

Evaluation of the African Development Bank's Decentralisation

2015-2024

Corporate evaluations

Summary Report

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Redacted version



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank	HRBP	Human Resource Business Partner
ADER	Annual Development Effectiveness Review	IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ADF	African Development Fund	IDEV	Independent Development Evaluation
AFD	Agence Française de Développement	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
AfDB	African Development Bank Group	IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
AHVP	Vice Presidency-Agriculture, Human and Social Development	LP	Local Professional staff
AsDB	Asian Development Bank	MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
BDU	Business Development Unit	MIC	Middle-Income Country
b/mUA	Billion/Million Units of Account	MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
CO	Country Office	MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
CODE	Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness	NSO	Non-Sovereign Operation
CPO	Country Programme/Planning Officer	OBA	One Bank Approach
CRF	Corporate Results Framework	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
CSP	Country Strategy Paper	PEVP	Vice Presidency-Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth
CSPE	Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation	PGCL	Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services
DAM	Delegation of Authority Matrix	PIVP	Vice Presidency-Private Sector, Infrastructure, and Industrialisation
DBDM	Development and Business Delivery Model	PL	International Professional Level staff
DFI	Development Finance Institution	PTCE	Talent Performance & Staff Development Department
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	PTCS	HR Operations, Recruitment & Client Services Department
ECCE	Country Economics Department	PTCW	Staff Welfare Services, Compensation & Employment Policy Department
FIFC	Financial Control Department	RASME	Remote Appraisal, Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation
GCI	General Capital Increase	RDGC	Regional Development and Business Delivery Office for Central Africa
HIGH 5s	Five priority areas of the AfDB	RDGE	Regional Development and Business Delivery Office for East Africa
IRS	Internationally Recruited Staff	RDGN	Regional Development and Business Delivery Office for North Africa
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	RDGS	Regional Development and Business Delivery Office for Southern Africa
HQ	Headquarters	RDGW	Regional Development and Business Delivery Office for West Africa
HR	Human Resource		

RDIBD	Regional Development, Integration and Business Delivery	ToR	Terms of Reference
RDRI	Regional Integration Coordination Office	TYS	Ten-Year Strategy
RDSA	Portfolio Monitoring and Delivery Department	UA	Unit of Account
RDTs	Transition States Coordination Office	UDAP	Updated Decentralisation Action Plan
RDVP	Regional Development, Integration and Business Delivery Complex	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
RIPoS	Regional Integration Policy and Strategy	WB	World Bank
RISF	Regional Integration Strategic Framework	WBG	World Bank Group
RMC	Regional Member Country		
RMF	Results Measurement Framework		
RO	Regional Office		
RRC	Regional Resource Centre		
SNBT	Business Transformation Department		
SNDR	Development Impact and Results Department		
SNDR.3.	Quality Assurance & Learning Division		
SNFI	Fiduciary & Inspection Department		
SNMO	Senior Vice Presidency Front Office & Management Operations Department		
SNPB	Programming and Budget Department		
SNSC	Safeguards & Compliance Department		
SNSP	Strategy and Operational Policies Department		
SNVP	Senior Vice-Presidency Complex		
SO	Sovereign Operation		
STS	Short Term Staff		
TCGS	Corporate Travel & Support Services Department		
TCIS2	Operations and Regional Coordination Services Division		
TCVP	Technology and Corporate Services Complex		
TM	Task Manager		
ToC	Theory of Change		

Executive Summary

Background and Context

This Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) report reviews the African Development Bank Group's (AfDB or "the Bank") decentralisation efforts, specifically focusing on the implementation of the Updated Decentralisation Action Plan (UDAP) 2016-2018 and the Development and Business Delivery Model (DBDM), between 2015 and 2024. The evaluation was initiated in 2023 as part of a broader series of corporate assessments by IDEV, including reviews of Human Resource Management ([HR1](#) & [HR2](#)), the One Bank Approach ([OBA](#)), and an [IDEV Comparative Study of Multilateral Development Bank Operating Models](#) (MDBs). These evaluations collectively aim to enhance accountability and improve the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the AfDB. This evaluation also coincided with ongoing efforts, launched in 2023, by AfDB Management to update the Decentralisation Action Plan, creating opportunities to align the evaluation's findings with the Bank's needs and maximise the results' utility.

The UDAP is a milestone plan in the AfDB's decentralisation strategy, which began in 1990. Its primary objectives are to align the Bank's operations more closely with the needs and systems of its Regional Member Countries (RMCs), deepen policy and sector dialogue with stakeholders, identify and develop new business opportunities, and strengthen donor coordination. By refocusing and streamlining the decentralisation program within the context of the Bank's approved organisational structure, the UDAP aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the AfDB's operations. Ultimately, these efforts support achieving the Bank's Ten-Year Strategy (TYS, 2013-2022 and 2024-2033) goals, ensuring a more significant impact in the countries where the AfDB intervenes.

Evaluation Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

The **purpose** of the evaluation was to contribute to accountability and learning and guide continuous improvement on the implementation of the Bank's decentralisation under the new YYS, approved in 2024. The assessment

addressed several critical evaluation questions, including whether decentralisation efforts were aligned with the Bank's and clients' needs, their coherence with the YYS 2013-2022 and other strategies, the extent to which objectives were met, the efficiency of implementation, and the likelihood of benefits enduring over the medium to long term.

The evaluation **scope** covered the period 2015 to 2024, covering the Bank's decentralisation efforts implemented at the Headquarters (HQ) and in regional and country offices, excluding the Asia External Representation Office.

Regarding the **methodology**, this evaluation employed a theory-based approach and used mixed methods to gather and analyse data required to respond to the evaluation questions. These included: a) a detailed document review; b) key informant interviews and focus group discussions involving more than 300 participants; c) an online survey that targeted the Bank's internal and external stakeholders; and d) five regional and 12 country case studies. The evaluation also included a portfolio review, secondary data analysis of key performance data, and a benchmarking exercise leveraging the findings of the 2024 [IDEV Comparative Study of MDB Operating Models](#). The evaluation used a four-point scale¹ (Unsatisfactory, Partly Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Highly Satisfactory) to rate the Bank's performance on five criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

Limitations: Challenges included: a) the wide breadth of decentralisation and difficulties in isolating its impact amid concurrent reforms; b) overlapping evaluation efforts creating perceived duplication, low response rate and fatigue amongst respondents; and c) data quality and availability, leading to difficulties in addressing all evaluations questions. These challenges were mitigated through enhanced coordination with key stakeholders, thorough document reviews and statistical analysis, and more substantial reliance on data from alternative sources, proxies, and case study feedback. The report highlights the methodology's limitations and the mitigation measures for transparency and credibility.

¹ The full evaluation methodology including details of the rating scale is presented in Annex 1.

Findings

Relevance

The evaluation found that decentralisation efforts under the UDAP 2016-2018 and subsequent initiatives were largely aligned with the Bank's commitments and client needs but demonstrated important shortcomings in the quality of design.

The UDAP and subsequent decentralisation efforts were developed to align with the Bank's commitments under the DBDM and Seventh General Capital Increase (GCI-VII), targeting improved efficiency and operational effectiveness. The evaluation judged decentralisation as highly relevant, particularly for enhancing client proximity and improving project design, supervision, and stakeholder relationships. Up to 94% of survey respondents reaffirmed the relevance of the Bank's decentralisation efforts. Indeed, enhancing local presence and improving efficiency and effectiveness aligns with current MDB reforms to become bolder, bigger, and more impactful, as reported in the Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) study of 2021. However, the evaluation found that the Bank's decentralisation efforts only partially responded to client and partner needs, especially in terms of coverage in transition and small island states.

The UDAP and later efforts were assessed as partially well-designed. On the positive side were a holistic set of policy and operational actions, both structural and non-structural, that the Bank would undertake to support the decentralisation program, and the adoption of criteria for establishing country offices. However, the criteria were found to lack the flexibility to adapt to evolving portfolios, thereby hindering resource allocation guidance. Co-location of the West Africa Regional Office, the Bank's HQ and the country office in Côte d'Ivoire was also found to have created ambiguity in roles and competition for resources. Other gaps found by the evaluation include unclear linkages between strategies and a lack of a unified strategic framework, clear objectives, and a theory of change to guide decentralisation efforts. The evaluation also highlighted unrealistic assumptions around cost-effectiveness and shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation. These further weakened the design of the UDAP and impacted subsequent decentralisation efforts. Additionally, emerging priorities, such as non-sovereign operations (NSOs), were only partially addressed.

Due mainly to these weaknesses in the design quality, **the evaluation rated the relevance of**

the UDAP and later decentralisation efforts as partly unsatisfactory.

Coherence

The evaluation assessed the UDAP to be broadly coherent with the AfDB's strategies, such as the TYS 2013-2022, High 5 priorities, and DBDM, but lacking sufficient detail at regional and country levels. The UDAP was found to enjoy complementarity with some pre-existing corporate policies and others developed during the evaluation period, including the 2015 Procurement Policy and 2023 Real Estate Strategy and Framework, amongst others. Although Human Resource (HR) policies and reforms also supported decentralisation efforts, significant delays in their implementation undermined the anticipated benefits.

The 2020 One Bank Approach that seeks to increase the Bank's efficiency and development effectiveness was found to have introduced some positive benefits for decentralisation, including (i) the establishment of mechanisms for work planning, programming, and budgeting between sectors and regions to improve collaboration and coordination; (ii) creation of sector manager positions allocated to regions; and (iii) operations business process re-engineering, among others. However, the evaluation found that the matrix structure and centralisation of authority at HQ contradicted the spirit of empowering regional and country offices as anticipated in the UDAP. Survey results and interviews indicate that roles and responsibilities between HQ, regional, and country offices remain unclear, with uneven collaboration across regions.

The evaluation also found that the AfDB's decentralisation approach aligns with practices of comparator MDBs, though implementation paths and organisational structures differ. Indeed, the benchmarking revealed that all MDBs strive towards proximity to clients to improve responsiveness to needs, efficiency, project execution and development effectiveness.

Based on these findings, **the evaluation rated the coherence of the Bank's decentralisation efforts as satisfactory.**

Effectiveness

Evaluating the effectiveness of the AfDB's decentralisation efforts revealed a mixed picture. The Bank implemented most of the actions in UDAP; however, only 53% of the outcome indicators' targets were met.

Evidence shows that the Bank has made significant progress in strengthening its country presence and delegation of operations, operationalising regional hubs (including the new hubs established in Cameroon and West Africa²), and establishing five country offices over the evaluation period, raising its total presence to 43 locations across Africa. The Bank increased the proportion of operational staff based in country offices from 41% in 2015 to 55% in 2023, however, falling well short of the 76% target. This shortfall arises from staffing shortages, hiring restrictions, and delays in strategic staffing reforms. Despite this, the proportion of projects managed by country and regional offices increased from 60% in 2015 to 77% in 2023, just below the 79% target.

The evaluation found that decentralisation improved the Bank's participation in development partner coordination and policy dialogue, strengthening partnerships, resource mobilisation, and influence on development issues where it has a robust local presence and adequate staffing. Proximity to clients was found to have helped the Bank respond better to business opportunities and boosted lending, especially in countries with offices. However, factors like the borrower's economic and political context, country eligibility for funding, and external shocks were also identified as influencers of portfolio growth. The evaluation found that decentralisation added value to the Bank's interventions by enhancing responsiveness to local needs and adaptation to changing circumstances, as was demonstrated in the response to COVID-19 and the changing political situation in Sudan.

Decentralisation was found to have facilitated quicker issue resolution and enhanced stakeholder engagement; however, its impact on portfolio performance and timely project delivery was less definitive, as targeted performance levels were not met. The evaluation's regression analysis indicated a weak correlation between country presence and timely project delivery, suggesting that decentralisation, in isolation, does not drive efficiency in project execution. The persistence of similar implementation challenges across both decentralised and non-decentralised country contexts underscores the predominant influence of internal Bank capacity, the robustness of local institutions, and project complexity as factors of success.

Furthermore, despite sustained decentralisation efforts, the evaluation found only marginal improvement in the proportion of projects

achieving development outcomes since 2015. Empirical findings suggested that the proximity of Task Managers to project sites correlated with stronger performance at project completion. However, systemic constraints, including deficits in governance, institutional capacity, and staffing, demonstrate that decentralisation alone is insufficient to resolve entrenched structural bottlenecks. Moreover, external disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, were found to have further exacerbated these constraints, reinforcing the need for resilient, institutionally integrated strategies that extend beyond the spatial reallocation of personnel and resources.

The evaluation found that decentralisation led to some unintended consequences, both positive and negative. For example, decentralised support functions have enabled innovative sectoral work and collaboration with regional and local entities. However, the emergence of regional silos threatened to weaken cross-regional collaboration, internal cohesion, and erode organisational culture.

Overall, the effectiveness of the UDAP and further decentralisation efforts was rated partly unsatisfactory.

Efficiency

The evaluation findings show a weak performance in terms of efficiency, with inadequate achievement of timeliness and cost efficiency objectives. While the evaluation found evidence of some cost savings made from decentralisation, there was insufficient data to assess the extent to which it has minimised incremental costs to the Bank. Structures to support decentralisation were established, but gaps in the delegation of authority, staff and financial resources, and budget control were found to hamper regional and country offices' ability to address local needs efficiently.

The evaluation found that the UDAP was not implemented in a timely manner, going beyond the scheduled three years, i.e. 2016-2018. Key initiatives such as the Delegation of Authority Matrix (DAM) revision and the rightsizing exercise experienced delays exceeding two years. The delays led to inefficiencies in decision-making, misaligned workforce optimisation, and gaps in operational consistency.

Due to data constraints and shortcomings in the design of the UDAP, the evaluation could not fully establish whether it was implemented within the

² Côte d'Ivoire was further reinforced as the Headquarters and Hub for West Africa

planned budget of Units of Account 34.39 million (mUA) and achieved the estimated cost savings of 28.9 mUA. The evaluation found that while the Bank realised savings from the rationalisation of country and regional office staff benefits of 10.8 mUA, they did not meet the targeted amount of 15.3 mUA. Other potential savings from mission costs and optimisation of office space in country offices have also not been fully realised. Moreover, operational mission costs within Africa increased from 10 to 10.4 mUA over the evaluation period. Despite an increase in the proportion of missions taking place within regions from 43% in 2016 to 53% in 2023, the Bank still incurred higher costs from missions originating from HQ, which represented 50% of the operational mission costs in Africa. It is worth noting that during the same period, the cost of staffing, associated benefits and missions originating from HQ increased partly to support a rapidly growing portfolio and implement concurrent HR and One Bank reforms. However, these trends also highlight a gap in the shifting of resources to the field. The evaluation could not establish to what extent other expected cost savings related to the increased use of local professionals and long-term consultants were realised. Costs of preparing and implementing lending projects were found to have fluctuated due to the expansion of project teams in line with the One Bank Approach and enforcement of higher quality standards and improvements in time-use reporting for project activities, which provided more information for cost accounting.

The evaluation found that the adequacy of the Bank's office structures and systems to support decentralisation reflects both progress and gaps. Structures to support decentralisation were found to have been established under the Regional Development, Integration, and Business Delivery Vice Presidency (RDVP), supported by specialised offices and sectoral complexes. Other notable improvements include regional sector divisions, implementation support units, and enhanced Information Technology (IT) infrastructure for better coordination and responsiveness to local needs. Tools like regional operational dashboards, disbursement portals, and collaborative digital workspaces were found to have streamlined operations, especially during the pandemic. However, the evaluation also found that the variation in organisational structure across regions and countries could negatively impact policy dialogue and timely decision-making. In addition, gaps in delegation of authority, staff and financial resources, and budget control were found to hamper regional and country offices' ability to address local needs efficiently.

While staffing in country offices has increased since 2015, it remains below target, causing staffing shortages and workload imbalances that were found to hinder the Bank's operational efficiency and effectiveness. Budget constraints, delays in implementing effective rightsizing and strategic staffing reforms, and weak rotation policies were found to have further limited the Bank's ability to meet its staffing targets.

Survey feedback also highlighted concerns about centralised decision-making and inconsistent application of the subsidiarity principles proposed in the UDAP. The evaluation further found that roles and responsibilities under the matrix system were unevenly understood by staff across regions, according to interviews.

The evaluation also analysed the evolution of the DAM and found that while improvements have been made since 2019, the extent to which it has clarified roles and responsibilities and streamlined decision-making remains mixed. Revisions were made to the DAM to align with the DBDM and the One Bank Approach, but delays, missing structures, and limited resources hampered efficiency gains.

Finally, mixed findings on the extent to which communication has improved suggest that while progress has been made, gaps remain in internal and external communication. Locally, decentralisation was found to have strengthened the Bank's presence, but its effect on visibility was hindered by insufficient staffing and communication gaps.

Considering the performance above, the evaluation rated efficiency as partly unsatisfactory.

Sustainability

The evaluation found that the benefits of decentralisation are likely to be sustained over the medium to long term. Key evidence includes the operationalisation of regional hubs, increased revenue generation by country offices, enhanced staff capacity-building efforts, the opening of new offices since 2015, and the interest of remaining RMCs without offices to see some type of Bank physical presence. The integration of decentralisation intentions into core policy and operational frameworks was deemed a sign of the Bank's commitment and therefore the likelihood of sustainability of decentralisation efforts. The evaluation found that the likelihood of the Bank meeting the ongoing expenses of decentralisation is high, given the current trajectory of income and expenditures. Projects managed from country offices were found to be

more sustainable than those managed from headquarters, as reflected in higher sustainability ratings in project completion report evaluations. At the same time, the evaluation highlighted weaknesses in internal and external engagement and communication, compromising a sense of ownership and coordination. In addition, persistent staffing challenges, including reliance on contingent staff, difficulties in attracting and retaining personnel for decentralised roles, and delayed or non-implementation of critical HR reforms, remain critical risks to the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the decentralisation model.

The evaluation concluded that the overall sustainability of the decentralisation strategy was satisfactory.

Conclusions

The evaluation of the Bank's decentralisation efforts under the UDAP and beyond has shown mixed but promising results.

Decentralisation was found highly relevant as it improves proximity to RMCs, improving responsiveness and alignment with organisational commitments and global reforms for stronger MDBs. However, the absence of a strategic framework and other gaps in the plan's design constrained its ability to steer the Bank's efforts and achieve full potential.

The Bank has made significant progress in decentralisation. These efforts have strengthened local presence, improved business development, enhanced stakeholder relationships, and increased policy engagement. However, persistent gaps in staffing and delayed reforms on the Bank's side and institutional constraints and country contexts on the borrowers' side have limited the full realisation of expected outcomes, such as improved portfolio quality and project delivery timeliness. The evaluation demonstrated that decentralisation alone is insufficient to address systemic barriers. The impact of external factors like COVID-19 and geo-political events reinforced the importance of flexibility and resilience and the value of local presence in facilitating the Bank's adaptive management capacity.

Efficiency challenges remain, particularly in staffing, resource allocation, structures and processes, communication, and coordination, and continue to hinder performance. Though findings on cost efficiency are inconclusive, realism on expectations and robust tracking systems were found missing. While investments in regional hubs and capacity-building provide a

foundation for long-term benefits, unresolved staffing, engagement and institutional ownership issues pose risks to sustainability. The evaluation underscores the need for ongoing investment and strategic alignment of the Bank's decentralisation efforts to enhance the Bank's effectiveness, responsiveness and profile as the continent's leading bank. The Bank could solidify its leadership and continue driving Africa's sustainable growth by addressing gaps and enhancing its people and processes.

