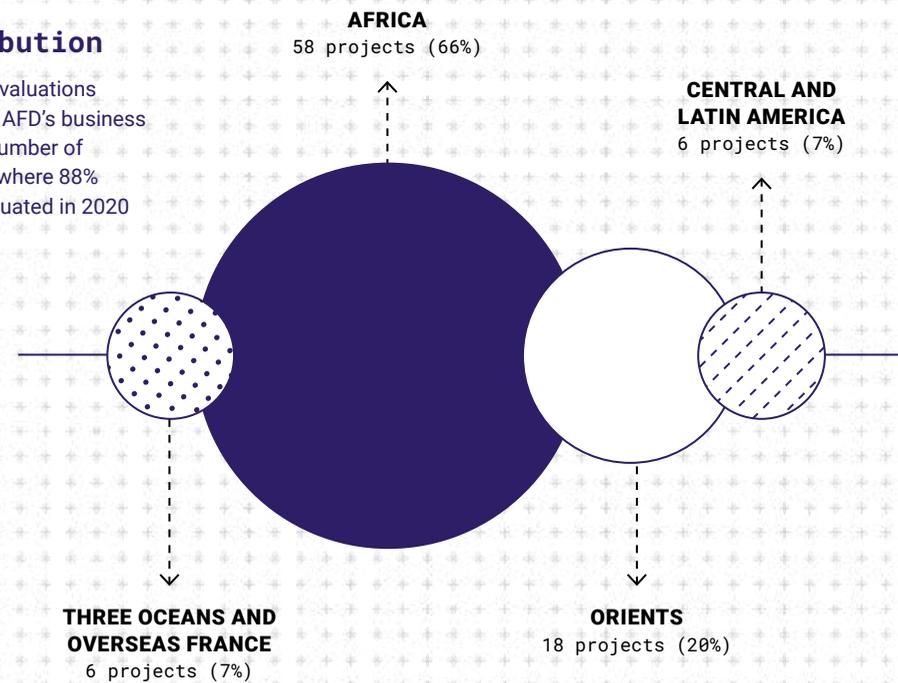


Sectoral distribution

Over the period 2019-2020, the number of projects evaluated was higher than in previous years in the agriculture and environment sector due to the rise in the evaluation of projects targeting the environment and biodiversity. Likewise, in the financial institutions sector, many projects supporting public development banks were evaluated in preparation for the Finance in Common Summit in November 2020. Very few governance projects were evaluated as the development of AFD's portfolio in this sector is still in its early stages, dating back only five years.

Geographic distribution

The geographic distribution of evaluations shows Africa's growing share in AFD's business plan, as well as the increasing number of evaluations in the Sahel region, where 88% of completed projects were evaluated in 2020 (against 67% in 2019)



RESULTS

SECTORAL EVALUATIONS - THEMATIC AND STRATEGIC

14 sector evaluations, thematic and strategic

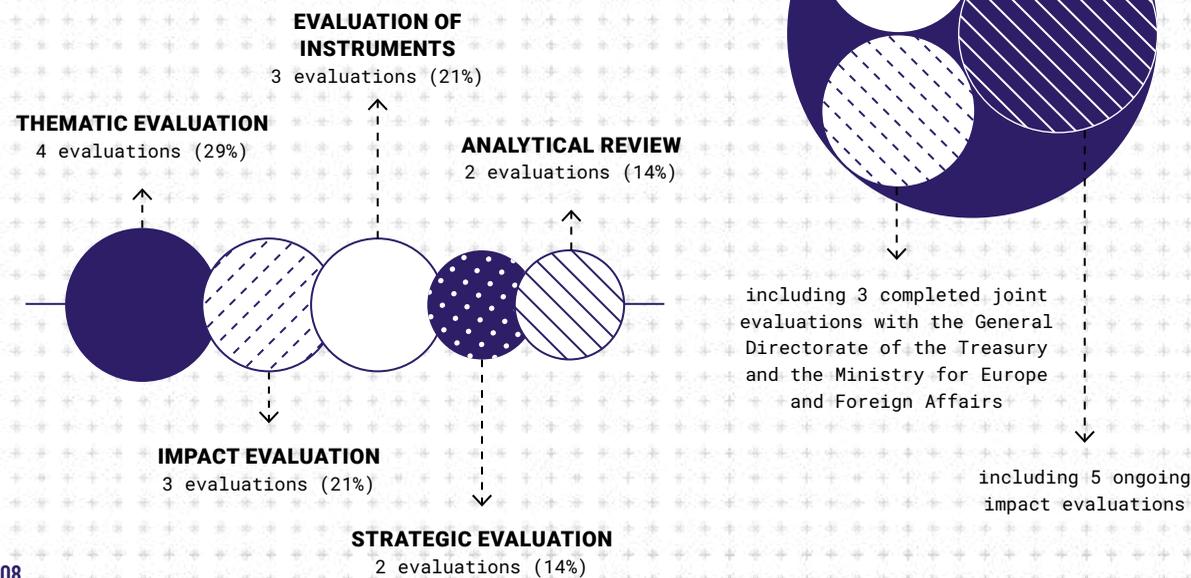
These aim to redress a lack of knowledge on the results and impacts of an intervention and to understand the cause-effect linkage between the intervention and the results and impacts.

These evaluations can also involve sectoral, geographic or cross-cutting (climate and gender) strategies. In this case, they aim to improve the quality of project implementation.

Three of these 14 completed evaluations were conducted jointly with the evaluation units of the General Directorate of the Treasury and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Moreover, five impact evaluations were still being implemented over the period.

Distribution by evaluation type



RESULTS

CAPITALISATION STUDIES

16 capitalisation studies committed

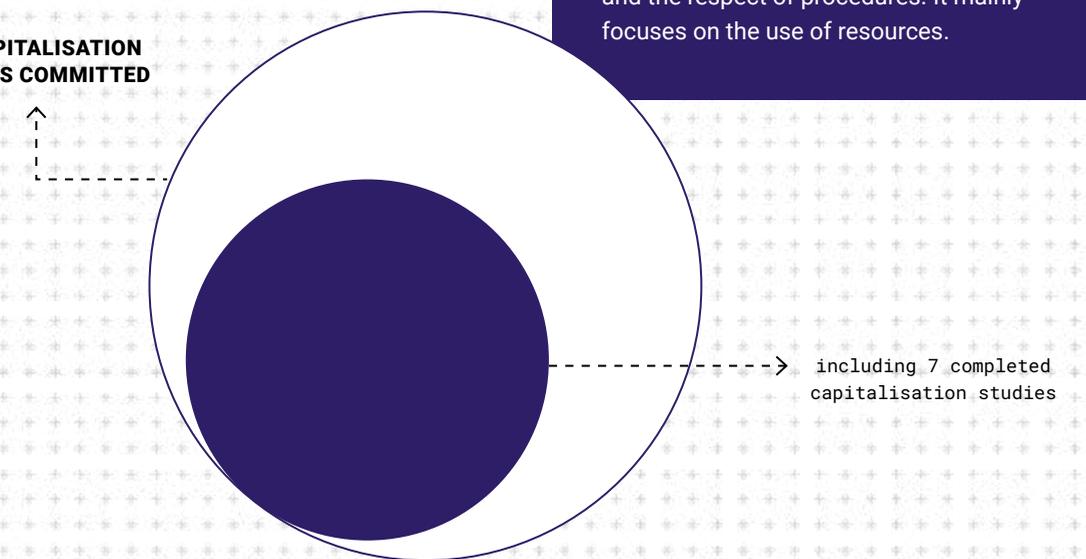
These enable the operational teams to step back from their practices

The year 2020 also saw a slowdown in capitalisation studies as the operational teams and local actors were less available, stretched by the response to the emergencies caused by the Covid-19 crisis in AFD's intervention countries. Seven of the 16 capitalisation studies committed over the period were completed (5 in 2019 and 2 in 2020). Based on evaluations or analytical reviews, the completed studies covered various themes, including some with a strategic dimension for AFD (policy-based loans, green credit lines, climate change adaptation project).

Evaluation, monitoring, audit: what is the difference?

Evaluation differs from monitoring and audits in that it focuses on **relevance** – i.e. the meaning – of the action and on elucidating the causal relationships between the resources used and the **results and impacts**. It relates to the whole cycle of a project or policy, from its design through to its effects. **Evaluation** provides a **judgment** on an intervention, whereas **monitoring** (or monitoring-evaluation) helps to **steer** a project using data collected on a continuous – or very regular – basis. As for an **audit**, this is a control exercise to check for compliance and the respect of procedures. It mainly focuses on the use of resources.

16 CAPITALISATION STUDIES COMMITTED



IN FIGURES

AFD GROUP 2020 ANNUAL RESULTS

With France currently boosting its development policy, AFD Group was able to provide a swift response to the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and to maintain a long-term focus, by mobilising French stakeholders and other public development banks.

“Faced with the worldwide social and environmental crisis, exacerbated by the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, AFD Group is taking action to meet short-term health and economic challenges in the countries where it works, especially in Africa. At the same time, we’re supporting far-reaching trajectories to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate. Our work falls within the framework of the crucial programming bill on inclusive development and the fight against global inequality, which is sponsored by the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian.”

↑ Rémy Rioux, AFD Group CEO



€12.1 BN

in new commitments, including €2 billion for private-sector financing with our subsidiary Proparco.

996

new development projects in all sectors combined.

450

public development banks gathered virtually for the first time in November 2020, at the invitation of AFD and IDFC during the Finance in Common Summit.

€8.8 BN

in disbursements (+35% compared to 2019).

€4.9 BN

for Africa, representing 46% of AFD’s total commitments, including €511 million for the G5 Sahel countries.

€5.4 BN

for the climate, to help meet the €5-billion climate finance commitment made at COP21 in 2015.

€565 BN

in financing for biodiversity.

€9.9 BN

in bond issues, including an unprecedented €2 billion in SDG bond issues and €1 billion in climate bond issues.

€3 BN

in Covid-19 response, including €1.2 billion for the “Health in Common” initiative in Africa and the Middle East, along with French stakeholders.

€40 M

net result despite the crisis, attesting to the robustness of AFD Group’s business model

EVALUATION IN THE TIMES OF COVID

COMBINING FLEXIBILITY OF PRACTICES AND CONTINUITY OF OBJECTIVES

The 2020 public health crisis gave AFD no choice but to adapt its evaluation practices. Travel was out of the question, actors became less unavailable, difficulties in mobilising stakeholders remotely, more complicated data collection..., all of these elements presented challenges for project evaluations and affected over one-third of them.

To continue collecting field data, AFD used both local and international consultant teams most of the time. Mobilising them meant, when possible, that field trips could be maintained in countries where projects were due for evaluation. The crisis has reinforced this practice which was already predominant at AFD and solidified the involvement of national experts, consistent with AFD's ambition to give more weight to global South experts.

“I was supposed to go on one of two planned field missions. In the end, I did both of them as the team of French consultants was unable to travel. We stepped up our exchanges even though Internet outages made this coordination difficult.”

↑ **Zakinet Dangbet**, lecturer and researcher at the University of N'Djaména, member of the evaluation team for a pastoral water project in Chad

KEY FIGURES

85%

of project evaluations carried out mainly with **local consultants**

7

project evaluations only were **carried out 100% remotely** out of 33 evaluations ongoing in 2020

50%

of project evaluations **were delayed** due to the public health crisis



AFD was keen to hear the views of the consultants and researchers who had been spearheading the adaptation of evaluations during the Covid-19 crisis. What were the main difficulties they came up against? And the solutions found? Adapt data collection methods while evaluations were still ongoing, strengthen the role of the consultants who could travel to the sites, put in place a strategy to compensate for the reduced effectiveness of remote collection methods, etc. Insights into the new common challenges raised by the health situation.



DAVID DE MONBRISON

Environment project manager at BRL Ingénierie, head of the evaluation team over the fourteen-year-long partnership of AFD-FFEM (French Facility for Global Environment) around conservation trust funds

The evaluation had already been launched and we were ready to leave on mission to several countries when the health crisis blocked us. For everyone, AFD and FFEM included, it seemed important to maintain these field missions. After a few months of waiting and hesitating, the joint decision was made to conduct the evaluation remotely. This was a challenge because the evaluation was already well underway. We had to revise the data collection plan and the team's organisation.

It's more difficult to mobilise stakeholders remotely. So, given the technicity of the subject, we decided to boost as much as possible the involvement of the local consultants already working on the team. The aim was to collect viewpoints and data from the different actors: conservation trust funds, the beneficiaries of these funds (protected areas) and national institutions. Data collection took us longer, and we also had to be more persistent – sending many reminders – and we jumped on every possible opportunity of face-to-face conversations with local consultants.

The time taken to coordinate – not only within the consultancy team but also with AFD and FFEM – was longer than planned as we had to adapt the data collection methods to the situation in real time, collectively adjust the organisation, and also take into account how the crisis was affecting the team members.

What also struck me were AFD's demanding requirements for monitoring, and the importance of measuring the impact. The requirements for project monitoring-evaluation are being reinforced with time and have to be consolidated. In all the evaluations, monitoring data are useful. With this health crisis, and with no access to the field, they are more valuable than ever for evaluations.

KOMLAVI II ADJEGAN

Field Survey Coordinator on the team of the Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD) in charge of the impact evaluation of the drinking water supply project, PILAEP, in Kinshasa

Everything was almost ready for the second follow-up survey of 3,000 households in Kinshasa planned from March to May 2020. Our survey protocol required phone-tracking to identify which households were still present in the study area, and why. This was before face-to-face interviews conducted by 80 interviewers. I was waiting on site for the arrival of the IRD research team to launch the training for the interviewers when the crisis broke out and blocked everything.

So we decided, together with AFD, the CTR (technical committee for the monitoring and evaluation of reforms of Ministry of Finance of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and the NSI (National Statistics Institute), not to go ahead with the survey as planned but to focus on phone-tracking with a more complete questionnaire, in particular so as to understand why households had left the area.

The changing health situation finally permitted us to continue the same survey – initially conducted by phone – in face-to-face interviews with around fifteen interviewers. What stands out for me is just how effective field work is compared to working remotely: we interviewed as many households face to face in one week as we had done in one month by phone!

I took over more responsibilities as the IRD team from Paris was unable to travel: I trained the interviewers and ensured coordination with the NSI in Kinshasa, with remote assistance from the IRD team. In the field, I helped to elaborate new hypotheses to explain why households had moved away, which enabled me to contribute to discussions with the research team on the effects of the project. Finally, it gave me the opportunity to prove myself. After this experience, I was awarded a doctoral scholarship to continue research on the project!

PARTNER
ACTORS

BENEFICIARY
ACTORS

INTERNAL
ACTORS

PUBLIC
DEVELOPMENT BANKS

PARTNER ACTORS

Provided that evaluation is carried out as closely as possible to the stakeholders of AFD-funded projects, it represents a strong driver

of learning and shared accountability. It informs the dialogue on development and helps enhance agile and transparent governance.



