

# Evaluation Programme 2023-2024

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of evaluations is to provide accountability and to generate learning based on the evidence of what works and what does not work in which contexts, and hence improve future development cooperation. The evaluation programme is the two-year rolling plan to operationalise the Policy for Evaluation of Development Cooperation (December 2020).

The evaluation function is embedded in the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK). ELK contracts independent evaluators through an EU-tender process to undertake the evaluations.

During the recent two years, multilateral support has been a particular focus in light of its increased share of Danish development cooperation, which both exacerbates the need for ELK to engage with multilateral evaluation functions, and to contribute to accountability and learning in relation to Danish multilateral support. This has both been reflected in the prioritisation of engaging in multilateral evaluation processes in relation to COVID-19, in the decision to support the establishment of a System-wide UN Evaluation Office under the general-secretary, in the continued focus on dialogue with the Multilateral Organisation Performance Network (MOPAN), and in the preparing of an evaluation of support to multilateral trust funds. In addition, the interplay between multilateral support and other types of Danish development support is expected to be a central element in the evaluation of aid management, currently under preparation. Learning in relation to climate mitigation and adaptation will also be a key focus area, cutting across studies and evaluations currently underway or under preparation. Another important area of consideration is evaluative work for support to Ukraine. While it is still too early to enter into more specific deliberations on evaluations of this support, ELK focuses on other ways in which to provide evaluative knowledge of relevance for support to Ukraine, and contributions to this area are currently being discussed with relevant partners.

## 2. Recently concluded evaluations and studies

The following evaluations have been finalized in 2022 and beginning of 2023. Two of these were substantially finalised in 2022 and mentioned in the last programme, but due to the call for elections, the publication of these evaluations was delayed. For transparency, they are included below.

- **Evaluation of Danida Sustainable Infrastructure Finance Programme, DSIF (2001-2019) (Particip, publication delayed till February 2023).**

The evaluation found that coherence between Danida Sustainable Infrastructure Finance Programme (DSIF) and Danish development policies and programmes had improved, not least due to the new country strategic frameworks. DSIF was found to provide additionality in the form of subsidised long-term finance and grants. Country studies found that the majority of projects had delivered planned

outputs but that limited attention had been paid to poverty reduction and to the sustainability of projects. The evaluation pointed to a need to assess the positive and negative aspects of tied aid and the potential of other modalities for DSIF. Among the recommendations were an increased oversight by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DSIF and a change of the tied aid modality with a view to encourage more cooperation with other financial institutions.

- **Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF) (NCG/ECORYS, publication delayed till March 2023)**

The Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF) encompasses the period 2014-2020. The evaluation concluded that the PSF has been a relevant instrument for Denmark's engagement in fragile and conflict affected contexts, and points to positive short- and medium term results. However, the degree to which PSF programmes have contributed to long-term peace and stability have remained modest. The evaluation points to a need for strengthening in-depth context and stakeholder analyses, with stronger attention to interlinkages between different conflict drivers, assumptions and risks. The findings and recommendations from the evaluation have been used as input to a process of re-thinking the Peace and Stabilisation Fund.

A number of different evaluation studies and pre-studies have also been finalised:

- **Studies on access to clean energy:** Access to clean energy is a priority for Denmark, not least on the backdrop of over half a billion people in Sub-Saharan Africa who live without access to modern energy. This suggests the need for a better understanding of the political economy of energy transitions, including the relation between policy and implementation as well as the interests related to different sources of energy. On this background, and in cooperation with DIIS, studies were finalised and related papers/notes published, including the following: Pedersen, R. H., Andersen, O. W., and Renkens, I. (2022). Energy transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa are about more than mobilising finance (DIIS Comment) and Pedersen, R. H. and Andersen O. W. (2023). A contested agenda: Energy transitions in lower-income African countries. Energy Policy 175 (2023).
- **Pre-study: The political economy of Danish-Tanzanian development cooperation 1962-2021** (June 2022). In relation to the evaluation of Danish development cooperation with Tanzania, DIIS carried out a pre-study of the larger trends of relevance to contextualizing the Danish-Tanzanian collaboration over the years (currently not published).

**Pre-study: Reflections on decentralised aid management** (August 2022):

DIIS also finalised an evaluation study with focus on identifying and discussing important issues that an evaluation of the Danish experience with decentralised aid management could focus on (currently not published).