Lessons

1. A comprehensive strategic framework promotes a clear and consensual vision of the Bank's decentralisation objectives. The UDAP introduced decentralisation priorities through various strategies and reforms but lacked a consolidated framework, leading to fragmented efforts and unclear linkages. A clear and comprehensive framework, grounded in a well-defined theory of change and supported by a robust data-based analysis of the chosen decentralisation model and its financial projections, can support informed decision-making and enhance alignment, transparency, and accountability.

2. Staff availability and expertise are paramount to delivering effectively and efficiently. Staffing gaps and limited local engagement were found to hinder the Bank's responsiveness and operational effectiveness. Effective decentralisation would require skilled personnel and strong communication to achieve intended benefits and improve development outcomes.

3. Realistic timelines, timely implementation, and a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism are crucial for the success of decentralisation. The evaluation found that delays in key decentralisation actions, such as rightsizing, DAM revisions and others, weakened the impact of reforms. Also, fragmented monitoring and reporting of progress negatively affected oversight and accountability. Timely implementation and a structured M&E framework with clear indicators and regular reporting can improve the efficiency, accountability, and effectiveness of decentralisation efforts.

4. Adapting to evolving needs is essential to address emerging priorities and dynamic contexts. New challenges, including the needs of transition states and the integration of non-sovereign operations, highlight the importance of flexible approaches to decentralisation. An adaptive approach ensures

that decentralisation remains adequate and relevant in addressing diverse and evolving priorities. Tailored solutions that consider specific country and regional contexts are vital for maintaining flexibility and maximising the impact of decentralisation efforts.

5. Collaboration across organisational levels is critical for a cohesive approach to decentralisation. Ambiguities in roles and responsibilities between headquarters, regional hubs, and country offices have created challenges in coordination and efficiency. Defining roles, improving communication, and strengthening coordination across organisational levels are essential for enhancing coherence and operational effectiveness.

Recommendations

The evaluation makes the following recommendations.

1. Enhance the strategic direction of the Bank's decentralisation efforts to improve coherence and effectiveness.

The evaluation found that the lack of a comprehensive framework, including a theory of change, objectives and expected results, and relevant indicators has led to fragmented decentralisation efforts, hindering coherence and effectiveness. Suggested actions may include:

- Developing a strategic framework to guide Bank-wide decentralisation initiatives and its footprint across the continent.
- Ensuring stronger integration of decentralisation objectives in country and regional strategies.
- Aligning sovereign and private sector operations with the decentralisation approach.
- Adopting a more systematic approach to monitoring, coupled with strong indicators and data analytics, to support better decision-making.
- Strengthening risk assessment, mitigation planning and surveillance to improve adaptability.

2. Strengthen organisational structures, processes and resource capacity to

improve the efficiency and development impact of decentralisation efforts.

The evaluation identified operational constraints, resource management challenges, and delayed delegation of authority as key obstacles to the effectiveness of decentralisation. Important HR reforms were delayed or newly started at the time of the evaluation. Suggested actions may include:

- Aligning office size and staffing with business requirements and portfolio size, and adopting more agile and business-oriented criteria for country presence.
- Advancing the implementation of strategic staffing and other ongoing HR reforms to ensure the availability of skilled and motivated staff to meet the Bank's business needs, including in transition states and other challenging duty stations.
- Ensuring more effective delegation of authority and greater process flexibility to enhance efficiency.
- Continuing to systematically review and adjust business processes such as procurement while strengthening local systems to maximise opportunities for efficiency and better project outcomes.

3. Strengthen communication and engagement to enhance the ownership and the long-term benefits of decentralisation.

The evaluation found uneven internal ownership and varying external engagement on the decentralisation process across regions, negatively impacting sustainability. A stronger sense of ownership and institutional commitment could bolster sustainability. Priority actions may include:

- Strengthening engagement within the Bank to enhance awareness of and commitment to its decentralisation efforts.
- Deepening partnerships with governments and clients to improve coordination.
- Adopting a more assertive approach to real estate, branding, and communication to further enhance the Bank's visibility and profile.

1. BACKGROUND AND EVALUATION PURPOSE

This evaluation report summarises the key findings, lessons, and recommendations of the evaluation of the African Development Bank Group's (AfDB or "the Bank") decentralisation efforts as implemented under the Updated Decentralisation Action Plan (UDAP) 2016-2018 and the Bank's Development and Business Delivery Model (DBDM) over the period 2015-2024. The enhanced UDAP aimed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Bank's region and country-based operations and enable it to achieve its Ten-Year Strategy (TYS) goals by refocusing and streamlining the decentralisation program in line with the approved new structure of the Bank.

This section of this report briefly presents the evaluation's purpose, scope, methodological approach, and limitations. The next section reviews the Bank's decentralisation efforts, specifically the UDAP and DBDM and other key strategic directions undertaken during this time, followed by the section presenting the evaluation findings regarding relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The last section distils a set of conclusions, lessons, and forward-oriented recommendations.

1.1. Evaluation Purpose, Scope, and Questions

The evaluation aims to provide insights on the Bank's decentralisation implementation and achievements (accountability) and lessons (learning) that will help guide the continuous improvement of decentralisation under the new Ten-Year Strategy 2024-2033 approved in 2024. With a double objective of learning and accountability, this evaluation aimed to assess the AfDB's decentralisation, considered as the process of reallocating resources, functions, and responsibilities from the Bank's Headquarters (HQ) towards offices based in the Regional Member Countries (RMCs) with the view of increasing the Bank's footprint in Africa.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the relevance of the Bank's UDAP covering the 2015-2018 period.
- Evaluate the coherence of the UDAP and other recent decentralisation efforts with TYS 2013-2022, High 5s, and other Bank strategies and institutional reforms.
- Examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the UDAP's implementation and other recent decentralisation efforts, including the stakeholder perceptions of intended or unintended outcomes.
- Assess the sustainability of achieved results.
- Provide lessons and recommendations to inform further decentralisation actions under the Seventh General Capital Increase (GCI-VII) and African Development Fund-16 (ADF-16) commitments while exploring internal and external factors affecting decentralisation, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

This evaluation coincided with ongoing efforts to update the Decentralisation Action Plan, launched in 2023; therefore, it aimed to support further decentralisation efforts through iterative discussions and ongoing feedback with the Bank's Decentralisation Task Force³.

1.2. Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was designed to answer the following questions as aligned with the international evaluation criteria:

- How relevant are the Bank's UDAP covering the 2015-2018 period, its implementation under the DBDM, and the continued efforts to decentralise after these strategies' implementation period?
- How coherent are the UDAP and other recent decentralisation efforts with the TYS 2013-2022, High 5s, and other Bank strategies and institutional reforms?
- To what extent have the UDAP covering the 2015-2018 period and other recent decentralisation efforts achieved their stated objectives and reached impacts?
- To what extent have the UDAP covering the 2015-2018 period and other recent decentralisation efforts been implemented efficiently?
- To what extent are the benefits of decentralisation likely to be sustained over the medium and long term?

³ A multi-departmental Decentralisation Task Force was launched in 2023 with the aim to reinforce the Bank's decentralisation programme.

Based on the availability of relevant data, the evaluation covers the period from 2015 to June 2024. It includes efforts implemented at the HQ and regional and country offices, excluding the Asia External Representation Office.

1.3. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation is theory-based and guided by a reconstituted Theory of Change (ToC). This framework was used to illuminate the degree to which the Bank's latest decentralisation efforts (under the UDAP and beyond) were relevant, coherent, effective, and efficient in delivering their intended results and impacts. Using the evidence collected throughout the evaluation, the evaluation team rated these criteria on a 4-point scale – (Highly Satisfactory-4, Satisfactory-3, Partly Unsatisfactory-2, and Unsatisfactory-1) elaborated in a methodological approach attached as Annex 1.

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach to gather and analyse data required to respond to the evaluation questions. This evaluation used qualitative and quantitative methods to capture and triangulate primary and secondary data. The evaluation was organised under the following components:

- **In-depth documentary review and secondary data analysis.**
- **Interviews and focus group discussions** with various Bank staff, RMCs, private sector, and other development partners involving over 350 participants.
- **Portfolio review** that provided an analysis of key trends and performance of the Bank's decentralisation efforts over the period 2015-2024⁴. This review also included a detailed secondary data analysis using simple regression methods and t-tests on 368 ongoing projects and 130 completed projects to assess the effect of decentralisation on performance elements.
- **Case studies** were conducted across five regions and 12 countries⁵ to deepen the understanding of the regional and country-level decentralisation process and the context's impact on strategy implementation.
- **The online survey** targeted various internal and external stakeholders to capture diverse experiences and perceptions of the AfDB's decentralisation efforts. The survey recorded 411 completed responses, with an overall response rate of 24%.
- **Benchmark study:** This study aimed to identify good working practices, common challenges and remedial actions and other contextual factors influencing the effectiveness and efficiency of decentralisation efforts across comparator organisations. The review targeted a set of financial institutions and UN agencies, including the World Bank Group (including International Finance Corporation), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Asian Development Bank (AsDB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD). The benchmarking component heavily leveraged efforts of a just-completed [IDEV Comparative Study of Multilateral Development Bank Operating Models](#), complementing it with additional inputs gathered through additional document review and interviews during the country case studies.

The list of documents reviewed is attached as Annex 2. Other annexes contained in the volume of Technical Annexes include: Annex 3 on the evaluation matrix; ToC as Annex 4; and an abridged version of the portfolio review report in Annex 5.

1.4. Evaluation Limitations and Mitigation Measures

The evaluation experienced the following challenges and mitigated them as indicated.

- **Evaluation breadth:** The broad nature of decentralisation and related reforms expanded the scope, potentially affecting the evaluation's depth of analysis and quality. The evaluation focused on 2015-2024 and limited itself to the UDAP and later decentralisation efforts under the DBDM.
- **Overlapping evaluation efforts between the decentralisation, human resource (HR)⁶, and One Bank Approach evaluations present potential duplications, contradictions, and burdens on**

⁴ Some of the data is as of December 2023.

⁵ Tunisia, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Guinea, Kenya, Sudan, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Mauritius.

⁶ IDEV had two ongoing HR related evaluations; i.e. [HR recruitment, retention, career development, and performance management](#) and [workforce planning and incentive structure](#).

the respondents. Ongoing collaboration between the evaluation teams, cross-sharing of information to reduce the burden on respondents, and openness on the different evaluation efforts helped to clarify the linkages between the different evaluation efforts. This report includes some findings from the HR evaluations and some preliminary inputs from the OBA evaluation where relevant. A more in-depth assessment of sectors, regions, and HQ will be addressed during the OBA evaluation.

- **Attribution:** Difficulty in establishing attribution of achieved results to decentralisation due to its broad nature and several other inter-related reforms undertaken by the Bank within the same period. The evaluation used statistical analysis to isolate the results linked to decentralisation from other factors. The review also considered additional internal or external factors influencing decentralisation results. However, some interdependencies remained and are documented as such.
- **Generalisation of findings and conclusions:** Contextual factors in each region impact the generalisation of findings. Given the diverse geographic scope of the AfDB's decentralisation efforts, the evaluation included in-depth analyses of their varied contextual applications, primarily through case studies. Additionally, a representative sample of countries and office types for case studies enabled a nuanced and in-depth analysis of patterns in performance.
- **Availability of external stakeholders for the case studies:** The timing of the case studies, data collection activities, and other external events beyond the evaluation's control affected partners' availability for some of the case studies and caused delays in the evaluation process. Follow-up virtual interviews and additional information were secured through document reviews where feasible. The report also clearly identifies the areas of missing data.
- **Low survey response rate:** The online survey registered uneven responses between the different categories of stakeholders, with underrepresentation from the private sector, non-AfDB member governments, civil society, and other stakeholders. In this report, disaggregation for external stakeholders has focused on governments from RMCs. However, feedback from private sector actors, development partners, and other stakeholders is captured in the case studies.
- **Data quality and availability:** The evaluation faced challenges using data from the Bank's Results Measurement Framework (2016-2025), Annual Development Effectiveness Review (ADER) reports, and other routine administrative data on staffing, expenditures, and travel. Key data gaps included: a) inadequate systems in place to provide data systematically to enable disaggregation between field and HQ for both performance data and expenditure; b) changes in indicator calculations and database structures over time, affecting data consistency across the evaluation period and generation of adequate samples to support meaningful analyses; c) absence of UDAP implementation budget breakdown and targets, data on co-financing before 2021, and quality at entry results. The evaluation team addressed these gaps by relying on alternative data sources, using proxies, and explicitly noting concerns about data reliability in the report. Some of the analysis/questions that were not completed included computing the extent to which the UDAP was implemented within budget and other cost savings elements, and the correlation between decentralisation, quality at entry, and, subsequently, its effect on the achievement of development outcomes.

2. OVERVIEW OF DECENTRALISATION AT THE AFDB

The AfDB began its decentralisation efforts in the late 1990s⁷. As part of the Bank's management commitments under the Fifth General Capital Increase (GCI-V) of 1998, initial steps towards operational decentralisation were formally introduced in September 1999, when the Board of Directors adopted a resolution to establish three Country Offices and one Regional Office on a pilot basis. The pilot experience was a success, leading to an acceleration of decentralisation efforts⁸.

In 2004, the Board of Directors approved the Bank's first decentralisation strategy, "Strategy for the Decentralisation of the Activities of the Bank Group." This initial formalised action plan set the ambitious

⁷ African Development Bank, "ADB: Thirty-five Years at the Service of Africa, Annual Report 1999," March 2000.

⁸ African Development Bank, Annual Reports 2002-2004.

objective of establishing 25 country offices (COs) by the end of 2006⁹. The role of the COs was to facilitate project execution and portfolio management by closing the gap between the Bank and its RMCs. The strategy included provisions for technical expertise on loan effectiveness, procurement, and disbursements and improving policy and strategy dialogue with borrowing countries and local partners.

The Bank's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) (2008-2012) included several decentralisation objectives, such as having 45% of AfDB staff in decentralised offices. The transition to the GCI-VI in 2010 reiterated the Bank's commitment to decentralisation, further formalised in the 2011 "Decentralisation Roadmap." The roadmap guided the Bank's efforts towards operational decentralisation for 2011-2015, laying out a 15-point Action Plan and introducing criteria for establishing regional offices (ROs). Since 2015, the AfDB's decentralisation has steadily progressed, notably through the DBDM. The DBDM is a package of reforms aimed at improving the Bank's proximity to clients, becoming more cost-efficient, increasing revenue and accelerating developmental impact. The initial action plan in the 2011-2015 Decentralisation Roadmap was renewed with the 2015-2017 Updated Decentralisation Action Plan proposal¹⁰.

In June 2016, the Board approved the UDAP 2016–2018¹¹ to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Bank's regional and country-based operations. Aligned with the DBDM, the UDAP sought to streamline decentralisation efforts and strengthen the Bank's capacity to achieve its TYS goals. To achieve these objectives, the UDAP focused on four key priorities: expanding the Bank's regional presence, rightsizing country and regional offices, redefining the role and functions of sector departments at Headquarters, and establishing Regional Development, Integration, and Business Delivery (RDIBD) hubs. To implement these changes, UDAP set out seven action areas and 25 specific actions for execution between 2016 and 2018.

Key priorities included operationalising the RDIBD hubs, rolling out the Delegation of Authority Matrix (DAM), updating business processes, and providing staff training. The UDAP focused on optimising capacity and cost-effectiveness, strengthening HR, information and communication technology, and administrative support, and reinforcing fiduciary safeguards and risk management. The Bank also aimed to enhance delivery mechanisms by implementing the results measurement framework (RMF), improving knowledge management, and strengthening stakeholder relationships. These actions created a structured, efficient, and results-driven decentralisation process aligned with the Bank's strategic objectives.

An [independent evaluation of the DBDM implementation](#)¹² in 2019 showed positive client perceptions of decentralisation, with evidence of improved client engagement and greater responsiveness to country needs. It also highlighted shortcomings and recommended further efforts to clarify roles and responsibilities between countries, regions, and HQ, optimise resources, and implement rightsizing. In response to this evaluation, one significant action was articulating the OBA¹³ in 2020, which aimed to clarify and strengthen the operational arrangements and ensure that regions, sectors, and operational staff operated as One Bank.

As of June 2024, the AfDB has five regional offices (for North, East, Southern, Central, and West Africa) and 38 country offices (of which seven are liaison offices).

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Relevance

This section assesses how the UDAP and later decentralisation efforts have aligned with Bank commitments, priorities, and client needs, and the quality of the design to meet the Bank's needs in an evolving environment.

⁹ "Proposed Strategy for the Decentralisation of the Activities of the African Development Bank Group," 2004, ADB/BD/WP/2004/72/Rev.1/Add.1 & ADF/BD/WP/2004/84/Rev.1/Add.1.

¹⁰ African Development Bank Group, "A Proposal to Update the Decentralisation Action Plan, 2015-2017: Enhancing the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Bank's Decentralisation Programme," March 2015, p. 2.

¹¹ African Development Bank Group, "An Update of the Decentralisation Action Plan in Line with The New Development and Business Delivery Model". June 2016.

¹² [Independent Evaluation of the Implementation of the Development and Business Delivery Model of the AfDB | IDEV](#)

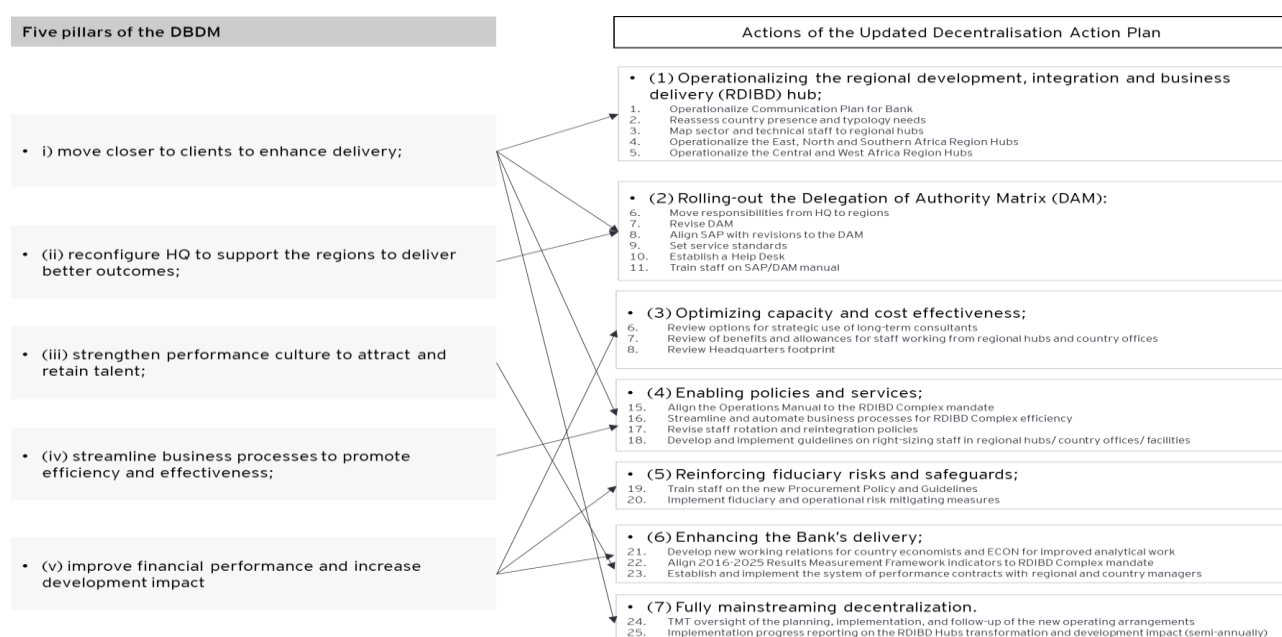
¹³ African Development Bank. Delivering As One Bank - Strengthening Accountabilities for Delivering Quality and Development Impact in A Matrix Organisation. March 2020.

