THE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE:
ENABLING EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

THE DAC NETWORK
ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

NEW RELEASE

2016 Review of Evaluation Systems in Development Co-operation

An OECD DAC Network on Development Co-operation publication

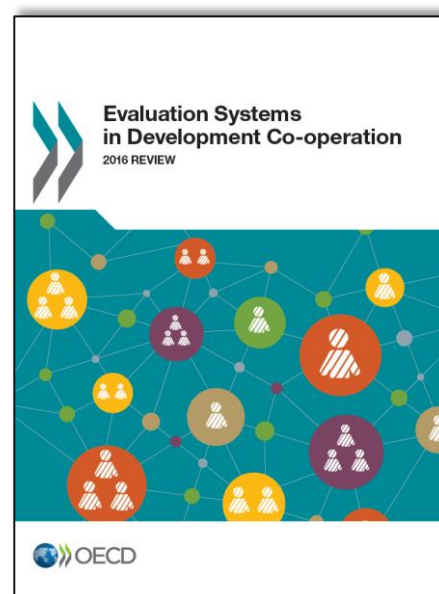## How are evaluations planned and managed in development co-operation? What is new?

How is evaluation organised across OECD DAC members?

A new study on systems for the evaluation of development co-operation brings to light a number of new developments while confirming some previous trends. New developments in recent years include: the creation of new evaluation units, a greater emphasis on strategic evaluation and a growing demand for learning in support of evidence based decision-making.

The study is the latest publication on evaluation from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee. The DAC **Network on Development Evaluation** works to foster learning and to support accountability needs through robust, independent evaluation of development co-operation activities.

The members and participants of the Network have evaluation units and systems with considerable variety in respect to structures, mandates, polices, and resources. This study looks at how evaluation units are resourced and managed in ministries, development agencies and multilateral development banks. The study updates and expands upon the analysis undertaken in the 2010 publication 'Evaluation in Development Agencies'.

The report covers some of the major changes to evaluation systems since 2010, such as the creation of new evaluation entities and the integration of development co-operation ministries with ministries of foreign affairs and trade in some countries. Data on human and financial resources for evaluation are presented in a comparable format.
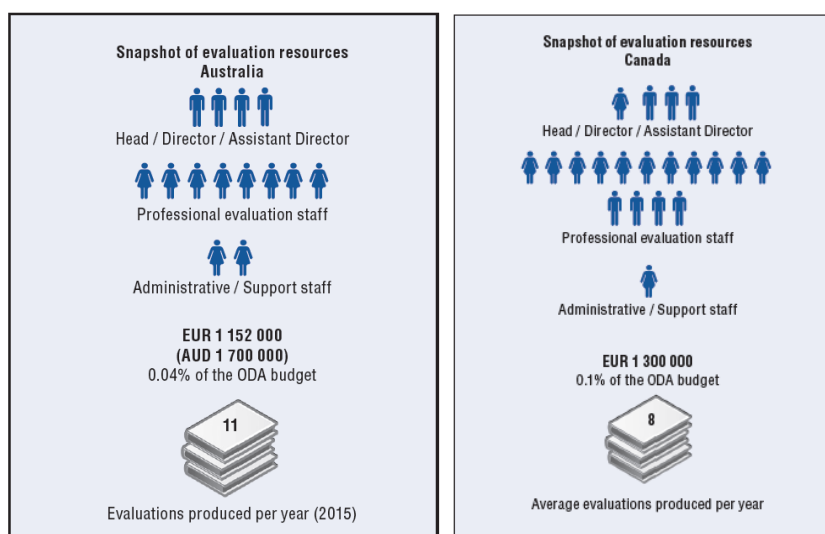
The report examines evaluation policies, reporting lines and structures; including measures to safeguard the independence and integrity of evaluation systems.

The data and analysis is based on a survey of network members, document reviews, and interviews with evaluation units of DAC members and multilateral development banks.

The study discusses evaluation processes, including: approaches to ensure the quality and rigour of evaluations, evaluation planning and programming, and how members ensure that evaluation results and findings are fed into future programming. The study also discusses the use of supplementary evaluation tools such as evaluability assessments, ex-ante evaluations and self-evaluation. Capacity issues and constraints are addressed from both the organisational perspective and in relation to partners and stakeholders, as is participation and joint and collaborative evaluation work. Finally, the study addresses evaluation use and demand including dissemination, management response and follow up, and institutional knowledge management.

