

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – (Evaluation of Development Assistance, EVAL)

Meeting in the Council for Development Policy 12 April 2018

Agenda item 6

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| 1. Overall purpose | For discussion |
| 2. Title: | Evaluation Programme 2018-2019 |
| 3. Presentation for Programme Committee: | N/A |

Evaluation Programme 2018-2019

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

Evaluations are commissioned by the Evaluation Department (EVAL) and undertaken by external consultants who are responsible for the contents of the evaluations and their recommendations. All evaluations are published with a management response from the ministry. MFA management undertakes a systematic follow-up to the recommendations two years after the evaluation. An annual budget of DKK 15 million is available for evaluations and explorative evaluation studies. Since March 2016, EVAL is also responsible for MFA's support to development research and the fellowship programme administered by Danida Fellowship Centre.

1. Experience from current work

The Evaluation Department undertakes programme evaluations, thematic evaluations and real-time evaluations. A number of evaluations have recently been finalised or are on-going within these three categories (with end dates indicated in brackets):

A. Programme evaluations:

- Evaluation of the Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU) (December 2018)
- Evaluation of the Africa Programme for Peace (June 2018)
- Evaluation of Water, Sanitation and Environment Programmes in Uganda 1990 – 2017 (September 2018)
- Evaluation of the Regional Development and Protection Programme (May 2018)
- Evaluation of the Ghana – Denmark Partnership (June 2018)
- Evaluation of the Danish Engagement in Mozambique 1992-2016 (March 2018)
- Evaluation of Danish-Bolivian Cooperation 1994-2016 (February 2018)
- Evaluation of Danish-Nepalese Development Cooperation 1991-2016 (November 2017)

B. Thematic evaluations:

- Evaluation of Danish Support to Promotion and Protection of Human Rights 2006-2016 (May 2018)

- Evaluation of Danida Support to Value Chain Development (August 2016)
- Evaluation of Capacity Development in Danish Development Assistance (July 2016)

C. Real-Time Evaluations:

- Real-Time Evaluation of the Danida Country Programme for Kenya 2016-2020
- Real-Time Evaluation Mali Country Programme 2017-2022
- Real-Time Evaluation of Danish Support to Sustainable Coastal Fisheries in Myanmar 2016 - 2020
- Real-Time Evaluation of Danida Market Development Partnerships 2017-2020

EVAL furthermore commissions studies, usually based on a specific request from a department, and is currently undertaking the following studies:

- Human rights and anti-corruption,
- Asian powers' involvement in International Finance Institutions,
- Commercial side-effects of aid
- Freedom of religion and beliefs (FORB) – towards a theory of change.

Finally, EVAL is funding a series of studies from DIIS focusing on new trends in development finance.

Evaluations at programme level serve an accountability purpose, but they also represent an opportunity to provide lessons learned within a certain specified area, typically involving a number of interventions and a considerable time span of 10-15 years. These evaluations provide an overview of the support within the programme, its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluations typically assess the Danish role and contribution to the development outcomes within the country or the sector concerned and point towards lessons learned in relation to the management of the programme, missed opportunities or other specific issues. The effects of these evaluations in terms of uptake and learning within the ministry vary and depend especially on the timing of the evaluation. When relevant, the evaluations inform new phases of support enabling the ministry and partners to strengthen the theory of change and establish a better knowledge base for the formulation of a new programme. In relation to the recently published country evaluations in countries where Denmark is phasing out or transiting towards other types of relationships (Nepal, Bolivia, Mozambique and Vietnam), the value in terms of learning has been enhanced by the preparation of a cross-cutting paper drawing lessons across the country evaluations, which is soon to be published.

Thematic evaluations across programmes more specifically serve a learning purpose. They offer the opportunity to consider approaches and technical issues related to the implementation

across a number of countries and typically over a longer time-period. They often involve researchers (in the team or as peer reviewers) and address an audience within and outside the ministry interested in that particular topic.

These thematic evaluations are often considered valuable contributions to the knowledge base, but given the fact that they in most cases involve several departments in the MFA, a number of embassies and external stakeholders, it can be challenging to maintain the engagement and to provide adequate feed-back and learning. The ownership within the MFA is not always as clear as desirable. However, these thematic evaluations are highly appreciated outside the MFA. The challenge for EVAL is to be sharp on the scoping of the thematic evaluation, which the current on-going human rights evaluation has been very instructive in showing us.

