

Evaluation Department

## Work Programme 2012

January 2012

Evaluation Department  
(EvD)



**European Bank**  
for Reconstruction and Development

## **PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

This Work Programme Final Report for 2012 provides an overview of the Evaluation Department's Work Programme for 2012 and is prepared in accordance with the Bank's Evaluation Policy.

I recommend that the Board of Directors approve this Work Programme Final Report for 2012.

Thomas Mirow

## Preface

In late 2011 the Audit Committee discussed the Evaluation department's (EvD) preliminary Work Programme for 2012 and broadly endorsed both the content and strategic direction of the proposal, providing specific comments and guidance at successive stages of its review. This final paper for Board consideration reflects the Committee's discussion in January 2012.

The main elements of the work plan include:

- increasing the number of validation reports for self-assessments; these become primary generator of ratings
- fewer OPERs selected mainly for value for insights, lessons and findings
- Special Studies on thematic and sectoral issues
- Synthesis Papers drawing on existing work to provide useful insights
- new Evaluation Policy
- revised basic template for project self-assessment
- approach papers prepared in advance for Special Studies and Operation Evaluations
- development of tools to assist Operations teams at the design stage
- restructuring of the Lessons Database
- develop improved and additional training modules
- fold annual Work Programme Completion Report into AEOR
- XMR Reviews dropped in favour of single annual assessment
- revise EvD document distribution policies and practices
- explore potential for EvD helpdesk
- note on options for improved Recommendations Follow-up.

A full presentation of the Final 2012 Work Programme is set out in Annex 1.

## Contents

Preface	
Abbreviations.....	<b>iv</b>
Introduction .....	<b>v</b>
1. Evaluations of investment and TC operations.....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Selection and mix of OPERS and XMRAs	1
1.2 Technical cooperation	4
2. Thematic evaluations and Synthesis Papers.....	<b>4</b>
3. Evaluation-related tools and processes .....	<b>5</b>
3.1 Integrating lessons more effectively	5
3.2 Improve evaluation-related tools	6
3.3 Training and awareness	6
4. Annual reporting documents.....	<b>7</b>
5. Evaluation and information policies, and external collaboration.....	<b>7</b>
Annex 1	
1. Annual reporting	
2. Tools, resources and processes	
3. Studies and Synthesis Papers	
4. Project evaluations	

Evaluation department  
**Work Programme for 2012**

January 2012

## **Abbreviations**

AEOR	Annual Evaluation Overview Report
EvD	Evaluation department
OCU	Official Co-Financing Unit
OPA	Operation Performance Assessment
OPER	Operation Performance Evaluation Review
OpsCom	Operations Committee
TC	Technical Cooperation
XMR	Expanded Monitoring Report
XMRA	Expanded Monitoring Report Assessment

## Introduction

The Evaluation department (EvD) Work Programme for 2012 will implement a strategic repositioning intended to increase the department's contribution to the EBRD's overall institutional performance and better accomplish its multidimensional mandate. The Work Programme intends to achieve two core objectives:

- produce superior, objective evaluations of the EBRD's performance, providing operationally useful insights to strengthen future performance and an essential instrument of organisational accountability
- to accomplish this, revise existing products and processes related to evaluation to increase their relevance, effectiveness and impact, and to deliver greater value to a wider pool of clients, internal and external.

EvD will focus on a few general tasks, with elements of both continuity and change, to achieve these critical objectives:

- complete sufficient investment evaluations to ensure statistically valid conclusions about institutional performance for accountability purposes
- prepare sector/thematic evaluations intended to reach a wider audience more effectively with lessons and operationally useful insights
- deliver a different mix of these two broad classes of products, and in formats that improve their usability, clarity, and impact
- update relevant tools and practices in order to improve evaluation-related products and services, their institutional uptake, and their contribution to improved operational performance
- make across-the-board improvements in the quality, utility, and relevance of evaluation-related products, services and processes.