IMPACT EVALUATIONS – VECTORS OF DIALOGUE WITH PARTNERS

The dialogue with local partners is a core concern for AFD regarding evaluation. Yet, in most cases, evaluation occurs at the end of a project in order to learn lessons from an intervention and to provide input to prepare the upcoming interventions.

Impact evaluations, especially when they are designed and implemented from the very beginning of the project, foster exchanges between researchers, donors and local partners. The exchanges can then continue throughout the evaluation and address the possible changes a project could generate, as well as its expected or observed effects.

Increased dialogue with operational partners

During the impact evaluation of a programme to rehabilitate and integrate precarious residential neighbourhoods in Tunisia (PRIQH 2), discussions between the project leaders, project engineers, etc. were organised in the Urban Rehabilitation and Renovation Agency (ARRU – the programme operator). The focus was on defining the main dimensions and indicators that they expected would be impacted. These discussions brought to light certain expected impacts that had not initially been identified, such as the possibility of a positive effect of asphalted roads on respiratory diseases and health, or improved safety as a result of more practicable roads.

This example illustrates one of the key advantages of implementing an impact evaluation: how dialogue can contribute to identifying development impacts.

Mastering data use and improving project steering

Beyond these exchanges with the stakeholders, impact evaluations involve data collection even before the intervention begins – through a baseline survey –, then possibly data collection during project execution and, lastly, a final (or endline) survey upon project completion. Sharing these data with the main stakeholders of a project enhances the dialogue, monitoring and steering. The surveys help to consolidate knowledge on the beneficiaries' initial situation and how it changes over time.

Regarding the above-mentioned evaluation in Tunisia, an NGO is contributing by making an analysis of the programme's spatial and territorial impact and developing the tools used to map evaluation results in collaboration with a research team from the United Nations University.

The NGO is also responsible for strengthening the geographic information system (GIS) capacities of ARRU, the local institutional partner and project operator. This capacity-building action runs in parallel to the project evaluation and aims to enhance ARRU's operational process regarding the exploitation and use of GIS analyses in order to better identify, monitor and evaluate its programmes.

While the dialogue with operational partners on the subject of data is crucial, the challenge is also to promote academic cooperation between research laboratories in different parts of the world.



Promote collaboration with local researchers to improve knowledge of the contexts

Although impact evaluations has expanded significantly since the 2000s, the bulk of academic papers are still produced by universities and research centres in the global North. A recent study on economic research in Africa revealed that out of 18,717 articles focusing on an African country published since 1970, only 53% have at least one author from an African research institution. This figure drops to 7% when it comes to the five most prestigious academic journals.

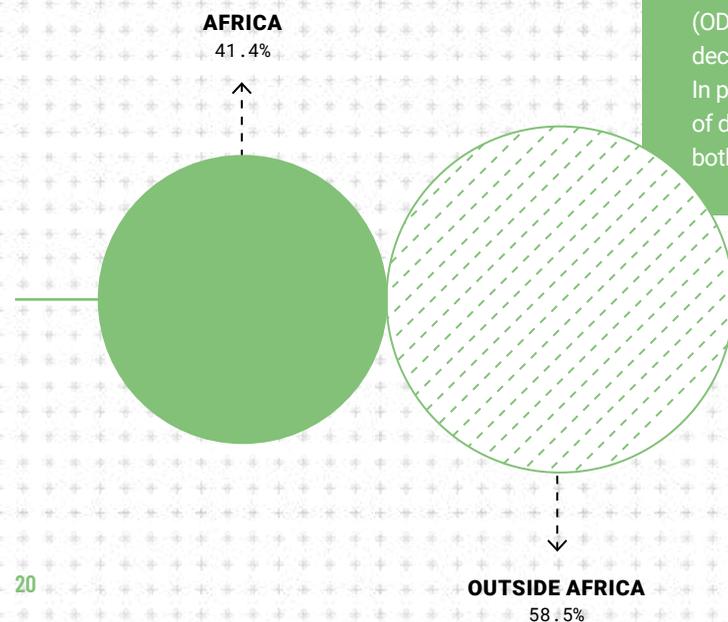
To address the low visibility of these contributors, who are essential to producing field studies, AFD has committed in its Research, Innovation and Knowledge Strategy for 2019-2022 to promote collaboration with researchers locally rooted in the Group's regions of operation.

The AFD Evaluation and Learning Department makes this ambition a reality through its practice of impact evaluations, and particularly with the PAIRES project. The initiative seeks to strengthen ties with research centres in AFD regions of operation in order to benefit from the deep knowledge that local researchers have on local contexts. The goal is to involve them throughout the entire scientific process of impact evaluation, from the project identification stage to the publication and dissemination of its results.

The purpose of impact evaluations is to measure the causal link between the project evaluated and the observed changes. Among the different impact evaluation methods, counterfactual methods consist of comparing the evolution of the situation of the population benefiting from the intervention with the situation of a population that has not been exposed to the intervention but is comparable to the beneficiary population (the control group).

The results of impact evaluations can inform research on official development assistance (ODA) and can be used to support public decision-making in AFD's intervention countries. In parallel, these evaluations reinforce the use of data and contribute to an evaluation culture, both of which are key to good governance.

Location of research institutions involved in impact evaluations of projects implemented in Africa



INTERVIEW AMEL CHAOUACHI

What do you hope to learn from this impact evaluation of the PRIQH 2 programme?

Contrary to the previous ex-post evaluations of programmes to rehabilitate popular neighbourhoods, the main objective of this impact evaluation is to quantitatively and qualitatively measure the impact of rehabilitation operations and project components on the living conditions of the beneficiaries. The in-depth socio-economic assessment that will be carried out before and after the works will help to precisely document the impacts on household living conditions that are directly attributable to the intervention.

How useful can the results of this impact evaluation be for the Urban Rehabilitation and Renovation Agency (ARRU) ?

The study results, which we can visualise thanks to the different tools (maps, indicators, citizens' perceptions, photos), will inform us on what changes have actually occurred in the neighbourhoods. Building on this, ARRU will be able to evaluate its types of intervention (the infrastructure built or rehabilitated) and the concrete impacts in the beneficiary neighbourhoods. This means that ARRU will be able to review its intervention strategy and prioritise projects that have had the strongest impact on the residents' living conditions, which will optimise the cost and timeframes of operations.

This impact evaluation more specifically includes a mapping component focusing on urban analysis and capacity-building for the ARRU teams in charge of the geographic information system (GIS). How can proficiency with mapping tools and georeferenced data help to improve the identification, planning or steering of your projects?

If project leaders, project engineers and ARRU's GIS team are proficient in the use of mapping tools and georeferenced data, this will allow the different producers and users of urban data to upload information about a project's implementation onto an integrated server up to the time of project closure (evaluation). This know-how will help to improve ARRU's performance in terms of planning the works in compliance with the scope of intervention, validating technical studies and monitoring the works. With the development of GIS, ARRU will have a more efficient tool for steering its programmes thanks to the *in situ* collection of precise information on how a project is progressing.

Today, GIS users at ARRU have not yet had sufficient training on these tools: capacity-building in the form of workshops and coaching is planned in the study, but this unquestionably needs to be prolonged to ensure that the tools are used over the longer term.

Amel Chaouachi, Director of Project Development and Identification at the Urban Rehabilitation and Renovation Agency (ARRU), Tunisia (November 2012 to May 2021)

CMSP AND FISONG

TWO FINANCING TOOLS SERVING THE GENERAL INTEREST

Concertation, innovation and dialogue dedicated to public policies.

CONCERTED MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROGRAMMES (CMSPs)

Grounded on the principles of stronger concertation between public authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs) in France's partner countries

Concerted multi-stakeholder programmes (CMSPs) [Programmes concertés pluri-acteurs] were set up in 2002 on the initiative of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE).

They focus on themes relevant to the general interest, such as democratic governance, poverty alleviation or youth. Their goal is to encourage civil society in partner countries to participate more in elaborating, implementing and monitoring public policy. For the most part, this is achieved by engaging a dialogue between the civil society and public authorities, setting up needed projects for targeted populations and through actions to organise local NGOs and strengthen their capacities. Six CMSPs have gradually been rolled out in eight countries: Morocco, Romania, Bulgaria and Moldavia, then in Congo, Algeria, Guinea and, lastly, Tunisia.



The evaluation of CMSPs, more than fifteen years on from their implementation, relied on a highly participatory approach in keeping with the approach built-in to the tool.

The evaluation was part of the collective drive for capitalisation in order to build the future of these programmes.

Collectively draw cross-cutting lessons that could usefully provide food for thought on the tool

Workshops bringing together French and global South CSOs, AFD and MEAE representatives were held in Paris, Marseille and four countries in which CMSPs were implemented. The goal was to create a common space where all the stakeholders could express themselves. Thanks to the workshops, a shared vision of the principles and goals of the CMSPs was co-constructed and the programme stakeholders exchanged practices and experiences.

A relevant, flexible and multi-faceted tool

The evaluation pointed out that the CMSP was an effective tool due to its flexibility, objectives and long-term approach – stretching from twelve to fifteen years.

With their multi-stakeholder governance – which has a good North-South balance focused on common challenges – the CMSPs are gradually being extended to local authorities and private-sector partners and firmly rooted in a strong territorial rationale. As of today, over 800 civil society actors have been mobilised directly in CMSPs (mainly from AFD's intervention countries but also from French SCOs), 800 projects have been supported with over 500,000 direct beneficiaries – priority being given to vulnerable or excluded populations.



Conclusive results

Although it is difficult to measure civil society's influence on public policies, the evaluation underlined that the recognition by public authorities of the role of SCOs in shaping and monitoring these policies was increasing exponentially. In tandem, the impact that CMSP-supported structures had on their territories was clearly shown.

The evaluation also brought to light the effects that CMSPs produced on public policy dialogue, on the organisation of global South civil society and on the strengthening of cooperation between civil society stakeholders in the global North/South and public authorities.

The relevance of this tool is clearly shown by the SCOs' contribution to democratic governance in the partner countries.

THE SECTORAL INNOVATION FACILITY FOR NGOs (FISONG)

A tool to strengthen partnerships with SCOs and drive innovation

A specific tool for financing and supporting projects focused on innovation, the Sectoral Innovation Facility for NGOs (FISONG), was created in 2007 with the cooperation of Coordination SUD. Much like the concerted multi-stakeholder programmes (CMSPs), it promotes partnerships and dialogue between French and foreign CSOs and AFD.

As a laboratory for testing innovations, FISONG is designed to support innovative technical processes and new ways of doing things – via biannual calls for proposals – to respond to needs identified jointly by AFD and CSOs.

As a follow-up to a first evaluation conducted in 2011 mainly to examine the tool's functioning and its effects, the second evaluation was launched to assess the changes that had taken place over the period 2012-2018.

The evaluation was backed by a survey of around fifty SCOs along with case studies of five thematic calls for projects. Some fifteen SCOs running FISONG projects and AFD staff attended a participatory workshop that offered a constructive opportunity to share experiences and gather the stakeholders' perceptions of the tool and its influence.

A tool offering real added value

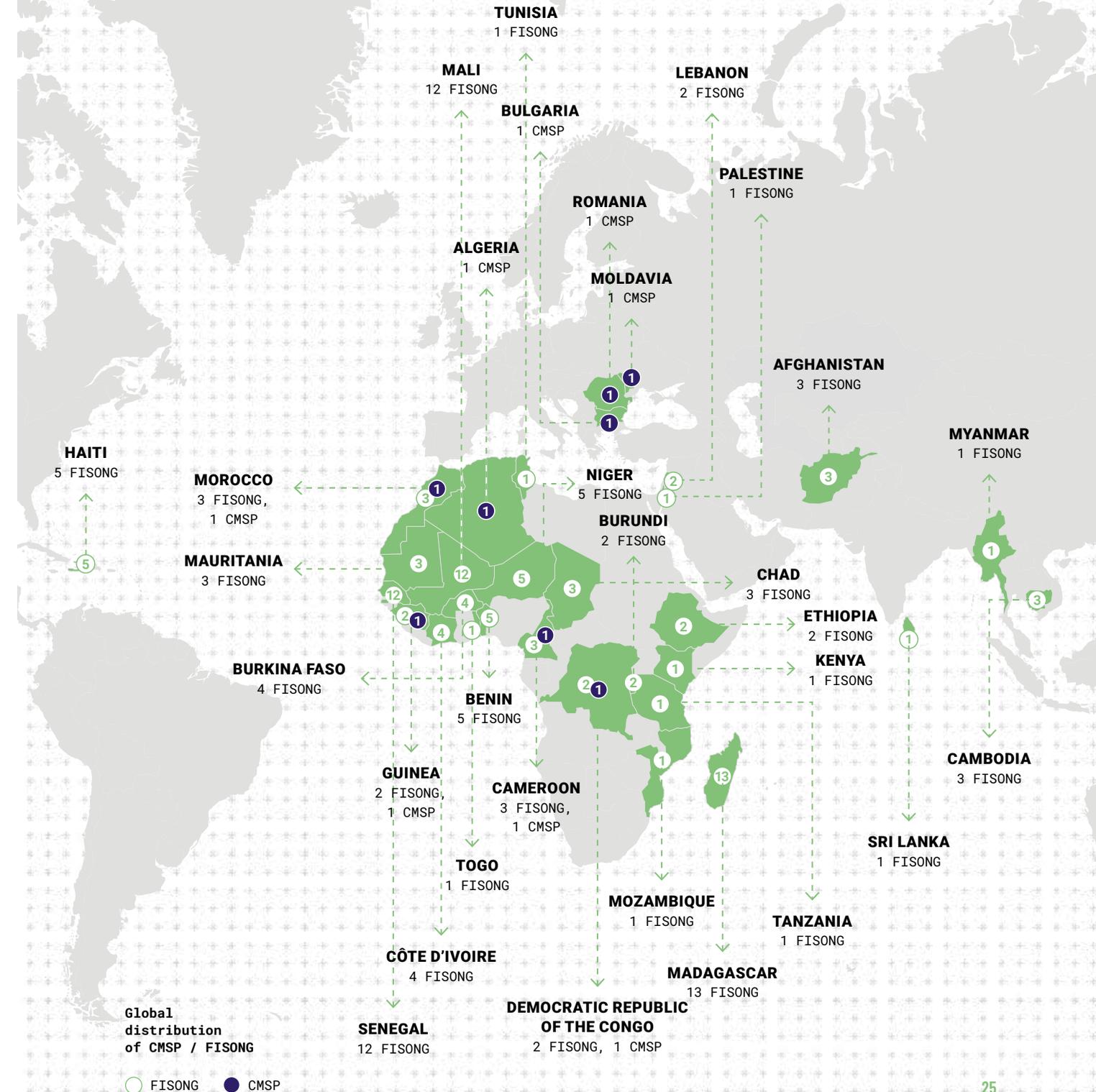
Consultation on the selection of themes and the principle of co-constructing projects between the SCOs and AFD's technical divisions ensure that the FISONG tool substantially bolsters the dialogue and partnership between them.