Real-time evaluations (RTE) are undertaken concurrently with programme implementation and primarily serve a learning purpose. The RTE approach was introduced as a response to the challenges of data availability in ex-post evaluations and with the aim of enhancing the usability of evaluations. Programme monitoring provides information on inputs (funding), activities and outputs, but do not provide information on outcomes and developments in the programme context during implementation. Most outcomes will only be visible after several years of implementation, but the RTEs may annually trace the process towards outcomes, and with qualitative data obtained primarily from targets groups or other sources provide an assessment of early results and thereby enable adjustments in the course of a programme, for instance at mid-term. Data collected by the RTE during the programme implementation will also provide better basis for an evaluation at the end of the programme. RTEs are considered especially relevant in a context that is very unpredictable (i.e. in fragile situations) or in relation to a pilot intervention where a special effort to provide lessons learned is warranted. The RTEs are undertaken by external consultants on a long-term contract, typically with 1-2 annual visits to the programme.

EVAL has initiated four real-time evaluations in various programme contexts in situations where they were requested by the embassies/units concerned. The real-time evaluation related to the Danida Market Development Partnership is focused on the first batch of five partnerships approved in Nigeria, Kenya (2 projects), Myanmar and Ethiopia. These five projects are in a start-up phase, and the RTE will focus on assessing both the partnership processes and interim development results not captured by the reporting system. The Country Programme in Mali is in its initial stages, and the RTE has just undertaken its first visit to the programme. Here, the RTE will focus on the results of three key engagements related to decentralisation, establishment of conflict mitigating dialogue mechanisms and youth inclusion, as well as the context in which the programme operates. In Myanmar, the RTE is linked to only one engagement, Sustainable Coastal Fisheries, where it will follow the developments in local institutions and communities as the programme seeks to introduce community management of the marine resources. The real-time evaluation of the Kenya Country Programme was the first

to be initiated and its scope and methodology was not fully elaborated at the time. In parallel, the embassy recruited an M&E team, which should strengthen partner monitoring and reporting capacity, and there are currently some unresolved issues in terms of the boundaries between the two, which are being addressed by EVAL and the embassy.

It is too early to assess the value added of the RTE approach, and whether these evaluations provide a value added in terms of for instance more focus on results or a better opportunities for adaptive planning during the implementation. It is, however, clear that the RTEs are more vulnerable to delays or changes related to programme implementation compared to normal evaluations and, to a larger extent than normal evaluations, they depend on a joint understanding between EVAL and the implementing unit regarding scope and purpose.

2. The future directions of development evaluation

The changes currently taking place in Danish and international development cooperation raise some issues in relation to the focus of evaluations and how they are undertaken. Evaluations are by nature looking backwards at interventions that were designed some years back, but how can evaluations continue to provide relevant lessons in the context of a substantially changed future development cooperation?

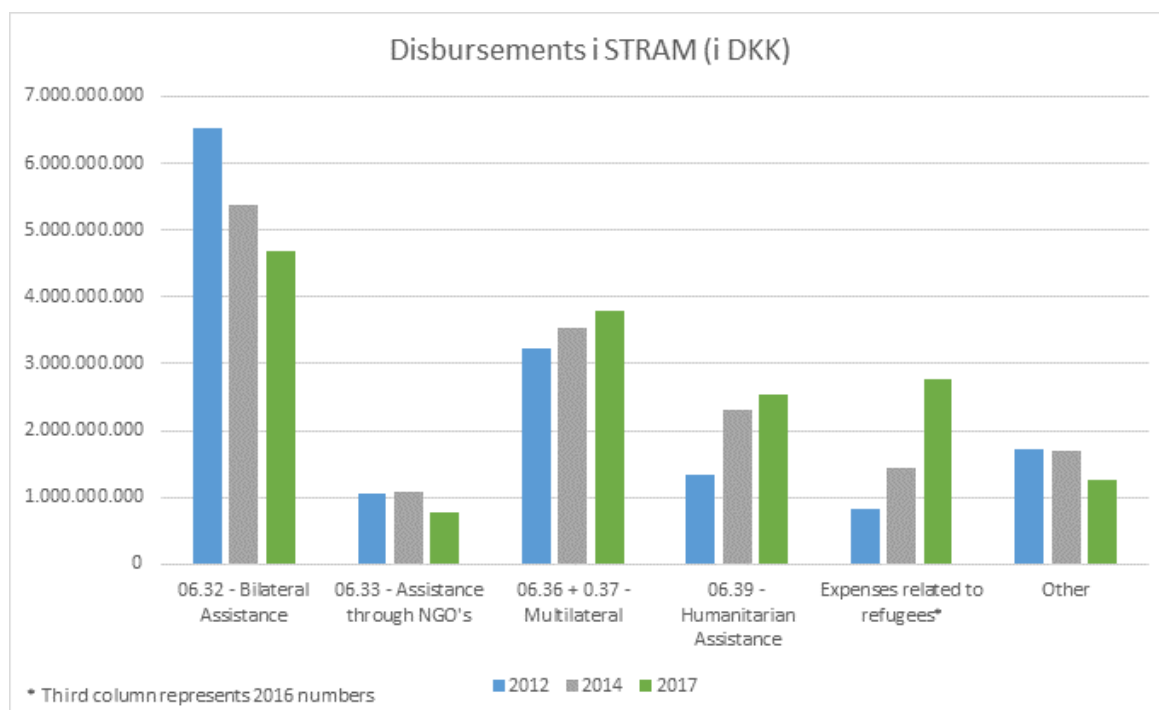
Internationally, the global Agenda 2030 with the Sustainable Development Goals is setting a new agenda for international development cooperation with an understanding that sustainable development should be promoted universally and not only in the poorest countries. The international development evaluation community is devoting considerable attention to the discussion of what the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs should mean for evaluations, but apart from a stronger emphasis on building partner countries' own evaluation capacity, no new directions have been offered so far. Evaluations will continue to provide useful lessons learned of topics related to the SDGs, and as the SDGs are likely to be used increasingly also as overall objectives of new development interventions, these objectives will eventually be evaluated as part of the normal programme evaluations.