These efforts will inevitably require some different resource allocation choices, within and beyond EvD. For 2012, EvD will operate within its current headcount and 2011 budget, plus any Bank-wide adjustment factors.

Section 1 discusses EvD's proposed new approach to direct evaluations. Section 2 focuses on higher level thematic and sectoral work. Section 3 reviews work to be done on evaluation tools and processes. Section 4 proposes some modifications in EvD's current annual reporting. Section 5 notes a few issues with the current Evaluation Policy and EvD's participation in the Evaluation Coordination Group. Lastly, Annex 1 presents EvD's Final Work Programme for 2012.

## 1. Evaluations of investment and TC operations

Evaluations focused on specific operations – Operation Performance Evaluation Reports (OPERs) or Extended Monitoring Report Assessments (XMRAs) – have been key EvD products for many years. OPERs are typically quite detailed assessments of a specific project or cluster of projects, involving field-work and relatively deep analysis. XMRAs are mainly desk-based EvD reviews and validations of self-evaluations done by the operational departments themselves.

OPERs and XMRAs have been intended, at least in principle, as instruments of the two overarching objectives of the evaluation process – accountability and learning. Both provide performance ratings along several dimensions, and both try to identify specific findings and lessons; recommendations have generally been made only in OPERs.

However, the extent of their respective contributions to the broad evaluation mandate has been uneven, for many reasons, and has fallen short of both need and potential. EvD's analysis, including of the practices of comparator organisations, suggests strongly that: validated self-assessments are being underutilised as a means of improved institutional performance and learning; they are distinctly second tier in terms of level of rigour, management profile and claim on resources, and level of circulation and uptake; and OPERs could be substantially more effective given their resource intensity and inherent capacity to explore key issues with both depth and objectivity.

For 2012, EvD will continue to produce both types of analysis, but in different proportions and with some important modifications in relative emphasis, content and process. In particular, XMRs and their EvD validations will be the core instrument for generating institutional performance ratings going forward, and therefore have a strengthened role in performance assessment for accountability. OPERs will be fewer in number, more selectively chosen, and focused primarily on producing operationally useful findings while also still contributing to accountability.

### 1.1 Selection and mix of OPERs and XMRAs

The identification of specific projects for evaluation (OPER or XMRA) has been done through a relatively complex multi-stage process combining random and purposeful selection from a pool of evaluation-ready operations. The intent of this process has been: first, to evaluate and rate a sufficiently large pool of randomly selected (and self-assessed) projects to permit statistically sound conclusions about the Bank's wider performance; and, second, to evaluate some projects more deeply where there is an expectation of issues of possible wider relevance. Roughly 30-40 XMRAs and 20-30 OPERs have thus been programmed annually over the past three years, with an average ratio of just over 1.5:1.

For 2012 EvD will shift the mix of OPERs and XMRAs, simplify the current selection mechanism, and make supporting improvements in key instruments and processes.

#### *XMRAs*

- The usual consultation between EvD and Management has identified a total of 97 evaluation-ready operations.

- From this EvD has randomly identified 45 operations for which self-assessments will be prepared by operations staff. These will subsequently be validated by EvD, producing a final evaluation with performance ratings, key findings and recommendations. These ratings will be the basis of EvD's regular reporting on institutional performance.
- EvD's review of self-assessments and related documentation may result in a judgment that additional analysis is necessary, including at the field level. There may also be circumstances when an EvD validation effort is widened into a full OPER. In such cases EvD will consult fully with Management, and resulting findings would continue to be part of the statistical sample for performance reporting purposes.

