

# **Evaluability Assessments (EA) within Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) - Conceptual and Peer Review Support**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **1. Background**

Evaluability is defined by the OECD DAC as the "extent to which an activity or program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner".<sup>1</sup> An evaluability assessment (EA) examines the extent to which it is possible to evaluate an intervention<sup>2</sup> in principle. Further it assesses whether an evaluation is possible in practice, i.e.: whether relevant data is available and to what extent systems are able to provide said data. An evaluability assessment should additionally provide information on the potential benefits and practical feasibility of an evaluation.<sup>3</sup> In addition to providing information about the feasibility and assistance in operationalization of a potential evaluation, an evaluability assessment can also contribute significantly to sharpening the design and implementation of the evaluation object itself.

In this connection, several advantages of evaluability assessments can be identified: Besides avoiding expensive evaluations of initiatives that are hardly evaluable and provide information for the development of a possible evaluation design, it emphasizes the sharpening of program goals and a primary assessment of their feasibility, as well as the improvement of implementation. Finally, the effective integration of evaluability assessments can also promote the development of a learning organization.<sup>4</sup>

### **Evaluability Assessments within Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)**

The Evaluation Policy of the Austrian development cooperation (2019) underlines the particular importance of evaluability assessments.<sup>5</sup> The policy is conceived as an umbrella document under which different modules can be developed to provide concrete guidance on specific areas of evaluation. The Guidelines for Programme and Project (PP) Evaluations at the Austrian Development Agency (2020) forms the first module to the Policy. A second technical module on Evaluability Assessments is foreseen next.

The ADC strategic evaluation plans 2019/2020 and 2021/2022 foresee the implementation of two evaluability assessments: The EA alongside the revision of the Policy Document Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (2020) and the EA of the Austrian contribution to combating climate change and its effects (2022). The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) is responsible for implementation of the ADC evaluation plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2009). Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. Paris: OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation.

<sup>2</sup> In line with the, the ADC Plus Evaluation Policy, term 'intervention' is in the following employed to denote the diversity of potential evaluation objects beyond projects and programmes. The object of an evaluation can be a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy, a theme, an institution, a financial instrument or any other form of development or humanitarian cooperation.

<sup>3</sup> Rick Davies (2013). Planning Evaluability Assessments A Synthesis of the Literature with Recommendations (p. 7). Cambridge: DFID, Department for International Development.

<sup>4</sup> UN Women. (2015). How to manage gender-responsive evaluation. Evaluation Handbook. Independent Evaluation Office.

<sup>5</sup> FMA (2019). Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation.

[https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web\\_Evaluierungspolicy\\_EN.PDF](https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web_Evaluierungspolicy_EN.PDF)

## Peer Review

Peer Review is an internationally established tool in development cooperation to ensure quality and enhance learning. Other bilateral development cooperation actors integrate elements of peer review into their strategic and programmatic evaluations.<sup>6</sup>

ADA's evaluation unit, together with MFA's evaluation unit, is responsible for commissioning and managing strategic evaluations. The Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) introduced the instrument of Peer Review (PR) in 2018 as a tool to enhance the methodical, methodologic or subject level quality of its strategic evaluations. It is meant to supplement the quality assurance process through ADA and MFA evaluation units and the Evaluation Reference Groups. The Evaluation Policy of the Austrian development cooperation, encourages the use of peer reviews as a useful tool to enhance quality and learning.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. The assignment

Internationally, a lot of experience has been gathered around the application of evaluability assessments in development cooperation. Within ADC, the systematic integration and implementation of evaluability assessments in their strategic and operational evaluation work has so far been limited. External support is therefore sought to:

- a) Establish conceptual clarity and guidance on the practical implementation of evaluability assessments;
- b) Support the first application of an evaluability assessment, namely the EA of the Policy Document Gender Equality through peer review.

Ad a) A workshop will be organized jointly with ADA evaluation staff and evaluation professionals of the Austrian development cooperation with the aim of establishing i) conceptual clarity on evaluability assessments and its application within Austrian development cooperation and ii) a joint understanding on the effective incorporation of evaluability assessments in evaluation work of the Austrian development cooperation. Based on the learnings and agreements from the workshop, a new module under the Evaluation Policy (2019) will be developed.

Ad b) to ensure quality application of the first evaluability assessment as per ADC strategic evaluation plan 2019/2020, the evaluability assessment of the Policy Document Gender Equality will be supported through peer review. The task will encompass the commenting of relevant reports of the said evaluability assessment.

The assignment is for 17 working days and will be spread over the period October 2020-December 2021. This assignment will be desk-based and the facilitation and communication will be conducted virtually with the aid of either Microsoft Teams or another virtual communication tool.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), see SDC paper presented at 2018 Annual DeGEval Conference in Dresden, Germany. Also the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has institutionalized external peer review.

