

Evaluation Programme 2022-2023

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 operationalize the Policy for Evaluation of Development Cooperation (December 2020).

The evaluation function is embedded in the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK). This organizational set-up has been in place since January 2020. ELK contracts independent evaluators through an EU-tender process to undertake the evaluations.

COVID-19 has continued to be the major challenge for the implementation of the evaluation programme. Travel restrictions has led to delays as the lack of on-site data collection has generally been considered a serious risk to the quality of evaluation exercises. However, the pandemic has also resulted in the exploration of alternative approaches, including greater use of local data collection and interviews conducted by local consultants. This may be important steps towards strengthening evaluation capacities in partner countries. The rapid proliferation of online and virtual platforms and exchanges has also been fully adopted in the evaluation community. The OECD-DAC EvalNet has facilitated exchanges to consider greater use of tools such as real time evaluation and rapid synthesis of data in evaluations, aiming to contribute to responsive decision making.

Besides addressing the challenges of COVID, other innovative approaches have also been introduced recently to increase uptake of findings. An evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society was conducted as a series of evaluations consisting of three thematic evaluations in which key themes were explored through a real-time and utilization approach. The rationale was that a full-scale results-focused evaluation of the portfolio in its totality would not produce the body of outcome-level results necessary to stimulate learning and improve results. Instead, the evaluation focused on support channeled through Danish civil society organisations i.e. the 16 Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA) and six pooled funds and aimed to be participatory and to promote evidence-based joint learning. This learning fed directly into the programming of the new round of SPA applications as the evaluation team was able to feedback findings to the MFA in real time. A number of recommendations were followed up on during the evaluation process. The thematic approach meant that the evaluation findings were initially mainly expected to be based on in-depth case studies, but it was decided to complement this with a wider

survey to generate more overall aggregate evidence in order to address the need for generalisability and to better fulfil the accountability function of the evaluation.

2. Recently concluded evaluations and studies

The following evaluations have been finalized in 2021 and beginning of 2022.

- **Evaluation of Danish Funding for Climate Change Mitigation in Developing Countries (Particip/ODI, May 2021)**

The evaluation of mitigation funding aimed to deepen understanding of the dynamics of “low emissions”, climate resilient processes in developing countries, where technical assistance and the mobilisation of international finance play important roles. As Danish commitments to tackling the global warming challenge are renewed, as new targets for emissions reductions are proposed and as new legislation is enacted, there was scope for intensive learning which would lead to enhanced mitigation actions. The evaluation documented achievements in terms of assisting developing countries to mitigate climate change through the provision of Danish support in the period from 2013; analyzed the outcomes of climate change mitigation funding, with due consideration of the opportunities and barriers at both national and global levels; and, provided recommendations pertaining to future funding priorities. Case studies of mitigation funding in Ethiopia, Indonesia, South Africa and Vietnam as well as studies of Danish support to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Energy Sector Management Programme (ESMAP) of the World Bank, the International Energy Agency (IEA) and “Verdens Skove” were included in the comprehensive assessment. Recommendations focused on providing support to identify the most mitigation-relevant sectors, regions and systems in partner countries, to become fully choice-aware in each of them, to develop options for reducing net emissions in all of them and to select the most effective mitigation options; and, improving proposed mitigation actions by describing anticipated mitigation effects, specifying baseline conditions, defining expected outcomes and criteria as well as indicators for assessing progress, and providing a full account of arrangements for monitoring and reporting progress towards those outcomes.

- **Evaluation of Danida Sustainable Infrastructure Finance Programme (2001-2019) (Particip, to be published April 2022)**

The evaluation found that coherence with Danish development policies and programmes had improved, not least due to the new country strategic frameworks covering Denmark’s entire engagement with countries, including those of IFU and DSIF. DSIF was found to provide additionality in the form of subsidised long-term finance and grants but there were no examples of additional commercial funding or funding from other bilateral or multilateral sources. 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. It was a conclusion of the evaluation that there was an overall need to increase the focus on results and long-term sustainability to ensure both the necessary accountability and learning. The evaluation supported DSIF's recent strategy establishing an increased focus on sub-Saharan Africa, increased financial and institutional innovation and on technology transfers. 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 Danish support to civil society: 3 thematic evaluations to support joint learning (Intrac/NCG, to be published April 2022)**

