



WORK PROGRAMME FOR STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS

2019-2023

I. Introduction

I.1. Principles and framework

The overall principles governing the evaluation of EU International Cooperation and Development policies and activities are set out in “[Strengthening the foundations of Smart Regulation - improving evaluation](#)¹”, in the [Better Regulation](#) package (2015) and in “[Evaluation matters - The Evaluation Policy for EU development co-operation](#)” (2014). The aim of evaluation policies and activities is to provide our organisation with evidence for informed decision-making. Public accountability, learning from experience and promotion of synergies are at the centre of our evaluation principles.

Embracing these principles, the Work Programme for Strategic Evaluations 2019-2023 aims to establish a close link between evaluation planning and the policy agenda.

The Work Programme was approved by the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, in agreement with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President and the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.

I.2. Scope and structure

The legal basis of the various instruments requires the Commission to “*regularly evaluate the results of geographical and cross-border policies and programmes and of sectoral policies and the effectiveness of programming in order to ascertain whether the objectives have been met and enable it to formulate recommendations with a view to improving future operations*”.

This Work Programme covers the following categories of strategic evaluations:

1. ***Geographic evaluations*** which assess the cooperation policies, and the contribution of projects, programmes and instruments to these policies over a significant period of time in a given **country or region** (see Annex I).
2. ***Thematic evaluations*** which assess the cooperation policies, aid modalities and the contribution of projects and programmes to these policies in a given **thematic area or sector** over a significant period of time. They also include major evaluations that could lead to changes in the policy and/or regulatory framework and do not feed into an overarching evaluation (see Annex II).

¹ COM(2013)686

Evaluations of interventions (also known as “project and programme evaluations”) **are outside the scope of this Work Programme.** These evaluations are conducted on a decentralised level by EU Delegations and Headquarters’ operational services. They are listed in the Operational Evaluation Plan (OEP) of the EVAL software module drawn up by each Delegation or Service and cover a wide variety of interventions. They are also used as input for geographic and thematic evaluations.

In line with the “[Better Regulation Guidelines](#)”², the present Work Programme is organised as a five-year rolling work programme for the sake of forward planning. However, it is reviewed and fine-tuned on a yearly basis in order to take on board new priorities and adjust to new developments.

This Work Programme is therefore **more complete and accurate for the first two years of the 2019-2023 period and more indicative for the following years.** For the years 2019 and 2020, it corresponds to the delivery capacity of the Section for Strategic Evaluations of Unit DEVCO.04 (Evaluation and Results), based on its current staff allocation.

The Work Programme is structured into geographic and thematic evaluations for reasons of clarity. However, these evaluations should not be seen as isolated blocks. Geographic evaluations inform and feed the thematic evaluations and vice versa.

II. Geographic evaluations

II.1. Typology and Criteria

Geographic evaluations, conducted at country or regional level, are categorised as:

- *Bilateral (country/regional) evaluations*, evaluating only EU development aid managed by the Commission;
- *Joint evaluations* conducted with other donors whatever the form of their support;
- *Budget Support (BS) evaluations*, which usually aim at involving all donors who provide budget support in a country.

The choice among the three categories of geographic evaluations depends on the share of budget support in a country and on other donors’ – including partner countries’ – interest in undertaking a joint evaluation.

Due to constraints on resources which do not allow the evaluation of every country portfolio in every programming cycle, a set of criteria has been adopted for the geographical evaluations:

- **Financial coverage:** amount of funds allocated under previous and ongoing programming cycles;
- **Regularity:** year of previous evaluation and/or special need in the context of joint programming;
- **Proportionality:** coverage of regions.

² SWD(2017)350

The Work Programme for Strategic Evaluations thus allows for a balanced geographical coverage, evaluation of a significant share of the financial allocations of the current programming cycle, and regular evaluation of cooperation in countries.

Moreover, in line with the [new European Consensus on Development - ‘Our world, our dignity, our future’](#), there is a particular focus on fragile and conflict-afflicted countries. This is reflected by a significant increase from the last Work Programme before the new European Consensus.