The evaluation shows that FISONG facilitates the emergence of experimental projects that would likely not have been explored by the technical divisions and would not exist in their original form without this mechanism: citizen participation in the sectors of water and sanitation, information and communication technologies and healthcare.

In this respect, the mechanism is one of the tools for SCO project financing that offers high added value.

FISONG also allows for the testing of new approaches since it encourages SCOs to innovate. As its goal is partnership-based, the tool positions AFD as a provider of support and technical assistance, from the project appraisal phase through to capitalisation. The relevance of FISONG both for CSOs and AFD is clearly evidenced.

Geographic distribution of CMSP / FISONG



A bridled ambition

Yet, the analysis underlines that FISONG is not always in a position to foster the scaling-up of projects and that the innovative aspect of projects could be boosted. The main sticking points to disseminating the innovations include the length of FISONG's support (three years), which does not always allow enough time for a project to reach maturity, the difficulties in finding further financing and the weak engagement of local public authorities.

Room for improvement was also identified when it came to the cross-cutting capitalisation of projects. At the same time, the tool could be expanded further if its processes and procedures underwent some form of innovation (mainly simplification).

KEY FIGURES

FISONG (2010-2020)

28

FISONG

83

projects supported

53

beneficiary civil society organisations

3

main themes: health, agriculture, education

82%

of the projects implemented in Africa, 90% of these in priority countries for French official development assistance



INTERVIEW PIERRE SAWADOGO

To what extent has the FISONG tool helped to leverage your project?

It enabled Solidarité Laïque to innovate its practices and test new approaches to learning and literacy, tailored to the socio-economic realities of the targeted areas and the beneficiaries' needs. We developed an innovative approach by building a framework based on the learners' motivation so that the pedagogical content could be adapted to the places in which it is used.

More specifically, we created synergies with local authorities, communities, NGO operators and State actors aimed at partnership-based and multisector actions to bolster appropriation, scale up and ensure the sustainability of the results achieved.

In what way do you think that FISONG is a good tool for strengthening partnerships between AFD and SCOs, and more specifically with Solidarité Laïque?

For the design and execution of the programme, we benefited from two-pronged support from AFD – from both headquarters and the Burkina Faso agency. This led to fruitful exchanges with local partners and Burkina Faso's Ministry of Education, as well as to action-research on how to measure student learning on the literacy programmes. The partnership also gave us the opportunity to develop actions that integrated gender into our programme – which earned us a recommendation and congratulations from the Ministry of Education.

FISONG enables AFD and civil society organisations to understand and better appreciate each other's logical frameworks, improve financing tools to suit on-the-ground situations, set up innovative projects adapted to identified needs and phase them into public policies.

In your opinion, how did your participation in the evaluation workshop help to build a dialogue among the SCOs?

The evaluation workshop in Paris gave project initiators a chance to share common difficulties and look for solutions. It also allowed us to share our experiences and our good practices in the field.

Pierre Sawadogo, Pierre Sawadogo, Regional Director for West Africa at Solidarité Laïque, Literacy Programme for Women and Youth in Burkina Faso

Pierre Sawadogo, Regional Director for West Africa at Solidarité Laïque, Literacy Programme for Women and Youth in Burkina Faso

LOOKING BACK AT

TWENTY YEARS OF SUPPORT TO OUAGADOUGOU CITY COUNCIL

For nearly twenty years, AFD has supported the Ouagadougou City Council (Burkina Faso), primarily with urban planning and infrastructure-building.

To understand how and why Ouagadougou's urban projects have gradually gained momentum over the past two decades and understand the history leading to the AFD-supported Ouagadougou Sustainable Development Project (PDDO, phases 1 and 2), a capitalisation workshop was organised. The goal was to gather input for an AFD publication on the Agency's support for the development of sustainable cities in Africa.^[1] The workshop provided the opportunity to compare feedback on the experiences of the City Council, AFD and project partners, as well as work on institutional memory.

A long-term vision for urban planning that structures the relationship between AFD and the City Council

To control the city's exponential growth, Ouagadougou City Council has gradually built up a vision of urban planning that it has pursued over the years. This vision focuses primarily on the multisectoral development of peripheral neighbourhoods, "secondary centralities", with a view to easing congestion in the city by creating new poles of attraction.

This vision is key. For the City Council, it constitutes the backbone that has structured a set of projects developed and implemented in a coherent manner for a decade. For a donor, this long-term vision is extremely valuable

in giving perspective to a longstanding partnership and it is what underpins the urban policy dialogue between the City and AFD.

Among the projects that make this vision a reality, the PDDO project has a pivotal role. It combines infrastructure building and strengthening the City's capacities in the field of project management and mobility. Phase 1 of the project (€40 million) has already developed 15,237 kilometres of roads and two bus terminals.

The second phase (€80 million) aims to develop three "secondary centralities" as well as to build and rehabilitate 11.26 kilometres of additional roads to better connect the neighbourhoods to each other and to the city centre.

In parallel to these outputs, the City Council has undergone a series of internal changes that have facilitated this action on the ground: a change in the municipal executive which brought new impulses, the creation of four municipal agencies operating throughout the Grand Ouaga area, constant technical support by the municipal administration, including during institutional vacancies.

However, the City Council's weak point continues to be its financial capacities. Although funding from external partners helps to keep investment financing under relative control, the operating budget (infrastructure management and maintenance) remains a huge challenge for the future. Considerable progress has nonetheless been made (receipts now linked to the management of Ouagadougou's central market and other fiscal mechanisms).

[1] <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/combining-social-cohesion-and-resilience-experience-african-cities>

Trust plays a key role

The City Council has been able to develop its projects as it has succeeded in diversifying its partners and external financing sources. This a sign of the trust that the technical and financial partners (TFPs) have placed in the City Council, a trust further fortified by the municipality's actions, thus creating a virtuous circle.

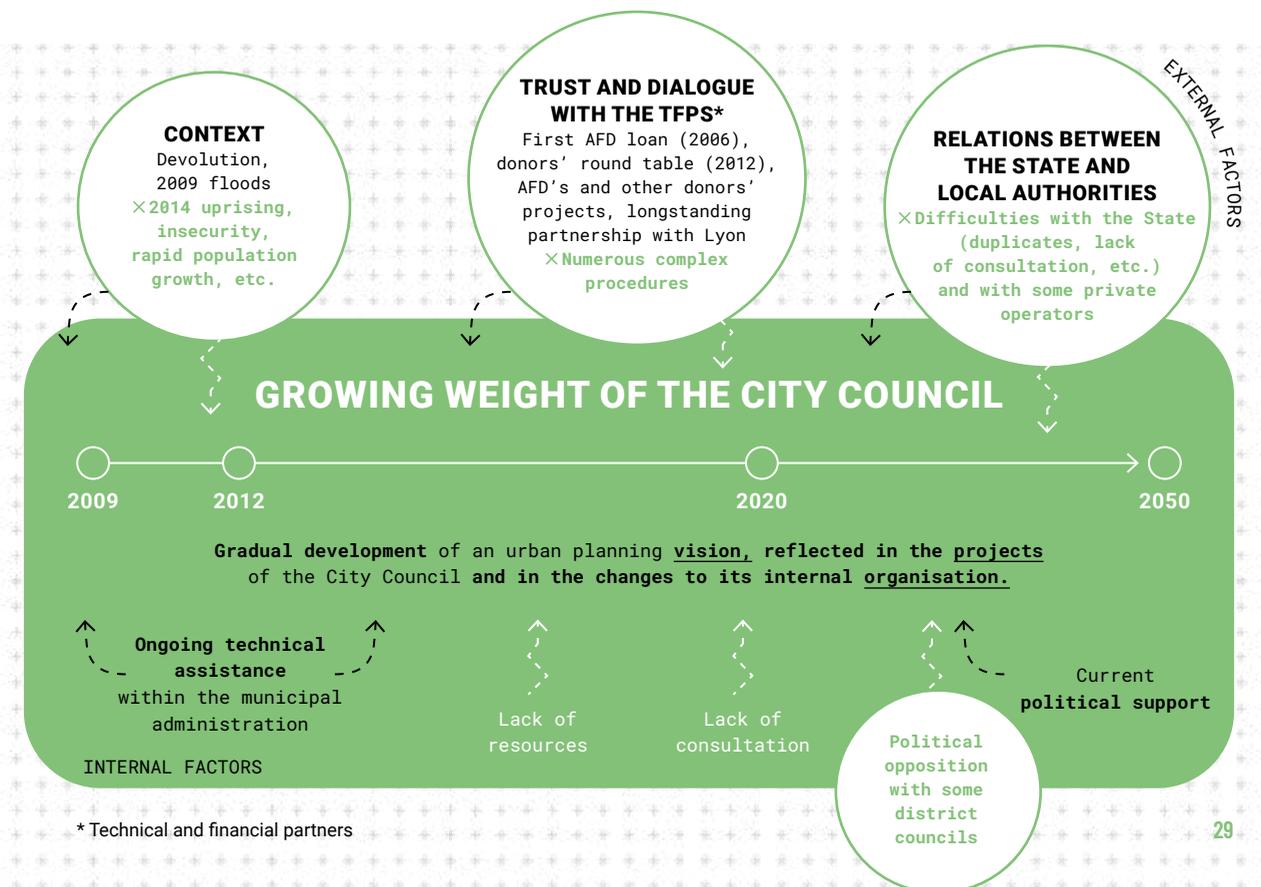
AFD is the first donor to have directly financed a project – without a state guarantee – initiated and executed by a local authority in West Africa in 2006, to rebuild Ouagadougou's central market. This had a positive impact on the mobilisation of other TFPs. The Agency is one of the main partners that has been supporting the City Council uninterruptedly for some twenty years.

The Metropolitan Area of Lyon and its urban planning agency, Urbalyon, have also provided very structuring support to develop the City's institutional and governance capacities and its mobility policy. This is part of a real long-term peer-to-peer partnership supported by AFD.

An enabling context and some obstacles

The growing weight of the City Council has spurred it to engage in greater dialogue with the State. However, this is not immune to difficulties or power issues and is a complication that also arises with some private operators.

Several contextual factors have also been conducive to the development and implementation of the City Council's vision for the city: the national devolution process and, paradoxically, the 2009 floods have helped to drive mobilisation for urban action. Other factors have hampered this initiative: the 2014 uprising, the current insecurity, urban issues, and political opposition with some district councils.



* Technical and financial partners



CITY OF DAKAR

AN INNOVATIVE AND ENLIGHTENING FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO SUPPORT THE MUNICIPALITY'S VISION

The public lighting programme for the city of Dakar was drawn up in the context of Senegal's devolution process. Dakar's management capacities were well above those of other Senegalese local authorities and the municipality was actively seeking financing for its investments.

With this first non-sovereign lending transaction for an African local authority, AFD helped to diversify the Senegalese capital's financial resources in view of boosting local investment.

However, the evaluation's conclusions point out that no data were able to show that the improved service quality had resulted in lower electricity consumption or a reduction of the city's energy bill.

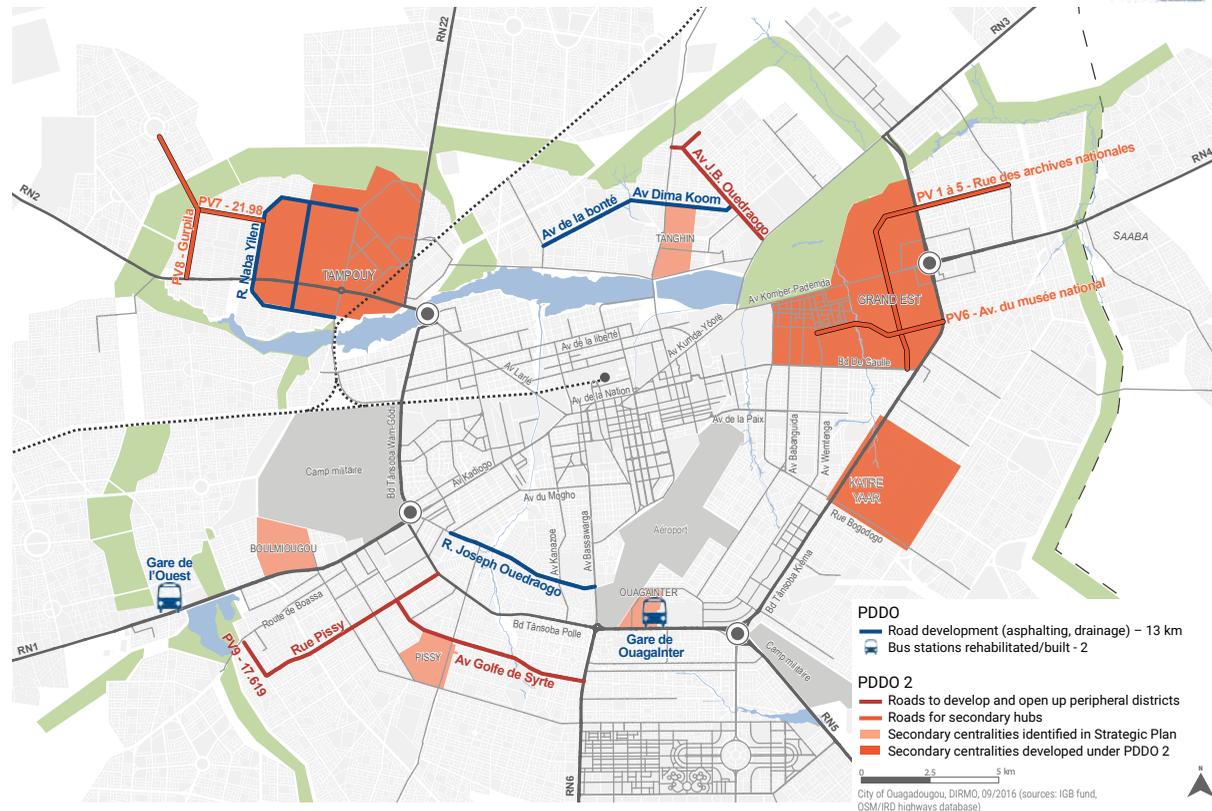
After some initial implementation setbacks, the loan was wholly disbursed, which justified AFD's risk-taking and demonstrated its capacity for innovation. Concomitant to the credibility it acquired, Dakar turned out to be a reliable borrower in the financial market. By highlighting the positive results of the project, the evaluation confirmed the local authority's financial autonomy and encouraged the creation of various financial partnerships enabling it to pursue its development.

AFD's ambitious wager taken to meet the needs expressed by its partner

The evaluation of the programme showed that, as a result of a continuous dialogue that had built up a robust partnership, AFD was able to assist the City of Dakar in completing its public lighting project despite the difficulties experienced. Yet more than a project, what was supported was the vision of the municipality.