The evaluation found that decentralisation efforts under the 2016-2018 UDAP and subsequent initiatives were largely aligned with the Bank's commitments and client needs. Decentralisation is viewed as highly relevant, particularly for enhancing client proximity and improving project design, supervision, and relationships. The UDAP and subsequent decentralisation efforts were assessed as partially well-designed, possessing evident criteria for office locations, guiding principles, and actions. However, weaknesses include unclear linkages between strategies, the absence of a strategic framework, rigid criteria for opening country offices and inadequate monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Emerging priorities, such as the increase of non-sovereign operations in the Bank's portfolio, remain only partially addressed, with gaps in aligning decentralisation with the TYS 2024-2033 goals regarding non-sovereign operations (NSOs).

3.1.1. How well did the UDAP and subsequent efforts align with the Bank's commitments, including the GCI and DBDM?

Decentralisation efforts under the UDAP (2016) were found to be largely aligned with the Bank's TYS 2013-2022 and the Bank's commitments under the DBDM and GCI-VII to enhance efficiency and effective delivery. The TYS identified decentralisation as the primary approach for program delivery, while the UDAP and DBDM represented the most focused efforts to strengthen decentralisation. Specifically, the 2016 UDAP was proposed to respond to the DBDM, addressing organisational priorities directly, as demonstrated in Figure 1. The plan's actions to advance the Bank's decentralisation included enhancing the Bank's presence at regional levels, appropriately sizing country offices, reconfiguring HQ to support regions, streamlining business processes, and delegating authority to achieve cost-effectiveness, along with other enabling policies and strategies aimed at ensuring operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Figure 1: Links between the five pillars of the DBDM and the actions of the UDAP



Source: Compiled by IDEV

Further efforts to improve the functioning of decentralisation through the One Bank Approach of 2020 and specific Presidential Directives (2024) are linked mainly to the 2019 GCI-VII commitments. Five of the seven objectives outlined in GCI-VII are interconnected with these decentralisation efforts. The One Bank Approach reflects five GCI-VII objectives, particularly concerning three key workstreams: (i) business processes (e.g., complete implementation of DAM); (ii) management of personnel and organisation; and (iii) tools for collaborative accountability (updated One Bank key performance indicators (KPIs) and their cascading).

However, the evaluation found potential for further clarification of the interlinkages between these organisational strategies. While the UDAP proposal presented in 2015 raised interest in a theory of change, it was not solidified in the UDAP approved in 2016. Clear and integrated objectives (considering further decentralisation efforts) and expected results were found partially missing. The absence of an intervention logic hinders a clear linkage in decentralisation's priorities between successive strategies and monitoring its contribution to corporate commitments and organisational reforms.

3.1.2. To what extent did the action plan, DBDM, and later decentralisation efforts meet client and partner needs?

The Updated Decentralisation Action Plan and DBDM efforts from 2016 to 2018 were found to be highly relevant, meeting clients' needs for proximity. The evaluation found that establishing regional hubs, country offices, and liaison offices enable deeper local understanding, more effective project design and supervision, and improved client relationships (see Box 1). It aligns with the Bank's objective of enhancing proximity to clients and better responding to local needs. Overall, the improvement of local presence was positively viewed by stakeholders, strengthening the Bank's image as a regional institution with strong client connections. Up to 94% of survey respondents indicated that it is somewhat or very relevant for the AfDB to decentralise, while 88% believe the AfDB should decentralise further¹⁴.

Box 1: Reviews from selected country offices opened in the period 2016-2018

In Guinea, the opening of the office in 2017 responded to the need to intensify dialogue with the country, accelerate the project appraisal process, and improve portfolio monitoring, which positively impacted portfolio quality despite the country's capacity challenges. *Source: Case study interview, July 2024*

The opening of the AfDB Country Office in Benin in February 2017 helped to foster close ties and strengthen policy dialogue with the national authorities. *Source: CSP Evaluation (2022)*

However, the evaluation found that the Bank's decentralisation efforts only partially responded to clients' and partners' needs regarding coverage. While the Bank did not commit in its previous strategy to universal coverage, stakeholders in countries without offices and some Bank staff raised this as a concern, believing this is the right direction for the Bank. At the time of the evaluation, 11 countries on the continent were without any form of local AfDB representation¹⁵. A review of completed Country Strategy and Program Evaluations (CSPEs) and case studies indicated that this lack of local presence has limited proximity with clients in The Gambia, Cabo Verde, and Namibia. Proponents of universal coverage emphasised the lost benefits of country presence for active shareholders, including opportunities for developing business, closer project monitoring, visibility, and dialogue with government and other development partners.

The UDAP was found to demonstrate increased attention to transition states, adhering to the principle of staying engaged. As of July 2024, the Bank was present in 80% of the transition states. However, given their institutional, political, and infrastructural constraints, the UDAP fell short of clarifying the additional resource implications for operating in such contexts. Discussions with regional offices indicated that unit costs of missions in insecure countries like Libya and Somalia are higher due to additional costs of security measures. Up to 36% of countries where the Bank has no presence are transition states. Though the Bank made some adjustments of incentives for staff working in transition contexts, these were still found inadequate, especially compared to other MDBs. Inadequate application of staff rotation policies was found to affect staff in transition countries more than others. Coverage of small island states in the UDAP was deemed sub-optimal. The Bank has some form of presence in only two of the six small island states¹⁶.

Stakeholders expressed mixed views across the regions about the AfDB's flexibility in processes, staffing, and decision-making authority. Overall, HQ and country interviewees underlined the need to deepen the reflection about strategic staffing, decentralisation of decision-making, and digitalisation of procurement processes and approvals to optimise the Bank's agility and to respond to evolving regional,

¹⁴ Up to 96% of government staff from RMCs found the AfDB's decentralisation somewhat relevant or very relevant. In addition, 89% of them believe the AfDB should decentralise further.

¹⁵ Botswana, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Namibia, Seychelles, and Somalia

¹⁶ Small Island States (SIDS) in Africa include Cabo Verde, the Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, and Seychelles. The Bank has Liaison Offices in Guinea-Bissau and Mauritius.

sub-regional and country needs. The tension between reducing risks of exposure and development impacts associated with private sector lending was found to affect the Bank's ability to respond to private sector needs fully across RMCs, especially the ADF-only countries.

Enhancing local presence, creating more efficiency and effectiveness as anticipated under the UDAP and DBDM, was found to align with current MDB reforms to become bolder, bigger, and more impactful. This conclusion is corroborated by the 2021 Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment, which affirmed these findings. The assessment reported that the Bank can leverage its proximity and affinity with RMCs to enhance its alignment, facilitate more extensive policy and sector dialogues with its stakeholders, explore novel business opportunities, and improve donor coordination.

3.1.3. Were the decentralisation efforts effectively designed to address the Bank's needs and evolving environment?

The evaluation found the UDAP and subsequent decentralisation efforts partially well-designed to address the needs of the Bank and its changing environment. The UDAP demonstrated strengths, such as establishing clear criteria for regional hub locations, guiding principles like subsidiarity, and a structured implementation timeline. The plan embodied a holistic view, identifying several policy and operational actions that the Bank would undertake to support the decentralisation program, including the implementation of Delegation of Authority Matrices, measures to mitigate fiduciary risks, and the strengthening of essential services like human resource management and ICT. Interviews with the Bank's decentralisation task force highlighted that creating a Transformation Management Team (TMT), chaired by the President, to oversee decentralisation efforts in 2016 was viewed positively. Additional measures under initiatives like the Ten-Year Strategies (TYS 2013-2022 and 2024-2033), GCI-VII, ADF 16, and the OBA were also noted to align with the Bank's evolving needs.

However, the evaluation also found important shortcomings in strategic frameworks, cost and savings estimations, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, which weakened the design of the UDAP and subsequent decentralisation efforts.

The evaluation found that the AfDB does not have a comprehensive and updated strategic framework to consolidate its decentralisation priorities as promoted by the UDAP and further decentralisation efforts¹⁷. The lack of a clear strategic framework and a standard definition for decentralisation were deemed to have created inconsistencies around the Bank's approach to decentralisation, the extent of delegation of resources and authorities to offices outside the HQ, roles, and delegation of authority. The evaluation found a mixture of different elements of decentralisation, e.g. geographical decentralisation (country and regional offices) and, in some cases, horizontal decentralisation (moving origination and investment of NSOs from the Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialisation Complex (PIVP) to other sector complexes). Some HQ-based staff interviewed stressed the need to clarify the objectives of decentralisation within the Bank.

Resourcing of the regional offices to function as a hub and spoke system: The evaluation found that underlying assumptions around concentrating expertise at the regional offices to be deployed across countries were not sufficiently supported with workforce calculations to estimate the resources needed for the functioning of the regional hubs. The assumption was that the hub and spoke system would bring cost savings by moving resources away from country offices to be made available across the region. However, neither the UDAP nor later strategic staffing efforts established a target for the staffing requirement at the regional vis-à-vis country levels¹⁸.

Country office opening criteria: The evaluation found that the UDAP benefits from having set criteria for selecting the location of regional hubs and guiding principles (such as the principle of subsidiarity¹⁹) and criteria for rightsizing and opening of country offices²⁰. However, these criteria for office opening were not found flexible enough to allow for adjustments in cases where the portfolio is growing or

¹⁷ The last decentralisation strategy was approved in 2004, and subsequent iterations have been in the form of action plans, with the latest being the UDAP.

¹⁸ The only target in the One Bank results measurement framework stops at the proportion of staffing in the field without disaggregating between regions and country offices.

¹⁹ The principle of subsidiarity holds that higher levels of authority should only perform those tasks that cannot be performed effectively at a lower level.

²⁰ These criteria include: a) size and complexity of the pipeline; b) countries in transition even when where there is no substantive portfolio, but it is critical to remain engaged; c) pipeline development; d) transport and logistical and living conditions; and e) privileges, immunities, and exemptions.

shrinking. For example, the Bank maintains offices in countries with no borrowing or minimal portfolios, while there are countries with more prominent and growing portfolios and no AfDB presence.

Co-location of regional and country offices and HQ: Findings from the West African Case Study revealed difficulties in distinguishing the roles and responsibilities between the HQ, the regional and the country office and in accessing logistical and human resources, as all three share the same location in Abidjan. It is worth noting that this challenge was already pointed out in IDEV's 2017 evaluation of the Bank's Country Strategy and Program in Côte d'Ivoire (2006-2016)²¹. Similar sentiments have been raised by some Kenyan government counterparts who feel subsumed under the regional office without a unique identity or advocacy for the Kenya country program.

Clarity and assumptions underpinning the cost of decentralisation and expected savings: The documentary review revealed that the UDAP did not explicitly state cost projections for its implementation, as they were strongly interlinked with the DBDM. This situation made it challenging to estimate and track specific decentralisation costs, hindering the Bank's ability to determine the cost-efficiency implications of decentralisation as expected. In addition, estimations and assumptions around incremental costs of decentralisation and cost savings were not always precise²², relevant, or backed by clear evidence. Some were found unrealistic given that they depended on several reforms as part of broader Bank institutional strengthening efforts. Other factors internal and external to the Bank, such as changes in the Total Compensation Framework in 2021 and delays in the strategic staffing exercise have emerged to adversely affect potential savings beyond what was anticipated.

Results measurement: The UDAP included an indicative results framework, but mechanisms to monitor and report decentralisation's impact on development outcomes and operational effectiveness were poorly defined. While many indicators were included in the Bank's Results Measurement Framework (TYS 2013–2022), they were found not well-designed to measure changes, such as performance differences between HQ and country offices. Some of the indicators were found not directly relevant to the UDAP efforts. Monitoring cost-effectiveness was hampered by unclear costing, lack of baselines and targets, and inconsistent indicator definitions. Changes in the calculation of some indicators were observed to have further reduced comparability over time.

Inclusion of NSOs: Efforts to decentralise were found to have only partially addressed emerging priorities, such as including NSOs in the Bank's decentralisation strategy. In 2024, the appointment of regional NSO Leads presents opportunities for enhanced coordination and proximity to services. However, NSO operations were found to have remained largely centralised, misaligned with broader decentralisation efforts. As of December 2023, 67% of NSO investment officers and portfolio managers (47/71) were based at HQ. Staff interviews indicated that NSO guiding principles and decentralised approval systems lag behind other MDBs, such as the International Finance Corporation's (IFC's) more decentralised tiered system. Stakeholder engagements revealed that the AfDB's pricing and bureaucratic processes limit flexibility, competitiveness, and responsiveness, hindering efforts to mobilise private sector resources.

Adaptability and flexibility to changing circumstances: Generally, the UDAP was not found to include dedicated risk mitigation measures, which could have addressed factors such as the delayed implementation of specific reforms that emerged and impacted overall execution. The evaluation found no documentation on the intentional reframing of targets, timelines, and actions in response to contextual changes and policy shifts affecting decentralisation, such as recruitment freezes or COVID-impacted staff deployments and mission travel. This diminished the value of the UDAP as a strategic framework for guiding the Bank's decentralisation efforts.

Due primarily to these design deficiencies, the evaluation assessed the relevance of the UDAP and subsequent decentralisation efforts as partly unsatisfactory.

3.2. Coherence

Coherence refers to the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution. This evaluation examined the alignment of the UDAP with the Bank's business model, other

²¹ IDEV (2017), [Executive Summary - Cote d'Ivoire EN.pdf](#).

²² For example, the plan did not clarify how savings from increasing the proportion of local professional staff (LPS) and long-term consultants would lead to savings of up to 9.5 mUA. In addition, the IDEV evaluation on strategic staffing found the targets behind increasing the proportion of locally recruited staff to be not backed by evidence and supported by a clear procedure / plan on how it would be achieved.

strategies and reforms, and organisational initiatives like the One Bank Approach. It also assessed the extent to which the Bank's decentralisation efforts were consistent with those of other MDBs.

The evaluation found that the UDAP and other decentralisation efforts are broadly coherent with the AfDB's strategies, such as TYS 2013-2022, High 5 priorities, and DBDM. However, they lack sufficient detail at the regional and country levels. Although the OBA introduced some positive benefits for decentralisation, the greater centralisation of authority at the headquarters was found to conflict with the UDAP's intention of empowering regional and country offices. Roles and responsibilities among HQ, regional, and country offices were found to remain unclear, resulting in uneven collaboration across regions. Nevertheless, the AfDB's decentralisation approach aligns with the practices of comparator MDBs, although implementation paths and organisational structures differ.

3.2.1. To what extent is decentralisation aligned with the Bank's business model, strategies, and reforms?

The evaluation found UDAP and DBDM intentions and actions to be largely aligned with the AfDB's overarching strategies, including the Ten-Year Strategy 2013-2022 and the High 5s. The DBDM also focused on transformation towards a more decentralised business model for organisational efficiency and optimising development impact on the ground. The new TYS 2024-2033²³ also supports decentralisation's objectives, notably the decentralisation of operations under a matrix structure. A review of policy and strategy documents demonstrated that the UDAP aligns with and underpins the delivery of other Bank strategies, such as the 2018-2025 Regional Integration Strategic Framework and the Fragility Strategy, to achieve regional integration and reinforce the footprint in transition contexts. It also enjoys complementarity with pre-existing corporate policies like the 2015 Procurement Policy that seeks to strengthen country systems and others developed in the evaluation period, such as the 2023 Real Estate Framework and Action Plans that aim to align real estate management and business with decentralisation strategies.

Successive HR policies and reforms were found to largely support decentralisation efforts. Since 2017, several HR reforms have been launched to support the key pillars of the DBDM and the priorities of enhancing the availability and quality of staff to fulfil the Bank's mandate. These policies included the People Strategy of 2021-2025, designed to build a talented, resilient, and diverse workforce, the Performance Management Framework, revised Staff Guidelines, and the Talent Councils and Jobs Families. Other reforms included rightsizing and strategic staffing, which began in 2019 to develop regional operational capacity, reflecting an apparent intention in the UDAP. However, staff mobility, the skills bank and talent marketplace, and short-term assignment policies — essential for achieving decentralisation objectives — were newly initiated at the time of the evaluation. While reinforcing appropriate incentives for staff, including those working in transition states, the Total Compensation Framework (TCF) was deemed to negatively impact the expected cost savings from decentralisation efforts once implemented. Critical HR reforms have also faced delays or stalled, negatively affecting decentralisation outcomes, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

UDAP interventions are observed to be only partially reflected at the regional and country levels. For instance, the evaluation did not find regional and country roadmaps developed to operationalise the UDAP based on local specificities, supportive programming, and monitoring systems at the country level. Regional Integration Strategy Papers and Country Strategy and Program documents have also not always explicitly discussed related organisational arrangements regarding staffing, facilities, and others needed to achieve their stated development results.

3.2.2. To what extent have the Bank's decentralisation efforts aligned and developed synergies with other organisational initiatives such as the One Bank Approach?

The evaluation found that the OBA of 2020, which introduced the revamped matrix structure with dual reporting lines, has produced mixed results in supporting decentralisation efforts. The 2020 OBA aimed to enhance the Bank's operational efficiency and development effectiveness, adhering to three fundamental principles: quality, timely delivery, and shared accountability. Roles and

²³ AfDB (2024), [The Ten-Year Strategy African Development Bank Group \(2024 – 2033\) | African Development Bank Group](#)

responsibilities between headquarters, sector complexes and regions as business delivery units were reconfigured, and guidelines for resource management were provided. Based on documentation review and interviews, **the evaluation found that when implemented as planned, the modifications introduced by the OBA strengthened the functioning of decentralised offices.** These improvements seem to have contributed to improved coordination between sectors and regions on work programming and operations delivery, mostly through guidance like the Rules of the Game, the quarterly and annual work planning and program events, and reinforced Country Strategy Papers as the main programming document, and led to the allocation of sector managers to regions due to the organisational fine-tuning. People management initiatives that enabled dual reporting, rightsizing, strategic staffing, staff movements, and talent boards were also found to enhance decentralisation efforts. Moreover, operations business process re-engineering was supported, notably under the Working Better, Accountability, Know-how, Accessibility, New, Decentralisation, Accuracy (WAKANDA) initiative to enhance efficiency in the Bank.

On the other hand, the One Bank Approach may be perceived as a step backwards in delegating authority and accountability to the Regional Directors General (DGs) and Country Managers. Contrary to the DBDM and UDAP's key objective to *"empower DGs and Country Managers as well as staff, while also holding them accountable,"* interviews with Senior Managers indicate that the powers of the regional offices as the key business delivery units have been diluted, as authority and resources are now concentrated in the sector complexes and departments, some of which are still mainly based in the HQ. The sectors control staff and operational program resources, with regions and countries having less control over the deployment and use. Business Development Units (BDUs) with sector representation cost centres under the DG's purview were removed with the implementation of the organisational fine-tuning and remapping of operations staff back to their sector complexes.