II.2. Main adjustments in relation to the previous work programme (2018-2022) for geographic evaluations

In order to better match capacity and corporate needs, the following adjustments have been made:

- i. Instead of 2019, evaluations of EU cooperation with Angola and Tajikistan will start in 2020 and some further changes are needed for the years 2020-2023;
- ii. The evaluation of cooperation with Niger is proposed as a joint evaluation, in order to allow a follow up from the previous joint evaluation published in 2010. Furthermore, this proposal aims at enhancing the usefulness of the evaluation in the context of the G5 Sahel initiative for cooperation on development and security policy;
- iii. The evaluation of EU cooperation with Samoa (Pacific) was taken out of the work programme due to its low budgetary weight; the EU cooperation with Haiti is already covered as pilot in the ongoing evaluation of state building contracts and thus it is replaced by the evaluation of EU cooperation with Guatemala;
- iv. The evaluations of EU cooperation with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Cuba for 2023 are new entries in the work programme;
- v. The evaluations of EU cooperation with Kyrgyzstan and possibly a selection from among Guatemala, Ethiopia, Nepal, Benin and Jamaica are suggested to be undertaken as budget support evaluations due to the large budget support portfolio.

II.3. Ongoing work on geographic evaluations

In May 2019, the following geographic evaluations were on-going including in preparation:

- *Bilateral Country/Regional Evaluations:* Central Africa, Latin America, Central African Republic and Myanmar;
- *Joint Country Evaluation:* Nicaragua (suspended due to the political situation with civil unrest), Mali;
- *Budget Support Evaluations:* El Salvador, Rwanda.

Apart from the evaluations of cooperation with Central African Republic, Mali and Rwanda, all the other evaluations are expected to be finalised and published in 2019.

III. Thematic Evaluations

III.1. Principles for defining thematic evaluations

The principles for defining the thematic evaluations in the 2019-2023 programme stem from the [Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy](#) and the [new European Consensus](#).

The three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) set the priorities of the thematic evaluations.

The thematic evaluations seek to provide a comprehensive picture of the following areas:

- Human rights, democracy and other aspects of good governance such as public financial management; focus is also put on security, fragility and transition under the umbrella of a more integrated, coherent and coordinated response, on migration, and on civil society and local authorities;
- Inclusive and sustainable growth: agriculture and energy, natural resources management, climate change, education and jobs creation, business environment, regional integration and access to world markets; new financial tools in order to leverage further resources to increase the EU's impact on poverty reduction;
- The nexuses between development and security and defence, state and societal resilience, climate change, fragility/conflict, inclusiveness, gender equality, human rights, multilateralism and joint implementation are taken into account;
- The use of aid modalities;
- Progress regarding the implementation of SDGs.

III.2. Main adjustments in relation to the previous work programme (2018-2022) for thematic evaluations

The evaluation of support to Agriculture-Growth-Employment is postponed from 2019 to 2020, in order to be able to prioritise other needs.

The evaluation on delivery through international development banks would follow-up on an evaluation on delivery through development banks and EIB from 2006 and allow mainly to gather evidence in times of reform of the World Bank Group trust fund (WBG TF) system. This would e.g. create a better basis to facilitate a more strategic use of the WBG TFs by the Commission, allowing it to capitalise better on them. The timely context of the above mentioned reforms, a new multi-annual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027, the NDICI³ instrument as well as the existence of EU trust funds advice the launch in 2019.

The evaluation of support to gender equality in preparation for launch in 2019 is done jointly with, and led by DG NEAR and integrates the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 in its scope.

³ Instrument for cooperation with neighbourhood, development and industrialised countries, currently in legislative procedure.

A series of meta-evaluations of support to Governance, Human Rights and Rule of Law foreseen for the year 2020 can be undertaken by the recently established Evaluation Support Service, while another one on SDGs in preparation of the second Joint Synthesis Report for the High Level Political Forum 2023 is inserted for 2021.

