

Evaluation Programme 2021-2022

1. Introduction

In accordance with the policy for the evaluation of Danish development cooperation (December 2020)¹, the purpose of evaluation is to provide accountability and to generate learning based on evidence of what works and what does not work in which contexts, and hence improve future development cooperation.

Since January 2020, the evaluation function has been embedded within the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK). The vision has been to maintain existing operational systems within evaluations and quality assurance, and at the same time increase synergies with existing quality assurance systems, adding a stronger and more systematic approach to the uptake and application of knowledge, learning and analytical capacity.

The new organisational setup has been a positive learning path despite significant impacts due to the Covid-19 pandemic - on the operations within ELK as a newly established unit as well as the implementation of the commissioned evaluations. Despite these constraints, it has overall been possible to keep up the pace for implementation of evaluations and evaluation studies in accordance with the evaluation programme 2020/21 and the allocated budget in 2020 (DKK 17 mill.).

Still, a major challenge for implementation of the current evaluation program 2021/22 is the **Covid-19 pandemic**. This will undoubtedly influence methods and approaches for ongoing and near-future evaluations. There will be restrictions on empirical data collection due to travel restrictions and limits on access to institutions and key stakeholders, who may not be available for interviews. Evaluative exercises will be significantly constrained due to the inability to conduct on-site data collection. New ways of using remote interviewing and desk-based reviews and analyses need to be applied, also new sources of evidence (e.g. “big data”), but adapting the evaluation methodology will still be a challenge at least for 2021/22. It is also anticipated that there will be a **conceptual shift** for evaluations in the next years. We will have to reflect on and factor in, both the direct and indirect causal effects of Covid-19 in any type of sector or any type of thematic issue that is subject to planned (and ongoing) evaluations and studies in the current evaluation program 2021/22. ELK will take up these concerns in close dialogue with the evaluation community globally, e.g. within OECD/DAC EvalNet, the Nordic+ evaluation network and the working group of Nordic evaluation departments.

¹ [EvaluationPolicy2020.pdf](#)

2. Recently concluded evaluations and studies

ELK undertakes programme, thematic and real-time evaluations (up to 2021). A number of evaluations have recently been finalised (with end dates indicated in brackets, all available together with Danish summaries at www.evaluation.dk):

- Evaluation of Danida Support to Development Research (2008-2018) (June 2020)

The main conclusion of the evaluation was that Danida has done very well in support of research for development by funding many valuable, high quality research projects, the vast majority aimed at pertinent opportunities to address development challenges in low-income countries. This very positive overall assessment of research and capacity building efforts led to several proposals and possible options for the consolidation and strengthening of support for development research. It was also noted that “legitimacy” of research is often an issue, in particular ensuring that gender bias and other inequities are confronted through research. Furthermore, the importance of “systems thinking” – or “sustainability science” – was emphasized and concerns about trade-offs between quality and development impact were considered.

- Evaluation of the Danish Strategic Sector Cooperation (September 2020)

The evaluation found that the SSC modality is able to mobilise Danish authorities in ways that other measures could not. The involved Danish authorities provide the partners in country with context sensitive contributions and facilitate shared ownership of the projects in collaboration with the Sector Counsellors. Although the evaluation concluded that it is too early to see concrete results of the projects, local partners report on useful contributions to local strategic planning. Although a mutual understanding of the engagement of the private sector has emerged this is still a challenge for some SSC projects. The flexibility of the SSC framework allows for an adaptive programming that underpins the responsiveness of the Danish authorities making them valued and equal partners to their counterparts. The evaluation concluded that local settings matter and the selection of countries and sectors needs individual assessments. A prerequisite for successful collaborations is sufficient capacity in the partner authorities to absorb knowledge and one of the key findings is the need for more policy dialogue.