In addition, the evaluation found that the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, redundancies and confusion caused by dual reporting lines inherent in any matrix structure continues to undermine the coherence of the OBA with the decentralisation process. Despite some positive evolution, the evaluation found that there is still some work needed to ensure a common understanding of the joint KPIs and their ownership, as evidenced by case studies and the survey of the ongoing One Bank Approach evaluation. Other important challenges within the One Bank model include achieving cross-departmental collaboration between task managers and the ecosystem, and their capacity to work as a collective team to ensure responsiveness to clients' needs and timeliness.

3.2.3. Is the Bank's decentralisation consistent with that of comparator institutions and development partners in RMCs?

The evaluation found the AfDB's decentralisation process to be coherent with comparator institutions and other development partners despite differences in the organisational structure, staffing, delegation of authority, and SO/NSO synergy.

IDEV's comparative study on MDB operating models²⁴ found the AfDB's decentralisation process to be coherent with that of comparator institutions and other development partners in RMCs. The primary goal of the comparators' decentralisation strategies is to enhance development effectiveness by positioning staff closer to client countries. Similarly to the AfDB, the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) and the World Bank Group (WBG) have decentralised to improve proximity to clients, increase local offices' authority, and better respond to countries' needs. The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also pursue decentralisation to improve project execution and development effectiveness. However, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) remains largely centralised, with decision-making concentrated at its Headquarters in London.

However, MDBs have differences in organisational structures, staffing, delegation of authority and management of NSOs.

- In terms of structures, all organisations have a specific construct of regional and country offices, though the coverage, delegated authorities and staffing in these offices are different. Document review shows that the World Bank has the highest number of offices, having a presence in 178 locations worldwide. Within Africa, the World Bank (including IFC) is present in 63 locations²⁵ compared to AfDB's 43 regional, country, and liaison offices.

²⁴ AfDB (2024), [Comparative Study of Multilateral Development Bank Operating Models EN.pdf](#)

²⁵ The WBG has more than one office in countries like Senegal, Mozambique, Cameroon, Nigeria.

- The delegation of authority to decentralised offices appears to be the most extensive in the IsDB, relying on the regional director without a dual reporting line, which differs from the AfDB and World Bank. In contrast, the EBRD employs a centralised decision-making process supported by its regional offices. The World Bank has made more efforts to delegate authority to Country Directors for critical decisions that respond to country needs, such as adjustments to the Country Partnership Framework and the operational restructuring and implementation of Advisory Services and Analytics. This differs from the AfDB, where such responsibilities remain with Headquarters. The evaluation found that the IDB remains largely centralised, with its decentralisation efforts primarily involving the relocation of personnel instead of delegating functions or authority.
- The management of NSOs also varies among the organisations operating under different lead institutions in the WBG and IDB. In contrast, NSOs are managed within the same organisation at the AfDB and AsDB. Notably, the World Bank initiated Joint World Bank Group country representation in 21 country offices to enhance SO/NSO synergy. The WBG has a unified Country Partnership Framework document for the various group members²⁶ in these pilot countries.

The ongoing reflections at the multilateral level to implement the roadmap “towards better, bigger, and more effective MDBs”²⁷ constitute an opportunity for the Bank to build on to update its decentralisation framework. It is also coherent with the TYS 2024-2033²⁸, which reflects recent discussions on how the MDBs will work together to scale up their investments in regional and global public goods where progress is being affected across their client countries.

Based on these findings, the evaluation rated the overall coherence of the decentralisation efforts as satisfactory.

3.3. Effectiveness

This section assessed the effectiveness of the Bank's decentralisation efforts under the UDAP from 2015 to 2024. The findings presented cover the progress made since 2015, the extent to which expected results and impact were achieved, and unintended outcomes. It also identifies key internal and external factors that have influenced the implementation and achievement of the UDAP results.

The evaluation of the AfDB's decentralisation efforts under the UDAP from 2015 to 2024 reveals a mixed picture. The Bank implemented most of the planned actions in the UDAP. However, the results were mixed, with only 53% of the outcome indicator targets achieved. Significant progress was observed in strengthening the Bank's country presence, operationalising regional hubs, enhancing client responsiveness, and improving business opportunities. However, gaps remain in achieving decentralisation targets, particularly concerning staffing and projects managed outside of HQ, improving timeliness, portfolio performance and enhancing project development outcomes. A limited association between country presence and timely delivery of projects points to the predominant influence of internal Bank capacity, the robustness of local institutions, and project complexity as determinants of success. Evidence suggests that the proximity of Task Managers in the country is associated with better project performance at completion. Despite the implementation of decentralisation, the evaluation found that country capacity and other systemic institutional challenges persist, indicating that decentralisation alone is insufficient to address entrenched development challenges within the Bank's RMCs. External shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, further exacerbated these challenges, underscoring the need for more resilient strategies.

3.3.1. To what extent was the Decentralisation Plan implemented?

The evaluation found that the Bank made significant progress in implementing the UDAP as part of its decentralisation initiatives. The effectiveness assessment revealed consistent execution across the seven action areas of the UDAP, showcasing both substantial accomplishments and ongoing challenges in the Bank's mission to enhance client engagement. Since 2016, the Bank has implemented

²⁶ International Development Association (IDA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

²⁷ G20 (October 2024), G20 Roadmap Towards Better, Bigger and More effective MDBs.

²⁸ [The Ten-Year Strategy African Development Bank Group \(2024 – 2033\) | African Development Bank Group](#)

most of the UDAP actions. However, the evaluation found that some registered achievements were reversed following the introduction of the OBA, for example, the action related to mapping staff and responsibilities from HQ to regions.

Table 1 illustrates the degree of achievement of the actions planned in the UDAP as of mid-2024 based on available data. Further discussions on implementing this plan and its outcomes are discussed across the remaining sections under the findings on Effectiveness and that on Efficiency.

Table 1: UDAP implementation progress

Action Area	Action	Progress
Operationalising the RDIBD Hubs	Operationalise Communication Plan for Bank Staff	● Achieved
	Reassess country presence and typology need	● Achieved
	Map sector and technical staff to regional hubs	● Achieved ²⁹
	Operationalise the East, North and Southern Africa Region Hubs	● Achieved
	Operationalise the Central and West Africa Region Hubs	● Achieved
Rolling out the Delegation of Authority	Move responsibilities from HQ to regions	● Achieved ³⁰
	Revise DAM	● Achieved
	Align SAP with revisions to the DAM	● Achieved
	Set service standards	● Achieved
	Establish a Help Desk	● Achieved
Optimising Capacity and Cost Effectiveness	Train staff on the SAP/DAM manual	● Achieved
	Review options for strategic use of long-term consultants	Pending information
	Review of benefits and allowances for staff working from regional hubs and country offices	● Achieved
Enabling Policies and Services	Review Headquarters footprint	● Achieved
	Align the Operations Manual to the RDIBD Complex mandate	● Achieved
	Streamline and automate business processes for RDIBD Complex efficiency in line with the 2017-2020 ICT Strategy	● Achieved
	Revise staff rotation and reintegration policies	● Achieved
Reinforcing Fiduciary Risks and Safeguards	Develop and implement guidelines on rightsizing staff in regional hubs and country offices	● Partially Achieved
	Train staff on the new Procurement Policy and Guidelines	● Achieved
Enhancing the Bank's Delivery	Implement fiduciary and operational risk-mitigating measures	Pending information
	Develop new working relations for country economists and ECON for improved analytical work	● Achieved
	Align 2016-2025 Results Measurement Framework indicators to RDIBD Complex mandate	● Achieved
Fully Mainstreaming Decentralisation	Establish and implement the system of performance contracts with regional and country managers	● Achieved
	TMT oversight of the planning, implementation, and follow-up of the new operating arrangements	● Achieved
	Implementation progress reporting on the RDIBD Hubs transformation and development impact (semi-annually)	● Achieved

Source: Document review and interviews compiled by IDEV

3.3.2. To what extent have the Bank's efforts to decentralise delivered their expected results and impacts?

The Bank's decentralisation objectives, outlined in the UDAP, aimed to align its operations with RMC needs, foster deeper stakeholder dialogue, develop new business opportunities, improve donor coordination, and enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and impact. The evaluation reveals mixed outcomes, with both notable achievements and significant gaps. While the Bank has enhanced its regional and local presence and client support, challenges have hindered the full realisation of results and impacts.

²⁹ Achieved then reversed under OBA.

³⁰ Achieved then reversed under OBA.

3.3.2.1. Performance indicators

A review of the performance indicators in the DAP Results Framework as adopted in the Bank's RMF and reported in the Annual Development Effectiveness Review reports registered positive progress in 65% (15/23) of indicators for which data was available from 2015 to 2023. However, the analysis shows that only 53% (8/15) of these indicators achieved their target as of 2023. Weaker performance was observed in effectiveness-related areas (i.e., portfolio performance, quality and speed of operations, and achieving development impact) and efficiency-related areas (i.e., moving closer to clients and staff engagement, development, and productivity), where more than half the indicators were performing below target as of the end of 2023.

However, these results should be interpreted cautiously, as some indicators are not directly related to the UDAP's primary efforts. Subsequent sections on achievement of results and on effective operations and development impact will analyse effectiveness in more detail, drawing on the indicators and other evidence to demonstrate the effects of the UDAP and later decentralisation efforts.

3.3.2.2. Achievement of results

Enhanced local presence through functional regional hubs and expanded country presence, increasing client proximity. One of the most significant achievements in the Bank's decentralisation efforts was found to be the establishment of regional hubs, a cornerstone in bringing operations closer to clients. Between 2017 and 2019, the Bank successfully transformed Regional Resource Centres in Kenya, South Africa, and Tunisia into fully functioning hubs, while Côte d'Ivoire was further reinforced as the Headquarters and hub for West Africa. Cameroon's regional hub for Central Africa was operationalised in 2019. Findings indicate that these hubs have enhanced the Bank's ability to tailor operations to regional needs, improve project delivery, and cultivate stronger client relationships.

In addition to its hubs, over the evaluation period the Bank established new country offices in Guinea (2017), Niger (2018), and Benin (2019), along with liaison offices in Eritrea (2018) and Eswatini (2022), raising its total presence to 43 locations across Africa. Since 2022, no new offices have opened. A 2021 proposal for Namibia was postponed due to budget and strategic staffing constraints, underscoring challenges in expansion versus resources.

During this period, the Bank improved its local expertise by assigning specialised staff to regional and country offices, although challenges persist in achieving optimal expertise. For example, the evaluation found that despite appointing 19 new country managers and relocating 121 staff in 2017, the Bank still fell short of its staffing targets in country offices. The proportion of operational staff in country offices rose from 41% in 2015 to 55% in 2023, remaining well under the 76% target. The evaluation revealed that budget constraints, hiring restrictions, COVID-19 disruptions, and reluctance among staff to relocate to selected stations contributed to these setbacks, which have limited the Bank's ability to leverage its local presence fully. Further discussions on staffing implications and delegation of authority constraints are covered under Efficiency.

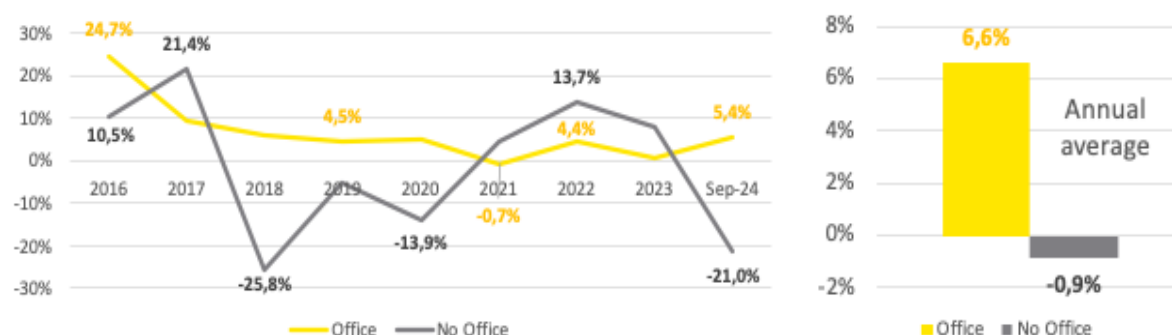
The evaluation found that between 2015 and 2019, the Bank made significant progress in decentralising operations, increasing the share of projects managed by country and regional offices from 60% to 78%. However, this proportion has since dropped to 75% by 2023, slightly below the 79% target, due to COVID-19 restrictions and recruitment constraints³¹. The evaluation observed regional variations, with East Africa registering the highest decentralisation rate at 93.7%, followed by North (87.8%) and South (86.4%), while Central and West remained lowest at 60%. Interview data revealed that staff are more easily attracted to East and Southern Africa. In contrast, insecurity, living standards, and safety concerns hampered recruitment in certain countries of Central and West Africa.

Generally, the AfDB's extent of decentralisation of staff and operations was found to compare satisfactorily with other MDBs. The WBG has a higher presence in Africa, with offices in 94% of the countries (51/54), compared to the AfDB's office coverage of 80% (43/54). The AsDB had offices in 77% of its RMCs, while IADB had offices in all its borrowing member countries. Regarding staffing, 45% of the WBG staff were based outside HQ as of 2022, compared to the AfDB's 38.3% by 2023, standing higher than the IADB and AsDB, which respectively had 69% and 74% based at their HQ. The comparative study findings showed that 75% of AfDB projects are managed from country offices, higher than the 57% of AsDB projects.

³¹ Source: AfDB, 2024 ADER.

Improved Business Opportunities: The evaluation found that decentralisation significantly boosted portfolio growth by allowing the Bank to respond more effectively to emerging opportunities. Up to 64% of survey respondents indicated that decentralisation has improved business development opportunities compared to 18% who observed no change or 3% who reported it has worsened. A review of portfolio data revealed that the Bank's total portfolio increased from 26.7 bUA in 2015 to 45.3 bUA in September 2024, a 69% rise and an annual growth rate of 6.2%. Figure 2 shows that countries with AfDB offices saw more substantial growth, averaging 6.6% annually, as portfolios expanded from 25.2 bUA in 2015 to 44 bUA in 2023. Conversely, countries without offices experienced a 0.9% annual decline, shrinking from 1.5 bUA to 1.3 bUA, highlighting the benefits of proximity in fostering portfolio growth. Portfolio growth was more volatile in countries without offices, influenced by their smaller sample size and the prevalence of transition states (4 of 11 in 2024).

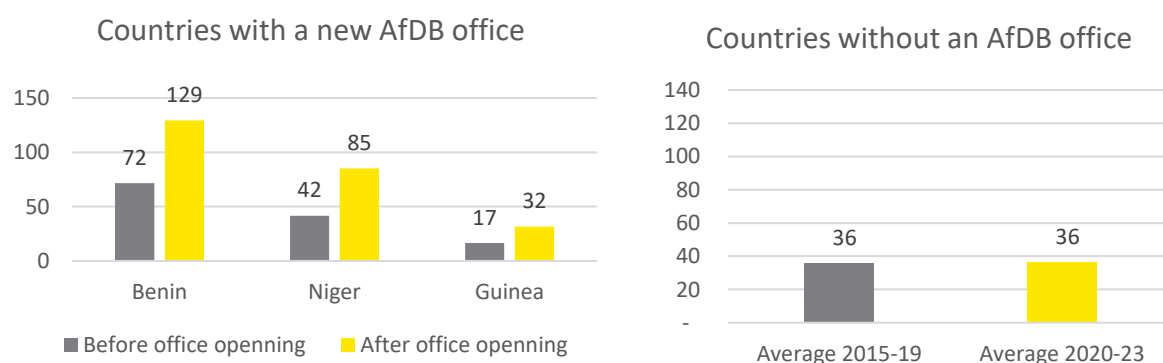
Figure 2: Annual portfolio growth in countries with and without an office (in %, 2015-2024)



Source: IDEV Analysis of Portfolio Information from RDVP Front Office

Annual approvals increased in the three countries where the AfDB opened country offices during the evaluation period. As can be seen from Figure 3, the average annual approvals of Benin, Guinea, and Niger increased from 43 mUA to 82 mUA (+90%) following the opening of an office. In comparison, between the 2015-19 and 2020-23 periods, the average annual approvals in the 11 African countries without an office remained the same at around 36 mUA.

Figure 3: Evolution of annual approvals in countries with a new AfDB office and countries without an office (2015-23)³²



Source: IDEV Portfolio Review

Although these figures highlight the advantages of local presence in identifying and seizing lending opportunities, the evaluation noted that these outcomes are also shaped by other internal and external factors beyond the Bank's local footprint. These factors include the economic and political situation of

³² Annual average for "Before office opening" values are based on 2015-18 for Benin, 2015-17 for Niger and 2015-16 for Guinea. Annual average for "After office opening" values are based on 2019-23 for Benin, 2028-23 for Niger and 2017-23 for Guinea. Countries without an office are Botswana, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Namibia, Seychelles, and Somalia.

the borrower, which affects its ability to borrow, the country's eligibility for AfDB funding (e.g., Benin became eligible for ADB funding in 2018, boosting approvals³³) and external shocks.

Responsiveness to Country Needs: The evaluation found that decentralisation has added value to the Bank's interventions by enhancing responsiveness to local needs. Decentralisation enhanced the Bank's capacity to meet local needs, as was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine³⁴. Stakeholder feedback revealed that having teams in the field allowed the Bank to mobilise resources quickly and support RMCs in meeting their needs, primarily through budget support, including emergency food programs. In other instances, country offices were found to have facilitated rapid budget support and negotiations over debt arrears in Sudan and Zimbabwe, reducing transaction costs and increasing efficiency. Insights from local field teams also enabled the Bank to exit Sudan before the 2022/2023 coup, minimising risks.

The evaluation further revealed that regional hubs and country offices have improved alignment with regional priorities and strengthened service delivery. For instance, the East Africa Hub in Kenya reported enhanced collaboration with regional economic communities. Discussions with the Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI) indicated increased utilisation of the Regional Operations envelope thanks to closer client engagement and advisory services, enabling significant projects like the CAR/Congo Pointe Noire-Brazzaville-Bangui Multimodal Transport Corridor and the Desert to Power initiative in Mali and Mauritania. These achievements underscore how proximity fosters stronger client relationships and more tailored interventions. These findings are corroborated by survey data showing that 75% of respondents (331 out of 440) believe decentralisation has improved the Bank's responsiveness and adaptability to local contexts and needs.

3.3.2.3. Effective Operations and Development Impact

Enhanced local presence and closer proximity to clients are expected to improve the effectiveness of Bank operations, as evidenced by more timely project delivery, better portfolio quality and performance, and greater development impact.

Timeliness of project delivery: The evaluation found limited association between country presence and timely delivery of projects. A review of ADERs and retrospective review reports on budget showed that the Bank has not made significant improvements in the timeliness of project delivery indicators since 2015. ADER reports indicate that the average time from project approval to first disbursement and from concept note to disbursement has consistently missed its target, showing minimal progress. Performance worsened during the COVID-19 period as both the Bank and RMCs grappled with restrictions that hindered project design and implementation.

An assessment of 349 investment projects approved during the evaluation period showed better performance of projects in countries without offices than those with offices in terms of timely delivery. The average time from project approval to effectiveness (172 days) and time to first disbursement (296 days) was longer for countries with an office than for countries with no office (154 and 236 days, respectively). For the indicator on time from approval to first disbursement, this trend is similar in ADB countries (414 days vs. 318) and ADF countries (263 days vs. 213), with offices vs. those without. However, the evaluation noted that while HQ-managed investment projects outperformed decentralized projects in ADF countries regarding the average time from approval to effectiveness (130 days vs. 169) and time from approval to first disbursement (267 days vs. 297), decentralized projects in ADB countries with offices reached first disbursement at 366 days vs. 389 days in HQ-managed projects.