This revised approach requires a number of reinforcing changes:

- First, the current XMR (self-assessment) format does not now serve well as a tool for useful self-assessment. It is repetitive, essentially an appendage of the Bank's basic credit report (Monitoring Report) and attached to a process (the Portfolio Monitoring Module) widely seen as burdensome, and generally viewed as merely a bureaucratic exercise.
- EvD has developed a revised self-assessment format in consultation with Management, called an Operation Performance Assessment (OA), and intended to be both more streamlined and more centred on issues of operational effectiveness and results. A more useful and relevant stand-alone tool, with greater operational staff uptake and higher Management ownership and perception of value, is the critical foundation for an evaluation process more effectively rooted in operational self-assessment.
- This is also the critical basis for EvD validations that are themselves seen to be credible, focused on the key issues, and of wider value in an organisation seeking to build a compelling record of achievement and results. EvD for its part needs to improve the quality, consistency and utility of its validations.

One final change in the current system is also recommended. For evaluation-ready projects not selected for either OPER or XMRA treatment, operations staff now prepare a "short-form" XMR, for which EvD then completes a cursory quality "review". Under existing policy and practice these XMR Reviews are not discussed further or circulated beyond the immediate project staff; nor do they feed into aggregate performance statistics of any kind.

This process has the virtue of completing a 100 per cent self-assessment of all evaluation-ready projects identified annually. However in its current form – without meaningful follow-up or absorption – it provides little beyond that and represents a missed opportunity.

After identification of OPERs and XMR validations from the 2012 sample of evaluation-ready operations, a total of 38 remain for "short-form" self-assessment by Operations. Rather than preparing a stream of separate reviews, as in the past, EvD will instead conduct a single review of all such assessments, focusing mainly on quality, completeness, and realism of performance ratings. It will present its aggregate findings either in a short stand-alone report to the Board or as part of the Annual Evaluation Overview Report (AEOR). This can be a vehicle for reflection on the utility of this work, and may be useful to Management as part of its own monitoring efforts in this area.

## *OPERs*

OPERs are expected to bring a critical added dimension to this core accountability work, primarily with deeper selective analysis to produce findings that are operationally useful and, ideally, more widely applicable.

- A total of 10 OPERs will be prepared from the evaluation-ready pool. In two cases, several similar operations will be covered by a single OPER.
- Selection has been done by EvD based on judgments and in consultation with Management as to potential for insights of wider operational use, or to help illuminate higher level issues or specific challenges for Board, Management and clients.
- These considerations can include operations with particular policy or operational content, especially complex operations, previously evaluated operations where a “second-look” might yield insights about longer-term effects, operations that raised particular concerns at the time of Board approval, and so forth.
- EvD will give particular attention to opportunities to contribute to the Bank’s early efforts in the new countries of operations.

Key elements of the current OPER process will be retained; others will be strengthened or reconsidered, and in some cases new procedures introduced.

- OPER preparation will draw, as now, upon both desk and field analysis and the use of specialised expertise as needed.
- EvD approach papers setting out basic objectives will be prepared in advance and discussed with interested parties within the Bank.
- A rigorous internal peer review process will be conducted in all cases; external reviewers may also be used as circumstances require and resources permit.

The revised mix of and selection process for evaluations has implications for the rating of institutional performance. Under best practice standards only ratings on randomly selected operations may contribute, for good reasons. Under the new approach this means that XMRA (all randomly selected) would be the sole source of ratings. Ratings from purposefully selected OPERs would not feed into aggregate performance ratings, as is now the case.

This invites the question whether future OPERs should continue to provide detailed ratings as they have in the past. If OPERs intend more to provide insights and learning than focused accountability, and if in any case OPER ratings would not feed into larger institutional performance metrics, there is an argument to move away from ratings altogether. The current approach often leads to resource- and time-intensive litigation, which contributes more to poor internal dynamics than it does to insight or constructive change. Yet, done credibly and used effectively, ratings can serve important wider institutional goals.

- Balancing these considerations, EvD proposes on an exploratory basis to rely more on a narrative approach to identify areas of strength and weakness. Options to scale back the current ratings matrix for OPERs will be explored with Board and Management.

The average length of OPERs has been reduced substantially, formal recommendations limited to a few actionable priorities, and key findings distilled and presented more concisely. EvD will continue working to increase the focus, clarity, and readability of all its evaluations.