- Evaluation of Danish Support for Climate Change Adaptation in Developing Countries (February 2021)

Danish policy priority to climate change adaptation varied over the evaluation period 2008-2018, which led to a generally weakening strategic focus. Opportunities and challenges were insufficiently understood and underestimated, in part because they were highly situation-specific and with low levels of capacity among partners. Mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in the planning and budgeting phases was more successful than mainstreaming in the implementation and monitoring phases. Community-level interventions were in general effective at targeting and empowering vulnerable people and led to improved climate resilience and livelihoods, even if it was in many cases still

too early to conclude if such interventions were sustainable. Transformation towards a climate-resilient economy has been challenging. It is highly dependent on committed national and local leadership in partner countries, and funds available. The most promising potential for transformation appears when adopting a programmatic approach that responds to national incentives. Sustaining such change is critical and the sustainability of many short-term climate-related projects within the Danish portfolio remains uncertain without continuing external assistance and a supporting political economy. Danish engagement with the global landscape influenced the multilateral interventions that it contributed to. However, there appears to have been relatively little learning within Danida from the engagement with the global landscape due to missing mechanisms for sharing as well as resource constraints. Denmark made good use of different modalities but there were missed opportunities to ensure synergy, mutual reinforcement and comprehensive operation across different levels from communities to local government to central government.

Furthermore, a number of evaluation studies have been finalized (also see www.evaluation.dk), in all cases in dialogue with relevant departments and embassies in Danida and often serving as pre-evaluation studies:

- Recent trends and issues in use of personnel and partnering for development (February 2020)
- Guarantees and incentives in development aid (June 2020)
- Keeping the promise: The role of bilateral development partners in responding to forced displacement (September 2020)
- Testing Real-Time Evaluations for enhanced adaptability in Danish aid programmes (January 2021)
- Identification and analysis of main trends in Danish multilateral development assistance (February 2021)

To this a number of studies have been commissioned and finalized, mainly as part of the ELK partnership agreement with DIIS and the collaboration with the OECD/DAC Evaluation Network, especially the working group on evaluation of blended finance.

3. Ongoing and planned evaluations for 2021-2022.

The following context and criteria have guided the outline of the evaluations proposed for 2021/2022:

- The general rule for coverage: over a 5-7 year period the aim is to cover most bilateral assistance – including modalities, large aid programs and countries.
- The preliminary framework for the new Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation
- Key trends within global development.
- A mix of cross-cutting thematic and initiative/programme focused evaluations.

Against this backdrop, the Evaluation Program for 2021-2022 will see the completion of a number of already initiated evaluations (expected date of finalization indicated):

- Evaluation of the Danish funding for climate change mitigation in developing countries (May 2021)
- Evaluation of Danida Sustainable Infrastructure Finance (DSIF) (July 2021)
- Evaluation of Danish support to civil society: Three thematic evaluations to support joint learning (June 2022)
- Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF) (March 2022)
- Evaluation of Danida Business Sector Programmes (mid 2022)
- Evaluation of Gender Equality in Danish Development Co-operation (mid 2022)

Most evaluations and studies are/will be clustered around a number of themes we believe will be highly relevant to learn from in the coming years:

➤ **Theme 1: Development Finance**

There are two important streams within the theme of development financing. Firstly, following the evaluations of IFU (2019) and finalizing the evaluation of the Danida Sustainable Infrastructure Finance (DSIF) (July 2021), we will in 2021/22 evaluate the **Danida support for Business Sector Programmes**. This will focus on policy/capacity development support for the business environment, defined as a complex of policy, legal, institutional and regulatory conditions that govern business activities and enhance the enabling environment for private sector development. A pre-evaluation study has been initiated (February 2021); **Trends and lessons learned on private sector programmes in developing countries which will propose** specific evaluation questions.

Secondly, ELK will continue our engagement in the **Working Group for Evaluation of Blended Finance** under OECD/DAC EvalNet, which beyond the planned evaluative products has developed into a dialogue with the OECD/DAC Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) on the operational implications of evaluating blended finance operations and private sector support. Concrete work commissioned by ELK include the study on Evaluating Financial and Development Additionality in Blended Finance Operations², developed in collaboration with the Department of Economics, University of Copenhagen and DIIS. The Working Group for Blended Finance will wind up in mid-2021 with additional publications and a seminar to conclude across the three work streams on definition of concepts, working with additionality and use of different financial instruments within blended finance operations. The EvalNet network will hereafter decide on options for future work on development financing, e.g. on impact standards and measuring development results.