Furthermore, a regression analysis performed on a dataset of 130 independently validated completed projects found no association between project efficiency and Bank field presence or Task Manager location, except for the case of program-based operations. This finding is corroborated by an analysis of CSPE findings of countries with offices and those without, which identified similar causes for project delays, including procurement bottlenecks, slow achievement of effectiveness conditions, low institutional capacity, and lengthy approval processes. Document review and interviews with AfDB staff consistently pointed to the gaps in technical expertise and resources needed to manage complex projects (see Box 2) and slow decision-making on the Bank's side, resulting in delays in project

³³ AfDB-IDEV (2022), "Bénin : Évaluation de la stratégie et du programme pays de la BAD (2012–2021).

³⁴ Language adopted in the Communiqué issued by the Board of Governors at the AfDB's annual meetings in May 2022; Algeria, China, Egypt, Eswatini, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa entered a reservation and proposed "Russia-Ukraine Conflict".

implementation and procurements. As will be discussed later, more stringent application of design quality standards, including attention to environmental and social safeguards, may have also contributed to the limited changes in execution timeliness.

Box 2: Average project size

The evaluation noted that projects in countries with an AfDB office are, on average, larger and more complex, with an average project size of 26.7 mUA compared to 12.7 mUA in countries without an office. This complexity likely contributes to longer approval and disbursement timelines, as larger projects require more extensive preparation and oversight.

Source: IDEV Portfolio Review

Based on these findings, the evaluation concluded that decentralisation's success in accelerating project delivery remains constrained by the Bank's internal capacity and processes, the strength of local institutions, and project complexity.

Portfolio quality and performance: Decentralisation sought to improve portfolio quality and performance by positioning technical and ecosystem staff closer to projects and using streamlined processes to improve engagement, oversight, and faster problem resolution. A reduced number of problematic projects would demonstrate this. However, between 2015 and 2023, the evaluation observed no improvements in Bank operations facing challenges (from 29% to 30%), eligibility for cancellation (from 25% to 30%), and at-risk operations (from 15% to 15.8%), all indicators consistently performing below the Bank's targets. While some countries without an AfDB office reported a higher share of satisfactory projects, deeper analysis revealed a different pattern in transition states with newly established offices and those with offices older than 10 years. In Niger and Benin, newly established offices reduced flagged projects from 49% to 37% and 33% to 29%, respectively. In addition, up to 100% of locally managed projects were rated non-problematic in Guinea and Niger, compared to 87% managed from HQ. On the other hand, the regression analysis revealed that projects in countries with longstanding offices (> 10 years) are 4.2 times more likely to be non-problematic than those in countries with offices that had been in place for 10 years or less, underscoring the benefits of sustained local presence.

Stakeholder discussions with Bank staff and project implementation units (PIUs) highlighted the benefits of proximity, including better understanding of the local context, early problem detection, increased accessibility to AfDB staff, and other needed expertise. However, success hinges on adequate staffing and swift decision-making within the Bank, and robust country capacities in procurement and project management, both of which are already identified as challenges. Evaluation findings confirm that projects are supervised more frequently in a decentralised context, especially in transition countries. A review of 405 projects approved since 2019 shows that 62% of those managed outside HQ received at least one annual supervision³⁵, compared to 50% of HQ-managed projects. This trend is even more pronounced in transition contexts, where only 48% of HQ-managed projects are supervised annually — 14 percentage points lower than those managed outside HQ. Furthermore, at least 30% of projects in transition countries with local offices are supervised annually, whereas those in countries without offices receive less frequent oversight.

Persistent challenges, such as procurement delays, weak institutional capacity, and limited oversight, were observed to continue impacting portfolio performance. Despite efforts like the 2015 procurement policy, staff training, and regular country fiduciary clinics in building country capacities, gaps in training budgets, staffing shortages, and high PIU staff turnover remain. Consequently, the evaluation concluded that decentralisation alone cannot resolve these deep-rooted systemic challenges.

Development Impact: While proximity to operations has improved responsiveness and issue resolution, broader systemic challenges such as governance, institutional capacity, and staffing shortages continue to hinder progress. Despite efforts to improve project effectiveness, the percentage of operations achieving planned development outcomes remains below the Bank's targets. In 2023, only 71% of operations achieved their planned development outcomes, falling short of the 80% target. This performance shows limited progress from 2015, when the achievement rate was also 71%.

³⁵ This analysis considered both field and desk supervisions.

Logistic regression analysis of a sample of completed projects did not establish a clear pattern linking the Bank's physical presence through country offices to project performance at completion. However, the location of the Task Manager in the country was found to have a more substantial effect. Projects managed from HQ were 3.7 times more likely to receive a highly satisfactory overall rating and 2.7 times more likely to receive a highly satisfactory rating for effectiveness than those managed outside HQ. More significantly, projects managed from the country office were found to be 10.4 times more likely to receive a highly satisfactory overall rating and 3.4 times more likely to achieve a highly satisfactory effectiveness rating than projects managed from outside the country. These findings suggest that the closer the Task Manager is to the project's location, the higher the likelihood of achieving intended outputs and outcomes at project completion.

A review of 25 CSPEs completed in the evaluation period revealed several limiting factors to achieving effectiveness, including weak linkages between outputs and outcomes and articulation of the intervention logic³⁶. Additionally, Bank staffing constraints, country institutional capacity and complex operating contexts made implementation difficult. For example, the CSPEs highlighted that the Bank's shortage of Portuguese-speaking staff reduced the effectiveness of supervision and procurement support in Angola, Cabo Verde, and Guinea-Bissau, hampering implementation in these countries.

The evaluation finds that while decentralisation provides operational advantages, it is insufficient on its own. Studies from the World Bank³⁷ and AFD³⁸ confirm that success depends on robust institutions and governance quality, along with policy coordination. Document review also suggests that robust public sector management and policy alignment enhance service delivery and development impact.

Partnerships, Coordination and Policy Dialogue: The evaluation found that decentralisation strengthened the Bank's coordination with development partners and its role in policy dialogue. Survey results show that 73% of respondents believe decentralisation improved collaboration with other donors. In South Africa, for example, local AfDB involvement facilitated joint work with the World Bank. At the same time, in Western Africa, the Bank recently took the lead on large-scale cross-border projects such as the Dakar-St Louis Highway and regional corridors. The evaluation also noted that 24% of projects managed by country offices attracted cofinancing versus 13% for headquarters-managed projects.

The evaluation further revealed that decentralisation bolstered the Bank's influence in policy dialogue where local presence and adequate staffing are in place. Offices with dedicated managers and task managers on-site enjoyed stronger strategic policy discussions, while countries lacking such presence struggled. Despite staffing constraints, country managers consistently engage in thematic cooperation groups³⁹. However, the evaluation found limited examples of improved engagement with civil society networks in case study countries beyond Kenya. In countries where the Deputy Director General (DDG) acts as Country Manager, the evaluation noted limitations to the Bank's high-level policy role and found that while in-country economists can facilitate macroeconomic dialogue, experienced sector staff and senior representation are needed for broader strategic influence. Understaffing and overburdened personnel were also found to restrict the Bank's capacity to participate consistently in policy and donor coordination groups. Nevertheless, the evaluation found that development partners and country officials still regard the Bank as pivotal, citing its close ties to African governments and strong local context knowledge. Consequently, the evaluation concluded that reinforcing in-country staffing is critical for expanding the Bank's operational effectiveness, partnerships, and leadership in development.

3.3.3. What were the unintended outcomes of decentralisation?

The evaluation found that the decentralised support functions have enabled **innovative sectoral work and collaboration with regional and local entities**. For instance, regional IT coordinators provided

³⁶ The Bank instituted improvements in readiness reviews to address some of the design shortcomings in 2021. However, the evaluation found insufficient project-level data to enable an analysis of the impact of these changes on the achievement of development outcomes. A review of ADER ratings on the quality of new operations shows marginal improvements from 3.10 in 2016 to 3.30 in 2021 but remaining below the target and maximum value of 4.

³⁷ World Bank. *Decentralisation in Africa: Emerging Trends and Progress*. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/249951468336075944/decentralisation-in-africa-emerging-trends-and-progress>

³⁸ Agence Française de Développement (AFD). *The Political Economy of Decentralisation in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

³⁹ Case study interviews and CSPE reports indicate that policy dialogue and donor coordination is easier where coordination mechanisms/platforms like sector/development working groups already exist.

technical expertise to the African Union's cybersecurity initiative, demonstrating how decentralisation can add value beyond core operational responsibilities. However, the evaluation noted **limited documentation and communication of such positive innovations**, reducing the Bank's capacity to showcase local successes and enhance its visibility.

The evaluation also revealed that **decentralisation inadvertently created regional silos**, which potentially undermined the One Bank Approach by weakening cross-regional collaboration and internal cohesion. Although establishing Regional Hubs aimed to boost operational efficiency, the evaluation found that it could impede central coordination and knowledge sharing. Staff described the hubs as "mini banks," pointing to inadequate information-sharing platforms. Further, limited staff rotation — both between regions and between HQ and country offices — deepened these silos, restricting the Bank's corporate culture. The evaluation noted that several employees recruited since 2018 had never visited Abidjan Headquarters, exacerbating the disconnect between HQ and the regions, and curtailing opportunities for cross-pollination. IDEV's Comparative Study of MDB Operating Models found that the World Bank Group had experienced similar challenges.

3.3.4. Factors affecting implementation and effectiveness

The evaluation identified key internal factors influencing AfDB's decentralisation, drawing insights from interviews, document reviews (including ADERs and CSPE reports), and statistical analysis. It found that Management's push for client proximity, reinforced by the UDAP and DBDM, played a critical role in advancing decentralisation. Notably, 85% of survey respondents affirmed decentralisation as a Bank priority. However, several challenges were also found to affect implementation:

- **Field Presence:** Countries with offices experienced more substantial portfolio growth, donor coordination, and policy dialogue (statistical analysis and case studies). However, inadequate staffing in country offices limited responsiveness to local needs. The evaluation observed that partial implementation of the 2019–2020 rightsizing exercise, a nearly two-year delay in finalising the Delegation of Authority Matrix introduced in 2018, inconsistent enforcement of the updated staff rotation policy, and insufficient relocation incentives further hindered decentralisation.
- **Financial Capacity:** The 2019 GCI VII boosted capital from USD 93 billion to USD 208 billion, enhancing project approvals and overall portfolio growth. Nevertheless, lending constraints and resource limitations were found to continue to shape operations.
- **Project Quality and Readiness:** Findings indicated that delays arose from incomplete technical designs, weak contractor performance, capacity gaps in PIUs, and slow procurement and disbursements, affecting timely execution and achievement of results.
- **Safeguards Compliance:** While crucial for sustainability, adherence to safeguard requirements was found to have introduced additional complexity and delays, especially in large-scale projects.

External factors beyond the Bank's control also influenced decentralisation outcomes:

- **COVID-19 Impact:** The pandemic (2020–2021) reduced country office management and limited staff relocations. Project approvals dropped to 46% in 2020, delaying supervision and disbursement, though remote work mitigated some effects. Weak economic growth and rising debt in several countries also constrained borrowing, shrinking the lending portfolio.
- **Political Instability:** Transitions and conflicts were found to have disrupted project implementation, worsening portfolio performance. In Sudan, flagged projects surged from 28% in 2020 to 78% in 2024, while Guinea also saw an increase.
- **Counterpart Funding Delays:** Securing counterpart funding from governments and co-financiers was commonly found to slow project execution, disbursements, and development outcomes.

Overall, the effectiveness of the UDAP and decentralisation efforts was rated **partly unsatisfactory**.

3.4. Efficiency

This section assesses the extent to which implementation of the UDAP occurred as planned (timeliness and budget), the extent to which cost savings objectives have been met, and the adequacy of the

staffing, structures, systems, and accountability to support decentralisation objectives.⁴⁰

The evaluation findings show a weak performance in terms of efficiency due to inadequate achievement of timeliness and cost savings objectives. Timeliness in UDAP implementation was found inconsistent, with delays in key actions like rightsizing and DAM revisions. While the evaluation found evidence of some cost savings made from decentralisation, there is insufficient data to assess whether it has minimised incremental costs of decentralisation. Though staffing has increased over time, it has remained below the target set for country and regional offices. Organisational structures and other resources, such as IT, have been established to support decentralisation. However, gaps in delegation of authority, financial resources, and budget control were found to hamper regional and country offices' ability to address local needs efficiently. While evidence suggests that the decentralisation monitoring system is evolving, the lack of comprehensive and systematic monitoring of UDAP intentions since 2018 has hindered a thorough assessment of its contributions to institutional reforms in the evaluation period. Finally, staffing shortages and poor communication were deemed to have limited local visibility and coordination.

3.4.1. To what extent has the implementation of decentralisation aligned with the planned initial targets, budgets, and timelines?

This section covers Timeliness, discussing the extent to which the UDAP and other decentralisation efforts have been implemented within the targeted timelines; Cost Analysis, assessing the extent of implementation of the UDAP within budget and cost savings realised; and Staffing and Organizational Systems Adequacy, assessing the adequacy of human resources, structures, and systems to support decentralisation, as well as coordination and communication.

3.4.1.1. Timeliness

The evaluation revealed that the UDAP's implementation was not executed in accordance with the scheduled timeline, exceeding the stipulated three-year period from 2016 to 2018. The plan was approved in June 2016, already shortening the available implementation time. While eight of the 22 tracked actions were completed on time, key initiatives such as the DAM revision and the rightsizing exercise experienced delays exceeding two years, thus affecting efficiency. Notable successes included the timely transfer of responsibilities in 2016 and the operationalisation of regional hubs on time in 2017, demonstrating the Bank's ability to deliver when coordination and resources align. However, delays in the DAM revision from 2016 to 2018 and rightsizing that is still partially implemented even at the time of the evaluation were found to have created inefficiencies in decision-making and workforce alignment.

3.4.1.2. Cost Analysis

The evaluation revealed that although some savings have been realised due to decentralisation, there is insufficient data to assess whether it has minimised incremental costs to the Bank.

UDAP Implementation Costs: The cost of implementation of the UDAP was estimated at 34.39 mUA, including 27.65 mUA of nonrecurrent costs (i.e. staffing and skills mix adjustment and relocation costs) and 6.74 mUA in recurrent costs (staff salaries, benefits, and accommodation). Savings of 9.69 mUA were expected to offset this cost through corporate and sector restructuring. However, the absence of additional cost breakdowns for different areas and the lack of distinction between UDAP and DBDM costs made it difficult to analyse, estimate, and track specific expenses related to decentralisation. Therefore, the evaluation cannot assess whether the plan was implemented within budget.

Incremental cost savings from decentralisation: Despite the data challenges noted above, the evaluation reviewed the extent to which expected savings from reducing incremental costs of decentralisation were realised. The UDAP estimated achieving potential savings of 28.9 mUA by

⁴⁰ While this evaluation makes mention of findings related to the collaboration between sectors, regions, and HQ, this will be handled in more detail under the ongoing One Bank Approach evaluation.

rationalising field staff benefits, increasing the use of LP staff and long-term consultants, reorganising office space, and reducing HQ and travel costs. The evaluation encountered some limitations in assessing the cost savings due to the limited relevance of some of the cost savings measures to decentralisation efforts (i.e. the move to the new HQ building in Abidjan) and lack of information on how the increased use of Local Professional (LP) staff⁴¹ and long-term consultants would lead to cost savings.

The evaluation analysis revealed that while some savings were made from the rationalisation of country and regional office staff benefits, they did not meet the target of 15.3mUA. Other potential savings from mission costs and optimisation of office space were also not fully realised.

- Field office staff benefits: Analysis of budget expenditure data showed that country and regional office staff benefits decreased by 66.6% (from 16.3 mUA to 5.5 mUA), resulting in a saving of 10.8 mUA, below the target of 15.3 mUA and therefore a savings shortfall of 4.5 mUA. Specifically, a 2.13 mUA decrease in housing allowance was observed between 2016 and 2018 due to the 2017 compensation policy and installation allowances. However, this was offset by increased HQ staff benefits (from 60.3 mUA to 79.2 mUA), raising overall staff benefits from UA 76.9 million in 2016 to UA 84.8 million in 2023. Data and discussions with the budget department revealed that while country and regional office staff benefits decreased, overall administrative expenses grew by 42.3% from 283 mUA to 403 mUA due to i) management efforts to reduce the vacancy rate⁴², (ii) regular merit increases and performance adjustments, and (iii) implementation of the DBDM and Total Compensation Framework.
- Missions: Operational mission⁴³ costs in Africa increased from 10 mUA in 2016 to 10.4 mUA in 2023. This trend includes a peak of 17.7 mUA in 2019 before decreasing to around 2 mUA in the COVID period due to reduced travel. It is worth noting that these mission costs were mainly driven by missions originating from HQ, which steadily increased from 0.4 mUA⁴⁴ in 2016 to 5.7 mUA in 2023, peaking at 11.7 mUA in 2019. Overall, the cost of missions originating from HQ represented around 50% of the total mission costs over the period. The proportion of missions within regions increased from 43% in 2016 to 53% in 2023. Moreover, over the period 2016-2023, operational missions amounted to 85 mUA, making up 84% of total mission costs.
- Office space utilisation and potential savings: Underutilised office space in some regions represents a missed cost-saving opportunity, with an average occupancy rate of 59% across 38 country offices as of September 2024 despite high lease expenses. In 2023, annual lease costs for country offices reached 8.1 mUA, nearly matching HQ costs (7.9 mUA) as per the real estate data shared with the evaluation team. For instance, the Cameroon office operates at only 29% occupancy, costing 630,000 UA annually. The real estate team attributes office size planning to current and future business needs but acknowledges that delays in staffing and rightsizing complicate accurate space estimation. These discussions revealed that leasing out underutilised spaces could generate savings, depending on diplomatic agreements with host countries.
- Costs of preparing and implementing investment projects: Available evidence from the ADER indicates that costs for preparing and implementing investment projects have fluctuated since 2016. The cost of preparing a lending project rose from 85.6 kUA in 2015 to 128 kUA in 2018 before declining to 80 kUA in 2022. Project implementation support costs increased from 19.7 kUA in 2015 to 28 kUA in 2018, reaching 24.1 kUA in 2022, exceeding the 19 kUA target. However, COVID-19-related travel restrictions and remote work temporarily reduced expenses, while IT investments and virtual solutions helped lower supervision costs. In both cases, decentralisation contributed to some of these costs in some years, such as 2018 and 2019, when staff capacity and expertise were expanded⁴⁵. However, the evaluation also found that

⁴¹ Though unable to estimate the impact of an increase in LP staff use due to decentralisation, the evaluation finds that the proportion of LP staff decreased from 9.4% in 2016 to 7.6% in 2023, while the proportion of Professional Level (PL) staff increased from 55% to 62.9%. While the Bank-wide expenditure on LP salaries increased from 7.9 mUA in 2016 to 9.2 mUA in 2023, it declined from 7.9 mUA in 2016 to 1.45 mUA in 2023 at the decentralised offices level. The evaluation attributes this decline to the remapping of staff to sectors, resulting in the expenditure no longer being recorded under field office expenses.

⁴² The vacancy rate for professional staff decreased from 16% in 2015 to 12.8% in 2022 and 7.7% in 2023.