The evaluation series consisted of three thematic evaluations focus on: 1) Public engagement in Denmark; 2) Strengthening civil society in the Global South; and 3) Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus. Overall the evaluation series found that support through Danish civil society organisations (CSOs) is distinctive in that funds are predictable, longer term and can be used quite flexibly. It is further characterised by a recognition of the importance of a strong, diverse and independent civil society as a desirable end in itself. The overall conclusion of the evaluation was that, in broad terms, this approach is appropriate and achieving significant results. Danish CSOs are able to engage with the Danish public and raising awareness of development issues, including positive examples of promoting public support for development cooperation. Danish CSOs have been able to generate many benefits for their partners in the Global South and marginalised communities that they represent. In the emerging Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, Danish CSOs are increasing their capacity to develop new approaches, which move beyond previous siloed ways of working, and the MFA funding modality is conducive to promoting this. The evaluation thus emphasized that that there is strong foundation to build on. However, it also revealed significant areas for improvement, particularly in the following areas: development of more joint and collaborative approaches amongst Danish CSOs; further localisation by encouraging Danish CSOs to promote more power-sharing and equal relationships with their Southern partners, but through their own strategies rather than imposing one-size-fits-all rules; incentivizing Danish CSOs to engage in nexus approaches in more challenging contexts with a particular focus on how to further operationalise the peace dimension of their work; and engaging in new approaches to summarizing and communicating portfolio-level results in line with what was already recommended in the previous evaluation with a view to enhancing accountability and continued support from government and the public.

A number of evaluation studies have also been finalized:

- **The Political Economy of Energy Transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa (DIIS, January 2022)**
The study points to the decisive influence of a country's resource endowments on the potential for an energy transition and how this affects the type of finance that can be mobilized for energy sector development with implications for potential coalitions between international and domestic actors.
- **Access to Water in Africa - a review to frame future development assistance for access to water in Africa (BJ-CON, September 2021)**
The study lists a number of selection criteria for new interventions, including the targeting of areas/countries which are likely to give the maximum impact on poverty alleviation, public health, climate adaptation, and commercial interest and potential of Danish private sector stakeholders.
- **Danish Support to Informally Organised Civil Society and Social Movements in Developing Countries (IMPAKT, July 2021)**
The study notes that Danish support modalities are perceived to be sufficiently flexible and open for Danish actors to pursue and support informal actors and movements, but that there is a need to continue to adapt and adjust modalities as contextual challenges, risks and compliance rules are also perceived to hamper further learning and development of good practices.
- **Digital Development & Human Rights - How to Strengthen Responsible Technological Development and Digital Resilience to enhance Democratic Governance (HN Consultants, June 2021)**
The study describes the all-pervasiveness of digitization with primary emphasis on its effects on democratic governance and citizens' rights. Digitisation disrupts and upends many assumptions about development assistance and changes the way we work with development policy and programming. To amplify Danish policy objectives, the study points to the EU as a crucial partner to leverage and promote policies and initiatives in line with the Strategy for Denmark's Tech Diplomacy 2021-2023.
- **Trends and Lessons Learned on Improving Framework Conditions for Private Sector Development in the Global South (Publicus, June 2021)**
The study focused on approaches Danida and other development agencies have taken to improve framework conditions for private sector development based on a review of existing evaluations and by mapping selected Danish global and country programmes. The study pointed to some success among programmes that

support improving framework conditions for private sector development, but also to a need to better understand how the design, implementation and monitoring of Danish programmes can be improved to achieve better outcomes and to ascertain attributional impacts and results.

- **Biodiversitet og naturbaserede løsninger i den globale og danske udviklingsbistand (Soeren Mark Jensen Enterprise, June 2021)**

The study presents some of the new and important global and Danish experiences and perspectives regarding the integration of the dimension of nature in development assistance.

3. Ongoing and planned evaluations for 2022-2023

The following context and criteria 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 will additionally take into consideration the envisioned implementations of The World We Share described in the established how-to-notes and approach papers and through the principles of Doing Development Differently on a wide range of prioritized areas, including poverty, peace and stabilization, migration, human rights and democracy, etc.