² [OECD iLibrary | OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](https://oecd-ilibrary.org/)

➤ Theme 2: Climate change and green environment

With the **Evaluation of Danish support for Climate Change Adaptation**³ to developing countries, finalized in February 2021, and the **Evaluation of the Danish support to Climate Change Mitigation**, expected to be published in May 2021, two major assessments of the relevance, effectiveness and outcomes of Danish climate change support can now guide the implementation of the new Strategy for Development Cooperation. The response and uptake of findings from the two evaluations within the Ministry and among implementing partners, illustrate the importance of timely and demand-driven evaluation work. The efforts to inform the climate change agenda will continue with a number of evaluative studies as follow-up to already published work (e.g. on climate change adaptation⁴ and renewable energy⁵). The focus of studies in 2021 will include **Devolved finance and Governance of Climate Change Adaptation** and the **Political economy of Renewable Energy investments in Africa**, just to mention two examples. Both studies are closely linked to research projects supported by Danida Development Research funds from 2021.

Responding to the expected renewed focus on the “green environment” in the new Strategy for Development Cooperation, a number of evaluation studies have been commissioned in 2021 to examine **Access to Water in Africa** and **Trends for Support to Biodiversity and Nature** within Danish and global development assistance. Both studies may inform more substantial evaluation work on these issues in 2022, and could through focus on **nature-based solutions** and **ecosystem services** create links to efforts to tackle climate change adaptation as well as mitigation, and the nexus of natural resource management and poverty alleviation.

➤ Theme 3: Humanitarian aid, Civil Society support and fragile contexts.

ELK continues the **thematic evaluation of the Danish Support to Civil Society** that through 2021/22 will entail three thematic sub-evaluations addressing issues central to Danish civil society support; 1) Danish public engagement in the international cooperation agenda promoted by Danish CSOs, 2) strengthening civil society partnerships in the global south, and 3) results achieved through the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. Themes such as localization, livelihoods and resilience will be examined in thematic evaluations number 2 and 3. The first thematic evaluation on Danish public engagement is expected to be finalized late spring 2021.

The planned evaluation of the operations of the **Peace and Stability Fund (PSF)** in the Sahel as well as both Syria-Iraq and the Horn of Africa is now underway. The last evaluation was in 2014 and the new evaluation will document the achievements and main results of PSF

³ [CCA Evaluation \(um.dk\)](#)

⁴ Climate change adaptation and development [Climate change adaptation and development | DIIS](#)

⁵ Trends in development assistance to new renewable energy in sub-Saharan Africa [Renewable energy poses opportunities and challenges in Africa | DIIS](#)

programmes, both with respect to outcomes “on the ground” and in terms of the overall policies adopted and carried out through the “whole of government” approach. Thus, it will analyse critical issues in peace and stabilisation responses as illustrated by the PSF programmes, and on the basis of main lessons learned propose recommendations for improved operation of the Fund. The evaluation has been informed by a **pre-evaluation study**⁶ examining possible paths through which to improve the Fund ten years into its existence, with the aim of scoping the evaluation and identifying key questions.

Finally, ELK has renewed the Danish contribution to the international humanitarian network for **Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP)**, being an important source for information to evaluate humanitarian interventions.

➤ **Theme 4: Multilateral cooperation**

Multilateral organisations have their own systems for evaluations outside the remit of bilateral donor’s evaluation departments, including ELK. However, they are regularly assessed through the **Multilateral Organisations’ Performance Assessment Framework (MOPAN)**, a system that has gained increased recognition, effectiveness and professionalism over the years. ELK is represented on the MOPAN Steering Committee and participates in reference groups for selected MOPAN thematic assessments, e.g. in 2021 on Multilateral Organisations Responses to Climate Change.