⁴³ This category includes missions related to business development, portfolio management and knowledge services.

⁴⁴ In 2016, the Bank was still in the process of moving back to Côte d'Ivoire from its Temporary Relocation Agency in Tunisia. When considering both Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia, the number of operational missions originating from these two countries in 2016 was 3009, amounting to 8.2 mUA.

⁴⁵ ADER.

the Bank's drive to improve the quality of operations may also have contributed to cost increases due to expanded project teams linked to operating as One Bank, adoption of more stringent quality at entry requirements and increase in environmental and social safeguard standards⁴⁶ as well as recording staff time spent on a project.⁴⁷ Discussions with the Budget Department also indicated that changes in the cost accounting systems over the period could explain some of the changes in costs.

The financial impacts of decentralisation vary significantly across MDBs: The evaluation found that the AfDB has maintained stable costs during decentralisation, anticipating future savings. In contrast, other MDBs, such as AsDB, WBG, and IsDB, reported increased operational costs due to HR constraints and the complexity of managing decentralised operations. Without a formal decentralisation policy, EBRD faces difficulties in cost management and maintaining operational efficiency. The Bank's experience reflects a broader MDB decentralisation challenge: balancing proximity benefits with rising costs. Initial infrastructure and staffing investments have increased operational expenditures, particularly in logistics and support services for relocated staff. While long-term efficiency gains could offset these costs, achieving sustainability depends on effective monitoring and evaluation to optimise decentralisation's financial and operational impact.

3.4.1.3. Staffing and Organizational Systems Adequacy

This section on adequacy of human resources, structures, and systems to support decentralisation includes the following sub-sections: Staffing, Organisational Systems, Delegation of Authority, and Coordination and Communication.

3.4.1.3.1 Staffing

The evaluation found that while staffing in country offices has increased since 2015, it remains below targets, leading to staffing shortages and workload imbalances and hindering the Bank's operational efficiency and effectiveness. Delays in implementing effective rightsizing, strategic staffing reforms, and weak rotation policies were found to have further curtailed the Bank's ability to deliver on its development objectives.

Staffing Gaps: Analysis of staff data shows that staff in country and regional offices increased by 25.5% from 636 in 2015 to 798 in 2024, as compared to an 11% increase from 1,158 to 1,287 staff at HQ within the same period⁴⁸ as can be seen from Figure 4. However, this resulted in only a marginal increase in the share of decentralised staff as a proportion of total Bank staff from 35.5% in 2015 to 38.3% in 2024, leading to staffing shortages. RDVP indicated a shortage of at least 59 positions as compared to the targets set in its 2022 rightsizing plans. At the time of the evaluation, only 48% of country offices had three core staff members (Country Manager, Economist, and Program/Portfolio Officer) as outlined in the UDAP⁴⁹.

The extent of decentralisation was found to vary across sectoral complexes and the eco-system, in some cases. The portfolio analysis found RDVP to be the most decentralised complex, with over 88% of its staff in regional and country offices. The sector complexes varied, averaging at 42.5%, with the highest for the Agriculture, Human and Social Development Complex- AHVP (54%) and lowest in PIVP (36%). Both the Power, Energy, Climate, and Green Growth Complex (PEVP) and the Technology and Corporate Services Complex (TCVP) stand at 40%. With regard to the eco-system, the financial management and procurement departments were found to be the most decentralised at 88.8% and 78% respectively, followed by the safeguards department (68%), loan disbursement division (47.8%) and the legal department at 11.2%.

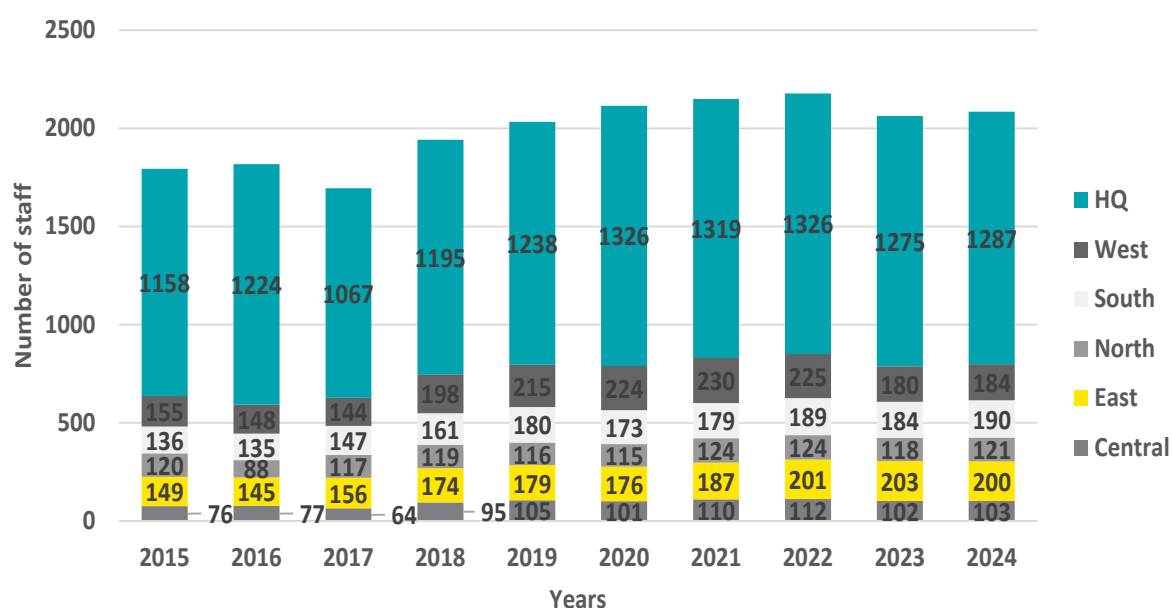
⁴⁶ For example, operations appraised for ESS standards increased from 87% in 2015 to 100% in 2023; operations with a gender informed design increased from 75% to 91% in the same period.

⁴⁷ ADER 2022. Additional data on ATRS reporting shows that time reporting increased from 83% in 2019 to 92% in 2022 and to 94% in 2024.

⁴⁸ This is actual head count data and excludes vacant positions.

⁴⁹ Specific gaps include five country offices without a Country Manager, 10 without a Country Economist, and five without a Program/Portfolio Officer. Additionally, the Mauritania Liaison Office has no resident staff.

Figure 4: Total staff numbers in country and regional offices and at HQ (2015-2024)



Source: IDEV analysis of HR Data

Task Manager adequacy and workload imbalances: Stakeholder feedback and document review highlighted that staffing shortages have led to workload imbalances among Task Managers (TMs), affecting the Bank's operational efficiency. The evaluation found that TMs are more concentrated at HQ and in regional hubs, with 37% based at HQ, 32.5% in the five regional hubs, and 30.5% in the 38 country offices. Coverage in transition states remains limited, with only 29 TMs spread across 11 transition states where the Bank has offices.

While the higher concentration of TMs in regional hubs aligns with the current hub-and-spoke model, stakeholder feedback and regression analysis indicate that locating TMs in-country enhances issue resolution and project effectiveness. Additionally, an analysis of resident sectoral expertise against active portfolio shows that, on average, only 29% of country offices have at least 50% of the required expertise, further highlighting staffing gaps. Regional imbalances were also found, with higher sectoral expertise coverage in East and West Africa (40%) compared to the Central (20%), Southern (22%), and Northern (25%) regions.

Concerns over excessive workloads were echoed across all regions. A 2024 workload rebalancing exercise increased the percentage of TMs meeting the newly instituted 3–5 SO projects threshold from 18% to 37%. However, this also led to a rise in overloaded TMs from 25% to 34%, especially in Economic Governance and Knowledge Management Complex (ECVP) and PIVP, as many continue to juggle both project origination and management. Workload imbalances were further found to be exacerbated for bilingual staff, especially those speaking high-demand languages (e.g., Portuguese), who manage disproportionately more projects. While the rebalancing exercise reduced the proportion of TMs handling fewer than the required threshold from 49% to 29%, opportunities remain for better workload optimisation and more equitable distribution of staffing resources to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

The evaluation found that the root causes of staffing shortages include Management decisions to retain TMs at HQ for cost efficiency reasons, staff reluctance to relocate to certain countries (particularly transition states), and the slow implementation of the rightsizing/strategic staffing exercise and rotation policy. These findings stem from interviews with Bank staff and Management and evaluation survey data indicating that 63% of staff respondents deemed staffing in regional and country offices insufficient. At least 64% of respondents in the survey conducted separately by the Decentralisation Task Force also highlighted inadequate staffing and skill mix at local levels. Moreover, the evaluation found that the partial implementation of the rightsizing initiative, attributed to budget constraints and the absence of comprehensive manuals or guidelines for rightsizing staff in country offices, impeded the systematic assessment and adjustment of staffing needs. As a result, some

country offices remain understaffed, limiting their capacity to manage projects effectively and engage with local stakeholders. Aside from TMs, other staffing gaps commonly identified in interviews include NSOs, procurement and financial management, and regional or country-level communication expertise. Interviews with staff indicated that while the allocation of regional NSO leads has improved coordination of activities at the local level, confusion persists regarding their roles alongside those of managers and TMs. In addition, staff expressed that the continued concentration of other staff at HQ limits the full realisation of decentralisation benefits.

Regarding staff rotation, the evaluation found that while Country Managers, Programme/Portfolio Officers, and Country Economists are the most frequently rotated staff, other personnel, including those in transition countries, are not, leading to delays in filling critical positions and a sense of demotivation. Furthermore, external factors such as COVID-19 travel restrictions were identified to have delayed recruitment and relocation. The evaluation also noted that alternative solutions, such as short-term assignments, were unsuccessful due to the lack of approved guidelines. These challenges underscore the need for strategic staffing reforms to address persistent gaps and enhance operational efficiency in country offices.

3.4.1.3.2 Organizational Systems Adequacy

Organisational structure for decentralisation: The Bank's decentralisation framework, detailed in the Country Office and Regional Directorate Handbook, incorporates all country offices and regional hubs under the RDVP complex. This structure is supported by the RDVP Front Office, the Regional Integration Coordination Office (RDRI), and the Transition States Coordination Office (RDTs). The Bank operates five regional hubs—North, South, East, West, and Central—alongside a Country Department Office in Nigeria. Each country office is intended to be led by a Country Manager and each regional hub by a Director General, backed by sectoral functions and administrative capabilities to ensure rapid service delivery to client countries. Regional hubs provide overall guidance to country offices, supervising operations, business development, project management, and the effective delivery of the Bank's High 5s.

Reorganisation efforts in 2022 were found to have enhanced operational efficiency by establishing regional sector divisions within AHVP, PIVP, PEVP, and ECVP. These changes were observed to have somewhat improved coordination and responsiveness to local needs. Additionally, creating implementation support units within regional hubs was found to have played a critical role in enhancing operational efficiency. These units coordinate operations across countries and sectors, oversee portfolio quality, and facilitate quarterly work programming and budgeting meetings. These meetings are platforms for joint progress assessments, prioritisation, and follow-up on new business ideas, contributing to more effective project delivery.

The evaluation observed that variations in the Bank's organisational structure across regions and countries sometimes impact efficiency in coordination and decision-making and could potentially undermine leadership effectiveness. For example, as indicated in case study interviews, Deputy Directors-General (DDGs) oversee 3-5 countries in addition to administrative and work program coordination duties, stretching their capacity and limiting engagement in policy dialogue and strategic relationships. Furthermore, only 24% of sector managers (15 out of 53) are based in the regions, restricting local decision-making and responsiveness.

ICT Services and Infrastructure: The Bank was found to have made significant progress in modernising its IT infrastructure and automating business processes, playing a crucial role in supporting decentralisation. Discussions with staff at different levels highlighted that the introduction of regional IT coordinators in 2017 and their deployment in 2018 has enhanced responsiveness to operational needs. Improved connectivity in regions and country offices was found to have facilitated remote work, while automated consultant procurement systems, disbursement portals, regional dashboards, and Remote Appraisal, Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation (RASME) streamlined operations. Updates to SAP and the Bank-Wide Program Processing Schedule (BPPS) have further aligned processes with the DAM, expected to increase efficiency and transparency. Digital collaborative workspaces were reported to have strengthened cross-regional coordination, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these advancements, staff interviews and survey findings indicated that connectivity issues and limited IT resources in some country and government offices have hindered the full utilisation of digital tools. In addition, inadequate IT personnel in some regions and centralised decision-making for IT procurement were found to limit the agility of regional offices. The evaluation found that some processes, such as procurement digitalisation, remain underdeveloped compared to other MDBs,

affecting accountability and efficiency. Both Bank and government staff met during case studies indicated that while IT tools have improved communication, they cannot fully replace the value of face-to-face interactions, particularly for building trust and resolving complex issues, especially in transition environments.

Oversight and Reporting: The Bank has enhanced oversight and assessment through consistent, transparent reporting. Regional operational dashboards now offer real-time project performance data, improving monitoring and decision-making. This complements the work program agreement coordination meetings and monthly operations status reports discussed in Senior Management meetings to address progress and challenges in meeting work objectives. Reporting on decentralisation was, however, found inconsistent due to delays in updating essential documents like the DAM and the Operations Manual. While the evidence shows that the monitoring system is undergoing transformation, some weaknesses still exist. Since the dissolution of the TMT in 2018, progress monitoring was found fragmented, leading to limited oversight and a lack of comprehensiveness and systematic structure. Regular reporting is crucial for tracking progress and identifying areas for improvement.

3.4.1.3.3 Processes and Delegation of Authority

The evaluation found mixed results regarding how much the DAM has clarified roles and responsibilities and eased decision-making.

Progress in transitioning authority and resources from HQ to regional and country offices was found inconsistent during the evaluation period. Under the DBDM, to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, the Bank aimed to increase budgets and decision-making powers for business delivery units, namely country and regional offices, while retaining some functions at HQ to support strategic development and ensure controls and risk management. This was implemented in 2016 and promulgated under the DAM. However, the distribution of authority and control over resources was later reversed in 2020, following the adoption of the One Bank Approach, which was initiated to further clarify the roles of the country and regional offices and to reconfigure HQ.

The DAM outlines responsibilities, authority, and accountability for Bank staff and decision-making structures. It has been updated thrice during the evaluation period (2018, 2022, 2024) to align with the DBDM and One Bank Approach, providing clarity in authority delegation among HQ, regional offices, and country offices. Following the first two revisions of the DAM, Bank staff received training, with planning for training after the latest update ongoing during the evaluation. Established in 2019, the DAM help desk supports decentralisation but faces staffing constraints, with only three employees struggling to respond promptly to inquiries. Although staff can consult DAM focal points or managers, the weak support system was found to contribute to delays in decentralised decision-making.

In all cases, updates to the DAMs have been delayed, resulting in a gap in the availability of guidance. For example, the first DAM revision to align with the DBDM, planned for 2016, was not issued until August 2018; the subsequent revision, aimed at aligning with the One Bank Approach, was promulgated in March 2022; while the most recent revision was published in July 2024, despite analysis being completed in December 2022. Furthermore, other DAM structures, for example Technical Quality Assurance and Technical Investment Committees meant to reduce the number of decisions requiring approval from the Senior Management Coordination Committee (SMCC) and thus decrease processing time, have yet to be established. Evidence suggests that additional efficiency losses may emerge from transferring certain procurement decision-making powers from TMs to already overburdened Sector Managers. However, fully evaluating the extent to which the DAM has improved efficiency in decision-making is beyond the scope of this evaluation; nonetheless, it is a matter that could be examined in the future.

Inadequacies in the current authority framework. Only 68% of Bank respondents in the evaluation survey believe the clarity in decision-making authority and delegation has improved. Regarding the decision-making power balance between HQ and local levels, 52% found it somewhat or adequately balanced. Interviews and qualitative survey responses highlighted concerns about the concentration of authority in HQ and the limited decision-making powers of regional and country offices. The UDAP principle of subsidiarity, which states that all operational tasks should be performed at regional or country offices with the attendant authority, was not found to be consistently applied. Countries and regions await decisions and guidance from HQ-based sectors, leading to delays. Additionally, the Decentralisation Task Force survey indicated that 56% of respondents believe that the DAM does not adequately reflect the decentralisation agenda due to accountability and resource issues.

The Bank's budget data shows that decentralised offices have limited financial control. Country offices managed less than 60% of their budgets, a downward trend since 2022, limiting resource allocation and response to local needs. Similar sentiments were raised by senior managers and in an online survey. The evaluation found that the inadequacy in human and financial resource allocation undermined the ability of decentralised offices to respond to country needs and to profile the Bank as a leading organisation on the ground.

The evaluation also concluded that recent updates to the DAM weakened TMs' decision-making power on the issuance of non-objection notices, approvals, extension of projects, and revision of goods and services of different categories, creating dependency on sector managers and an overburdened ecosystem. Operational delays, exacerbated by insufficient process flexibility and tensions, were observed in most regions.

Despite updates, interviews revealed that there was an uneven understanding by staff across regions of roles and responsibilities under the matrix system. While some clarity exists, the distinction of roles between HQ, regions, and countries remains limited, as illustrated in Box 3. In Tunisia, for example, staff and one local stakeholder interviewed reported insufficiently clear delineation of responsibilities between the Bank's operational and sectoral functions. In Southern Africa, feedback indicated that while the matrix system is understood at the Senior Management level, frontline staff sometimes struggle to grasp their specific roles within this structure or to whom they should report on particular matters. In addition, dual reporting was sometimes described as redundant and generating inefficiencies in project delivery. Some accountability issues generated by the redesign of the DAM were also noted. Staff interviewed in RDGS, for instance, indicated that responsibility over procurement orders below a certain amount was transferred to Administrative and Finance staff without additional training and resources, generating fiduciary risks.

Experiences from other MDBs reinforce that effective decentralisation requires clear delegation of authority and role clarity. The AfDB, AsDB, and WBG have successfully decentralised key roles to improve responsiveness, supported by tools like the DAM and the Accountability and Decision-Making Matrix. These frameworks clarify roles, enhance accountability, and streamline processes. Conversely, EBRD and IsDB were found to struggle with limited authority delegation and unclear roles, hindering their decentralisation efforts.

Box 3: Clarity in Roles and Responsibilities between the HQ, regional and country offices

"Clearer roles need to be assigned to countries, regions, and HQ staff to avoid duplication and conflicts. Roles at each level must complement the other rather than compete with the other. For example, sector personnel at the HQ cannot go on missions to a country or region with sector personnel stationed unless they are invited by country or regional sector personnel to complement their efforts. Country and sector dialogue cannot be prosecuted from two angles, whereby HQ staff are engaging governments separately from engagements by country or regional staff. HQ staff should only join country or regional staff to engage with the government at the national or sector level. Different teams should not replicate these engagements, or we will end up confusing the government.

Source: IDEV's Decentralisation Evaluation Survey

3.4.1.3.4 Coordination and Communication

While the evaluation found that decentralisation has improved some aspects of coordination and communication, it also noted some remaining challenges. Staff feedback (see Box 4) and the findings of the DBDM evaluation indicated that communication about the decentralisation process was stronger and more consistent until 2017, leveraging similar efforts under the DBDM implementation. In addition, some coordination platforms including country and regional team meetings are continuing to provide opportunities for coordination of activities across sectors, countries and HQ.