Individual profiles are provided for each member of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation in order to capture the diversity of approaches to evaluation in development institutions and to complement the broader picture. Each profile presents information on the evaluation function's institutional arrangements and management, the mandate of the unit, mechanisms to protect independence and ensure quality, reporting lines and distribution of evaluation reports.
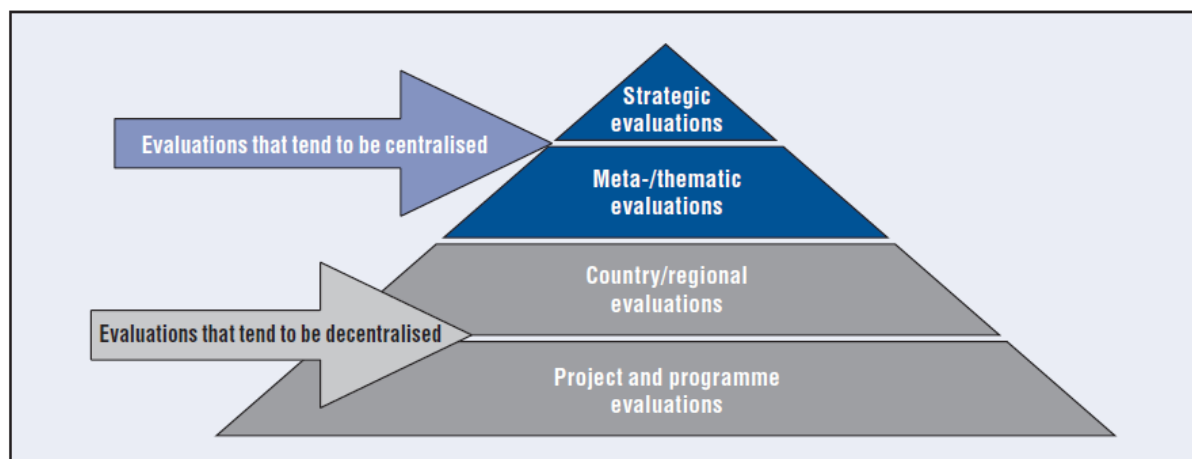
A box for each member describes the human and financial resources available in evaluation unit(s) and average number of reports produced each year.

Snapshot of evaluation resources
Australia

Head / Director / Assistant Director

Professional evaluation staff

Administrative / Support staff

EUR 1 152 000
(AUD 1 700 000)
0.04% of the ODA budget

11

Evaluations produced per year (2015)