### 3. Ongoing and planned evaluations for 2023-2024

The following elements continue to guide the evaluation programme:

- The Policy for Evaluation of Development Cooperation (December 2020) stipulates that over a 5-7-year period the aim is to cover most bilateral assistance, including modalities, large development programmes and countries.
- Denmark's strategy for development cooperation, The World We Share.
- Key trends within global development.
- A mix of cross-cutting thematic and programme focused evaluations.

Evaluation themes and approaches additionally take into consideration the envisioned implementations of the established how-to-notes and approach papers and through the principles of Doing Development Differently on a wide range of prioritised areas, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, poverty reduction, peace and stabilisation, human rights and democracy, etc. At the same time, a new strategy for Denmark's development cooperation is to be developed in 2024-2025, and planned evaluation and studies are considered with an aim to feed into this process. This entails a focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation, both as focus areas in their own right, and as an element to consider in relation to other aspects of aid. As an example, it is expected that the upcoming evaluation of support to trust funds will include a focus on trust funds working in the broad field of climate change adaptation (more on this below).

Beyond the studies and evaluations either under way or in preparation, there are considerations on the longer-term pipeline: The evaluation study of "Nature based solutions" will in a similar manner form the point of departure for a more specific assessment of the potential for evaluative work in the area, with an expected focus on i.a. contribution to resilience, biodiversity and carbon capture. Further, ELK is in dialogue with the broader group of donor evaluation agencies in OECD-DACs EvalNet to be ready for evaluation work in relation to support to Ukraine. As a first step, ELK will support upcoming work on "lessons learned from evaluations" of relevance to the support to Ukraine, as suggested by EvalNet.

The Evaluation Programme 2023-2024 will see the completion of a number of *on-going evaluations*, some of which were foreseen to have been finalised earlier, but were delayed among other reasons due to the pandemic (expected date of publication indicated):

- **Evaluation of Danida Multi-Bilateral Interventions (Mokoro, expected publication August 2023):** Over the years, Denmark has increased its direct collaboration with multilateral organisations and an increased percentage of earmarked aid is channelled through these systems as so-called multi-bi interventions, from 12% in 2011 to 27% in 2019. Four countries are serving as case countries; Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, while experience from Afghanistan, Niger, Mali, Palestine and Ukraine is also included. The evaluation is substantially finalised and provides lessons for future use of the multi-bi instrument in Danish development cooperation by looking at context and

rationale for using this modality, Denmark's role in its implementation, and the strengths and weaknesses of the Danish multi-bi contributions. The evaluation finds that Denmark's multi-bi engagements were largely relevant and could facilitate coherent and adaptive approaches, but that there are trade-offs between the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, flexibility and efficiency of country multi-bi engagements. Partnerships with multilaterals has lowered the exposure to contextual, institutional, and programmatic risks, given restricted embassy development capacities, but came with an additional layer of administrative costs and longer implementation chains. The evaluation stresses that while embassies often opted to partner with multilaterals because of reduced capacity, in practice the management of performance and risk in multi-bi engagements still required significant human resources. The evaluation concludes that multilaterals often were effective delivery partners for Denmark at country level, provided the multilateral partner had the right capacities and influence in-country, and the engagement was large enough and structured well. Hard-earmarked engagements where results frameworks differed from the multilaterals' core frameworks were often associated with implementation and performance difficulties. In contrast, soft-earmarked engagements were associated with some or good effectiveness performance, especially when the Danish contribution was large and to a multi-donor partnership.

- **Evaluation of Danish support to Framework Conditions for Private Sector Development (PSD) (NCG, expected publication August 2023):** The evaluation focuses on programmes that improves the framework conditions for PSD and is particularly concerned with the development of a more enabling business environment, or 'business climate' for the private sector in developing and emerging economies, rather than the development of the Danish private sector per se. The evaluation covers four case countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana and Mali), and includes a thematic case study focusing on Business Advocacy Funds (BAFs). The evaluation is substantially finalised. The evaluation concludes, that Denmark in most cases provided relevant framework conditions support for Private Sector Development, although this proved to be especially challenging in a fragile context such as Mali. Denmark has been innovative and rather unique in its initiative to set up BAFs. The evaluation finds that (with a few exceptions) Danish support to framework conditions was not based on a clear strategic approach, which is reflected in output-focused and relatively weak programme design. The support contributed to the realisation of a large variety of outputs ranging from strengthened capacity of government and private sector actors to the formulation of new laws, policies, and regulations. However, the evaluation finds that there are only few examples of evidence of contributions to actual implementation of new policies and practices, improved service delivery and use of infrastructure. For most framework conditions support, there is not enough evidence to determine to which extent the programmes contributed to tangible improvements for the private sector or whether the private sector significantly increased investments and