The evaluation of Cooperation with the UN, will be undertaken jointly with DG NEAR in the lead and postponed according to NEAR's work programme from 2020 to 2021.

The evaluation of support to biodiversity will have an enlarged scope to encompass renewable natural resources. It is advanced from 2022 to 2020 to allow having initial findings for the Conference of the Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2020.

The evaluation on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) will not be undertaken in this work programme as the Cariforum EPA is currently ongoing and implementation for other EPAs is too recent to assess results. The evaluation on EU trust funds will not be undertaken in this work programme as the modality is largely evaluated by evaluations of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis (MADAD fund) and the European Trust Fund for the Central African Republic (Bekou Trust Fund) in the scope of the evaluation of cooperation with the Central African Republic.

In 2020, this would allow undertaking an evaluation on public financial management including domestic resource mobilisation and utilisation as a cross-cutting issue of the new Consensus, being timely in view of adjustments to the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) framework.

Other new entries for 2023 will include a joint interim evaluation with DG NEAR of the new financing instruments NDICI, Overseas Association Decision and European Instrument for Nuclear Safety, including final evaluations for the current financing instruments DCI, EIDHR, ENI, IcSP, IPAI and PI⁴. Moreover, an evaluation on innovative engagement with more advanced developing countries as a cross-cutting issue of the new Consensus and on the European Development Days will be inserted for 2023.

III.4. Ongoing thematic evaluation work

In July 2019, the evaluation on Conflict Prevention and Peace Building (jointly with NEAR, DEVCO leading) is ongoing with a publication expected for late 2019. Evaluations on the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, State Building Contracts, Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities, Migration and Gender (both jointly with NEAR in the lead) and Vocational Education for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth were launched early 2019.

⁴ Instrument for Development Cooperation, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, European Neighbourhood Instrument, Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, Instrument for Pre-Accession II, Partnership Instrument



ANNEX I: Geographic Evaluations

Title	DEVCO Directorate	Joint	Budget Support	Fragile ⁵	Comments
Planned for 2019 (delivery in 2020)					
Kyrgyzstan	F		X		In line with EWP 2018-2022; substantial budget support portfolio; full country programme never evaluated
Mauritania	D			X	In line with EWP 2018-2022; full country programme never evaluated
Niger	D	X		X	Last evaluation published 2010. Usefulness in the context of the G5 Sahel initiative for cooperation on development and security policy. Timing requested by Directorate D. FR expressed interest, feedback other MS pending. ⁶
Planned for 2020 (delivery in 2021)					
Angola	E				Evaluation postponed from EWP 2019: Last evaluation published 2009; launch early 2020 preferred by service.
Guatemala	G		X		Evaluation requested by Directorate G to draw lessons for improving cooperation given the. Large budget support portfolio
Tajikistan	F				Evaluation postponed from EWP 2019; full country programme never evaluated
Somalia	E			X	In line with EWP 2018-2022; possibly together with ECHO as planning to evaluate Horn of Africa in 2020
Planned for 2021 (delivery in 2022)					
Guyana	G		X	X	Last evaluation published 2008 (no BS)
Malawi	E				Evaluation postponed from EWP 2019: Last evaluation published 2011