## 1.2 Technical cooperation (TC)

The Bank's TC-related work can be critical to operational design and execution, and has long had a front line role in the essential work of policy dialogue and reform. Given its importance to the Bank's reach and impact and the transition-related opportunities it presents, TC operations both merit and would reward a more systematic evaluation focus than they have had in the past.

EvD has traditionally produced a handful of TC OPERs each year using similar methodology as for investment OPERs. Yet 20 years of TC evaluation work has mainly produced findings related narrowly to project processing issues. Relatively little insight can be gleaned on the central issues of relevance, effectiveness, and impact. This is a real missed opportunity and loss of value for the Bank, the funding providers, and the countries of operations.

EvD will deepen its focus on TC operations and in particular explore ways to extract more useful insights and feed them more effectively into the planning and operational cycle. Among other efforts, it is working with the Official Co-Financing Unit (OCU) to contribute usefully to a larger OCU-driven assessment of TC-related instruments and processes and identification of needed improvements. These likely will need to include: greater clarity and precision in the *ex ante* specification of TC deliverables and performance benchmarks; process improvements in linkages with investment operations; and, quality improvements in internal review and clearance, and the *ex post* Project Completion Reports (essentially self-assessments) of the kind that have often been flagged in the past.

- EvD will complete two TC evaluations (not yet specifically identified) in a more streamlined format in 2012.
- This will be reinforced by giving specific attention to the TC component of a few selected project OPERs.

## 2. Thematic evaluations and Synthesis Papers

EvD will continue to produce evaluation work at a thematic or sectoral level in the form of Special Studies and use Synthesis Papers to present the findings of prior evaluation work on a topical basis and in compact form.

Special Studies can provide valuable insights to strengthen operational outcomes and institutional performance; they can allow focus on larger issues for which a transactions lens is unsuitable and generate more widely applicable findings for a potentially wider audience; and, they can use more creative or robust evaluation methods. EvD will continue to do Special Studies of this kind in 2012.

Synthesis Papers draw on the stock of existing evaluation work in some specific area, and are intended primarily as a learning and lessons dissemination tool. They identify major and/or common findings of wider interest and relevance to the Board and Management, and present them in a readily usable form. In principle they can be produced relatively quickly to meet a perceived need for specific analysis.

### 3. Evaluation-related tools and processes

Effective evaluation requires much more than a series of products, even of high quality and relevance. It also depends critically on the quality and effectiveness of the instruments and processes that are used both up- and down-stream of the evaluation papers themselves.

Repositioning EvD for greater relevance and value will require updating some tools and practices that have been in place for many years. Some of this work is already under way, but in any event it should be expanded and largely completed in 2012. In many cases this is for EvD to initiate; but in most cases execution will also require support and complementary actions from Management and Board.

Specific priorities are:

- upgrade the existing operations self-assessment tool (Expanded Monitoring Report (XMR)). EvD has piloted a new Operation Performance Assessment (OPA) as the basic self-assessment produced by Management and validated by EvD. This new template will be used for self-assessments, effective immediately.
- improve integration of lessons from past experience.
- improve evaluation-related tools and usage.
- increase evaluation training and awareness.

#### 3.1 Integrating lessons more effectively

Absorbing and applying experience effectively in any complex system requires both supply- and demand-side components. EvD's most direct contribution must be on the supply side (ideally encouraging uptake on the demand side), and this is where its efforts will focus. Two specific areas will get priority focus in 2012: restructuring the current approach to collecting and presenting lessons; and, making findings and lessons available to Operations teams earlier in the project design process.

##### *Lessons resources*

EvD's Lessons Database is not adequate either as an archive or as a valued component of a wider system of knowledge sharing and management. If it is to function more effectively as a resource for Operations teams to access at their own initiative, it requires a substantial re-think. At a minimum, it requires a major restructuring to consolidate out-of-date and duplicate material, improve the user interface and search functions, and raise content quality. While some of this work can be done internally, specialised skills will likely be needed as well.