created jobs as a result of the support. Nevertheless, it is plausible that Danish support in specific areas to some extent has contributed to creating improved conditions for an enabling business environment, including greening aspects in Kenya and through business advocacy projects in several countries.

- **Evaluation of Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation (Itad, expected publication October 2023):** The purpose of the evaluation is to learn from implementation of previous programmes and projects in terms of addressing gender issues with a view to strengthening Denmark's integration of gender equality, girls' and women's rights in Danish development cooperation. The evaluation addresses the issue of support to gender equality from different perspectives, and includes analysis of the budgetary allocation to bilateral and multilateral gender programmes (2014-2021), assessment of key gender achievements in selected bilateral and multilateral programmes, with emphasis on the outcomes and impacts of gender equality achieved at a transformative level as well as the organisational set-up related to gender equality support within the MFA. The evaluation covers the country programmes in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Mali as cases, as well as the support to UNFPA, UNICEF, Marie Stopes International and the Green Climate Fund. At the time of writing, the evaluation report is under preparation.

*Upcoming evaluations and planned and on-going studies* can be clustered around the following themes:

- *Fragility and Climate Change*
- **Ongoing study: Climate change adaptation in the rural water sector in Africa: A focus on devolved climate adaptation projects (DIIS).** Water is a priority sector for climate change adaptation and receives a substantial share of climate finance. The study aims to review current and past adaptation approaches that support access to water in Africa's rural drylands, with a focus on 1) centralised/decentralised approaches, and 2) infrastructural/nature-based solutions approaches to provide a set of issues and lessons learned for each approach.
- **Ongoing study: Green bonds and swaps in low-income countries: Opportunities and limitations (DIIS):** The climate crisis weighs heavily on lower-income countries, which already face huge financing gaps. While these countries need financial resources to pursue sustainable development goals (SDGs), they also need finances to forge climate-resilient development pathways. The study will analyse the role of green debt in highly indebted lower-income countries by unpacking opportunities and limitations for green bonds and swaps. The main aim of the study will be to provide an overview of green capital markets as they relate to highly indebted lower-income countries. The overarching research question will investigate lower-income countries' opportunities and limitations on leveraging green capital markets and the most effective instruments and modalities.

➤ *Aid Effectiveness*

- **Evaluation under preparation: 60 years of bilateral development cooperation between Denmark and Tanzania (contract under tendering).** With the decision to phase out the bilateral development cooperation between Denmark and Tanzania from 2024, this is the time to retrieve lessons from the longest-standing development cooperation with any country. Tanzania was the first African country Denmark initiated a development cooperation with in 1963 and since then there has been a continuous partnership with development cooperation as the corner stone. During the long engagement in Tanzania, Denmark has supported a wide range of sectors and thematic areas. An evaluation of the bilateral development cooperation is under preparation, with a focus on capturing Danish contribution to change in Tanzania, and to identify lessons learned regarding the implications of approaches to development cooperation and partnership.
- **Evaluation under preparation: Danish aid management 20 years after decentralisation (contract to be tendered summer 2023).** To improve the quality of Denmark's development programming, the process of decentralising bilateral aid management was initiated in 2003. An evaluation of the decentralisation was undertaken in 2009. Since then, many changes have taken place of the organisational structures of the aid management operations, of the international aid architecture and composition of Danish aid. Recent overviews indicate that in 2002, 60% of Danish aid was managed at the decentral level, while 40% was managed from head quarter. In 2022, the figures had changed to 30% managed at the decentral level. Thus, rather than follow up on the evaluation from 2003 in a narrow sense, the evaluation will focus on the actual composition of the Danish development assistance, and the processes, structures and tools etc., that constitute the aid management.