⁵ EU Crisis list 2017/18

⁶ Launch might be postponed to 2020

Title	DEVCO Directorate	Joint	Budget Support	Fragile ⁵	Comments
Papua New Guinea	F			X	Evaluation postponed from EWP 2020: Last evaluation published 2000
South Sudan	D			X	Evaluation postponed from EWP 2019; possibly together with ECHO as planning to evaluate South Sudan in 2021
Zimbabwe	E			X	Evaluation postponed from EWP 2019 allowing more time for implementation after change of government; full country programme never evaluated
Planned for 2022 (delivery in 2023)					
Ethiopia	D		X	X	Evaluation postponed from EWP 2020; suggested modification to BS as substantial amount: Last evaluation published 2012 (no BS)
Nigeria	D			X	Evaluation postponed from EWP 2020: Last evaluation published 2010
Nepal	F		X		Evaluation requested by Directorate F; Last evaluation published 2012 (no BS); large budget support portfolio.
Benin	D		X		Evaluation already included in the 2017-2021 work programme planned for this year; large budget support portfolio
Jamaica	G		X		Evaluation already included in the 2017-2021 work programme planned for this year; large budget support portfolio.: Last evaluation published 2012 (no BS)
Planned for 2023 (delivery in 2024)					
Mozambique	E				Evaluation postponed from EWP 2020: Last evaluation published 2009 (BS)
Liberia	D			X	Evaluation postponed from EWP 2022: Last evaluation published 2010
ASEAN (regional)	F				Last evaluation published 2009
Cuba	G				Although UMIC on paper, and MIP allocation limited, suggested to learn from restart of bilateral cooperation

ANNEX II: Thematic and other evaluations

Title	Policy areas	Comments
Planned for 2019 (delivery in 2020)		
Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities' (CSO- LA) Programme⁷	Governance	Following the first phase, the evaluation will focus on the assessment of the thematic programme CSO and Local Authorities (2014-2020 with a budget EURO 1.907 billion). The legal base of this Programme lays in the Regulation 233/2014 of the European Parliament and Council 'establishing a financing Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI)'. The objective of DCI is defined mainly 'to strengthen civil society organisations and local authorities in partner countries. The scope might include the DEAR programme and Framework Partnership Agreements with CSO associations.
Gender equality	Gender	Important cross-cutting issue of New Consensus. Horizontal assessment of gender equality issues and mainstreaming including Gender Action Plan II 2016-2020 ⁸
Evaluation on delivery through international development banks	Modalities	The evaluation on delivery through international development banks would follow-up on an evaluation on delivery through development banks and EIB from 2006 and allow mainly to gather evidence in times of reform of the World Bank Group trust fund (WBG TF) system. This would e.g. create a better basis to facilitate a more strategic use of the WBG TFs by the Commission, allowing it to capitalise better on them. The results of the evaluation can be used to improve the way of contributing to TFs, remaining an important tool to partner with others. This should help reducing fragmentation, increasing influence over them, strengthen the position of the Commission in TF governance, as well as better visibility and involvement in decision-making. Commission currently is the third largest contributor to WBG TFs (156 active WBG TF contributions with around USD 2,406 million for 2014-2018 [DEVCO alone contributes around EUR 430 million per year to 79 TF for the period 2010-2017]). A summary of existing evaluations of specific WB TR contributions is undertaken in preparation. Link time-wise to evaluation of PFM support useful as such actions supported mainly through WB TF.
Planned for 2020 (delivery in 2021)		
Agriculture-Growth-Employment	Agriculture Employment	The need for this evaluation is underpinned by the fact that in more and more ACP countries the sector of rural development is an essential focal sector in line with our commitments. The objective of the evaluation is to evaluate the results of the support provided by the EU in this area. An evaluability assessment might be considered in preparation.
'Global Public Goods and Challenges' Programme	Multi sector	This evaluation will focus on the assessment of the thematic programme 'Global Public Goods and Challenges'. The legal base of this Programme lays in the Regulation 233/2014 of the European

⁷ Although CSO-LA and GPGC (planned in 2020) are mentioned as programmes in the DCI, they are closely linked to DEVCO policies as regards its work with firstly, non-governmental actors and secondly, the approach to global public goods. They are thus considered as strategic evaluations. However, the GPGC evaluation is to be confirmed (both timing and approach).

