



September 2021

Independent Evaluation Department Work Program, 2022–2024

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Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
CAREC	–	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CPS	–	country partnership strategy
DEC	–	Development Effectiveness Committee
DMC	–	developing member country
GMS	–	Greater Mekong Subregion
IED	–	Independent Evaluation Department
PCR	–	project completion report
TA	–	technical assistance
XARR	–	extended annual review report

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A. Background

1. As specified in the Evaluation Policy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB),¹ the Board of Directors is responsible for approving the rolling 3-year work program of the Independent Evaluation Department (IED), after it has been reviewed and endorsed by the Development Effectiveness Committee (DEC). In developing the work program, IED consults with ADB Management and the DEC, taking into account issues of interest and relevance to ADB, its member countries, and the Asia and Pacific region more broadly.

2. This document presents the IED Work Program for 2022–2024 (Table 1), as discussed and endorsed by the DEC during its 25 August 2021 meeting, for Board approval.

B. Strategic Priorities and COVID-19

3. **Strategic directions and pillars.** The work program supports IED’s strategic directions, vision, overarching objective, and four pillars. IED’s vision statement calls for it to be recognized as an influential authority on accountability and evaluation knowledge, driven by the principles of impact, excellence, and teamwork. IED’s overarching objective is to strengthen its impact through high-quality evaluations, better alignment of work, effective communication, capacity development, and dissemination of evidence-based findings, lessons, and results. IED aims to achieve its strategic directions and objective through four pillars:

- **balance:** maintaining a good balance in IED’s product mix;
- **utilization:** strengthening utilization of evaluation through knowledge, outreach, evaluation capacity development, and quality of interaction with stakeholders;
- **gaps and risks:** addressing evaluation gaps and key risks to development outcomes of ADB’s Strategy 2030;² and
- **quality:** strengthening the quality and credibility of evaluation work.

4. In delivering the work program, IED will continue to optimize its human resources, align its work with Strategy 2030, explore new evaluation products and methodologies, and further strengthen its knowledge management and evaluation capacity development work.

5. **Dealing with COVID-19.** IED has adapted to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, supporting ADB’s response while maintaining its independence. To remain relevant and highly effective, IED is: providing real-time input to ADB COVID-19 operations; developing just-in-time knowledge on topics related to COVID-19; piloting new knowledge platforms; adjusting its evaluations, work program, and methods; and undertaking an ongoing real time evaluation (RTE) of ADB’s response to COVID-19.

6. **Continued flexibility and responsiveness.** Given continued uncertainty caused by the protracted pandemic, IED will maintain operational flexibility so it can respond to changing circumstances. It is IED’s regular practice to set aside contingency resources to enable it to respond if a need for unprogrammed and unanticipated evaluations arises, or if quick-turn-around evaluations and related work are required. IED will continue to set aside resources in its budget so it can maintain this flexibility.

¹ ADB. 2008. *Review of the Independence and Effectiveness of the Operations Evaluation Department*. Manila: ADB.

² ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila: ADB.

C. Work Program Highlights

1. High-Level Evaluations

7. As agreed with the DEC, IED will deliver no more than seven high-level evaluations a year. In light of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, in 2022 IED will deliver six high-level evaluations. In 2023 and 2024 it will return to the usual seven high-level evaluations.

8. **Alignment with Strategy 2030.** The work program will continue to be aligned with Strategy 2030 and support ADB's achievement of its seven operational priorities. The evaluations of ADB support for integrated water management (2022) and India's urban sector (2023) will contribute to the operational priorities of *tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience and enhancing environmental sustainability* (operational priority 3), and *making cities more livable* (operational priority 4). The regional program evaluations of ADB support for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC, 2022), and South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC, 2023) will support *fostering regional cooperation and integration* (operational priority 7). The evaluation of gender and development (2024) will support *accelerating progress in gender equality* (operational priority 2). The cross-sectoral evaluation of rural development and food security (2024) will support *promoting rural development and food security* (operational priority 5). The evaluations of the Asian Development Fund (2023) and human capital development (2024) will support *addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities* (operational priority 1).