➤ *Multilateral cooperation*

- **Evaluation under preparation (contract to be tendered autumn 2023):** Joint Nordic Evaluation of Support to Trust funds. Multilateral contributions constitute an increasing share of development assistance from the Nordic countries, and a significant and increasing share of the multilateral contributions is earmarked and channelled through various multilateral trust funds. It is envisaged that this trend will continue in the future not least within areas related to climate change. An overview found that 100 trust funds had received support from at least two Nordic countries, while 21 trust funds had been supported by Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, and 9 trust funds by all five Nordic countries. There is a common interest for evaluating the support, and ELK has taken lead on setting up a Joint Nordic Evaluation, with engagement of all the Nordic countries. The focus of the evaluation will be both on accountability and learning by assessing

Nordic support to multilateral trust funds and provide recommendations on how to improve the use of this instrument. Thematically, the evaluation is expected to include a focus on Climate adaptation and mitigation in relation to WB trust funds, and on governance when looking at UN trust funds.

➤ *Peace, stabilisation, human rights and good governance*

- **Ongoing study: Learning from “Tech for democracy”:** The first phases of the Danish MFA’s multi-stakeholder initiative Tech for Democracy (TDF) has gathered partners across civil society, tech industry and governments, centering on challenges at the intersection between tech, democracy and human rights. A November 2021 conference marked the launch of a Year of Action during which Denmark intended to see ideas, intentions and visions translate into concrete actions and solutions. A study is underway with the aim to collect and document experiences from this process. More specifically, the study aims to: a) gather and analyse activities, experiences and lessons learnt from the activities within Tech for Democracy during the Year of Action (from November 2021); b) map trends and gaps of the activities within the initiative, including commonalities, and discrepancies between priorities laid out by signatories of the Copenhagen Pledge and c) identify opportunities and challenges for future pathways of action and multi-stakeholder cooperation the Tech for Democracy initiative.
- **Planned study: Aid in contexts of autocratisation:** In recent years, many countries have moved towards more autocratic governance. As this is an important issue confronting many development donors, OCED-DAC’s Governance Network (GOVNET) is in the process of investigating how ODA is linked to regime contexts, and how donors relate and respond to changes in regime types. First output from this process has been the publishing of the report “Official Development Assistance by Regime Context (2010-2019) while a number of country case studies are under way. Like other donors, Danish ODA has been faced with difficult choices in terms of working in contexts where autocratisation processes have been on-going, in some cases as a dramatic deterioration, while in others as a more gradual process. As a first step to learn from these experiences, a study is under preparation, with the potential to draw upon the GOVNET work, but with a focus on Danish aid in contexts of autocratisation. The study is expected to feed into a potential evaluation of Danish experience with aid in contexts of autocratisation, the challenges encountered and results achieved as well as lessons regarding various approaches to partnerships.
- **Planned study: Opportunities for gender equality cooperation between the African Union and Denmark.** Considering an increasingly contested gender equality discourse internationally, with evident conservative backlash in several countries, regional bodies may become forums for addressing the gender equality discourse. The planned study will investigate areas overlapping policy priorities in

the gender equality sphere between the African Union and Denmark, fruitful directions for cooperation, as well as potential challenges. Additionally, it will bring forth perspectives from select AU member states, for which the Danish priority countries (as per the World 2030 Strategy) provide an excellent starting point. The countries included are Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Somalia (Category 1, Fragile Countries); Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda (Category 2, Poor and Stable); Ghana, South Africa and Egypt (Category 3, Transition and Growth Economies).

#### 4. Other evaluation activities in 2023-2024

- **Support to evaluation of UN response to COVID-19:** Support has been given to a system-wide evaluation of the entire UN Development System's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, supported by an analysis of how the process of UNDS reform may have enabled and/or constrained that response. The evaluation provides an assessment of how well the UNDS response has integrated action on the core UN values of human rights, gender equality, inclusion (including persons with disabilities) and Leaving No-One Behind. The evaluation, the first of its kind, has been timely and will be followed up at the level of the UN Secretary General with a potential impact on the coherence of UNDS' future response under such circumstances.
- **Support to Joint strategic evaluation of the international COVID-19 response, OECD-DAC EvalNet.** Support is given to the OECD-DAC EvalNet led strategic evaluation of the COVID-19 response, by providing funds and by participating in the reference group. The purpose of the evaluation is to document the collective response of international development and humanitarian assistance providers to COVID-19, inclusive of efforts to support equitable access to vaccines and vaccination roll-outs. By analysing the effectiveness of the response at the country-level, inclusive of national, bilateral and multilateral efforts, it will provide a system-wide perspective not covered by other analyses. In particular, the evaluation responds to a knowledge gap concerning the overall response of bilateral donors. It will assess how different approaches have fared in terms of enabling co-ordination, aligning limited resources to needs, and responding in a timely manner.