With nearly 12,000 lighting points directly financed by the project, against the initial target of fewer than 10,000, the evaluation showed that the project's specific objectives were in the main surpassed. The project directly contributed to doubling the size of the network over the period 2011-2016 and improved the quality of the installations (equipment, performance, integration into the urban fabric).

PDDO AND PDDO2 INVESTMENTS IN OUAGADOUGOU



KEY FIGURES

6
new financial partners for the city of Dakar

12,000
lighting points financed (10,000 targeted by the objectives)

The municipality's technical and financial capacities bolstered but still fragile

Today, Dakar is equipped with procedures and tools to manage the technical public lighting services far more efficiently than in 2008. Although the management can be described as rigorous, thorough and guided by tried-and-tested procedures, it still needs professionalising. However, most of the specialised expertise and data on the state of the network are concentrated in the private sector.

The risk for senior management of the technical services is to become locked into a dependency on its service providers.

The resources earmarked for this line of work are relatively modest and the programme lacks consistency as its initiatives are dispersed. However, the evaluation points out – with respect to the programme implementation phase – that the project contributed moderately but lastingly to professionalising the personnel and to improving the city's financial management.

Beyond the objectives, a better quality of life

More light across the city certainly, but importantly the installation of thousands of lighting points in the beneficiary neighbourhoods has also enhanced the residents' quality of life. The focus groups attended by residents and tradespeople clearly revealed the tangible impact of the public lighting project on their daily life. The final beneficiaries confirmed that better public lighting helps to reduce insecurity, including for women, facilitates citizens' night-time mobility and promotes the growth of economic activities.

NIGER

A COLLECTIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVING HEALTHCARE

In Niger, where the health sector suffers from chronic under-financing, a multi-donor fund, the Common Health Fund, was created in 2006 at the initiative of the Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs, with initial support from AFD and the World Bank.

Today, the Fund comprises six donors and mobilised €91.3 million between 2015 and 2019 – the years covered by the evaluation.

The Fund aims to support Niger's public health policy, especially for women and children, by helping to finance the implementation of the Health Development Plan [*Plan de développement santé - PDS*]. Its goal is to support the State's capacity to deliver health services nationwide by channelling the resources of the Fund's partners into the Ministry's priorities, lines of action and procedures, in compliance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Launched in 2019 by AFD, the evaluation of the Fund's operating methods and its effects adopted a resolutely participatory methodology, involving actors from the Ministry and its decentralised agencies, as well as all of the Fund's partners. A general feedback session was organised by the Ministry, followed by a workshop aimed at crafting an action plan to implement the evaluation's recommendations. The lessons learnt from the evaluation provided input for the design of the AFD's fourth tranche of financing for the Fund.

An efficient financing tool, a factor of stability in a context of insecurity

The evaluation showed that the relevance of the Fund had increased with time, as it had adapted its management methods to accommodate some partners who wished to target their financing at PDS priority actions while still complying with the fundamental principles of the Paris Declaration. This more focussed targeting of priorities also helped to reinforce the strategic dialogue between the Ministry and its partners, even if the partners' coordination still needs further improvement. In addition, the Fund had a knock-on effect on the Ministry of Education – which set up a similar Fund with its partners – and helped to strengthen the intersectoral approach, particularly with the Ministry of Population and Social Reform.

TESTIMONY YATMA DIAO

The evaluation process and use of objective indicators led to conclusions reflecting the reality experienced on the ground, but which were difficult to measure without a scientific study.

The evaluation results showed the effectiveness of the project through a clear improvement in the quality of the public lighting service across the entire city of Dakar, given that the size of the network had doubled in the space of five years (2011–2016).

For instance, the evaluation underlined the outdated methods for managing the public lighting network, which is still rudimentary despite substantial financial investment in its maintenance. This enabled us to understand what we had to change. Practically, it means creating a geographic information system to computerise network management and upskill our own technical departments.

Yatma Diao, Head of the Revenue Division of the Administrative and Financial Department of the City of Dakar

Another highly positive observation of the evaluation notes that the Fund is a highly efficient management mechanism and the quality of its fiduciary management was unanimously commended, as shown by the tripling of the 2018-2019 budgets compared to previous years. It had introduced clear procedures followed by all, which have strengthened the Ministry's management capacities. Lastly, the Fund is much appreciated by the regional health departments, as for these it is the only reliable and predictable "partner", allowing them to finance their annual work plans.

Shortcomings in planning, monitoring and evaluation

The evaluation points out, however, that the Fund has some serious shortcomings when it comes to finance monitoring, outputs and results. This makes it impossible to measure the effectiveness of the targeted actions. More generally, the evaluation underlines the repeated observations that PDS planning is overly bottom-up and that its monitoring-evaluation system is of poor quality. It notes that few major advances had been made on maternal and child health according to the latest national survey, and is not in a position to comment on what effects the Fund had had on indicator trends.



TESTIMONY
DR ABACHÉ RANAOU

To ensure the coordinated implementation of the successive Health Development Plans to promote the social welfare of Niger's population, the Ministry of Public Health, together with the technical and financial partners in the sector, created a common donor fund in 2005, which became operational in 2006. The purpose of this mechanism is to facilitate the alignment of the partners' actions with national priorities, harmonise partner interventions, and enhance the predictability and stability of available international aid.

The evaluation of the AFD-managed Fund has shown very positive results overall. The conclusions of this study bolster the confidence of the technical and financial partners with respect to the Ministry of Public Health and lead me once again to encourage all partners to join the Fund. The Fund is a source of national pride and benefits our communities.

While the evaluation pinpoints tangible results, it also mentions areas for improvement. The Common Health Fund needs to be adjusted by strengthening some highly important areas, including communication, programming aspects, monitoring and evaluation.

Certainly, to convince other technical and financial partners

and other stakeholders to join the fund, we consider it crucial to specifically focus on the visibility of the Common Health Fund's activities and highlight the results achieved compared to the resources mobilised.

Moreover, given that the Fund is now growing, it seems to me that the current arrangements could be reviewed in order to consolidate the achievements and maintain the Fund's performance. In this optic, the functions of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Health (overloaded and too often solicited) should be separated from the function of Strategic Coordinator. An overhaul of the Common Health Fund's organisation would allow a rebuilding of its entire functional and hierarchical structure and thus, increase its effectiveness.

Dr Abaché Ranaou, Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs and strategic coordinator of the Common Health Fund

BENEFICIARY ACTORS

Involving beneficiary communities from the beginning to the very end of an evaluation means that the evaluative analyses are enriched by the main

stakeholders' perceptions of their living conditions. Their participation in the evaluation helps to enhance the quality of the recommendations made for future projects.



MADAGASCAR

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER TO SUPPORT URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In Madagascar and particularly in its capital Antananarivo, rural exodus and exponential population growth are fuelling an accelerated urbanisation of the city. This increase in population (estimated at around 100,000 people a year) is driving a significant pressure on land.

The municipality is unable to meet the expectations of the hundreds of new citizens who arrive daily. As most are in a highly vulnerable situation, they have no choice but to live in unplanned and illegal settlements in precarious neighbourhoods, often on the city's periphery.

This situation prompted the Malagasy authorities to launch the programme "Lalankely" ("alleyways" in Malagasy) in 2011 to open up and upgrade the capital's priority neighbourhoods. AFD has supported this programme right from the start with investment of €14 million (a €9 million grant in 2011, and a second worth €5 million in 2014).

The evaluations of the first two phases showed that the project had bettered the living conditions of 600,000 residents in 110 precarious neighbourhoods. This included improved mobility, access to drinking water, sanitation and waste collection thanks to the construction of 80 kilometres of alleyways and carriageways, as well as standpipes, wash houses and sanitary facilities.

Enriching the project through dialogue between neighbourhood residents and partners

Given the increased accountability requirements, AFD's Urban Transition and Mobility Department wished to develop a new format and original way of presenting the results and impacts of supported projects, but also bring to light what the stakeholders had to say, their life stories.^[1]

Drawing on the lessons from the first evaluations, capitalisation work on practices was carried out in the form of exchanges between all the project actors and the inhabitants. This was done at a key moment – just when the third phase of the project started up. With more substantial financing, which combined a €19 million sovereign loan and a European Union grant of €3 million, 220 additional neighbourhoods stood to benefit from an immediate response to the basic needs of the poorest communities.

Two Malagasy-speaking workshops were organised along resolutely participatory and community-based lines with around one hundred residents from the intervention neighbourhoods and all of the project's stakeholders (state representatives, local decision-makers, operators, associations, entrepreneurs, and AFD staff). The purpose was to give all the attendees a space to express themselves and exchange views.

[1] This work, like that conducted with Ouagadougou City in Burkina Faso, aimed to enrich an AFD capitalisation study of its support to the emergence of sustainable cities in Africa. <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/combining-social-cohesion-and-resilience-experience-african-cities>

Led by a specially trained local team, these workshops were an opportunity to share the evaluation findings and, for the first time, to listen to the views of such a large number of inhabitants in a constructive approach to exchange.

This collaborative exercise helped to identify various positive and tangible changes, including easier access and circulation for the inhabitants thanks to the carriageways; enhancement of housing and the neighbourhoods' image; improved hygiene, public health and access to water; the growth of economic activity; and reduced flooding.

While all the advances made are recognised, the picture is more mixed when it comes to changes for the inhabitants' safety and will be better addressed during the next phase of the project.

Learning and good practices

The workshops were organised when the project's third phase was beginning, which also coincided with the moment that the municipal teams were renewed. The workshops thus enabled the new actors to assimilate the history and stakes of the project's first ten years, as told by the diverse viewpoints of the inhabitants and partners.

The two-day workshops also brought to light the major change factors, in particular the local actors' strengthened capacities; the sustainability of changes in the neighbourhoods fostered by fruitful collaboration between local actors; and the behavioural changes induced by NGO-led awareness-raising actions for the residents. These are all good practices that need to be continued and improved to optimise the implementation of the next steps.

The third phase is set to extend the benefits of the project to over one million people.



CHAD

PUTTING THE BENEFICIARIES AT THE HEART OF THE EVALUATION APPROACH

After ten years of cooperation with Chad's Ministry of Public Health and National Solidarity, AFD wished to carry out an ex-post evaluation of phases 1 and 2 of the health sector support project launched in 2009 (PASST 1 and 2). The second phase was still ongoing at the time of the evaluation. The phases targeted several of the Ministry's priorities, including reinforcing human resources and the supply and demand of maternal and child health.

Given the challenges of learning with respect to capacity-building and engaging the community, the choice was made to conduct an internal evaluation (with support from an external consultant) and develop a methodological approach oriented towards "assessing the changes".

"Before the training, the midwives didn't know what to say to welcome us, now they really know how to welcome us."

↑ A woman beneficiary of an urban health centre

Focus groups and interviews to grasp the changes

In addition to the documentary review, individual interviews and household health survey data, the data collection methodology revolved around six focus groups. During these, the actors proposed their analysis of the observed changes (their knowledge, know-how and life skills) and directly contributed to the evaluative analysis. More than seventy people were interviewed.

How the project stakeholders (project managers, actors from the delegated contracting authority, intermediate and final beneficiaries) perceive change is core to the evaluation. The originality of this approach lies in a reversal of the analytical process. Instead of starting from the project to evaluate the results achieved, the changes

KEY FIGURES

70

interviews carried out

6

focus groups held on different themes: 1 with the beneficiaries, 1 with the community workers, 1 on governance with the NGO project operators, 2 with health workers, 1 with the Ministry of Public Health.

experienced by the project's stakeholders are evaluated – regardless of whether these match the targeted results. The next step involves analysing the extent to which the project may have contributed to the results.

Changes in healthcare accessibility and quality

The PASST programme is unfolding in a fast-changing macroeconomic and political environment. The fall in oil prices coupled with the Sahel crisis led to health budget cuts as early as 2014, followed by measures to reduce social spending. It had been impossible to deliver broader health services, even though the health and demographic context fully warranted it. The intervention logic had been developed on a theoretical basis when the project was first designed and, as a result, was not completely actionable.

The evaluation nonetheless shed light on various positive changes that had gone unnoticed until then.

Analysis of the 2010-2014 demographic and health survey data for the N'Djamena and Logone Occidental regions shows an increase in healthcare coverage (family planning, assisted childbirth, caesarean sections). Moreover, the use of modern contraceptive methods jumped up sharply in Logone, rising from almost zero in 2010 to 10.5% of women in 2014, when PASST 1 finished.

"Before, I was afraid of delivering a breach baby, I let someone else do it. Now, I feel confident."

↑ A midwife

"I now understand that the health centres belong to the community."
"It becomes a daily reflex: when I meet a woman who should have come for a check-up, I remind her."

↑ A villager and a community worker

These changes, backed by statistical data, are also corroborated by the qualitative data from the interviews and focus groups. They underline a change in the practices of midwives, who now take the time to talk with the women about family planning methods and their risks, and leave time for the women's questions.

Yet, the evaluators are unable to confirm that the increase in the use of contraceptive methods and prenatal check-ups is directly attributable to the financial support for PASST's activities – although the programme certainly contributed to it.



INTERVIEW
ABDELKADRE MAHAMAT HASSANE



What are your thoughts on the evaluative approach used?

The participatory approach and the organisation of focus groups were something very new and much appreciated. They helped the PASST project partners to work actively on the analysis and conclusions, learn and self-evaluate. When evaluation comes from the field and brings together civil society organisations, the beneficiaries and the Ministry of Public Health, I feel it has greater legitimacy and is more qualitative.

How do you think the evaluation has fostered change in the way PASST is managed?

What I learnt from the evaluation's conclusions is the importance of dialogue in countering the weak stakeholder synergy that was pointed up in the study. Even though six operators were present in the same region, all working within the same logical framework, there was little coordination and little discussion between them during project implementation. At the end of the evaluation, we set up coordination meetings between the operators in the regions and we noticed that this allows us to save time and encourage the pooling of some activities and resources.

Another change involves the platform for exchanges on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Maternal Health, which had existed before the evaluation but was not sufficiently functional. After the evaluation, it gained in momentum and is now more operational. A decree has placed the platform

under the Directorate General of the Ministry of Public Health, which has bolstered its institutionalisation and attracted more partners, especially non-state stakeholders.

PASST is the offspring of the Ministry of Health. The evaluation has charted ways forward. It has been a wake-up call for us to implement certain recommendations.

The Ministry of Public Health has been a key partner of AFD in Chad. What would your advice be to make the evaluations more useful?

The evaluations need to be done more regularly so as to avoid the participants' loss of memory or forgetfulness (fading memories) about project activities. I would also recommend reinforcing their anthropological aspect, centring them on the social side, and increasing the number of focus groups, particularly those involving beneficiaries. Knowing how to identify the beneficiaries in order to obtain more representative samples of the population is important to minimise information bias. Lastly, I think it is really important for the evaluation team to include socio-anthropological expertise on the project's theme.