However, quantitative data from the online survey reflects mixed perceptions, with 44% of respondents indicating improvement and 44% reporting no change⁵⁰. Similarly, during a field visit to Tunisia, national authorities emphasised the lack of visibility and communication regarding the Bank's decentralisation efforts. This contrasts with the Southern and East Africa regions, where external stakeholders reported

⁵⁰ The remaining 12% were undecided.

that decentralisation was communicated and understood as beneficial to operations. These findings suggest that while progress has been made, gaps remain in internal and external communication. For example, coordination and communication between HQ, regional offices, and country offices was found suboptimal, hindering the effectiveness of decentralisation. The Decentralisation Taskforce survey also highlighted the need to strengthen communication and awareness channels to enhance coordination between HQ and regional offices. Uneven cross-regional collaboration was identified as a significant barrier to synergy, limiting the Bank's ability to implement the One Bank delivery model (Action 22 of the GCI-VII). Most regional offices reported to be overstretched with their portfolios, reducing their capacity to support other regions. The evaluation found this issue to be compounded by inadequate platforms for sharing resources and information beyond the RDVP retreats.

The evaluation found **coordination challenges between Management and Board members**, particularly in information flow and engagement with country authorities. Interviews with Executive Directors (EDs) expressed that in some cases, weak communication has limited the Bank's visibility and stakeholder relationships, affecting its positioning. However, engagement was observed to vary among EDs, with some actively strengthening government and partner relations, while others were less involved. This inconsistency points to a need for improved collaboration and communication to enhance the Bank's influence across regions.

Visibility and local engagement: While decentralisation has strengthened the Bank's local presence, its effect on visibility was found to have been hindered by insufficient staffing and communication gaps. Survey data indicates that 79% of respondents (349 out of 440) believe decentralisation has added value regarding the Bank's visibility and profile in the country. However, stakeholders in case studies and interviews highlighted that enhanced visibility must be accompanied by adequate, high-quality staffing to maximise impact. Furthermore, the physical characteristics of some of the Bank's offices, such as their size, location, and ownership, have occasionally resulted in mixed perceptions about the Bank's status compared to other development partners. Regional and country offices raised challenges around gaps in human and financial resources for communication.

Box 4: Perception of survey respondents on communication about decentralisation

"The enthusiasm in communication that went with the initial decentralisation seems to have fizzled out, and more recently, nobody has been communicating on this subject of decentralisation. This is also linked to staff rotation."

"While the 'WHY' was clearly communicated, the 'HOW' was never clear, especially when it came to reporting lines and budget allocation. Maybe more recently, some of these issues have gradually self-resolved as people work out what is most feasible within their complex, but this was never clear at the onset and very little communication to those concerned."

"The decentralisation process seems to have suffered a strategic abandonment along the way. Communication relating to the process slowly diminished over the last five years."

Source: IDEV's Decentralisation Evaluation Survey

Based on the performance assessed in the previous sections, the evaluation rated the efficiency of the Bank's decentralisation as **partly unsatisfactory**.

3.5. Sustainability

This section identifies the DAP results likely to be sustained and the factors/risks to maintaining those benefits.

The evaluation found that the benefits of decentralisation are likely to be sustained over the medium to long term. Key evidence includes the operationalisation of regional hubs, increased revenue generation by country offices, enhanced staff capacity-building efforts, new offices since 2015, and the interest of remaining RMCs without offices to see some type of physical Bank presence. The evaluation finds the likelihood of the Bank meeting the ongoing expenses of decentralisation to be high, given the current trajectory of incomes and expenditures. Projects managed from country offices were found to be more sustainable than those managed from headquarters, as reflected in higher sustainability ratings in

project completion report evaluations. However, persistent staffing challenges, including reliance on contingent staff and difficulties in attracting and retaining personnel for decentralised roles, remain critical risks to the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the decentralised model.

The Bank was found to have successfully established and operationalised a network of country and liaison offices coordinated by regional hubs. As reported in the effectiveness section, the Bank has successfully established and operationalised its five regional hubs in Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Tunisia from 2017 onward. These hubs guide and supervise country offices within their region and are responsible for the AfDB's business development, operations, and project management. During the evaluation, data collection missions in various countries revealed that these hubs were largely equipped with the necessary administrative and operational resources and responsibilities to operate, although some staffing challenges and financial resource constraints were identified. This increases the hubs' resilience to changing circumstances, contributing to the sustainability of the Bank's decentralisation efforts.

In parallel, country offices have demonstrated, in most situations, their capacity to generate revenue by supporting project implementation and fostering economic development within their respective regions. The portfolio analysis showed that the Bank's operations portfolio growth is higher by 7.5pp on an annual average in countries where the Bank is present compared to countries without an AfDB office. Portfolio fluctuation also tends to be more stable where the Bank is present than where it is not. Since 2017, for example, annual portfolio growth has varied between +9.5% and -0.7% where the Bank has an office and between +21.4% and -25.8% where it does not. It is important to note that, besides the influence of the Bank's presence, portfolio fluctuations are also dependent on external factors such as the country's economic situation, political stability, or external shocks such as COVID-19 during the period under review. Engagement with local government in policy dialogue, contribution to development partners' (DPs') coordination, and development impacts also appear to improve with the Bank's presence. This evidence suggests that the decentralisation process will likely produce sustained benefits for the AfDB.

Evidence suggests that projects managed from country offices are more sustainable than those managed by HQ. The analysis of project completion report evaluation notes' (PCREN) ratings indicated that projects managed from a country office at completion have a higher sustainability rating than projects managed from HQ. For instance, the portfolio review showed that around 95.6% of projects managed from country offices were rated satisfactory and above for sustainability. This performance was only 83% (12pp below) for projects task-managed from HQ.

Integrating decentralisation intentions into core policy and operational frameworks and linking them to organisational efficiency and effectiveness was found to strengthen the likelihood of sustainability. For example, the integration into the TYS, the Bank's Results Measurement Framework, general capital increase, and the ADF commitments demonstrated the Bank's commitment to operationalising decentralisation by providing the principles, operational framework, and basis for accountability.

Financial Sustainability: The evaluation found that the Bank's current and projected financial performance appears sufficient to meet decentralisation's existing administrative and capital expenditure costs. Over the evaluation period, the Bank's net income rose from a negative value of 30.83 in 2015 to 360.05 mUA in 2023. The evaluation found that while administrative costs have increased from 2016 to 2023, budget reports indicate that these expenditures have remained within the approved budget. However, it remains to be determined whether further expansion of decentralisation, including staffing and other capital investments in purchasing or constructing country/regional offices, could be managed within the annual cap. Despite the potential risk of a reduction in callable capital, financial reports indicate that the Bank's capital adequacy metrics have remained within limits for the past four years, maintaining the Bank's ability to continue lending and generate income. Given the current trajectory of incomes and expenditures, the evaluation finds that the likelihood of the Bank meeting the ongoing expenses of decentralisation is high.

The Bank's investment in capacity building of staff in ROs and COs was found to contribute to making the benefits of decentralisation more sustainable. The AfDB has significantly reinforced staff training programs and the development of operational guidelines/policies to support the implementation of operations. Training has targeted operational staff, at both HQ and country levels, to enhance their capacity for program delivery. For example, the AfDB has developed an ambitious

"Operations Academy" e-learning program to equip operational staff with AfDB project design and management fundamentals. Given that a growing share of operational staff are based in country offices, such an online platform with self-paced programs enables the Bank to reach numbers of staff across different locations cost-effectively. The Operations Academy's courses have expanded in the past three years, providing more targeted pathways for specific functions like Country Managers, Country Portfolio/Programme Officers and NSO operations. Recently, podcasts have been introduced to support changing preferences for learning of different audiences. The Operations Academy complements other actions in the Bank's 2019 Integrated Quality Assurance Plan aimed at enhancing the quality and impact of the Bank's SO and NSO operations. Initiatives such as the Delivery Exchange Team, Country Manager Exchange, and targeted trainings organised by RDVP in collaboration with other complexes supported staff capacity, peer exchange, and learning within the decentralised framework. The evaluation identified as risks to achieving improved institutional capacity the incentives to retain staff as discussed in subsequent sections, and delays in delivery of required guidelines as previously experienced with critical DAM and Operations Manual updates.

Decentralisation's long-term sustainability was found to have been negatively affected by gaps in staffing, institutional ownership, and resource utilisation. While decentralisation has improved the Bank's responsiveness, inconsistencies in personnel allocation and limited incentives for country-level assignments were found to have impacted the Bank's ability to retain experienced staff in field offices. The evaluation found that internal ownership of decentralisation remains uneven, with varying levels of engagement across departments and country teams. External engagement with governments, clients, and partners has also faced challenges, affecting coordination and alignment with local priorities. Without more substantial institutional buy-in, decentralisation risks being seen as an operational adjustment rather than an integral part of the Bank's long-term strategy. Issues of ownership and sustainability are closely linked, as weak internal commitment can undermine efforts to institutionalise decentralisation and embed it within the Bank's core operations.

Staffing challenges were found to weaken decentralisation's sustainability by reducing the Bank's operational capacity and increasing reliance on short-term staff. Although country office staffing grew, regional disparities persisted, with some offices struggling to attract and retain talent. The evaluation's survey revealed that 48% of respondents found incentives for positions outside HQ inadequate, while case studies highlighted concerns about limited career growth for country-based staff. Transition states and regions, such as Central Africa were identified as facing the most significant difficulties in attracting personnel due to security concerns and working conditions. In contrast, staff interviews revealed that regions like Southern Africa remained highly attractive. Other factors, including delays in HR policy implementation and limited career development opportunities, further hindered an efficient staff distribution, as seen in Box 5. These issues, partially addressed in the efficiency section, are explored in greater depth in IDEV's evaluations of the Human Resource Management System, which assess the broader impact of staffing constraints on the Bank's performance.

Box 5: HR reforms linked to decentralisation

The main Bank initiatives that were found relevant in supporting decentralisation but were still being designed/newly implemented at the time of the evaluation include:

- Staff mobility rules and target time in position for regional and country offices
- Revamped onboarding process
- Short-term assignment Policy and Talent Marketplace
- Talent Councils and Job Families

Other initiatives supporting decentralisation processes in other MDBs/comparators, but not implemented at the Bank, include rotation-based promotion and a specific retention policy for staff assigned to challenging countries.

Staff shortages were also found to increase the Bank's use of short-term staff (STS) and consultants, which can have financial and operational implications. Between 2015 and 2024, country office expenditures on STS and consultants rose from 0.3 mUA to 1.3 mUA, while Bank-wide consultancy costs increased from 14 mUA in 2016 to 56 mUA in 2023. Consultants have become essential for implementing special initiatives, safeguards, supervision, portfolio management, and business development. However, the overuse of STS and consultants was found to have introduced instability in project management and execution. In Southern and West Africa, Management noted that

the frequent turnover of short-term staff affected operational continuity and credibility. For example, in Senegal, shortcomings in consultant expertise on projects such as the Malincouda Power Project impacted the Bank's reputation, raising concerns about the long-term viability of decentralised operations.

Frequent staff turnover can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge, disrupting long-term projects and increasing the training burden on the organisation⁵¹. In some instances, key roles, such as procurement positions, were filled by temporary staff, resulting in operational inefficiencies such as delays and errors in critical processes like procurement execution. As noted in the 2020 Strategic Staffing Review, "excessive reliance on consultants puts the Bank's intellectual capital at risk and creates a less invested workforce in the institution's long-term goals and objectives".

These findings indicate that ensuring a balance between decentralisation's structural requirements and sustainable resource management remains critical to strengthening the Bank's presence and effectiveness across its regional member countries.

The evaluation concluded that the overall sustainability of the decentralisation strategy was **satisfactory**.

4. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

The evaluation found that decentralisation under the UDAP and subsequent efforts has been highly relevant to both the Bank and its clients. By bringing decision-making closer to RMCs, decentralisation has improved responsiveness and aligned with organisational commitments and clients' needs. At the same time, important shortcomings in the design quality of the UDAP, such as the absence of a unified strategic framework, limited adaptability to local contexts, and unrealistic assumptions have constrained its full potential. The relevance of the UDAP and later decentralisation efforts was rated **partly unsatisfactory**.

Decentralisation efforts have been **coherent** with the Bank's overarching strategies, such as the TYS 2013-2022, the High 5s agenda, and the DBDM. Decentralisation aligned well with overarching priorities like the High 5s, the DBDM and other corporate policies, but it was less consistently reflected at the regional and country levels. The One Bank Approach introduced some positive benefits for decentralisation, but also reversed some delegation of authority to country and regional offices. The AfDB's decentralisation approach aligned well with the practices of comparator MDBs. Coherence was rated **satisfactory**.

Regarding effectiveness, the Bank has made significant progress in implementing its decentralisation objectives, achieving milestones such as the operationalisation of regional hubs, the revision of the DAM, and increased operational staff in country offices. These advancements have strengthened the Bank's local presence, improved participation in policy dialogue, and, in some cases, enhanced development impact. However, some outcomes—such as improved portfolio quality and project delivery timeliness—remain limited, underscoring the need for continued refinement. While decentralisation has yielded clear benefits, internal challenges such as staffing gaps and delays in implementing key reforms have hampered its effectiveness. Systemic challenges in local country systems and capacities suggest that decentralisation alone cannot address these deep-rooted challenges. The evaluation found the effectiveness of decentralisation to be **partly unsatisfactory**.

Efficiency has been a challenging dimension of decentralisation. The evaluation highlights persistent inefficiencies in allocating staff, resources, and time across the Bank's operations, which impeded the achievement of timeliness and cost efficiency objectives. While decentralisation has improved responsiveness to country needs, delays in critical reforms, uneven staff distribution, and limited cost-efficiency gains have affected overall performance. Optimising processes, addressing staffing shortages, and ensuring better utilisation of resources will be crucial to maximising the benefits of

⁵¹ A review of monthly staff reports shows total attrition rates of 7% for the period 2018-2023. Turnover in Task Managers was also raised as an issue in some case study interviews and CSPE reports.

decentralisation. The evaluation rated this aspect as **partly unsatisfactory**, mainly due to the delays in implementing critical reforms like rightsizing and strategic staffing.

The evaluation found that the benefits of decentralisation are likely to be sustained over the medium to long term. Investments in regional hubs, capacity-building initiatives, and the ability of country offices to generate revenue provide a solid foundation for long-term benefits. However, unresolved challenges, particularly in staffing and institutional support, pose risks to sustaining these gains. Addressing these vulnerabilities is critical to maintaining the decentralised model's resilience and ensuring the Bank's ability to meet stakeholder expectations. The likelihood of the sustainability of decentralisation is deemed **satisfactory**.

In conclusion, decentralisation has strengthened the Bank's responsiveness, partnerships, and development impact, reinforcing its identity as **"Africa's Bank"**. While complex and time-intensive, decentralisation fosters trust, credibility, and influence beyond financial returns. Lessons from comparator MDBs emphasise the importance of clear objectives, structured governance, and staff mobility. As MDB experiences and survey feedback show, decentralisation is not just an operational choice but a strategic necessity for scaling resources, enhancing efficiency, and effectively addressing local needs.

To remain effective and responsive amid growing development finance needs, the evaluation finds that the Bank would do well to invest in refining decentralisation, strengthening its presence, and improving coordination. Proximity to clients has enabled better policy dialogue and impact, but ongoing investment and strategic alignment are essential. The Bank could solidify its leadership and continue driving Africa's sustainable growth by addressing gaps and enhancing its people and processes.

4.2. Lessons

1. A comprehensive strategic framework promotes a clear and consensual vision of the Bank's decentralisation objectives.

The evaluation revealed that the UDAP introduced decentralisation priorities through various strategies and reforms. However, it lacked a consolidated framework, resulting in fragmented efforts and unclear linkages. A clear and comprehensive framework is essential to unify decentralisation objectives, aligning them with organisational priorities and fostering stakeholder understanding. The theory of change for the 2015 UDAP was not implemented in the 2016 approved version. This oversight led to inconsistent objective definitions and varied stakeholder perceptions. Moving forward, a well-defined theory of change is crucial for clarifying objectives and linking activities to outputs and outcomes, providing a clear framework for achieving decentralisation goals and offering a robust analysis of the chosen decentralisation model and its financial projections, grounded in strong data analytics. This approach will facilitate more informed decision-making and enhance alignment, transparency, and accountability.

2. Staff availability and expertise are paramount to delivering effectively and efficiently.

The evaluation found that staffing gaps, particularly in senior roles, and limited local engagement have affected the Bank's responsiveness and operational effectiveness. Decentralised operations require skilled personnel to manage projects and engage stakeholders, yet inadequate staffing and weak communication strategies have constrained these efforts. Analysis has shown that the presence of in-country Task Managers has a stronger association with project performance outcomes than the mere presence of an office. Visibility and local presence also play a critical role in shaping credibility and trust with stakeholders. Without sufficient expertise and enhanced outreach, decentralisation may struggle to achieve its intended benefits, limiting the Bank's effectiveness in delivering development outcomes.

3. Realistic timelines, timely implementation, and a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism are crucial for the success of decentralisation.

The evaluation found that delays in key decentralisation actions, such as staff mapping, rightsizing, and revising the DAM, weakened the impact of reforms. At the same time, the lack of a comprehensive M&E system made it challenging to track decentralisation's contributions to organisational goals. Fragmented monitoring and reporting of progress negatively affected oversight and accountability. Timely implementation and a structured M&E framework with clear indicators and regular reporting can improve the efficiency, accountability, and effectiveness of decentralisation efforts.

4. Adapting to evolving needs is essential to address emerging priorities and dynamic contexts.

New challenges, including the needs of transition states and the integration of non-sovereign operations, highlight the importance of flexible approaches to decentralisation. An adaptive approach ensures decentralisation remains adequate and relevant in addressing diverse and evolving priorities. Tailored solutions that consider specific country and regional contexts are vital for maintaining flexibility and maximising the impact of decentralisation efforts.

5. Collaboration across organisational levels is critical for a cohesive approach to decentralisation.

Ambiguities in roles and responsibilities between headquarters, regional hubs, and country offices have created challenges in coordination and efficiency. Defining roles, improving communication, and strengthening coordination across organisational levels are essential for enhancing coherence and operational effectiveness.

4.3. Recommendations

To contribute to addressing the key challenges identified and driving meaningful change, IDEV makes the following strategic recommendations:

1. Enhance the strategic direction of the Bank's decentralisation efforts to improve coherence and effectiveness.

The evaluation found that the lack of a comprehensive framework, including a theory of change, objectives and expected results, and relevant indicators has led to fragmented decentralisation efforts, hindering coherence and effectiveness. Suggested actions may include:

- Developing a strategic framework to guide Bank-wide decentralisation initiatives and its footprint across the continent.
- Ensuring stronger integration of decentralisation objectives in country and regional strategies.
- Aligning sovereign and private sector operations with the decentralisation approach.
- Adopting a more systematic approach to monitoring, coupled with strong indicators and data analytics, to support better decision-making.
- Strengthening risk assessment, mitigation planning and surveillance to improve adaptability.

2. Strengthen organisational structures, processes and resource capacity to improve the efficiency and development impact of decentralisation efforts.

The evaluation identified operational constraints, resource management challenges, and delayed delegation of authority as key obstacles to the effectiveness of decentralisation. Important HR reforms were delayed or newly started at the time of the evaluation. Suggested actions may include:

- Aligning office size and staffing with business requirements and portfolio size, and adopting more agile and business-oriented criteria for country presence.
- Advancing the implementation of strategic staffing and other ongoing HR reforms to ensure the availability of skilled and motivated staff to meet the Bank's business needs, including in transition states and other challenging duty stations.
- Ensuring more effective delegation of authority and greater process flexibility to enhance efficiency.
- Continuing to systematically review and adjust business processes such as procurement while strengthening local systems to maximise opportunities for efficiency and better project outcomes.