In relation to other international work, EVAL is involved with the OECD/DAC in an initiative aiming at elaborating better approaches and tools for evaluating blended finance and and private sector development. Also led by the OECD/DAC, there is currently a debate about the continued adequacy of the five OECD/DAC evaluation quality criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

With “The World 2030 – Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action” a vision for Danish development cooperation has been provided firmly within the framework of Agenda 2030, while emphasising that development policy is an integrated part of

Danish foreign policy. The new strategy emphasises the importance and the value for Denmark of development cooperation and establishes four overall strategic aims for Danish development cooperation: security, migration, inclusive and sustainable growth and human rights. The four overall aims are expected to influence both the composition of the overall development portfolio as well as the objectives of individual programmes. The impact pathways in relation to the strategic aims are complex and influenced by a number of factors beyond aid, which means establishing a traditional theory of change for these effects and evaluating them will be challenging with the existing evaluation methodologies, not least when it comes to the side-effects in Denmark. The enhanced emphasis on security and migration calls for more evaluation in fragile states and situations where access is difficult and data often are less reliable. Private sector development and governance, which will continue as important elements of the bilateral portfolio, are consistently difficult to assess in terms of overall development effects. These developments call for new ways of assessing aid both within and beyond evaluations.

Figure 1: Disbursements on major finance act budget lines 2012-17.



The allocation of Danish aid has already seen significant changes. Figure 1 above indicates that humanitarian assistance, multilateral assistance and expenses related to refugees have increased while the bilateral development assistance, which has been the main focus of the evaluations

commissioned by the Evaluation Department, constitutes a decreasing share of the total ODA envelope.

In terms of partners in bilateral country programmes, there seems to be a tendency that, compared to earlier country programmes, national governmental institutions are less predominant as implementing partners, and an increasing share of programmes are undertaken with other types of partners (mainly UN organisations and development banks, NGOs and directly with the private sector).

It should be noted that multilateral and civil society organisations have their own systems for learning and accountability, which are not the remit of the MFA Evaluation Department. Multilateral organisations are furthermore regularly assessed as part of the Multilateral Organisations' Performance Assessment Framework (MOPAN), and their evaluation functions undergo peer reviews. EVAL recently participated in the panel of the peer review of the evaluation function of UNODC (UN Office of Drugs and Crime) and is now engaged in the panel for the peer review of IFAD's (the International Fund for Agricultural Development) evaluation function.

Evaluations of bilateral programme assistance in terms of both centrally managed programmes and country programmes, including in fragile states, will continue to constitute the main thrust of the evaluations undertaken. But in view of the changed allocation patterns of the Danish development assistance, EVAL will be considering strengthening the focus on evaluating the Danish humanitarian assistance, Danish participation in multilateral assistance and the MFAs cooperation with civil society organisations. This will include assessing how these partnerships are prepared and managed by the MFA, and how Danish influence plays out in the cooperation. Moreover, EVAL will increasingly seek to engage in joint evaluative work within topics of specific Danish interest and to pilot new approaches to joint evaluations.

Partly in response to these new trends, EVAL is currently finalising an evaluation of the Regional Development and Protection Programme, which includes linkages between humanitarian and development assistance in relation to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Two joint evaluations are currently under preparation. One evaluation focusing on cash transfers to be conducted jointly with Danish NGO partners and one joint evaluation with UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees), extracting lessons learned from an integrated camp settlement approach in and around the Kakuma refugee camp in Northern Kenya.