*Abdelkadre Mahamat Hassane,
PASST project coordinator*

PARTNER
ACTORS

BENEFICIARY
ACTORS

INTERNAL
ACTORS

PUBLIC
DEVELOPMENT BANKS

INTERNAL ACTORS

AFD's operational teams are systematically integrated into the evaluation process so that they can gain experience and develop projects adapted to the different contexts and needs of the populations.

Ownership of these studies brings direct benefits in terms of enhancing the quality and implementation of projects.



GENDER

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES OF MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN AFD PROJECTS

Launched in June 2019 to help improve AFD's operational practices on gender and to combat gender inequality, the evaluation of the place given to gender in AFD projects (2014-2018) has just been completed.

The purpose of this evaluation was to report on the effects of rolling out the gender mainstreaming strategy, "Gender and the Reduction of Gender Inequalities" (the gender cross-cutting intervention framework [CIF]), adopted in early 2014. The evaluation focuses on the portfolio of AFD-funded gender projects in all intervention sectors, the development of the Agency's operational strategies and the effectiveness of its internal organisation for implementing the Gender CIF.

Based on a purposeful collaborative approach, the evaluation was carried out by external consultants and supported by a reference group of more than thirty members, mostly the gender focal points from all of AFD's operational structures. The co-building of various analytical tools, the evaluation's observations and recommendations, along with regular discussions about the work all helped to consolidate the inhouse dialogue and provided input for AFD's learning process on gender mainstreaming.

Tangible progress

The evaluation concluded that the implementation of the Gender CIF has indeed modified the attention paid to gender in AFD's practices. The tools developed, the activities to build the teams' capacities, and the advocacy role played by the organisation in charge of providing environmental and social support have all helped to heighten an awareness of the salience of gender in projects. At the same time, the related knowledge and skills acquired by the operational teams at headquarters have progressed.

The evaluation points up the significant rise of gender mainstreaming in the portfolio of AFD-funded projects: in 2014, 34% of the projects were flagged with gender equality markers DAC 1 (secondary gender equality objective) and DAC 2 (principal gender equality objective), whereas this had risen to 49% in 2018.

The headline objective of the Gender CIF (50% of gender projects in 2017) was almost on target, mainly thanks to financing for projects led by civil society organisations. CSOs are often already gender-responsive and play a crucial role in the take-up of gender. Another contributing factor was the number of projects with a secondary gender objective (86% of gender projects over the period 2014-2018).

The challenges ahead

Implementing the gender strategy has required internal restructuring to ensure an efficient roll-out. Its management and coordination, the development of methodological tools and training, as well as steering and coordinating the network of gender focal points in the various operational entities, have required reinforcing governance and the initial level of institutional resources. Human resources, in particular, have had to be scaled up given the level of support required.

Moreover, while gender is indeed one of AFD's major strategic objectives, this issue – which has found its way onto the agenda of many international donors more recently than the climate issue – is gradually gaining momentum and must continue to be taken on board at all echelons of the Agency.

The evaluation also notes that, in the field, AFD's local agencies found it very difficult to engage a dialogue with partners during the project design phase. As a result, gender is often integrated at a later stage, during project appraisal. However, a qualitative analysis of the portfolio shows that, for optimal achievement of the objectives, the

gender dimension needs to be effectively integrated as early as the project design phase. The dialogue with partners also needs to continue throughout the entire project cycle.

Initial weaknesses and strategic transformations

Since 2019, AFD has been committed to being a "feminist" agency in line with France's feminist diplomacy. This involves a transformative commitment to deeply embed a gender perspective in development projects, partnerships, communication and inhouse. In practical terms, this has translated into an internal restructuring, the creation of the Gender Unit with dedicated staff (6 members and consultants) in charge of implementing the strategic gender initiatives, structuring and deploying a support service and training offer, and promoting a human resources policy for gender equality at work.



You are Chair of the Gender Evaluation Reference Group. What surprised or interested you most during this evaluation?

My initial motivation was to observe a process of preparing and steering an evaluation so as to understand the discussions that AFD is engaged in regarding the cross-cutting gender intervention framework, and hence a policy of institutionalisation.

I was pleasantly surprised by the size of this reference group, the number of meetings and, especially, by the involvement of a very significant number of its members. The discussions were highly constructive and dynamic. I think that this active evaluation process is at least as interesting as the report that will come out of it and that it will greatly help to bolster ownership of all this evaluation work. Engaging in this discussion on gender is highly useful in order to further advance its institutionalisation, far beyond the precise formulation of the recommendations.



Elisabeth Hofmann,
Lecturer-Researcher at
Bordeaux Montaigne University

Do you think that gender-responsive evaluation of development projects has a role to play in mainstreaming these issues more effectively into donor practices? Why is it important to integrate gender questions into projects?

For some years now, AFD has been creating a strong impetus to encourage NGOs – via the FISONG scheme, for example – to integrate gender into the projects they submit for AFD co-financing. To my mind, such encouragement can produce an effect if the organisation is “mature” enough to embark on this process. This is particularly true if its teams include pro-gender and gender-competent members who know how to make the most of the opportunities offered by these incentives.

It’s crucial that a gender perspective be included in the evaluation, so that what has been done can be documented, promoted, produce recommendations and drive change. With its retrospective and prospective dimensions, evaluation helps to build greater take-up of gender within NGOs and upgrade their related skills. It is also crucial that AFD mobilise further to mainstream gender into projects other than those that are led by civil society, as the financial volumes involved are far greater.

For projects with the classification DAC 0 (no gender objective) or DAC 1 (gender as a secondary objective), a gender-responsive evaluation is still relevant to check what differentiated effects the project has on women and men – to know whether the opportunities it brings have been taken up equitably by men and by women, or whether the project has unintentionally deepened inequalities. It also helps to identify possible missed opportunities to produce a positive impact on gender relations in the context of a given project.

The ambition to systematically carry out this type of evaluation cannot be sustained without adequate financial resources, and without checking that teams have the necessary gender skills and experience. In addition, AFD and the partners involved need to use the conclusions and recommendations on gender for future projects.

Based on the lessons learnt from gender evaluations and, more broadly, from your own experience, do you have any recommendations that could help the gender aspect to be more systematically mainstreamed into projects?

In my view, it’s important to provide assistance on gender at the time a project is being set up so that this perspective can be incorporated into the agenda as soon as the project is identified and designed. During these stages, this assistance could be combined with action-training processes: short periods of operationalisation

in tandem with training, for AFD employees and partner institutes.

Gender focal points should be ramped up not only by doubling their numbers and encouraging male-female duos, but also by enhancing their role (in share of work time allocation, when promotions are made, etc.). Stronger networking between these focal points, with moments dedicated to exchanges, could also render this arrangement more meaningful and more effective.

It seems crucial to me that gender be institutionalised at AFD (this aspect is not covered by the present evaluation) so that mainstreaming gender in projects can make further headway. This will also create more consistency between what is preached to partners, to NGOs, and what is practised.

NEW CALEDONIA

EVALUATING TEN YEARS OF AFD'S ACTION

In 2020, AFD launched an evaluation of its activities in New Caledonia over ten years (2009-2019). This is part of a new thrust to strengthen the evaluation of its activities in French Overseas Territories.

Very positive results on support to the public sector, but more critical on support to the private sector

The evaluation shows that AFD played a key role in New Caledonia's development financing as, over the ten-year stretch, it provided €2.2 billion of structural investments.

Financing for the public sector rose steadily over the decade and all of the territory's municipalities received support. For some local authorities, AFD was the sole donor. This was the case – at least for the period evaluated – for the northern and Loyalty Islands provinces. One finding was that AFD has contributed to territorial rebalancing.^[1]

On the other hand, the average trend in the private sector is generally downwards, despite occasional spikes, mainly because some bank refinancing instruments have disappeared. The evaluation underscores that the added value for this domain is far more limited than for the public sector.

An invitation to bolster AFD's role of "influencer"

In addition to these findings, the evaluation points up the extent to which New Caledonia's local authorities appreciate AFD's support and advisory role. It encourages AFD to go further in this direction, develop a more structuring strategy and take a firmer positioning as advisor and "influencer". More operational recommendations on tools and practices are outlined, but the New Caledonia agency is above all encouraged to rethink its role within the territory and, ultimately, renew itself.

These recommendations are very timely as the Noumea agency is now due to prepare its new strategy for New Caledonia, taking into account the territory's specific context – the previous strategy having expired (2015-2018). The evaluation has provided some priority thrusts for this strategic reflection, to be pursued through a dialogue with counterparties and partners.

[1] This involves tackling economic and social inequalities between the different regions, particularly between the North and South, but also and more recently inequalities within urban centres, notably the Greater Noumea metropolitan area.

A virtuous circle fostering ownership of the evaluation and its use

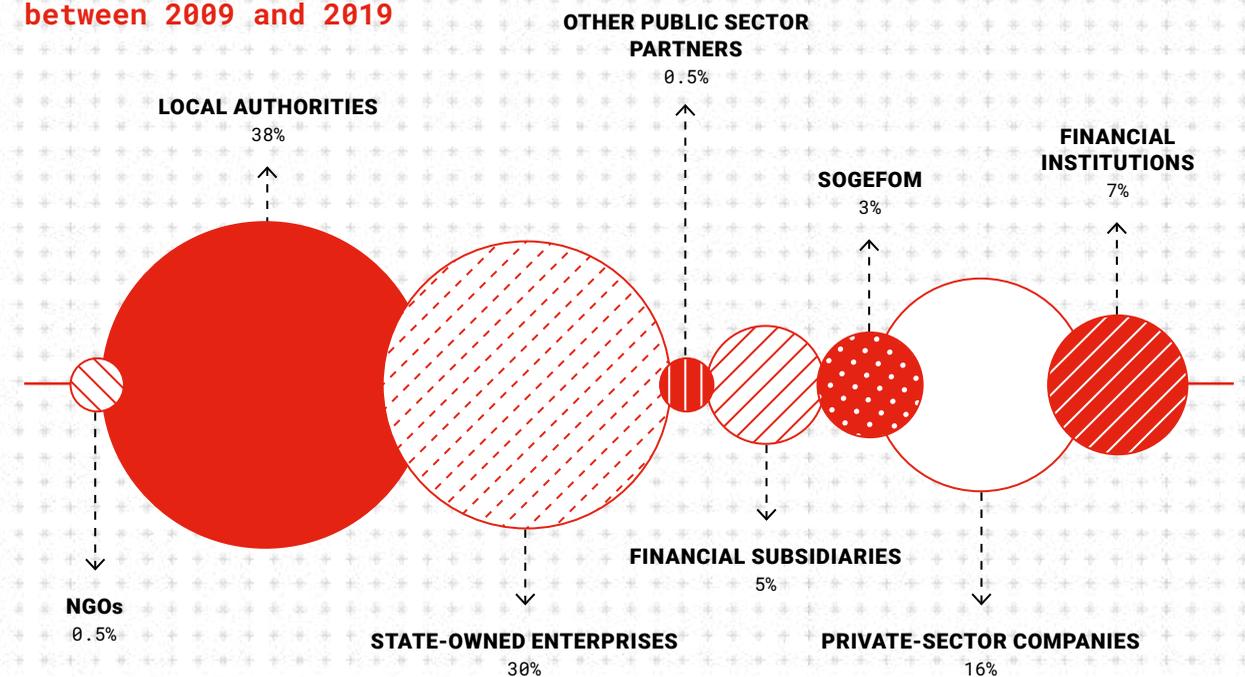
The evaluation applied a participatory approach from end to end. Upstream, six workshops had been organised, first with the agency, then with the agency and the New Caledonian partners. The workshops not only helped to mobilise these actors but also defined the terms of reference aligned on the needs expressed.

The evaluation is viewed as highly useful by all concerned. This is down to several combined factors: a quality study, the agency's and partners' high level of involvement and all this in an environment conducive to change – both externally (a pivotal institutional context given the self-determination referendums and the health crisis, both of which herald the need for change) and internally (an internal dynamic of questioning by the agency's staff).

Even before the evaluation was completed, the agency drew on the provisional results to inform its response to the urgency of the Covid-19 crisis. Today, it has taken full stock of the changes suggested by the evaluation – unsparing as it was – and is using the recommendations as a basis on which to build a new strategic project with its partners.

Both retrospective and prospective, the evaluation of these ten years of operations by the Agence française de développement in New Caledonia reflects an economic, social, political and health context that is exceptional for the territory. At a turning point in New Caledonia's history, the observations and recommendations from the decade 2010-2020 outline the opportunities that could enable AFD to fully assume its role as a bank and development agency for its diverse partners.

Types of third parties financed by AFD in New Caledonia between 2009 and 2019



Would you tell us what this evaluation has brought to the Noumea agency?

This evaluation could not have been more timely for two reasons:

- × firstly, the very particular situation in New Caledonia was prompting us to reach out to the actors and our clients, and take initiatives;
- × and secondly, internally, the agency had embarked on a process of change and its staff were engaged in a dynamic process of questioning.

So the timeliness of the evaluation and the relevance of its recommendations have supported the first practical implementations.



Philippe Renault,
Director of AFD's Noumea agency

How are you going to use or already using this evaluation?

Apart from the fact that this evaluation makes recommendations that are very useful for our next Country Intervention Framework, some changes have already been implemented, for example:

- × initiatives have been taken in keeping with the expected role of "influencer". These include producing thematic studies fine-tuned to the New Caledonian setting, on the subjects of highly sustainable economic diversification, the future climate in the Pacific and the preparation of climate adaptation plans for New Caledonia (and French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and Vanuatu), and the development of the social and solidarity economy;
- × we have adopted a more partnership-based approach to our technical and financial operations, consulting with the Banque des Territoires on financing. Studies are being carried out with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME) on the one hand, and with the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD) and Météo France on the other hand;
- × our financial tools are being developed, as our subsidiary SOGEFOM (French Overseas Guarantee Fund Management Company) has set up a portfolio guarantee to support partner commercial banks – New Caledonian MSMEs being the final beneficiaries. Our capacities for technical assistance to public contracting authorities are actionable through the Overseas Fund.



Alongside this, AFD has remained responsive to partners' requests, as in the case of the €240 million emergency loan to the Government of New Caledonia in 2020 to support its economic, budgetary and social response to the pandemic.

What key ideas will you retain from this evaluation experience?

First, this evaluative work has proved constructive and full of lessons to be learnt. The participatory approach used from late 2019 to early 2021 has highlighted our partners' very high expectations vis-à-vis AFD. This was perhaps more than we had anticipated.

More importantly, we need to continue to develop our positioning, our intervention tools, our communication, etc. These expected and necessary changes present a collective challenge for AFD, and not only for the agency. The overall momentum driven by AFD (agency and headquarters) must continue and the very strong mobilisation of our partners maintained. This will mean that the results of the evaluation can be implemented, and the observations and analyses shared (and supported) with the State and our clients – which will make it possible to achieve the expected changes.