9. **Continued focus on COVID-19.** IED will maintain a strong focus on the evolving and protracted pandemic. IED plans to deliver a fourth interim Board note and the capstone report for the RTE in 2022. In that year, IED will also deliver its review of the ADB Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX), as required by the facility's policy paper.³ The APVAX review will take the form of a topical paper. All high-level evaluations will include a focus on the implications of COVID-19 for the topic being evaluated and IED will continue to produce complementary knowledge products on pandemic-related topics over the work program period.

10. **Supporting the private sector.** IED will continue its strong focus on and support for ADB's nonsovereign operations, the finance sector, and broader private sector development. Evaluations in these areas will cover the additionality of nonsovereign operations (2022), finance sector (2022), credit and risk management (2023), global and regional value chains and digital economy (2023), ADB private sector strategic approach and results (2024), and the enabling environment for private sector development (which will be a special chapter in the Annual Evaluation Review [AER] 2024).

11. **Strengthening ADB corporate processes.** IED will continue to deliver evaluations aimed at supporting and strengthening ADB's corporate processes, operations, and functions. This will include evaluations of the procurement system (2022), the early implementation of Strategy 2030 (2023), and technical assistance (2024), as well as the evaluations of the Asian Development Fund and credit and risk management system mentioned above.

³ ADB. 2020. *Policy Paper: ADB's Support to Enhance COVID-19 Vaccine Access*. Manila: ADB.

2. All Other Evaluations

12. **Validations of country partnership strategy final reviews.** To support ADB's country strategies and operations, IED will continue its practice of validating 100% of ADB's country partnership strategy (CPS) final reviews. IED's validation of these ADB self-assessments serve as important inputs to new CPSs brought to the Board for review and approval.⁴ Based on current CPS scheduling by ADB's five regional departments, IED expects to undertake four to six validations per year over the work program period.

13. **Synthesis notes, systematic reviews, and topical papers.** IED will continue to deliver occasional synthesis notes on timely and relevant topics throughout each year, including an annual synthesis note that draws on findings from IED's new TA Completion Report Validation System. IED will also continue to report on the divergence between ADB's self-assessed project success rate and IED's validated (final) project success rate, through its annual variance memo to the Board and ADB Management. Other knowledge products will be developed, as and when appropriate. A systematic review in the finance sector is underway and will be delivered in 2022, with topics for systematic reviews in 2023 and 2024 to be confirmed. As previously mentioned, in 2022 IED will deliver its review of APVAX in the form of a topical paper. Topical papers in 2023 and 2024 will focus on strengthening domestic resource mobilization and supporting action on climate change (a follow-up to the evaluation on climate change in 2021), respectively.

14. **Project and TA work.** IED will continue to deliver at least four project or program performance evaluation reports (PPERs) each year, with two each covering sovereign and nonsovereign operations. IED will also deliver one technical assistance performance evaluation report per year. IED will continue to validate 100% of all circulated project completion reports (PCRs) and extended annual review reports (XARRs). Starting in the second half of 2021, IED will shift from conducting a purposeful sample of all eligible TA completion reports to validating all these reports. This will enable IED to report on annual success rates of TA operations, as it currently does for sovereign and nonsovereign project operations.

15. **Quick turn-around and other evaluations.** IED will continue to set aside contingency resources in the likely event that unanticipated requests for evaluations are made by the Board or ADB Management. In 2020 and 2021, IED responded to three such requests, for evaluations of the Regional Cooperation and Integration Fund (2020), the Climate Change Fund (2020), and the Asia-Pacific Disaster Response Facility (ongoing).

D. Evaluation Knowledge Management and Other Support

16. IED will continue to strengthen and expand its knowledge management work to complement and deepen the influence of its evaluations, in line with its Evaluation Knowledge Management Strategic Plan.⁵ This work focuses on: evaluation capacity development; communication and outreach; methods and guidelines; and information systems. In the context of COVID-19, IED will continue to strengthen the use of information technology for sharing knowledge through virtual events, e-learning modules and the use of artificial intelligence to improve access to and use of evaluation lessons.