<sup>7</sup> FMA (2019). Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation.

[https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web\\_Evaluierungspolicy\\_EN.PDF](https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web_Evaluierungspolicy_EN.PDF)

### 3. Purpose

The assignment aims at:

- Strengthening conceptual clarity and provision of guidance on practical implementation of evaluability assessments within ADC and potentially beyond through targeting other Austrian actors in official development assistance.
- Supporting the practical incorporation of evaluability assessments and the quality assurance through the peer review of the evaluability assessment of the Policy Document Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls.

### 4. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the consultant:

**a) Establishing conceptual clarity and guidance on practical implementation of evaluability assessments:**

The consultant will be responsible for facilitating the workshop and the co-drafting of the module by developing the methodological-technical components and practical implementation in the first draft and supporting the adaptation of the document to the ADC context.

**b) Peer review of the evaluability assessment of the Policy Document Gender Equality:**

The consultant will provide written feedback on relevant documents and reports of the evaluability assessment, will answer related questions and attend relevant presentations.

Responsibilities of ADA's evaluation unit: The unit will coordinate the meetings and timelines for deliverables taking into account the consultant's availabilities. It will provide a virtual platform for the virtual communication and the implementation of the workshop and will act as an interface for technical questions. Furthermore, the unit will contribute to the development of the module by inserting contextual components.

### 5. Envisaged process and deliverables

The assignment consists of two phases:

**a) Establishing conceptual clarity and guidance on practical implementation of evaluability assessments:**

The first phase comprises of the following actions/deliverables by the consultant:

- Preparation and development of a draft workshop plan incl. facilitation methods suitable for a virtual workshop (1-2 pages max.) and incorporation of feedback from evaluation unit
- Facilitate two separate workshop sessions of 0,5-day duration each
- A first draft of the module on evaluability assessments
- Support in finalization of module (length of module: 10-15 pages max)

**b) Peer Review of the evaluability assessment of the Policy Gender Equality**

The Peer Reviewer contributes to the quality of strategic evaluations by provision of written comments on

- The ToR of the evaluability assessment
- The suggested approaches outlined in the selected proposal
- The draft EA report
- The draft EA report

Furthermore, the consultant will be invited to the presentation of the inception report and the final report.

And she/he will discuss and provide a written input to ADA After Action Review exercise in which the lessons learned from the evaluations process will be shared.

**6. Payment**

Payment will be based upon deliverables and involves three instalments:

- An advance payment of 40 % of the total budget will be transferred after the approval of the first outline of the module on evaluability assessments within the ADC context in November/December 2020;
- A second payment of 30 % of the total budget will be paid after approval of the finalized module;
- The third and final payment will be settled by ADA after the submission of written input in the After-Action Review of the peer review.

**7. Qualifications of the consultant**

The consultant should be an acknowledged expert in the field of evaluation and should have the following qualifications:

- In-depth knowledge of evaluation methods and methodologies, proven by at least one publication (can be also working papers, etc.)
- In-depth knowledge of evaluability assessments and their implementation, proven by at least one publication (can be also working papers, etc.)
- Experience in conducting strategic or thematic evaluations, using rigorous approaches and methods, proven by at least two evaluation reports
- Experience in conducting training sessions on evaluation-related matters
- Excellent writing skills

The consultant should not have been involved in the design and implementation of any ADC interventions that are being evaluated as part of the evaluability assessment.

## 8. Working days

The following table describes the maximum working days for the training and development of the concept paper.

<b>1. Establishing conceptual clarity and development of module</b>	<b>9,5</b>
Preparation and development of workshop plan	1,5
Conduction of workshop	1
Development of the first module draft	2,5
Support in finalization of module	4,5
<b>Peer review</b>	<b>7</b>
Commenting on ToR	1,5
Commenting on evaluation approaches outlined in Proposals	1
Commenting on Draft EA IR/participation in RG meeting	2
Commenting on Draft EA Report/participation in RG meeting	2
Input After Action Review	0,5
<b>Reserve Day</b>	<b>0,5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

The following tentative timeline is planned for the assignment:

Assignment Phases	Tentative Timeline
<b>1. CONCEPTUALIZATION</b>	
Preparation and development of workshop plan	October/November - December 2020
Workshop	November
First draft of module	End of November
Support in finalization of module	March 2021
<b>2. PEER REVIEW</b>	
Development of ToR	November 2020 - January 2021
Recruitment of evaluators	January - March 2021
Draft EA Inception Report Submission, Commenting and Integration of Feedback	June - July 2021
Presentation EA Inception Report	June - July 2021
Draft Report Submission, Commenting and Integration of Feedback	September – November 2021
Submission/Approval final EA report	November - October 2021