Building on the evaluation study on Danish multilateral organizational strategies, published in 2019⁷, a new evaluation study on **Identification and Analysis of Main Trends in Danish Multilateral Development Assistance**⁸ was finalised in February 2021. This study provides updated statistics on the trends in Danish multilateral aid 2011 to 2018 with respect to partners, modalities and volumes. The paper also proposes a number of strategic and operational issues to consider within future support for multilateral organisations. The study serves as the pre-evaluation study for a new evaluation of **Danish collaboration with multilateral organizations in partner countries** to be initiated in 2021. The main objective of the evaluation will be to provide lessons learned for the future use of the multi-bi instrument in Danish development assistance. Four countries have been pre-selected as case countries; Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, but experiences from Afghanistan, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, and Palestine will also be included.

As part of the collaboration within the OECD/DAC evaluation network DAC member states are invited to participate in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) when they do peer

⁶ How to strengthen Danish stabilisation engagements. [How to strengthen Danish stabilisation engagements | DIIS](#)

⁷ Use of Organisation Strategies and Results Reporting for Danish Multilateral Partners [Use of organisation strategies \(um.dk\)](#)

⁸ Identification and Analysis of Main Trends in Danish Multilateral Development Assistance [MultilateralStudy \(um.dk\)](#)

review of each other. This year Denmark participates in the **peer review of UNHCR's evaluation functions**.

In 2020 ELK joined the **Global Evaluation Initiative** (GEI), which is a partnership between the evaluation departments of the World Bank, UNDP, and a number of bilateral donors (including Norway, Sweden and Finland). Denmark is represented in the Steering Committee and the partnership expected to be an opportunity to improve learning on M&E within MFA and provide a platform for increased collaboration, not at least with multilateral organisations. GEI will have special focus on the SDGs and a multi-year work plan will be endorsed in April 2021.

The partnership agreement with **BetterEvaluation**, an internationally recognized network of evaluators providing technical and professional skills development and knowledge exchange among the members, has been extended for 2021-2022. Better Evaluation will continue to provide training and product development for MFA and its staff, including aspects of building proper M&E systems, use of Theory of Change and scenario planning as part of improved capture of results to inform future evaluations as well as the roll out the doing development differently (DDD) approach within Danish development assistance.

➤ **Theme 5 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic**

It is now recognized that the **Covid-19 pandemic** will play a significant role for development assistance in many years to come. Not at least the socio-economic impacts due to local and global lock-downs will impact development efforts in poor countries in Africa. ELK is currently following international evaluation initiatives on Covid-19 and has commissioned studies to inform potential future evaluations, in collaboration with international partners or specifically on Danish responses within development assistance.

ELK has from the start participated in the **Covid-19 Global Evaluation Coalition**⁹. The Coalition is an independent collaborative programme made up of the development evaluation units of countries, United Nations organisations and multilateral institutions. The purpose is to provide credible evaluative evidence that will inform policy makers and implementers to support a more effective (and collective) response to - and recovery from - the Covid -19 pandemic, and to this generate lessons and good practices, and facilitate learning for future global crises. Denmark has expressed particular interest in the collective evaluation efforts within the concept of **Building Back Better and Greener (BBBG)** and is currently in dialogue with GEF, ILO, Norway, France and the DAC Secretariat on options for joint evaluative work.

Denmark has with a number of other donors contributed to the **UN Covid-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund** (MPTF)¹⁰. The purpose is collectively to support measures to suppress transmission to stop the pandemic and save lives, address social,

⁹ <http://www.covid19-evaluation-coalition.org/>

¹⁰ <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/COV00>

economic and multi-dimensional impacts, and implement sustainable solutions to cope with the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis. By December 2020, the MPTF has granted support for projects of a total budgeted value of \$62.3 million and a wealth of information is available on the Covid-19 MPTF projects, the functionality of national Covid-19 Socio-Economic Response Plans and importantly the operation of the Fund and its implications for the UN Development Reform. ELK has, with evaluation colleagues from Norway, Holland, Finland, financed (and provided technical expertise) for an early lesson and evaluability study to set the scene for future evaluations of the Fund. The work is coordinated by the Executive Office of the Secretary General of the United Nations.

ELK will also in 2022 consider evaluating the outcomes of the four **Danish Covid-19 response packages** for developing countries approved in 2020-21, mainly in Africa, amounting to around DKK 1.6 billion. How the BBBG approach has been applied in these interventions could be a relevant focus.