The Evaluation Programme 2022-2023 will see the completion of a number of on-going evaluations, some of which were foreseen to have been finalized earlier, but were delayed among other reasons due to the pandemic (expected date of publication indicated):

- Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF) (NCG/ECORYS, May 2022)
- Evaluation of Danida Multi-Bilateral Interventions (Mokoro, September 2022)
- Evaluation of Danish support to Framework Conditions for Private Sector Development (NCG, October 2022)
- Evaluation of Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation (EU-tender on-going, June 2023)

Evaluations and studies will be clustered around the following themes:

➤ Aid Effectiveness

- **Planned evaluation:** It is part of Denmark's strategy to apply a long term perspective, but also to be ready to adapt and reduce the Danish involvement in accordance with changing developments and needs. When adapting the involvement, it is important to consider the opportunity to harvest the lessons learned from the engagement. 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. Therefore it is planned to initiate an evaluation of the cooperation this year.
- **Planned evaluation:** To improve the quality of Denmark's development programming, the process of **decentralising bilateral aid management** was initiated in 2003, some 20 years ago. An evaluation was undertaken in 2009. Since then, many changes have taken place of the organizational structures of the aid management operations and of the international development agenda. At the time of the previous evaluation, aid management was still moving towards more aid being handled by embassies. It seems relevant to initiate a follow-up to this evaluation to determine amongst other the efficiency and effectiveness of the decentralization agenda in light of the new directions that Danish development cooperation has taken since that time.

➤ Fragility and Climate Change

- **On-going evaluation:** As **stabilisation of fragile and conflict-affected countries** has increasingly become a strategic priority for Denmark, this has been reflected in significant Danish engagements, including in Somalia, Mali, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Peace and stabilisation efforts typically involve the integration of Denmark's diplomatic efforts, development initiatives and military instruments to stabilise fragile and conflict-affected states. An evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund is on-going and will be finalized in 2022. It is analysing critical issues in peace and stabilisation and responses as demonstrated by the PSF programmes, not least the efficiency and effectiveness of the comprehensive whole-of-government approach. The Evaluation has an encompassing scope,

spanning the full portfolio and global coverage of the PSF, with in-depth analysis in three regions (Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Iraq/Syria).

- **Planned study:** As Denmark is both committed to increasing its engagements in fragile and conflict-affected areas and to invest in climate change adaptation in poor countries, it will be considered to assess the effectiveness of Danish approaches to promote **resilience across the different dimensions of fragility** as this could also contribute to learning on how to further improve our ability to address the intersecting challenges of climate change, fragility and conflict. Also in light of recent developments, the Danish engagement in the Sahel could provide a relevant basis for such an assessment. Denmark has had long-term engagements in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali, which have undergone considerable adjustments over the past 5 to 10 years. These have been intensified in the last few years where there has also been a growing focus on applying a humanitarian-development-peace nexus. An evaluation study could thus focus on the adaptation of the Danish engagement to the growing fragility in the Sahel across its different dimensions, including climate change that the region is particularly exposed to, by looking into: i) the overall performance of Denmark's engagement with a particular focus on addressing the root causes of fragility across the portfolio; ii) the adequacy of Danish approaches, instruments and priorities.
- **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 back ground, and in cooperation with DIIS, studies have been commissioned on (i) The political economy of renewable energy in Africa; (ii) Excess capacity in the energy sector in Africa; and (iii) Financing of renewable energy in Africa. The studies will be finalized in 2022.
- **Planned study of Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan:** The purpose of this joint study with the Ministry of Defense is to assess and evaluate Denmark's military and development engagement in Afghanistan during the years 2001-2021 to draw out lessons for future peace and stabilization efforts. ELK is contributing to the study which has been agreed upon by the majority of political parties of Parliament. The study will be undertaken by DIIS and is expected to be ready by the end of 2023.

➤ Multilateral cooperation

- **On-going evaluation:** Over the years, Denmark has increased its direct collaboration with multilateral organisations and an increased percentage of earmarked aid is channeled through these systems as so-called **multi-bi interventions**, from 12% in 2011 to 27% in 2019. An evaluation to be finalized in 2022 will seek to provide 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. Four countries are serving as case countries; Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, while experience from Afghanistan, Niger, Mali, Palestine and Ukraine will also be included.

4. Other evaluation activities in 2022-2023

- **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. It will also provide 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 is timely and could potentially have an actual impact on the coherence of UNDS' future response under such circumstances.
- **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 organizational learning, accountability and evidence-based policy making.

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 among other things 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.

- **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 organization 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.

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 <http://evaluation.um.dk>.

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