Snapshot of evaluation resources
Canada

Head / Director / Assistant Director

Professional evaluation staff

Administrative / Support staff

EUR 1 300 000
0.1% of the ODA budget

8

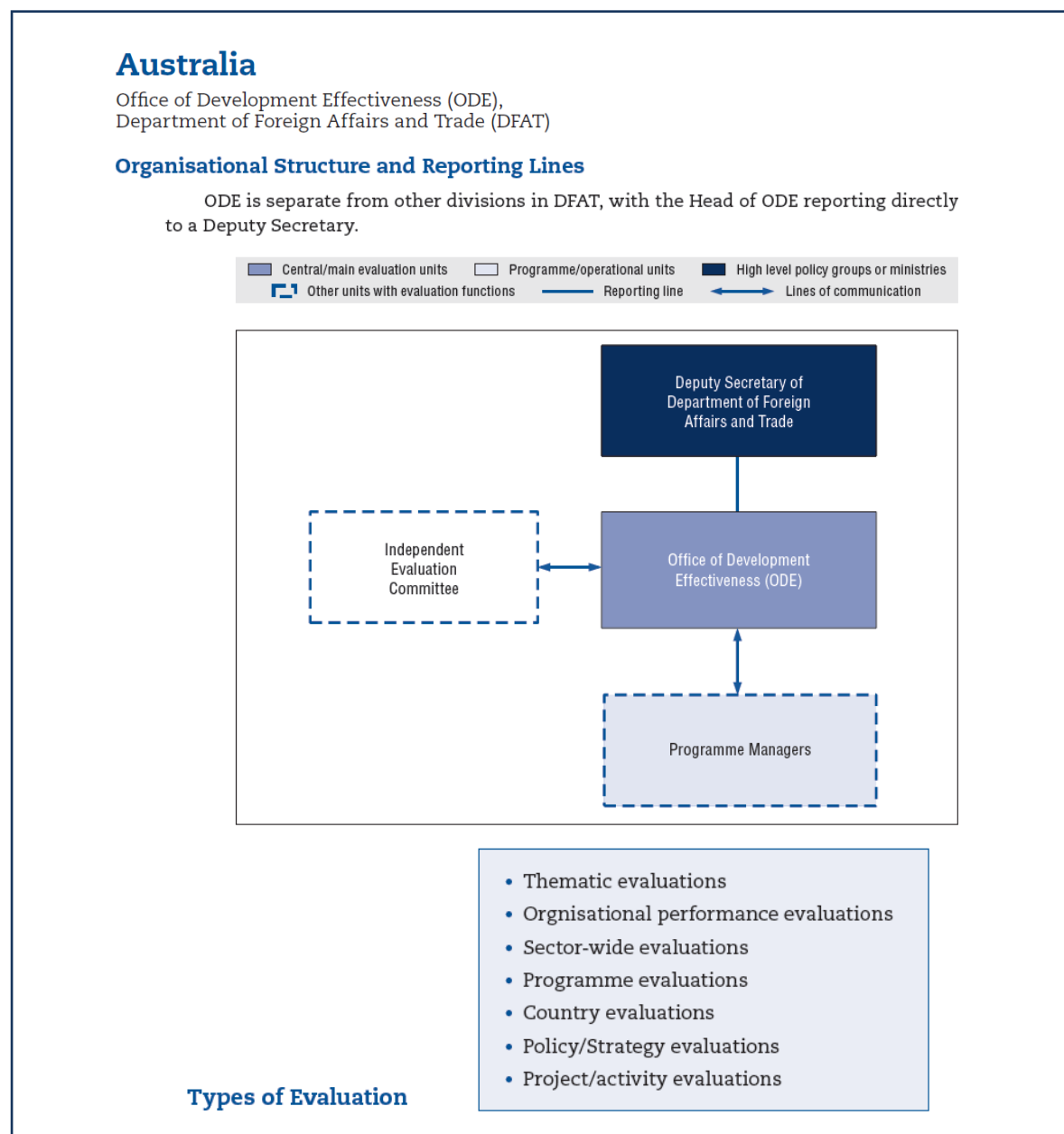Average evaluations produced per year

TRENDS & FINDINGS

- The vast majority of member organisations have a policy document to guide evaluation work, representing an increase since 2010.

- The emphasis on strategic questions of development is apparent in recently revised evaluation policies which demonstrate an orientation towards thematic work. However, project evaluations are still common for some members.

- The balance of emphasis between accountability and learning has continued to shift since the 2010 review of evaluation systems (OECD, 2010). There is an increased emphasis on undertaking evaluation for the purposes of learning; however this is not necessarily at the expense of accountability, as both are recognised to fulfil vital functions and reinforce one another.

- The landscape has evolved with the creation of new evaluation entities such as ICAI in the UK, DEval in Germany and the EBA in Sweden.

- The organisational independence of the evaluation units is clearly described in the policies of the majority of member organisations. The advantages of independent evaluations in terms of contributing to credibility and accountability are widely recognised. Nevertheless, independence needs to be balanced with the potential of a disconnection from operations, which may reduce acceptance and the use of evaluation findings.

- The study suggests that the use of evaluation findings and recommendations depends on organisational culture and the support of senior managers. The use of evaluations in decision making appears to be driven in part by the need to incorporate evidence in the formulation of new initiatives. There is some evidence that demand is increasing and is strongly linked to the relevance of the evaluations to management needs.

- The majority (55%) of organisations use of a combination of centralised and decentralised evaluation. In some members evaluation systems have become increasingly decentralised. Central evaluation units provide a variety of support mechanisms to operations units, from providing input to specific milestones in the evaluation process to engagement throughout the process.

Typical types of evaluations that are centralised and decentralised

SAMPLE MEMBER PROFILE

Australia

Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE),
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Organisational Structure and Reporting Lines

ODE is separate from other divisions in DFAT, with the Head of ODE reporting directly to a Deputy Secretary.

Legend:
- Central/main evaluation units
- Programme/operational units
- High level policy groups or ministries
- Other units with evaluation functions
- Reporting line
- Lines of communication

Deputy Secretary of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Independent Evaluation Committee ↔ **Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE)**

Programme Managers

Types of Evaluation

- Thematic evaluations
- Orgnisational performance evaluations
- Sector-wide evaluations
- Programme evaluations
- Country evaluations
- Policy/Strategy evaluations
- Project/activity evaluations

THE DAC NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION
Evaluation Evidence for Better Policies

READ THE REPORT: **Read the report on the OECD i-Library**

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