Finally, ELK continues to commission studies on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, with focus on Africa and especially socio-economic effects. Examples are the studies on Implications of the Covid-19 pandemic for revenue generation in poor African countries¹¹ and on Fiscal policy responses to Covid-19 in Danida priority countries in Sub-Saharan Africa¹². To this can also be added contribution to another MOPAN Analytical Study in 2021 on **How are Multilateral Organisations reacting to the COVID-19 crisis?**

4. Other evaluation activities in 2021-2022

Gender Equality is a core priority in Danish development policy and Denmark has pursued this priority for decades through programming and a high profile in multilateral negotiations, setting international norms for gender equality and women and girl's rights. Given the considerable changes in strategies and policies since 2014; and the continued importance of Gender Equality as a core priority in Danish development policy; and Denmark's role in pursuing this priority for decades through programming and a high diplomatic profile in international norm setting, it has been decided that an **evaluation of the Danish policies and strategies, addressing gender equality** will be undertaken. A pre-evaluation study commissioned by ELK will frame the evaluation, including possible focus in terms of topics, activities, approaches (gender mainstreaming), results and partners (international organizations, UN etc.).

Danish development assistance is constantly exposed to new challenges, priorities and realities and it raises the question if the administration of Danish development assistance is fit for purpose. One aspect of this – the decentralisation of the aid administration – was evaluated in 2008 and it seems relevant to revisit this agenda with an evaluation lens. To pursue this a pre-evaluation study with the purpose of determining the objectives for an **evaluation of the**

¹¹ [Taxation in sub-Saharan Africa after Covid-19 | DIIS](#)

¹² Working Paper Department of Economics, University of Copenhagen (in press)

decentralisation of the Danish development administration will be considered during 2021 with an evaluation planned for 2022.

In 2022 a number of country evaluations may also be initiated. Potential countries could be **Bangladesh** and **Myanmar** with focus on Danish engagement in country phase-out situations and a conflict prone context, respectively.

Furthermore, there are other upcoming issues linked to Danish development policy priorities which could be subject to evaluative work in 2022. These include the **use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in governance; targeting poverty and inequality; youth in development** and **support for culture and cultural exchange**.

The testing of a **real-time evaluation (RTE)** pilot instrument, initiated in 2014, was finalized in 2020¹³. Findings show that RTEs have added value in the context they have been applied, but at significant costs. Delays and timing issues have been obstacles. The multi-actor set-up of the RTEs has created challenges, but keeping flexible and dialogue-based approaches are important for RTE usefulness. It was concluded that the rationale behind the RTE pilots remains valid. The approach may be more successful with the new Danida adaptive aid paradigm (Doing Development Differently) and will therefore be included in the tool box for future M&E systems.

5. Additional Evaluation studies in 2020-2021

The **institutional partnership with DIIS** on evaluative studies will continue throughout 2021 and the following studies will be carried out:

- Study on support to devolved finance and governance of climate change adaptation.
- Relationship between development programmes and migration.
- The political economy of renewable energy investments in Africa.
- Targeting in Danish development assistance projects and programmes.
- Fintech and debt-based development financing.
- Nature-based Solutions (NBS) in Africa.
- Security Sector Reform in Somalia and Iraq.

6. Communication and outreach

The ELK 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>.

¹³ Testing Real-Time Evaluations for Enhanced Adaptability in Danish Aid Programmes [RTE-study \(um.dk\)](http://evaluation.um.dk)

There will be a continued effort to improve the communication products from evaluations, in close dialogue with the Communication Unit (KOM) of the Ministry. As a test, communication objectives have been integrated from the very start in the Evaluation of Support to Climate Change Adaptation. Dedicated communication specialists followed this evaluation closely and carried out (despite Covid-19) country level field work to gather case stories, interviews, film spots etc. These communication products are now available at [Films \(um.dk\)](#) free for use for Embassies, implementation partners and other stakeholders.

ELK is in ongoing dialogue with KOM on how to integrate evaluation results into the overall communication platform of the Ministry, including social media.

ELK