⁸ Although DG NEAR will lead the evaluation, the implementation of this evaluation will have a serious impact on the workload of DEVO.04

Title	Policy areas	Comments
		Parliament and Council ‘establishing a financing Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI)’. Actions that range from environment, human development, sustainable energy and agriculture to migration and asylum are funded through this programme.
PFM including domestic resource mobilisation and utilisation	PFM	Cross-cutting issue New Consensus: Assessment of policy dialogue and assistance provided for public financial management (PFM) including impact on anti-corruption.
Renewable natural resources including biodiversity	Natural Resources Biodiversity	Renewable natural resources including biodiversity and development are closely linked. The European Commission has provided official aid funds alone for biodiversity-related activities of around €1.3 billion between 2002 and 2017. This evaluation will encompass lessons learnt and practices focused on Agro/Forest - biodiversity and Wildlife.
Planned for 2021 (delivery in 2022)		
Evaluation of Cooperation with UN⁹	Modalities	The evaluation will cover the partnership between the EU and the UN in terms of channeling development cooperation funds through the UN. Furthermore, assessing the choice of aid modality versus other modalities will be included. The evaluation will build upon the previous evaluation ‘Evaluation of Commission’s external cooperation with partner countries through the organizations’ implemented in 2008. This evaluation will be led by DG NEAR but it will also cover DG DEVCO countries. To consider covering Spotlight initiative in the scope.
External Investment Plan	Investment Infrastructure Private sector	The European External Investment Plan is an example of a ‘smarter’ use of Official Development Assistance to leverage funding from other sources, create quality and decent jobs, and generate inclusive sustainable growth for the benefit of the poorest. It will encourage investments that otherwise would not happen – for example in conflict-affected areas or where economic governance is lacking. As based on a new legal base adopted in 2017 and foreseen to be covered by NDICI this evaluation will be a major evaluation following BR requirements and including the EFSD and EFSD Guarantee evaluation required by Regulation 1601/2017 and to be submitted at the end of 2022 to Parliament and Council (first pillar of EIP).
(Meta-) evaluation SDGs		Based on the New European Consensus that translates SDGs into the EU policy framework and the revised development results framework (2018) this evaluation would assess in how far EU contributed to implementation of SDGs and with which results 6 years after their launch, in order to feed into the second Joint Synthesis Report on the implementation of the Consensus ahead of High Level Political Forum 2023. Evaluation function committed to undertake regularly meta-evaluations since 2018 as a possibility to capitalise on other in-house evaluation investments (DEVCO, NEAR, FPI).
Planned for 2022 (delivery in 2023)		
Joint implementation	Modalities	Having a prominent role in the new European Consensus, Joint implementation is a way of promoting

⁹ Although DG NEAR will lead the evaluation (postponed with evaluation work plan 2019-2023 to the year 2021), the implementation of this evaluation will have a serious impact on the workload of Unit DEVO.04.

Title	Policy areas	Comments
		a more coherent, effective and coordinated EU support based on shared objectives in selected sectors or on cross-sectoral specific themes, tailored to the country contexts. Joint implementation for example ranges from delegated cooperation, joint operational programmes to technical expertise (twinning), thematic Trust Funds, Joint management centres and others. Joint implementation is grounded in joint analyses and is evaluated jointly.
Planned for 2023 (delivery in 2024)		
External financing instruments: - NDICI - Overseas Association Decision (OAD) - European Instrument for Nuclear Safety (INSC)	Legal basis	Evaluation of the instruments. Evaluation will assess the NDICI, INSC and OAD at the mid-point of their implementation as set out in the regulations (currently under negotiation). At the same time, the evaluation will feed the final evaluation of the existing instruments.
Innovative engagement with more advanced developing countries	Differentiation	Cross-cutting issue New Consensus and 9 years after DCI-graduation. With MFF 2014-2020 graduation of partner countries introduced for first time at EU-level. The idea was to develop further the cooperation with upper MICs and economies with a share of more than 1% of world gross national income towards more of a partnership focussing stronger on shared interests on the assumption that those countries could afford the financing of their development themselves. Lessons need to be learnt from the closing down of bilateral aid programmes in graduating countries and the use of other instruments for the establishment of new forms of partnerships based on mutual interests and joint initiatives to address global challenges.
Evaluation of European Development Days	Communication	Evaluation on the impact of the EDD on the international development exchange and in how far the EDD have become a reference for the exchange and developments in the policy area.