DATA COLLECTION AND VISUALISATION TOOLS

DEPLOYING INNOVATIVE METHODS TO ENHANCE REPORTING

As a direct consequence of the worsening crisis in the Sahel and its extension to increasingly large areas, the operational teams are no longer able to travel to some project intervention sites.

To ensure the continuity of project appraisal, management and monitoring in situations where travel is impossible, AFD has been, for several years now, developing innovative methods and tools to collect data remotely in coordination with the operational teams.

“Visualising” the progress of projects

Among the tools such as satellite imagery or complaint solving mechanisms, mobile data collection is the most widespread tool used at AFD. It involves providing monitoring-evaluation officers with mobile phones or tablets to collect data that can be instantly transmitted to a digital platform.

Within the Sahel Alliance, collaborative work between technical and financial partners (TPFs) aimed at sharing the geolocation of each other's projects has been initiated by the World Bank to improve inter-donor coordination. To map its activity portfolio, the Bank was using the KoBoToolbox platform – an open-source toolkit able to collect data without an Internet connection. The Bank has thus promoted this tool and trained other donors. AFD decided to align with this practice, raising its teams' awareness and training them.

Mobile data collection tools allow for digitalised questionnaires, geo-referenced data, photographs, the processing and visualisation of data collected in real time. By connecting to the platform, each project team member has continuous access to updated data on the progress made. The tool also allows us to check the veracity of collected data, map AFD's project activities very precisely, and respond to the surging demand for accountability in the degraded context of the Sahel.

In parallel, AFD's Evaluation and Learning Department has supported the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea regional offices in creating, building up and using project databases that cover the activities in these regions. These databases, and their cartographic use, have enabled the project teams to better report on their operations in the field.



INTERVIEW ALEX CHUNET

In what way is the satellite imaging of geospatial data useful?

With recent technological advances and the launch of new satellite constellations, the availability and precision of satellite imagery and geospatial data has increased exponentially. Today, these new sources of information mean that we can not only analyse global environmental phenomena, but also inform and guide public policy and projects at the local level.

What use can they be to donors ?

These technologies can be used to support operations at different stages of the project cycle. This could apply, for example, to the project preparation and appraisal phases to inform the public policy dialogue or improve the project's geographic targeting. It can also be useful during the implementation phase to provide more comprehensive remote monitoring at a lower cost and, lastly, during evaluation to better analyse a project's impacts. Several AFD projects have already shown the usefulness of geospatial data, particularly on themes such as deforestation in the Congo Basin or urban public lighting in Dakar, Senegal.

What is AFD doing to extend the use of these technologies?

To better integrate the use of these technologies, a strategy (Geospatial Data and Imagery) has been designed and is now being rolled out by AFD's Evaluation and Learning Department. It is grounded on three components: first, the creation of partnerships (particularly with the World Bank, the European Space Agency, the French Centre national d'études spatiales [National Space Research Centre]) to promote the transfer of innovative methods and data; second, an awareness-raising campaign (for operational staff) underpinned by documents providing them with information and practical tools, as well as dissemination activities; and last, the strengthening of expertise both for AFD staff and our partners.

One of the key challenges for this strategy is the adoption of geospatial analysis techniques, such as machine learning algorithms and their integration into AFD's operations.

Alex ChUNET, Project and Evaluation Officer, geospatial data expert at AFD

FOOD SECURITY SUPPORT PROJECT IN EASTERN BURKINA FASO

Why have you set up a mobile data collection system like KoBoToolbox?

We use mobile data collection in our project to develop our monitoring and evaluation system and thus strengthen the reliability of data, and simplify and systematise the data collection. Also, given the mounting insecurity in the project intervention area since 2017-2018, especially in the Eastern region where several municipalities suffer repeated terrorist attacks, this data collection and remote monitoring method was more appropriate. Before the introduction of mobile collection with the KoBoToolbox platform, we used to take photos, geographical coordinates with GPS devices, and the teams would fill in the monitoring sheets and reporting templates by hand. However, not only was the quantity of data that we received too complicated to process and the feedback time too long, but there were often data entry errors and the veracity of the data was not guaranteed. This system allows us to monitor each investment in real time, from its planning phase to its completion. We collect a variety of information: GPS coordinates of the infrastructure built, a description of its condition illustrated by photos, information about its management

(by an association, the municipality, etc.). This allows us to produce knowledge with a minimum risk.

How do you go about this practically?

The Project Management Unit manages the creation of questionnaires, their digitalisation and data processing.

The facilitators present in the municipalities for the implementation of the project are responsible for collecting data to monitor the project. After a test phase, their feedback from the field enabled us to fine-tune the questionnaire with regard to certain items that were not clear. All project members, including AFD, have a guest account allowing them to visualise the data on the KoBoToolbox platform as they are collected or updated.

Did you come up against any difficulties when setting up this tool?

This application can only function with human relays on site; however, there isn't a facilitator in every municipality and we are limiting field trips between municipalities to reduce security risks. This slows down, or even interrupts, data collection as our main concern is to guarantee the physical integrity of project personnel. So far, there have been no incidents, but we remain vigilant. Our aim is to increase the number of project workers in 2021 to cover more municipalities.

Adama Siri, expert in monitoring and evaluation for the Food Security Support Project in Eastern Burkina Faso (PSAE) from the start-up in May until June 2020

Zakaria Zongo, Geographic Information System expert in the monitoring and evaluation unit of the PSAE project



PARTNER
ACTORS

BENEFICIARY
ACTORS

INTERNAL
ACTORS

PUBLIC
DEVELOPMENT BANKS

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT BANKS

The public development banks are privileged partners in the area of development aid. Evaluating the interventions to support these actors gives AFD greater insight into how

its collaboration with these institutions can be leveraged to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

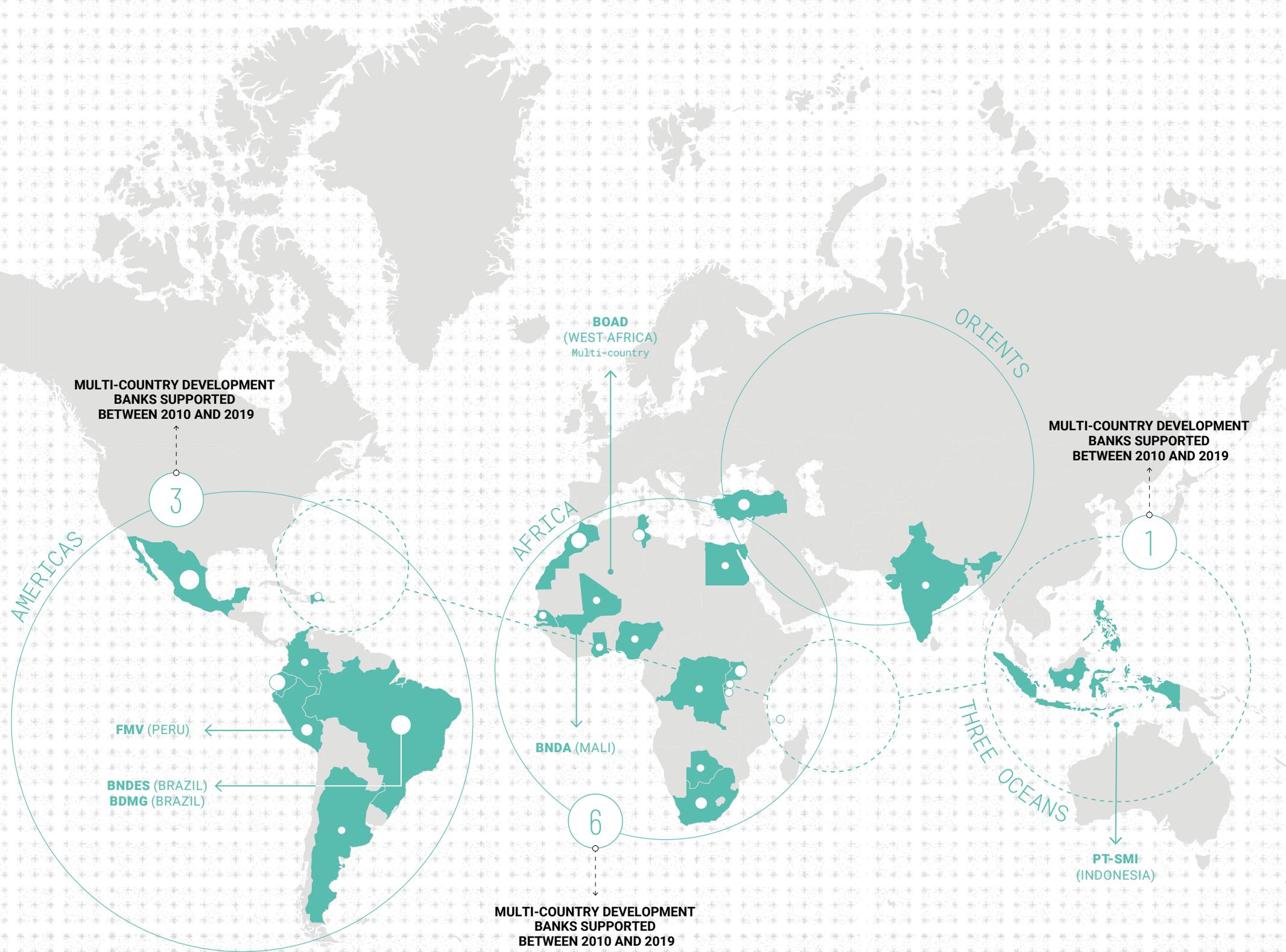


PARTNER ACTORS

BENEFICIARY ACTORS

INTERNAL ACTORS

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT BANKS



List of projects evaluated in the capitalisation exercise on the public development banks

BOAD (West Africa)

Mandate: bank finances WAEMU member countries (West African Economic and Monetary Union). Financing for states, local authorities, businesses, financial institutions. Focus on infrastructure, agriculture, financial sector.

Date relations started: 1981

Projects evaluated:

- × CZZ 1420: food security loan + TA[1]
- × CZZ 1625: private sector loan
- × CZZ 1717: energy sector loan + TA
- × CZZ 2045: financial consolidation loan

BDMG (Brazil)

Mandate: local development bank of the State of Minas Gerais. Direct financing for businesses and local authorities, and support for design of PBL (policy-based loan) financing.

Date relations started: 2013

Project evaluated:

- × CBR 1051: green line of credit to local authorities

PT-SMI (Indonesia)

Mandate: infrastructure finance bank. Clients: local authorities, businesses and PBL projects.

Date relations started: 2014

Projects evaluated:

- × CID 1056: green line of credit + AT

Bnda (Mali)

Mandate: universal bank, including retail banking. Activity now diversified with a strong focus on the agricultural sector.

Date relations started: 1979

Projects evaluated:

- × CML 1237: education loan + TA
- × CML 1350: agricultural sector and SME loan
- × CML 1422: financial consolidation loan

FMV (Peru)

Mandate: a second-level bank operating in housing finance (through partner finance institutions).

Date relations started: 2014

Projects evaluated:

- × CPE 1006: sustainable housing line of credit
- × CPE 1022: sustainable housing line of credit

BNDES (Brazil)

Mandate: generalist bank. Direct financing or via intermediation. No retail clients. Diversified operations in different economic sectors.

Date relations started: 2014

Project evaluated:

- × CBR 1048: green line of credit

[1] TA: technical assistance

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT BANKS AS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

To grasp the effects of AFD's interventions in support of public development banks, a capitalisation exercise was launched on the evaluation of twelve projects implemented between 2010 and 2019 with six institutions: in West Africa (BOAD, BNDA), Indonesia (PT-SMI) and South America (BNDES, BDMG and FMV).

This work, which was accompanied by a portfolio review and a benchmarking exercise with other donors, made it possible to highlight the different forms and evolution of the partnerships established, some of which have lasted several decades through successive generations of projects.

The structuring effects on the banks and room for progress

The findings of the capitalisation study revealed how AFD's interventions had had a structuring effect on its partner banks, while taking into account their diversity (PDBs do not form a homogeneous group). The main effects concerned the development of their portfolio, their strategy and a positioning that better integrates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into their operations. AFD's projects also contributed to strengthening the banks' role in implementing public policies.

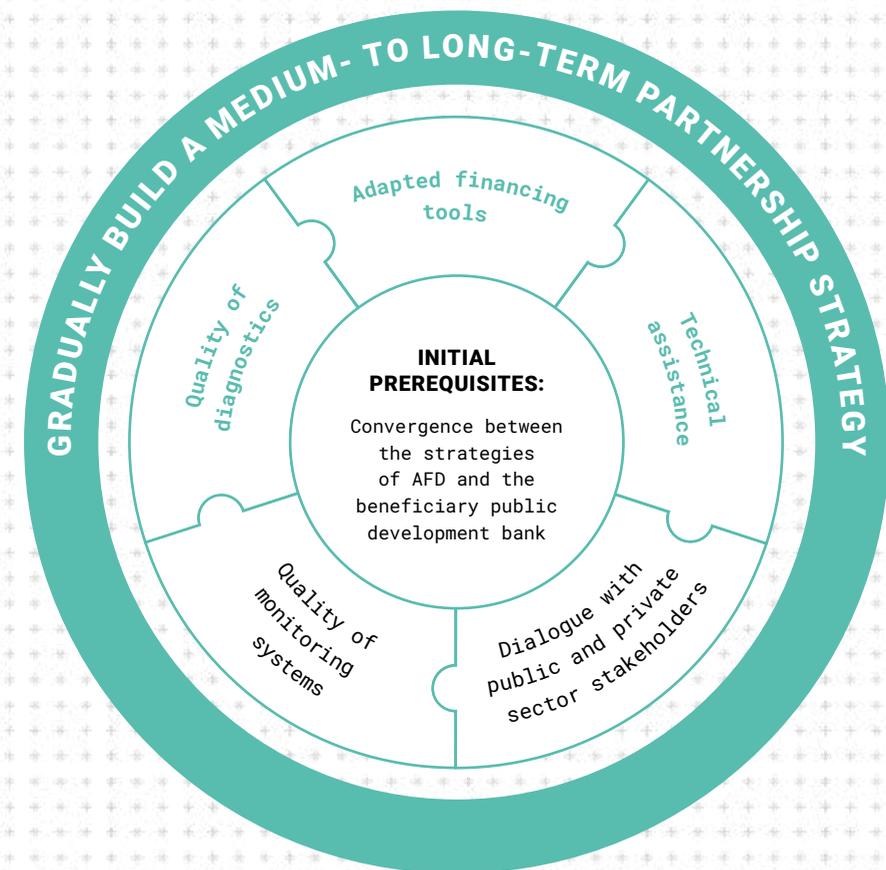
Most of the evaluations nonetheless underscored the limits of some initial diagnostics, as well as the difficulties in ensuring reliable and relevant monitoring of the effects that these projects had on the final beneficiaries (SMEs, households). This was due to the limitations of the project monitoring mechanisms put in place at AFD level and to the shortcomings of such mechanisms in most of the banks evaluated.