3. Strengthen communication and engagement to enhance the ownership and the long-term benefits of decentralisation.

The evaluation found uneven internal ownership and varying external engagement on the

decentralisation process across regions, negatively impacting sustainability. A stronger sense of ownership and institutional commitment could bolster sustainability. Priority actions may include:

- Strengthening engagement within the Bank to enhance awareness of and commitment to its decentralisation efforts.
- Deepening partnerships with governments and clients to improve coordination, and
- Adopting a more assertive approach to real estate, branding, and communication to further enhance the Bank's visibility and profile.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Methodological Approach and Rating Scale

The methodological approach employed a rigorous mixed-methods strategy, combining theory-based evaluation, case studies, key informant interviews, online surveys, benchmarking, and portfolio analysis. A strong emphasis was placed on triangulation, stakeholder validation, and systematic analysis, ensuring that the findings and conclusions drawn from the evaluation are credible, evidence-based, and actionable.

1. Key Steps of the Evaluation

The evaluation took place from February 2024 to March 2025, adhering to a structured process that was divided into three phases: inception, data collection, and analysis/reporting. Each phase involved specific tasks and deliverables.

a. Inception Phase (Feb-Mar 2024)

- Conducted scoping interviews with key HQ stakeholders.
- Performed a preliminary documentary review to establish context.
- Developed the evaluation framework anchored in a Theory of Change (ToC) approach.
- Designed data collection strategy and tools, ensuring alignment with evaluation objectives.
- Produced an Inception Report, validated through structured meetings.

b. Data Collection Phase (Apr-Sep 2024)

- Conducted an in-depth documentary review and secondary data analysis.
- Held interviews and focus groups with stakeholders at HQ and in 12 Regional Member Countries (RMCs)⁵².
- Performed field visits in six countries (Cameroon, Congo, Guinea, Mauritius, South Africa, Tunisia).
- Developed five regional case studies and one transversal case study report.
- Implemented an online survey targeting key stakeholders.
- Conducted portfolio and benchmarking analyses.

c. Analysis and Reporting Phase (Oct-March 2025)

- Conducted transversal analysis to integrate findings.
- Formulated preliminary findings, conclusions, and lessons learned.
- Produced a Draft and Final Technical Report.
- Delivered the **Summary Report**, incorporating stakeholder feedback.

2. Technical Methods and Data Collection Tools

The evaluation deployed multiple data collection techniques to ensure **triangulation** and enhance the **validity** of findings:

a. Key Informant and Grouped Interviews

The semi-structured interviews covered a total of **173 interviews** conducted with **390 participants**, categorised as follows:

- Scoping interviews: 5 interviews with 10 participants.
- HQ interviews: 16 interviews with 49 participants.
- Country case study interviews: 151 interviews and focus groups with 331 participants.

b. Case Study

The case study component was designed to **deeply analyse decentralisation at regional and country levels**, with the following methodological considerations:

⁵² Tunisia, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Guinea, Kenya, Sudan, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Mauritius.

- Multi-method approach: Combined document review, secondary data analysis, benchmarking, and interviews with stakeholders.
- Stratified sampling: 12 countries were selected based on regional distribution, linguistic diversity, office typology, volume of operations, transition context, financial arrangements, and country office age.
- Hybrid data collection: Both physical and virtual methods were used, adjusting to accessibility constraints.

c. Online Survey

- Objective: To quantify stakeholder perceptions on AfDB's decentralisation.
- Target audience: HQ and country office staff, government officials, development partners, private sector clients, and knowledge partners.
- Deployment: Ran for 8 weeks (August 19 - October 15, 2024).
- Response rate: 24% (411 responses out of 1,701 targeted stakeholders).
- Cross-validation: Findings were triangulated with interview and case study insights.

d. Benchmark Analysis

- Conducted a comparative assessment of AfDB's decentralisation against other Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) (AsDB, EBRD, IADB, IsDB, WBG).
- Leveraged findings from IDEV's Comparative Study of MDB Operating Models.
- Supplemented with additional document reviews and interviews with IFIs, UN agencies, and bilateral donors.

e. Portfolio Analysis

- Mapped staff and office distribution trends over time.
- Assessed project performance differentials between HQ-managed and decentralised projects.
- Measured impact using Bank performance indicators (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, overall ratings) using regression methods and t-tests of 368 ongoing projects and 130 completed projects to assess the effect of decentralisation on performance elements.
- Considered co-financing dynamics and corporate KPIs related to decentralisation.

f. Evaluation Limitations, Challenges, and Mitigation Strategies

Several **methodological challenges** were identified and addressed:

Limitation	Mitigation Measures
Broad scope of decentralisation reforms	Focused on post-2015 reforms, limiting scope to UDAP and key decentralisation documents.
Overlapping evaluation efforts	Integrated HR evaluation findings and preliminary One Bank Evaluation inputs.
Mission fatigue in RMCs	Limited sample size, avoided recently evaluated countries, and used hybrid (physical/virtual) missions.
Attribution challenges due to multiple reforms	Separated decentralisation impacts from other corporate transformations using triangulation.
Contradictory stakeholder views	Systematic triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data.
Regional diversity affecting generalizability	Used representative country sampling, complemented by literature review.
External stakeholder availability	Adjusted scheduling, leveraged secondary data sources.
Low survey response rate	Triangulated survey data with interviews and secondary sources.
Data gaps (e.g., tracking of decentralised projects, co-financing data)	Used proxy indicators, alternative data sources, and transparency on data limitations.

3. Rating Scale

The evaluation criteria adopted are in line with the practices set out in the Revised OECD/DAC criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The evaluation team used a rating

scale to assess and score the performance of the AfDB's decentralisation efforts. This scoring scale aims to ensure sound qualitative assessment based on evidence derived from the documentary analysis, interviews, case studies and portfolio analysis. The rating scale has four levels ranging from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (highly satisfactory).

Rating	Definition	
4	Highly Satisfactory	All dimensions of the criterion are fully met
3	Satisfactory	Overall satisfactory quality of the considered criterion; all dimensions of the criterion have been met, but some of them have minor shortcomings
2	Partly Unsatisfactory	Overall insufficient quality of the considered criterion; one or more dimensions of the criterion have not been met, and substantial improvements are required to bring the criterion to a satisfactory rating
1	Unsatisfactory	Deficient quality in most aspects of the considered criterion; most of the dimensions of the criterion have not been met

4. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Sub-criteria
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objectives of the intervention are aligned with RMCs' and Bank goals, priorities and needs The design of the intervention is financially and technically feasible and is conducive to achieving results.
Coherence	<p>Internal coherence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intervention aligns with other Bank policies, strategies, and frameworks Extent of synergy between departments and processes to support decentralisation efforts <p>External coherence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns with external / global policy commitments and partnerships Actions are coherent with actions of other organisations
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the intervention's outputs have been achieved. Extent to which the intervention's outcomes have been achieved
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Utilisation: Resources were used /allocated as planned. Cost efficiency: The reform has led to lower administrative costs and other cost savings Timeliness: Implementation within the timeframe, and delays did not have a significant effect on the expected outcomes Appropriate structures, systems and processes are in place to support reform objectives
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms guaranteeing economic and financial sustainability⁵³, institutional sustainability⁵⁴, ownership and partnerships⁵⁵ are in place and fully assured.

⁵³ Funding mechanisms and modalities (e.g., tariffs, user fees, maintenance fees, budgetary allocations, other stakeholder contributions, aid flows, etc.) have been put in place to ensure the continued flow of benefits after completion, with particular emphasis on financial sustainability.

⁵⁴ The extent to which the intervention has contributed to strengthening institutional capacities – and that sufficient organisational systems and capacities are in place to facilitate the continued flow of benefits.

⁵⁵ Relevant stakeholders were involved, promoted a sense of ownership amongst the beneficiaries, and put in place effective partnerships with relevant stakeholders (e.g., local authorities, civil society organisations, private sector, development partners) as required for the continued maintenance of the results.

Annex 2: List of Documents Reviewed

Bank Documents	
Corporate strategies and action plans	<p>2005-2007 Strategy for the Decentralisation of the Activities of the AfDB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2004 08 Proposed Strategy for the Decentralisation of the Activities of the AfDB ▶ 2006 07 Enhanced Decentralisation Strategy ▶ 2008 09 Impact of the Decentralisation Strategy on Country Dialogue and Portfolio Quality ▶ 2009 06 Final Evaluation of the Decentralisation Strategy ▶ 2019 190607 Presentation of Most Significant Change <p>2011-2015 Decentralisation Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2011 04 Decentralisation Roadmap - Final version ▶ 2014 06 Implementation of the Decentralisation Roadmap - Report of the Mid-Term Review - Management response ▶ 2014 06 Implementation of the Decentralisation Roadmap - Report of the Mid-Term Review ▶ 2014 10 Implementation of the Decentralisation Roadmap - Report of the Mid-Term Review ▶ 2014 10 Review of the Bank Group Fiduciary Risks and Safeguards in the Context of the Decentralisation Roadmap - Management Response ▶ 2014 10 Review of the Bank Group Fiduciary Risks and Safeguards in the Context of the Decentralisation Roadmap ▶ 2015 06 Review of the Two Pilot Regional Resource Centres (RRCs) in Nairobi and Pretoria - Management response ▶ 2015 06 Review of the Two Pilot Regional Resource Centres (RRCs) in Nairobi and Pretoria <p>2015-2017 Updated Decentralisation Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2015 03 Updated Action Plan for the Bank's ▶ 2015 03 Updated Action Plan for the Bank's Decentralisation Feedback ▶ 2015 10 Proposal to Update the Decentralisation Action Plan 2015-2017 – QA ▶ 2015 10 Proposal to Update the Decentralisation Action Plan 2015-2017 – Revised ▶ 2015 Decentralisation and DBDM ▶ 2015 Enhancing the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Bank's Decentralisation Strategy ▶ 2016 07 An Update of the Decentralisation Action Plan in Line with the New DBDM <p>2016-2018 DBDM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2016 05 A Proposal to Redesign the Bank's Development and Business Delivery Model - Final version ▶ 2016 05 Highlights - ADB 1046 - Meeting of 22-04-16 ▶ 2017 02 DBDM - Implementation Update ▶ 2017 10 3rd TMT Update to the Board on the Implementation of the DBDM ▶ 2018 05 4TH TMT Update to the Board on the Implementation of the DBDM ▶ 2018 11 5th Update to the Board on DBDM Implementation – Presentation ▶ 2018 11 5th Update to the Board on DBDM Implementation <p>2013-2022 Ten-Year Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ AfDB Strategy for 2013-2022- At the Centre of Africa's Transformation ▶ 2024 The Ten-Year Strategy African Development Bank Group (2024 – 2033) <p>Board Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2020 03 Report on the Fifteenth General Replenishment of the Resources of the ADF ▶ 2022 12 AfDB Organigram ▶ 2023 02 Report on the Sixteenth General Replenishment of the Resources of the African Development Fund (ADF-16) ▶ 2023 03 ADF-16 Replenishment Deputies Report ▶ 2023 04 Fourth Progress Report on the Implementation of CGI-VII ▶ 2023 07 Highlights Committee of the Whole - Meeting of 12 July 2023 ▶ 2209 Report of the Bank Group Executive Directors Consultative Mission to the Kingdom of Morocco ▶ 2303 Executive Directors Consultative mission to Angola - Report Final ▶ 2305 SAA Study Tour Report Malawi ▶ Approved New Bank Structure as of 31 May 2023 (EN) (1) ▶ GCI VI 4th Working Paper <p>GCI-VII</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ (Rev.2- Approved) First Progress Report on the implementation of the GCI.VII ▶ 2nd Progress Report on the implementation of the GCI VII - (Rev.1) ▶ Progress on Delivering GCI-VII Commitments ▶ Third Progress Report on the Implementation of GCI-VII (1) ▶ Third Progress Report on the Implementation of GCI-VII

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2023 04 Fourth Progress Report on the Implementation of GCI-VII ➤ Tracking Progress on GCI-VII Commitments ➤ 2024 Fifth Progress Report on the Implementation of GCI-VII (<i>once it will be presented and validated by the AfDB</i>) <p>One Bank Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Bank Group Results Measurement Framework 2016-2025 ➤ AfDB (2018, updated in 2022), Delegation of Authority Matrix ➤ 2020 Delivering as One Bank – Strengthening accountabilities for delivering quality and development impact in a matrix organisation ➤ 2021 Delivering as One Bank – Report on Progress Implementing the OBA <p>Other strategic framework documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ (Rev.4) -Total Compensation Framework 2021 – 2024 ➤ AfDB Regional Integration Strategic Framework revised February 2018 ➤ Cost Containment Framework ➤ EN-AfDB Fragility Strategy_1 ➤ Sharpening the Banks Selectivity and Development Focus
HR strategies, policies, processes, and practices	<p>2016, Procurement policy for Bank group-funded operations</p> <p>2020 02 Framework for Engagement on Strategic Staffing (Rightsizing)</p> <p>2020 12 Rightsizing and Strategic Staffing Review – Revised</p> <p>2021 06 RDVP Footprint – Request for New Positions</p> <p>2021 06 RDVP Proposed Footprint Annexes</p> <p>2022 06 RDVP Strategic Staffing Document updated June 2022_Signed</p> <p>2022 11 AfDB 2022-2026 Strategic Staffing Plan - (Rev.1)</p> <p>2023 05 Defining TM project Ratios Analysis of ATRS data PEVP (May 2023)</p> <p>Staff at post as at 16.05.2023</p> <p>AfDB Staff data from 2015 to 2022</p> <p>List of staff June 2024</p> <p>Staff at post as at 16.05.2023</p> <p>Task Manager workload rebalancing</p> <p>AfDB (2018), Human Resources Strategy</p> <p>AfDB (2022), People Strategy 2021-2025</p> <p>AfDB (2017), Refreshing our Performance Management Framework</p> <p>AfDB (2021), Presidential Directive 05/21 concerning Staff Performance Management Framework</p> <p>AfDB (2021), Total Compensation Framework</p> <p>DAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2021 One Bank, Delegation of Authority Matrix ➤ 2022 PD on Promulgating the Update DBDM – Compliant DAM ➤ 2023 One Bank, Delegation of authority matrix ➤ DAM 2018 ➤ 2024 Updated DAM ➤ 2024 PD - Issuance of Presidential Directives on Subordinate Committees of Operations and Senior Management Committees
Real Estate Framework and Action Plan	<p>2023 07 Report - CAHR Meeting (02) of 10 July 2023_Final Version</p> <p>2023 07 The Real Estate Action Plan</p> <p>2023 07 The Real Estate Management Framework – CAHR</p> <p>2023 09 The Real Estate Management Framework – Board</p> <p>Real Estate Action Plan on Country Presence</p> <p>Budget policies and procedures manual</p>
Reports	<p>Annual Reports and ADERs</p> <p>AFDB Annual Report 2015-2023 (and annexes)</p> <p>AFDB Financial Report 2015-2022</p> <p>Annual Retrospective Review Report on Budgets and Work Programme Performance 2015-2023</p> <p>2022-2024 Work Programme and Budget Document</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Outlook 2023</p>
Country and Regional Offices documents and data	<p>2018 Regional Integration Strategic Framework – Revised</p> <p>AfDB (2020), Country Office and Regional Directorate Handbook</p> <p>RDVP List DG-DDG-CM-RPO-CPO (Details) March 2023</p> <p>Proposal to Open an AfDB Country Office in Namibia (2021)</p> <p>Proposal to Open Bank Country Offices in Benin, Guinea, and Niger (2017)</p> <p>RISP and CSP of regions/ countries covered by case studies</p> <p>RDVP Strategic Staffing Proposal 2022-2026 (2022)</p> <p>KPIs</p> <p>2023 Cofinancing and syndications (22.12.2023)</p> <p>2023 Lending Tracking Report- Final</p>

	2023 Top level KPIs- Dec 2023 (Draft for review)
Comparator organisation documentation	
Documents from selected comparators	Human Resource Strategies and policies Documents describing key processes and guidelines Documents including selected Human Resource KPIs Previous studies and evaluations Implementation reports
Previous studies and evaluations on the topic	
Previous AfDB studies and evaluations	Organisational transformation and human resources AfDB (2017) The AfDB's Human Resource Management Policy and Strategic Directions: A Formative Evaluation AfDB (2019), Midterm review of the Ten-Year Strategy IDEV (2022), Evaluation of the Ten-Year Strategy IDEV (2019), Independent Evaluation of the Implementation of the Development and Business Delivery Model of AfDB IDEV (2021), Evaluation of the AfDB's Country Portfolio Review and Restructuring Policy (2011-2019) IDEV (2024), Evaluation of the African Development Bank's (AfDB's) Human Resource Management System - HR Evaluation 1 (Recruitment, Retention, Career development, Performance Management) – Concept notes and inception reports AfDB (2024), "Comparative Study of MDBS Operating Models HR related audits Staff surveys Selected CSPEs of the case study countries Audit reports Comprehensive Evaluation of Development Results (CEDR) Others Country Portfolio Review and Portfolio Restructuring Policy PSD Strategy 2013-2019 Evaluation Summary Report
Evaluations of other MDBs Institutions	2007 Evaluation of IFAD's Country Presence 2012 The Matrix System at work: An Evaluation of the World Bank's Organisational Effectiveness 2016 Summary Study EBRD Experience with Resident Offices 2017 IDB Approach Paper - Evaluation of the Implementation of the Private Sector Merge-out 2017 World Bank Group Joint Projects - A Review of Two Decades of Experience 2019 Knowledge Flow and Collaboration under the World Bank's New Operating Model 2022 AsDB One ADB - An Evaluation of ADB's Approach to Delivering Strategy 2030 2022 Enhancing the Effectiveness of the World Bank's Global Footprint 2023 IFAD Decentralisation Evaluation 2023 Corporate Evaluation of IDB Invest AsDB Decentralisation Evaluation 2013 AsDB Organisational Review Review-ADB-Resident-Mission-Operations
Benchmark	AsDB Organisational review Organisation chart functional AsDB Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific EBRD EBRD Organisation Chart 2023 Summary Study EBRD experience with resident offices IADB 2021 Vision 2025 Reinvest in the Americas IDB Operating Model Study Brief December 2023 IDB Group- Second Update to the Institutional Strategy Organisational chart ISDB ISDB Organisational Structure Corporate Evaluation of IsDB Group Synergy. 2019 IsDB Development Effectiveness Report 2022 IsDB Organisational Manuals The Road to the SDGs. The President's Programme. A New Business Model for a Fast-Changing World WB About WB

	<p>Approved New Bank Structure as of 30 June 2024</p> <p>2024 New WB Scorecard FY24-FY30</p> <p>Measuring and Reporting Results Fact Sheet – Oct 23</p> <p>The World Bank Group Organisational Chart</p> <p>New World Bank Group Scorecard FY24-30. Driving Action, Measuring Results</p> <p>Evolving the World Bank Group's Mission, Operations, and Resources: A Roadmap. December 2022</p> <p>World Bank Group Strategy</p>
Others	<p>Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), (2023), <i>MOPAN Assessment Report: African Development Bank (AfDB)</i>, 2021 Assessment, Paris.</p> <p>Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), (2017), MOPAN 2015-16 Assessments. African Development Bank (AfDB). Institutional Assessment Report</p>