⁴ ADB intends to rename *Country Partnership Strategy Final Review* to *Country Assistance Program Review*, as proposed in the review of country partnership strategies and results frameworks: ADB. 2020. *Country Partnership Strategy and Results Framework Review*. Manila: ADB.

⁵ IED. 2019. *Evaluation Knowledge Management Strategic Plan: Making Evaluation Influential*. Manila: ADB. The plan was discussed by the Development Effectiveness Committee on 23 May 2019.

17. **Evaluation capacity development.** IED will deepen its interactions with key stakeholders and to intensify its collaboration within ADB and with regional and country partners. IED has responded to demands from ADB regional departments to customize training for their staff on evaluation methodologies and to build evaluation capacity in countries for improving project performance. Mainstreaming evaluation in ADB training programs will continue in collaboration with the Budget, People, and Management Systems Department (BPMSD) through the project development and management program and the ADB induction program. Given the current pandemic, IED will continue to develop e-learning and interactive virtual classrooms for delivery through an online platform. A hybrid program combining e-learning and face-to-face delivery is also being developed. This will be supplemented by a training of trainers program for IED staff to create resource multipliers and harness knowledge on diverse specializations. IED's flagship knowledge event, the Asian Evaluation Week, organized with the Shanghai-based Asia-Pacific Finance and Development Institute (AFDI), will continue in its virtual format until it can resume in-person. Meanwhile, due to travel restrictions, AFDI and IED have decided to suspend the Shanghai International Program for Development Evaluation Training program until 2022.

18. **Communication and outreach.** IED will enhance its strategic communication and outreach program to ensure that evaluations remain accessible, valued, and used, both within ADB and externally. It will continue to expand its multimedia production capabilities, using new webinar videos and dissemination material as part of the virtual Asian Evaluation Week 2021. IED will also continue to produce the *Evaluation HEADline* and *Evaluation Guru* video series. IED's 2020 perceptions survey confirmed that multimedia is an effective tool for communicating evaluations and IED will continue using this tool to share knowledge. To provide an evidence-based approach for its future communications and outreach, IED is drafting a communication blueprint, which will be based on an extensive stakeholder analysis and will be used to guide the scope and scale of communication and outreach activities.

19. **Methods and guidelines.** IED appointed a methods advisor in 2018 who develops approaches and methods to enhance the quality, credibility and usefulness of evaluations and evaluation knowledge management. IED will continue to update guidelines to align them with current international standards, as needed, including updates to incorporate the new coherence criterion that is now part of international standards. Updates will be based on a guidance note on the application of the criterion issued by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2021.⁶

20. **Information systems and databases.** IED will continue to improve the information systems that support its work, including the Management Action Records System (MARS), the Evaluation Information System (EVIS), the IED Dashboard, and the Success Rate Database. In 2021, IED will complete the initial incubation phase of its EVA pilot project, which uses artificial intelligence to generate lessons from self-evaluation and independent evaluation documents. Once the initial phase is complete, IED and the Information and Technology Department will determine in 2022, based on its performance, whether to proceed with the full and final product.

E. For Board Approval: IED Work Program, 2022–2024

21. At its 25 August 2021 meeting, the DEC discussed and endorsed IED's Work Program, 2022–2024. The work program is hereby presented for Board approval.