#### 5. International Evaluation Fora

- **OECD-DAC EvalNet:** ELK participates actively in the DAC Network on Development Evaluation which is the primary international platform for coordination and exchange of information on evaluation approaches, current evaluation themes, evaluation systems, etc. Denmark has been in the lead on coordinating EvalNet's work on evaluating blended finance and has played an active role in discussions on evaluating climate change finance and related initiatives. The coordination within EvalNet is combined with other coordination efforts, such as the Nordic+ and the EU. In addition, ELK participates in the EvalNet Climate Crisis Working Group, and contributes with Danish evaluation experience within this theme; latest with



presentations on the experience with the evaluations of support to climate mitigation and climate adaptation efforts. Further, EvalNet has recently suggested that work is initiated on a “lessons from evaluations” letter of relevance for donors looking to support Ukraine, to be presented to the DAC high level meeting in November. This work is to pull together key insights drawing on evaluations and studies related to reconstruction/post conflict, budget support, EU accession, support to the Balkans, etc., dependent on scoping decisions. ELK will provide support to this work, based on further dialogue with EvalNet and relevant partners.

- **Nordic+ Evaluation Network:** ELK is an active member in the Nordic+ Evaluation Network, consisting of representatives from the Nordic development evaluation units and institutions, as well as like-minded representatives from Canada, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, with the EvalNet secretariat as an observer. The network is a forum where common issues and challenges are tabled and discussed, and collaboration on specific projects is planned, information and experience shared, common positions outlined etc. For the 2023 meeting, hosted by Denmark, key issues include assessments of multilateral organisations (including the role of MOPAN, peer reviews of UN evaluation functions, the evaluation of support to multi-bi engagements commissioned by ELK and the ongoing work on a joint Nordic evaluation of trust funds), organizational learning from evaluations and the needs for evaluative work in relation to Ukraine.
- **Support to Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN):** Multilateral Organisations have their own systems for evaluations outside the remit of bilateral donor’s evaluation units. They are, however, regularly assessed through the Multilateral Organisation’s Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). ELK is represented in MOPAN’s Steering Committee. ELK furthermore participates in reference groups for selected thematic assessments. In 2022 this includes an evaluation study on coordination among Multilateral Organisations and on identifying factors which have facilitated or constrained coordination in the context of COVID-19. This clearly fills a gap from the organisation specific evaluations such as the UN system wide evaluation mentioned above.
- **Support to the international humanitarian Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP):** Denmark is a contributor to the international humanitarian Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) which is an important source for bringing about improvements in the performance of the humanitarian system, amongst other by improving quality of evaluations.
- **Support to the establishment of a System-wide Evaluation Office:** Denmark is supporting the establishment of a system-wide evaluation office, with the aim to generate cohesive and timely evaluative evidence across the UN development system at country, regional and global level, with particular value to: (a) governing and

legislative bodies in their oversight, decision-making, and direction-setting roles of the UN system as a whole as they are informed through the Secretary-General's QCPR reports, (b) UN system leadership seeking better understanding on SDG progress and impediments and their contribution to system-wide results; and (c) Member States, as they look to the UN for guidance and support to achieve the SDGs in their respective countries. Denmark has provided support to facilitate the work on setting up the office until more permanent funding arrangements are in place.

- **Support to the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI):** Since 2020, Denmark has been a member of the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI), a partnership between the evaluation departments of the World Bank, UNDP and a number of bilateral donors. The initiative aims to support countries in developing M&E systems and capacities to support organisational learning, accountability and evidence-based policy making.

## **6. Communication and outreach**

ELK is responsible for communicating findings and conclusions of evaluations and studies both within the Ministry and to a broader audience. Through the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Danish Parliament is informed about all evaluations by providing members with the summaries and management responses which are also posted at [evaluation.um.dk](http://evaluation.um.dk). The recent evaluations have generated substantial interest from the press, with requests from media for additional information regarding the evaluations and articles in *Development Today*, *Globalnyt* and others.

Efforts will continue towards improving communication through events, articles and film.