The levers of successful interventions

The capitalisation study also identified six levers for setting up a structuring intervention with a PDB: (i) make a precise analysis of the baseline conditions to identify the relevant levers and priorities to be strengthened, (ii) define an overall partnership approach with the supported bank, articulating a short and medium-long term vision, (iii) provide relevant and coordinated technical support to strengthen the institution's capacities in the various

dimensions of its activity, (iv) catalyse dialogue between PDBs and other actors in the ecosystem, (v) optimise the project's financial structuring to meet the needs of the different stakeholders while also ensuring an efficient use of resources, and (vi) improve the monitoring mechanism, and more specifically impact monitoring, to comply with the demands for accountability and the missions/ mandates of the PDBs.

Key levers for successful projects with the public development banks



What place and what role does evaluation currently have at the West African Development Bank (BOAD)?

Evaluation holds a key place at BOAD. It is one of the pillars of our Strategic Plan. Over the past ten years, resources have been stepped up to allow for a systematic and objective assessment of the design, implementation and development results of ongoing and completed projects.

Evaluation plays two major roles in the areas of accountability and capitalisation.

To reinforce accountability, the Bank has recently undertaken some twenty evaluations. Their reports have been referred to the Board of Directors and disseminated to its partners and the general public through various channels (website, workshops, etc.).

In parallel, several capitalisation meetings with the BOAD departments involved in the project-cycle have helped to bolster ownership of the lessons drawn from evaluations and highlight that more than half of the recommendations made in the evaluations have been implemented.



Damit Serge Didier Amany,
*Director of Project Development
Results Evaluation (DERP), at BOAD*

What issues and challenges does impact monitoring raise for a bank like BOAD?

Two issues can be mentioned – highlighting the effectiveness of BOAD-funded projects and identifying the levers to improve this effectiveness. The issues present a twofold challenge. On the one hand, the evaluation culture is not deeply rooted for some of our partners and BOAD has noticed that impact monitoring-evaluation systems are institutionalised in very different ways. As a result, the planning and implementation tools for these activities are sometimes limited. When this is the case, we make a point of supporting projects not only through capacity-building but also by providing funds for monitoring-evaluation activities.

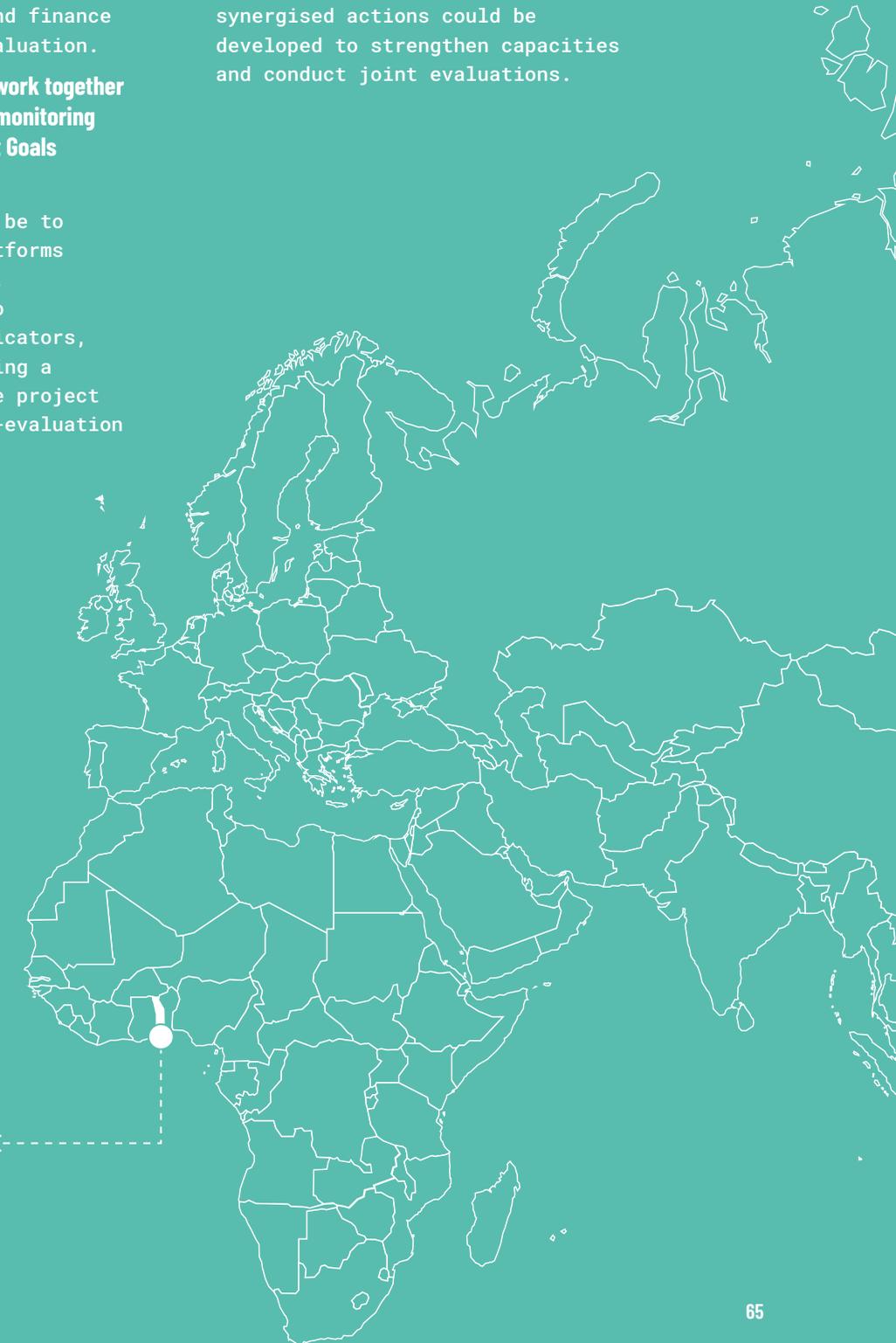
On the other hand, Covid-19 and the insecurity of certain project zones do not allow for optimal collection of the data required for impact evaluations. This situation has led us to use remote data collection platforms such as KoBoToolbox, and also to explore the advantages of satellite imagery.

We are particularly hopeful that the partnership with AFD will enable us to introduce and finance other types of impact evaluation.

How could development banks work together to improve the integration and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in the projects they finance?

One possible lever could be to create collaborative platforms on the theme of the SDGs. This would likely lead to the harmonisation of indicators, methodologies (establishing a baseline situation before project start-up, the monitoring-evaluation

of ongoing operations) and reporting approaches. In addition, synergised actions could be developed to strengthen capacities and conduct joint evaluations.



THE STAKES OF MONITORING RESULTS AND IMPACTS FOR PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT BANKS

Monitoring the results^[1] of all AFD's projects is challenging as the Agency must be able to assess the effects of its interventions in order to report on them and improve them.

The capitalisation study covering 12 operations for 6 public development banks (PDBs) shows that the objectives for initial quantitative targets (number of final beneficiaries, investment volumes financed, development results, etc.) were achieved overall, according to the information collected by the evaluators.

On top of these results, the evaluations revealed that these interventions had had positive effects on capacity-building for AFD's partners, particularly regarding sustainable development topics. These effects were achieved thanks to the use of specific criteria to determine the eligibility of the investments to be financed, to dedicated support schemes in the form of training, workshops and tools, and to environmental and social requirements.

Current hurdles

Most of the evaluations nonetheless underscored recurrent difficulties in ensuring reliable and relevant monitoring of all the results of the interventions. One reason for this relates to the specificities of financial intermediation projects. In fact, in this type of project, AFD has to rely on its financial partners – i.e. its direct

beneficiaries and, in this case, the PDBs – to ultimately monitor the results of the financed projects.

This two-tier collection system (three-tier even, should the PDBs themselves be financing financial intermediaries) increases the risk of unreliable data being transmitted to AFD (cf. the diagram opposite).

The other reasons identified relate to the limitations of the project monitoring systems put in place at the level of AFD and to the shortcomings of these systems in most of the banks evaluated.

Strengthening mechanisms and capacities

To counter these difficulties, the evaluators put forward two key operational recommendations.

The first requires strengthening the mechanisms used to monitor interventions. For greater relevance, these mechanisms need to be backed by indicators that are clearly defined at the outset, directly linked to the set objectives, together with an adapted methodology to measure them. In addition, it is crucial to establish a baseline situation and target values to assess the progress made. Moreover, in the case of quantitative impacts, AFD and the other donors would benefit from strengthening and harmonising their practices, particularly as regards methodologies, so that they can more effectively monitor the results of their interventions on themes such as climate or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The second recommendation involves strengthening the PDBs' capacity to measure the results of implementing their development mandate. AFD's requirements for monitoring these interventions need to be adapted to the internal capacities of its partners (both the banks and project sponsors), who should be able to receive dedicated technical support as and when necessary.

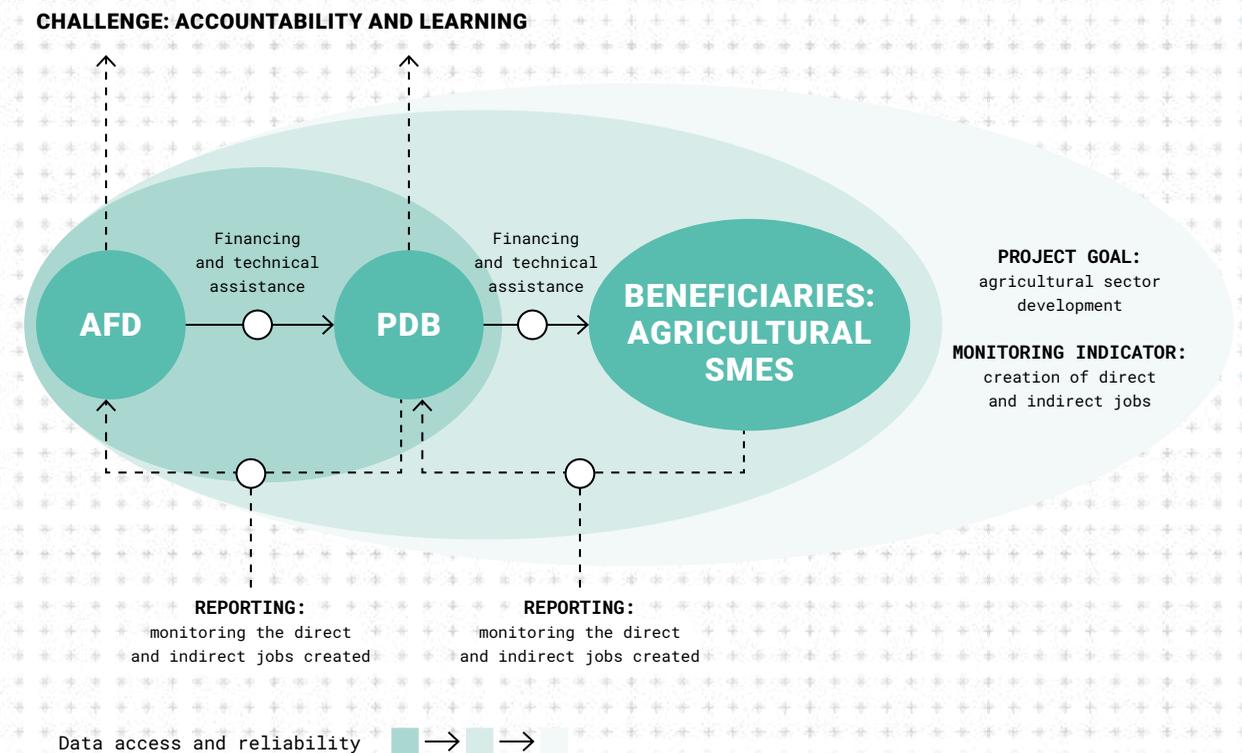
These results-monitoring difficulties are not specific to projects supporting PDBs, or to AFD projects in general, as this finding emerges in many other evaluations and is common to all donors. Yet, it is particularly salient for projects supporting PDBs insofar as these banks

are not only AFD partners working to achieve the SDGs, they are also development stakeholders who must be accountable for their actions and performances.

This provides an incentive to develop exchanges among PDBs on monitoring tools, not only to ensure an accountability approach, but also to extend the use of these tools for the purpose of capitalisation, improving interventions and decision-making support.

[1] The notion of results used in this article covers the entire results chain of an intervention, from mid-term results to long-term impacts.

Example of monitoring agricultural employment results for a project financed by a public development bank



CONCLUSION

In an enabling political environment that reasserts solidarity as one of France's priorities, evaluation has entered the limelight as the

indispensable link between steering mechanisms, decision-making support and accountability to its citizens.



CONCLUSION

EVALUATION FACED WITH ITS CHALLENGES

Just as the new legislation on inclusive development and combating global inequalities was creating an independent evaluation commission dedicated to this major public policy, the moment seemed opportune to step back and question the place and the nature of evaluation at AFD.

The evaluation of AFD's evaluation policy aims to inform the debates that will be taking place late 2021 to early 2022 to redefine the ambitions of AFD Group's evaluation policy and how it is to be implemented.

This evaluation offered a valuable opportunity for dialogue not only inhouse but also with stakeholders, project owners and all those who contribute to the evaluations – civil society organisations, researchers, evaluation practitioners from the global North and South.

Dialogue is core to the very nature of any evaluation, be it project evaluations, strategic evaluations or impact evaluations; this is what the present Evaluations Report 2019-2020 has sought to illustrate. It has chosen to depict several examples of evaluations to show how these contribute to enhancing the projects and strategies developed by AFD, to strengthening the governance of our partners' public policies, and ultimately to improving the living conditions of populations in the global South.

Contribute to the debate and public decision-making on development

In an ever-changing world, where development questions require being able to square a rapid response to people's basic needs with the sustainable development goals, which are more oriented to the mid- and long term, evaluation can be a relevant governance tool. Not only is it a tool for learning and decision-making, but it also plays a key role in showing the effects of interventions and public policies in complex environments. In this way, it contributes to the public debate and public policy dialogue.

Strengthening the capacities of governments and institutions in the global South and monitoring and evaluating their projects and public policies is a challenge for the future. Today, several initiatives of the Evaluation and Learning Department are heading in this direction, particularly in the case of impact evaluations (support to national statistics institutes, training, etc.) or through the ongoing partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO) relating to collecting data on youth employment. The question here is that of disseminating the evaluation culture not only inside AFD, but also to the stakeholders of our interventions.

Now that AFD is gradually redefining its relationships with its partners, monitoring and evaluation have a pivotal role to play by handing more lead to our partners in these exercises to promote shared accountability.