⁶ OECD. 2021. *Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Available online here: <https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en>

TABLE 1: INDEPENDENT EVALUATION DEPARTMENT: WORK PROGRAM FOR 2022–2024

Evaluation Products	2022	2023	2024
1. High-Level Evaluations			
Corporate Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement* RTE COVID-19: Interim Board Note 4 and Capstone Report* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADF 12 and 13 Early Implementation of Strategy 2030 Credit and Risk Management Function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TA Performance and Results Private Sector Strategic Approach and Results
Thematic Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additionality of NSO* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global and Regional Value Chains and the Digital Economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Capital Development (series): Health ^a Gender and Development ^b
Sector-Wide Evaluations and SAPEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Sector* Integrated Water Management* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAPE: India Urban Sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-Sectoral Contributions (series): Rural Development and Food Security ^c
Country and Regional Program Evaluations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Programs (series): CAREC (moved from 2022 to early 2023) ^d 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Programs (series): SASEC (moved from 2023)
Annual Evaluation Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AER 2022: ADB Support for FCAS and SIDS* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AER 2023: Country Engagement, Policy Dialogue, and Diagnostic Tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AER 2024: Enabling Environment for Private Sector Development
2. All Other Evaluations			
CPS Final Review Validations ^e (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India Kyrgyz Republic Sri Lanka Turkmenistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia Azerbaijan Fiji Uzbekistan Philippines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhutan Cambodia Georgia Indonesia Maldives Nepal
Synthesis Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCR Note Variance Memo Others TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCR Note Variance Memo Others TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCR Note Variance Memo Others TBC
Systematic Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Sector ^f 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC
Topical Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APVAX Review ^g 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening Domestic Resource Mobilization ^h 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Further Action on Climate Change ⁱ

Evaluation Products	2022	2023	2024
PPERs and TPERs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 sovereign PPERs • 2 nonsovereign PPERs • 1 TPER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 sovereign PPERs • 2 nonsovereign PPERs • 1 TPER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 sovereign PPERs • 2 nonsovereign PPERs • 1 TPER
PCR, XARR, and TCR Validations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of circulated PCRs and XARRs • 100% of eligible TCRs^j 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of circulated PCRs and XARRs • 100% of eligible TCRs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of circulated PCRs, XARRs • 100% of eligible TCRs
3. Contingency Resources for Unprogrammed Evaluations and Other Work			
Quick Turn-Around Evaluations, Other Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC, upon request of Board, DEC, or Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC, upon request of Board, DEC, or Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC, upon request of Board, DEC, or Management

AER = Annual Evaluation Review; ADF = Asian Development Fund; APVAX = Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility; CAREC = Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation; COVID-19 = coronavirus disease; CPS = country partnership strategy; DEC = Development Effectiveness Committee; FCAS = fragile and conflict-affected situations; NSO = nonsovereign operations; PPER = project or program performance evaluation report; PSD = private sector development; RTE = real time evaluation; SAPE = sector assistance program evaluation; SASEC = South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation; SIDS = Small Island Developing States; TA = technical assistance; TBC = to be confirmed; TCR = technical assistance completion report; TPER = technical assistance performance evaluation report; XARR = extended annual review report.

Note: Items with asterisk (*) pertain to ongoing evaluations.

^a This new human capital development series of evaluations will begin with an evaluation of ADB's health sector operations in 2024, followed by evaluations of ADB education sector operations in 2025 and social sector operations in 2026.

^b The gender and development evaluation will include a focus on women's economic empowerment, which was originally proposed as a topical paper.

^c This new cross-sectoral contributions series of evaluations will assess how different ADB sectoral operations contribute to development outcomes, starting with rural development and food security. The evaluation will build on earlier sector-wide evaluations and sector assistance program evaluations.

^e The number and timing of IED CPS final review validations is determined directly by ADB's completion of CPS final reviews in each year. In 2022, ADB intends to rename the country partnership strategy the country assistance program review (see footnote 4).

^f The finance sector evaluation was originally scheduled for 2021; it is ongoing and delivery is planned for early 2022.

^g IED will conduct a review of the APVAX as required by the APVAX policy paper of 2020 (see footnote 3).

^h Originally planned as a thematic evaluation in 2023.

ⁱ The topical paper will update and build on the findings and recommendations of the 2021 thematic evaluation of ADB support for action on climate change.

^j The process for selecting TA completion reports for validation is set out in the 2020 guidelines: ADB. 2020. *Technical Assistance Completion Report Validations Guidelines*. Manila: ADB.

Source: Asian Development Bank (Independent Evaluation Department).