3. Evaluations proposed for 2018-2019

Based on a hearing within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the following evaluations are under consideration for 2018-2019:

Agricultural growth and employment programme in Bangladesh. The embassy in Dhaka has requested an evaluation of the programme in view of a new phase of the programme to be initiated from 2021. Results from the projects show that physical targets are met and that impressive numbers of small and poor peasants are trained. It is less clear, however, to which extent the knowledge acquired is actually used and whether the desired impact is achieved. Such information is essential with a view to inform the embassy's decision as to whether interventions in agriculture should be continued.

Trade Mark East Africa. An evaluation of lessons learned from the joint donor initiative within trade and economic development within the EAC. The programme is one of the few recent Danish supported regional programmes, and lessons learned will be instrumental in forming the Africa Department's view on whether to initiate other regional programmes.

Niger Country Programme Evaluation. The country programme has undergone major changes, and with the closing of the Danish representation in Niamey, the programme is now managed from Ouagadougou through delegated partnerships. The evaluation will contribute to documenting experience and lessons learned in relation to fragile state interventions. The cooperation with Niger has not been evaluated since 2010.

Private Sector Development, Tanzania. Leading up to the preparation of a new phase of the Tanzania country programme from 2020, the embassy has requested an evaluation within the area of private sector development, in particular the engagement on Private Agriculture Sector Support (PASS), which has been supported for more than a decade.

Gender equality. While Denmark increasingly puts strong emphasis on gender equality, especially in terms of sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly in multilateral fora, recent country evaluations suggest that the issue is not adequately dealt with in the bilateral cooperation. Bearing in mind the SDG targets, this evaluation should consider linkages between bilateral and normative work in relation to gender equality and aim at identifying ways to strengthen these linkages.

Humanitarian assistance. In dialogue with the Humanitarian Department, EVAL is planning further evaluation work to document results and draw lessons, especially in relation the implementation of international commitments in the 2016 Grand Bargain and particularly addressing concrete experience in implementing interventions bridging humanitarian and development efforts.

The **Strategic Sector Cooperation** was initiated in 2015 as a concrete initiative aimed at mobilising the competencies of Danish public authorities directly in long-term strategic cooperation and partnerships with counterpart institutions in growth and transition economies. 14 countries are now involved in a total of 29 strategic sector cooperation agreements and 29

sector counsellors posted at the Danish embassies. An evaluation is planned for 2019 to assess the experience so far.

The **Danish Support to Development Research** has undergone some changes over the last years, especially with the introduction of research cooperation in connection with the Strategic Sector Cooperation. An evaluation is planned for 2019 for the whole area of development research, and in light of its responsibility for the management of the development research, the Evaluation Department is considering how such an evaluation best can be carried out.

Use of earmarked funding of multilateral programmes. There is an increasing trend of entering in partnerships or delegated cooperation with multilateral organisations under the country programmes or as part of centrally managed programmes. EVAL will undertake either a full evaluation or a desk study with the aim of assessing ‘the Danish side’ of these partnerships in terms of Danish influence and use of this tool and the quality assurance both in the preparation and under implementation.

The Evaluation Department is furthermore considering to undertake larger evaluation studies in relation to two topics:

- Experience from youth employment in Africa and MENA with special focus on youth inclusion and the distinction between formal and informal sector. Due to the enhanced emphasis on youth, an evaluation study will be undertaken to outline the limited Danish experience within this area, so far.
- Aid effectiveness after Paris. Bilateral donors have to a varying extent abandoned the earlier agreed aid effectiveness principles. What have they put in place instead in order to ensure national ownership and sustainability of aid interventions?

4. Communication and outreach

The Evaluation Department has a responsibility for communicating the findings and conclusions of evaluations and studies both within the ministry and to a broader audience. Apart from the formal requirement to inform the Danish Parliament by providing members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Finance Committee with Danish summaries of all evaluations, evaluations and their management response are posted at <http://evaluation.um.dk>. In view of presenting and introducing the evaluations in a better way, EVAL is in the process of introducing new elements to the website, including interviews with evaluation stakeholders and shorter texts about results of the evaluation. EVAL will also be looking into including video-bites and graphic elements to the website. The website is primarily targeted towards a Danish and international audience that is interested in – and to some extent knowledgeable about – Danish development cooperation.

Eval organises brown-bag lunches and public seminars on the basis of published work. In September 2017, Eval hosted a half-day public “Evaluation day” with participation of more than 130 people. The seminar included presentation and discussion of findings from country evaluations in Mozambique, Bolivia and Nepal and an introduction to the SDG targets and indicator framework. A public seminar on fragile and conflict-affected states is planned to take place in June 2018 in cooperation with the evaluation department of NORAD presenting evaluations from both Danish and Norwegian development cooperation. Based on an evaluation study, Eval is planning to undertake a seminar on the effects of development cooperation on Danish commercial cooperation with partner countries. Furthermore, a seminar is planned for September in cooperation with OECD/DAC on results measurement and evaluation in relation to blended finance.

EVAL