Act more effectively and contribute to decision-making

Evaluation proves to be a powerful tool for improving action and aims to enlighten strategic decision-making. In fact, the potential of evaluation goes far beyond the sum of evaluations taken individually. This observation points up the need for interlinking and capitalisation in order to learn aggregate lessons and cast a greater light on decision-making practices. Evaluators have seen that AFD's evaluations have made a stride in this direction in recent years, but there is still significant room for improvement. The main challenges involve the timing of evaluations, their promotion, the integration of their recommendations for action and decision-making and, lastly, the need to strengthen the "evaluation culture" at AFD even more.

On this count, evaluation programming needs to be more strategic, shared to a greater extent, while also addressing the diverse needs in a more targeted manner by adapting evaluation formats and approaches still further.

Give evaluation a place in the continuum of responses to the demand for accountability

The current context is also characterised by a growing reflection of the accountability of French official development assistance (ODA), which is clearly shown by the creation of an independent evaluation commission. The increasingly important issue of ODA accountability naturally has repercussions on AFD and on what is expected from evaluation.

As all of the international donors observe, this requirement implies that projects should be more results-oriented right from their appraisal phase, as evaluation does not provide the whole answer. Certainly, it is a vital link in the chain of accountability but, if the chain is to be solid, it must also ensure the overall coherence of the whole approach to results-monitoring.

As a result, the challenge for AFD is to fine-tune the place of evaluation in the accountability continuum: analyse the impacts of its interventions using a diversity of methodological approaches, and analyse the coherence of its interventions with respect to its commitments and French policy orientations.



How did you manage to ensure the independence of the evaluation of AFD's evaluation policy?

Nathalie Le Denmat: We couldn't take the risk of being both judge and jury for this evaluation and we had to ensure the independence of the consultants. So the idea naturally came up of having it steered by our Comeva,^[1] whose members include representatives from the administrations, evaluation experts, external to AFD.



Nathalie Le Denmat, Director of the Evaluation and Learning Department (EVA) at AFD

Katia Horber-Papazian, Chair of AFD's Evaluation Committee (Comeva), Honorary Professor of Public Policy Evaluation at the University of Lausanne

[1] Comeva (the evaluation committee), whose members are appointed by AFD's Board of Directors, was created in October 2009 to "support AFD in delivering its mission of accountability and evaluating its actions independently and transparently."

Katia Horber-Papazian: Comeva fully performed its role of project sponsor: it set the evaluation questions, defined the criteria for recruiting evaluators and selected them, then validated all the texts. Also, on behalf of Comeva, I personally followed all the steps of the evaluation. My role was made easier thanks to the ethics exercised by everyone involved.

However, the quality of an evaluation report cannot be judged solely on its degree of independence. It also needs to include clear and well-founded responses to all the evaluation questions, highlight the strong points and the areas for improvement, and make recommendations that are consistent with the evaluators' observations. It's this combination of factors that turned the evaluation we're discussing into a high quality document.

How do you see the positioning of evaluation changing?

Katia Horber-Papazian:

The evaluation of AFD's evaluation policy helped to open up a fundamental dialogue both within AFD and with its partners on the function of evaluation and the conditions that each party needs to fulfil if the AFD Evaluation and Learning Department is to play its full role. Moreover, by highlighting the fact that AFD makes little use of evaluation results in its strategic and operational decision-making processes, it raised an awareness

that is likely to give evaluation a stronger positioning at AFD.

Apart from EVA, many other entities are and will be involved in AFD evaluations (AFD Board of Directors, Comeva, the development policy observatory, French administrations, the future independent evaluation commission). It will be crucial to clarify the distribution of roles and responsibilities among all these stakeholders. There is also the challenge of coordinating these participants on the choice of subjects and fields to be evaluated in order to create real synergies and avoid duplication.

Nathalie Le Denmat: We welcome the growing interest in evaluation now that the demand for accountability is increasing and its progress at AFD is being reinforced. We will be working in close collaboration with the independent evaluation commission.

The evaluation of our evaluation policy has certainly stoked a lot of interest internally, particularly with the mobilisation of a highly cross-cutting "support group". This has enabled us to focus on the main areas to be considered to make further progress. The goal is to strengthen the evaluation culture not only within our institution, but also among the on-the-ground stakeholders of development projects, who have expressed themselves in several focus groups and interviews. The 360° evaluation, if I can put it that way, provides us with invaluable input for the update of our evaluation policy.

Looking ahead to the new evaluation policy, how can partners and beneficiaries be more integrated?

Nathalie Le Denmat: AFD already involves project stakeholders in all the evaluation steps, but we need to go further and evaluate together with a view to sharing accountability. It is still too often the case that our beneficiaries see evaluation as a donor-centric exercise, so they don't appropriate it as an element of their own governance.

Katia Horber-Papazian: It is absolutely vital for evaluations to be conducted in close collaboration with the project partners and beneficiaries to make sure the projects meet their needs and are in keeping with the public policies in their countries. This will certainly heighten the interest in evaluations and their use, and thus the effectiveness of interventions.

EVALUATION LIST 2019-2020

PROJECT EVALUATIONS

AFRICA

BENIN

- × Promote high-performing and sustainable family farms and strengthen the structure of cotton producers' organisations.

BURKINA FASO

- × Secure a clean energy supply and improve the population's access to the electricity network.
- × Improve maternal and child health and support the country's demographic transition dynamics.
- × Improve the quality of the electricity service – Zagtoui solar power plant project.
- × Support the Basic Education Strategic Development Programme in Burkina Faso (PDSEB) with a delegated grant from the Global Partnership for Education.
- × Support the Basic Education Strategic Development Programme in Burkina Faso (PDSEB) with a delegated grant from the Global Partnership for Education. Phase 2.

CAMEROON

- × Improve the population's health in ten regions in Cameroon by increasing hospital capacity and enhancing the quality of care delivered.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

- × Promote the economic, social and urban reconstruction of two precarious neighbourhoods in Bangui in a post-crisis context.
- × Support capacity-building for public contracting authorities responsible for development projects.
- × Continue the rehabilitation of the stormwater drainage network in the city of Bangui.

CHAD

- × Contribute to securing the pastoral economy by financing water infrastructure, transhumance corridors and a bridge over the Batha river allowing for the secure crossing of livestock.
- × Contribute to reducing maternal, infant and neonatal mortality.
- × Support accessible and continued primary schooling for girls in rural areas.
- × Improve the healthcare delivered to the population by strengthening basic training for paramedical personnel and human resources management.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

- × Revitalise the capacities of the education system, meet the skills needs of the economy to better integrate young people and deliver fair access to different educational levels for the population.
- × Reinforce the resources devoted to the national reproductive health and family planning programme, support community awareness-raising on family planning and strengthen the ways of distributing contraceptive products.
- × Relaunch several strategic agricultural sectors and contribute to the creation of the Rural Land Act.
- × Strengthen the economic sustainability of agricultural sectors, propose innovative tools to preserve natural resources and strengthen the State's capacities for leadership and control, particularly the area of food safety.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- × Improve the health of the population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly maternal and child health by developing high-quality healthcare, accessible to the poorest.

DJIBOUTI

- × Create a vocational training centre for port-related professions with the Djibouti Chamber of Commerce.

GUINEA

- × Contribute to developing a high-quality and inclusive education system.
- × Contribute to funding the Guinean government's priority spending in the field of education.
- × Assist the process of devolution and local development by giving municipalities the means of becoming the main originators and actors of their territorial development strategies.
- × Improve access to basic social services and support the municipalities in the economic development of their territory.
- × Contribute to financing the Education and Training Sector Programme to reinforce the human capital required for Guinea's economic and social development.

KENYA

- × Rehabilitate the Meru protected area to preserve biodiversity and contribute to relaunching tourist visits to the Park.
- × Improve Mombasa's water and sanitation services.

MALI

- × Support the development of a high-quality, post-primary private education offer.
- × Rehabilitate the electricity production and distribution facilities of the company, Énergie du Mali, in the town of Mopti.
- × Promote the financing of the rural SME-SMI sector by the public development bank, BNDA.
- × Contribute via long-term resources to financing the medium-term development plan 2016-2020 of the BNDA, and to the bank's financial equilibrium.

MAURITANIA

- × Improve the educational situation of the Mauritanian population in view of contributing to sustainable economic growth and a reduction in inequalities and poverty.
- × Improve the governance capacities of Mauritanian municipalities and thereby contribute to their planning of coherent regional-level development projects.
- × Improve the effectiveness of the justice system by strengthening the capacities of judicial personnel and civil society actors.

MOROCCO

- × Improve the sewage collection and treatment systems of the small and medium-sized municipalities in Morocco.
- × Support business creation for disadvantaged people in the Fahs-Anjra province.
- × Finance the tramway network and the sustainable development of the Rabat-Salé link.

MOZAMBIQUE

- × Conserve the diversity, abundance and ecological integrity of the resources of Quirimbas National Park.

NIGER

- × Support the implementation of the Niger Health Development Plan in order to improve the health of the population, particularly maternal and child health.

SENEGAL

- × Contribute to the construction of the new Blaise-Diagne international airport in Dakar.
- × Rehabilitate the power production park operated by Senelec and improve the metering of large consumers following the electricity sector crisis.
- × Extend the Dakar toll motorway, from Diamniadio to the Blaise-Diagne international airport.
- × Finance Dakar City's public lighting programme.
- × Support the financial and institutional restructuring of Senelec.
- × Support the Integrated Water Resources Management of the Senegal River Basin Development Organisation (OMVS).

TANZANIA

- × Develop the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es-Salaam as a centre of excellence for the country in healthcare and expand its offer countrywide through the creation of 30 outreach centres.

TUNISIA

- × Support the young people's integration, improve their employability and support entrepreneurship in the region of Medenine.

MULTI-COUNTRY

- × Increase the financing of the public development bank, BOAD, in support of the agricultural and rural development of WAEMU countries and improve BOAD's appraisal and oversight capacities, particularly for agricultural and rural development.
- × Finance BOAD's activity of direct lending to the private sector.
- × Support BOAD's financing for projects under the Regional Initiative for Sustainable Energy (IREDE) of WAEMU (West African Economic and Monetary Union).
- × Support the Regional Plan for Fruit Fly Control in West Africa.
- × Consolidate the achievements of the International Network for Agricultural and Rural Training and its role in renewing national agricultural and rural training schemes for young people to tackle the demographic and employment challenges in Africa.
- × Enable BOAD to consolidate its intervention capacities and strengthen its financial steering.
- × Support the management of fisheries resources and marine protected areas in West Africa.

CENTRAL AND LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

- × Support financing by the public development bank, BNDES, of local projects for energy efficiency, renewable energies and energy innovation.
- × Support financing by the public development bank, BDMG, of projects linked to combating climate change developed by municipalities in the Minas Gerais region.

MEXICO

- × Assist the public biodiversity conservation policy.
- × Support in defining the implementation of a public policy on ecological connectivity.

PERU

- × Support the public development bank, FMV, in building a loan portfolio in the sustainable housing sector.

THREE OCEANS AND OVERSEAS FRANCE

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- × Build and equip a reference centre for cardiology.

HAITI

- × Secure food production supplying Port-au-Prince and support rural micro-entrepreneurship in the Central Plateau region.
- × Assist the National Vocational Training Institute (INFP) in improving and modernising its training offer.
- × Increase agricultural production in the municipalities of Arcahaie and Saint-Marc through better use of available water resources.

COMOROS

- × Support the national health policy, particularly for mothers and children.
- × Strengthen the institutional framework and capacities of the Ministries of Health and improve the availability and quality of healthcare, targeting more specifically maternal and neonatal health and the islands of Anjouan and Mohéli.

ORIENTS

AUTONOMOUS PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

- × Improve the standard of living and health situation of the populations in the north of the Gaza strip by developing a waste water treatment system.
- × Support actions for energy efficiency and energy management in the Palestinian Territories.
- × Support public and private investment in energy efficiency.
- × Build a waste water treatment plant in the north of the Gaza strip.

CHINA

- × Restore two wetland areas in the cities of Panjin and Kangping in Liaoning province.

INDONESIA

- × Develop financing by the public development bank, PT-SMI, of green infrastructure projects.

JORDAN

- × Strengthen the technical and financial performance of the water sector.

LAOS

- × Improve and secure farming incomes for rural populations and support the formulation of rural development policies and intervention frameworks.

LEBANON

- × Enhance olive oil yields and quality and improve the living conditions of rural populations in southern Lebanon.
- × Strengthen the employability of vulnerable populations.

VIETNAM

- × Improve water resources management to support sustainable growth of rural, urban and industrial areas of Ho Chi Minh City and the surrounding provinces.
- × Strengthen water resources management and rehabilitate hydro-agricultural infrastructure in the Bac Hung Hai area.
- × Develop the vocational training colleges of Dung Quat and Nghi Son.
- × Develop transport infrastructure and ecotourism in Lào Cai Province.

MULTI-COUNTRY

- × Support three NGOs working on access to social, health and psychosocial support services for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraqi Kurdistan.

THEMATIC, SECTORAL AND STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS

MULTI-COUNTRY EVALUATIONS

- × Evaluation of the French contribution to the International Finance Facility for Immunization (IFFIm).
- × Assessment and capitalisation of programmes to strengthen capacity-building and the dialogue between civil society organisations from partner countries and France and the public authorities from partner countries and France (CMSP: concerted multi-stakeholder programmes).
- × Evaluation of the FISONG mechanism (sectoral innovation facility for NGOs).
- × Cross-cutting analytical review of projects to finance investment in hospitals in the non-profit private sector.
- × Evaluation of the objective to mainstream biodiversity in the development policies of the Biodiversity Cross-cutting Intervention Framework (CIF) (2013-2017).

- × Ex-post evaluation of AFD's intervention in the irrigation sector from 1983 to 2017.
- × Cross-cutting analysis of what four energy projects contributed to improving the performance of the national electricity operators in Senegal and Burkina Faso.
- × Evaluation of the French contribution to improving the financial governance in the countries receiving official development assistance (2006-2016).
- × Evaluation and capitalisation of sanitation sector innovations supported by the sectoral innovation facility for NGOs (FISONG) (2012-2017).
- × Ex-post evaluation of a cluster of Muskoka projects (G8 commitments to support maternal, newborn and child [under 5] health).
- × Study on the methods used to evaluate AFD's projects in French Overseas Territories.

NEW CALEDONIA

- × Evaluation of ten years of AFD's action in New Caledonia.

IMPACT EVALUATION STUDIES

CONGO

- × Impact evaluation study of how forest management systems impact the forest cover in the Congo Basin.

MAURITANIA

- × Impact of the obstetrical risk insurance (ORI) scheme in Mauritania – effects on the healthcare offer, the utilisation of healthcare services and inequalities in healthcare access.

MOROCCO

- × Impact evaluation of Phase 1 of the Rabat-Salé tramway and Line 1 of the Casablanca tramway.

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