### *Lessons input*

Under current practice EvD is typically approached by Operations teams for assistance with lessons relevant to new projects only shortly (a few days) before final OpsCom consideration (detail provided in the 2011 AEOR). In the case of TCs, proposals presently do not include any provision to discuss lessons from experience, and EvD receives no requests for input to their preparation.

EvD will consult with Board and Management about ways it might help transactions teams to consider the Bank's accumulated experience sufficiently early in project processes to shape basic thinking about design and focus. Other organisations have worked with reasonable success to build this in closer to the concept stage of project development, including through Management-owned quality-at-entry processes. EvD will also explore whether it has the capacity to provide a helpdesk function, and may experiment with this on a trial basis.

### **3.2 Improve evaluation-related tools**

Internal consultations reinforced by experience elsewhere suggest that Operations staff would both welcome and benefit from tools that specifically help address key evaluation and performance-related issues. EvD will accordingly produce a few specific pieces in the course of 2012, including:

- a checklist to help Operations Leaders address common questions about performance benchmarks, monitoring, and evaluability, and intended to be used upstream of the final OpsCom
- a similarly-designed pre-TC-Com checklist for TC proposals under development
- guidelines on preparation by Operations teams of *ex post* self-assessments of project and TC performance
- internal EvD guidelines for preparation of project and TC OPERs, and validations of staff self-assessments.

In cases where such work crosses departmental lines, EvD will actively seek input from others and is committed to a collaborative and inclusive approach.

### **3.3 Training and awareness**

While EvD is engaged in several training activities, there is both scope and need for increasing their reach and for additional modules. EvD has initiated discussions along these lines with the Learning Division and will work toward delivery of new training material for key Banking department trainings.

Separately, the EvD web site needs substantial upgrading for both functionality and appearance. EvD has initiated discussions with Communications and will be moving ahead with the upgrade in 2012. While this work will require specialised skills, they are readily available and competitively priced.

## 4. Annual reporting documents

The increasing premium on Board and Management time, together with a need for sharper and more selective messaging from EvD, argues for consolidation in the current line-up of EvD reports produced annually. The substantially shorter and more focused Annual Evaluation Overview Report (AEOR) for 2011 was well received by Board and Management. EvD was encouraged to make further such improvements and will do so in 2012. In addition, EvD will no longer prepare a stand-alone report on Work Programme Completion and will instead fold this basic material into the AEOR. This will eliminate duplication without loss of relevant detail.

EvD also partially restructured its latest Annual Report on Management Follow-up on EvD Recommendations. In particular, only those EvD prior recommendations that were specifically actionable by Management were put forward for Management follow-up; the remainder were re-characterised as “findings”. While Management’s internalisation of these findings is of both interest and importance, they are typically not something to which some discrete action would respond. EvD proposes that the “findings” emerging from its work could be quite adequately assembled and presented as part of the AEOR – and indeed would better belong in that document.

“Recommendations”, henceforth expected to be far less numerous, together with Management’s Responses, could be more effectively addressed in a much shorter and more focused paper. Most importantly, there is a strong case to bring recommendations to Management for follow-up much more swiftly. One possible option is for the Management follow-up report to be prepared immediately following Audit Committee discussion of a specific EvD paper. Another could be that Management prepares a brief semi-annual follow-up note on specific EvD recommendations emerging during the previous six months. EvD will prepare a discussion note with various options.

## 5. Evaluation and information policies and external collaboration

Numerous changes adopted *de facto* in 2011 and proposals now being made for 2012 constitute a departure from standing EvD practice and policy. But irrespective of the details of proposals made here for the 2012 Work Programme, the repositioning of EvD for the longer term requires a fresh look at existing policy and practices. Specifically, EvD plans to complete preparatory work toward a new Evaluation Policy during the course of this year, with a view to delivering something formal early in 2013. This will also touch on some EvD-related elements of the current Public Information Policy, as well as standing policies with respect to internal distribution of EvD materials. On the latter, EvD will seek to ease significantly the current substantial obstacles to greater internal access to EvD material.

EvD remains an active contributor to and beneficiary of the work of the Evaluation Coordination Group (ECG). Areas of particular emphasis in the coming year will include: implementation of recently updated good practice standards for private sector operations; initiation of some focused work on the evaluation of TA/TC; and, working group efforts to advance harmonisation of ratings methodology. The expectation is that ECG-related resource requirements will remain broadly consistent with what they have been in the recent past.

## Annex 1

1. Annual reporting	Notes
<b>Annual Evaluation Overview Report (AEOR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— EvD's primary reporting tool on activities during the previous year.</li><li>— Will also include content of current Work Programme Completion Report; that report to be discontinued.</li><li>— Present collected "Findings" from completed evaluations under previous Work Programme.</li></ul>
<b>Management Follow-up on EvD Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Focus on follow-up and as appropriate on implementation of specific recommendations.</li><li>— EvD will present options to improve existing review and follow-up processes for EvD recommendations.</li></ul>
<b>Work Programme and Budget 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Initial discussion draft delivered in October.</li></ul>
<b>Ad Hoc Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Reporting to Audit Committee and Board as requested.</li><li>— Interim reports to Audit Committee on implementation of new self-assessment process.</li></ul>

2. Tools, resources and processes	Notes
Evaluation Policy revision	Updated policy finalised in 2012. Early consultation with Audit Committee (and Board, if requested) on approach.
Internal document circulation	Changes presented and agreed in current procedures for internal distribution of evaluation-related documents.
Self-assessment template	<p>Modified template used for all investment operations self-assessments, replacing current Expanded Monitoring Report (XMR).</p> <p>Prepare guidelines for Operations Leaders to complete new Operational Assessments (OAs) and EvD staff to complete validations.</p>
Integrating lessons	<p>Restructure Lessons Learned Database to improve ease and effectiveness of use, relevance, and applicability of contents.</p> <p>Present options for operations to incorporate experience and lessons earlier in project cycle.</p>
EvD web page	Upgrade EvD web page for improved functionality and appearance.
Training	In cooperation with Learning and Development, produce new training materials for use in basic orientation and Banking Academy modules.
Operations guidance	<p>Prepare guidance/checklist on performance benchmarks, monitoring and evaluability for Operations teams use upstream of OpsCom.</p> <p>Prepare similar material for use on TC operations upstream of TCCom.</p>

3. Studies and Synthesis Papers (SP)	Notes
Facility for Medium-sized Projects	Board requested mid-term review.
Climate Investment Fund	Multilateral Development Bank Evaluation Groups requested by CIF to complete a joint evaluation.
Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership	Mid-term evaluation of the EBRD's role in NDEP, focusing on design, implementation and results.
Telecommunications Sector Review	Many operations (52) since last evaluation in 2005, including privatisation projects.
TC Experience in New Countries of Operations	Early use of TC in new countries of operations (Turkey) to identify issues relevant for the southern and eastern Mediterranean region (SEMED) .
Private Equity Funds (2007-11)	Review Bank portfolio of investments in private equity funds.
Performance Metrics in Selected Projects	Clarity and monitorability of performance metrics in a sample of approved 2011 projects.
Corporate Recovery Phase II	Extend current work on observed trends and develop case studies for training.
Pilot Impact Evaluation	Per OCE invitation to contribute to impact evaluation of judicial training work.
Natural Resources Operations (SP)	Review and synthesis of findings and insights from past evaluations.
Assessing TC Relevance and Effectiveness (SP)	Review experience and practice in comparative organisations.
Privatisation/Corporatisation (SP)	Review experience in the EBRD and elsewhere potentially relevant to the SEMED region.

3. Project evaluations	Notes
Operation Performance Evaluation Reviews	Ten OPERs across a range of sectors and countries
Operation Assessment Validations	Forty-one validations of projects across a range of sectors and countries
Operation Assessment Reviews	Thirty-six validations of projects across a range of sectors and countries