

GUIDELINES FOR DISSEMINATING FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

Purpose. In the Asian Development Bank (ADB), operations evaluation is designed to provide feedback on performance to improve the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of ongoing and future operations, and to enhance their contribution to achieving development results in ADB's developing member countries. These guidelines address two aspects of the dissemination of evaluation findings and recommendations (i) ways to build value from evaluations, and (ii) options for reaching out.

Audiences. The targeted audiences include the Board of Directors, Management, senior staff, staff in headquarters, resident missions, and representative offices, institutional responsibility centers in developing member countries, local stakeholders, nongovernment organizations, other development agencies, and umbrella organizations such as the Development Cooperation Directorate in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Evaluation Network that it coordinates, the United Nations Evaluation Group, and the Evaluation Cooperation Group.

Material. Material will be compiled from Project/Program Performance Evaluation Reports, Assessments of Development Impact, Special Evaluation Studies, Sector Assistance Program Evaluations, Impact Evaluation Studies, Country Assistance Program Evaluations, Annual Evaluation Reports, or a combination thereof. The material will cover both operational lessons and developmental lessons.

Building Value. What is a subject of interest? How will its evaluation make a contribution in ADB and its developing member countries? What can be done to ensure that it tells an informative story? How can stakeholder and shareholder expectations be met? To stay committed to and focused on building value in evaluations, it is important to

- Think of the Broader Picture
 - An evaluation must be seen as an opportunity to contribute to improved operations and continuous learning. This means that from the outset and throughout the evaluation process, a focus must be maintained on what contribution the evaluation can ultimately make. The maximum potential value of an evaluation is reached when decisions or actions draw on the findings and recommendations in the evaluation report. Sharing this knowledge with decision makers is needed for evaluations to be useful.
 - To increase the value of an evaluation, it is useful to think about how dissemination activities can contribute to: (i) ameliorating issues and problems, (ii) improving policies and practices, and (iii) achieving institutional learning objectives.
- Focus on Lessons
 - The development of useful findings and recommendations must be at the forefront of the Evaluation Specialist's mind throughout the evaluation process. It is necessary to think of what a decision maker needs to make a decision.
 - To maintain a good focus, it is useful to continuously ask if an evaluation provides (i) a clear understanding of performance, the development results achieved, and any weaknesses or problems, (ii) an explanation of how ADB's involvement contributed to the results, and (iii) a set of valuable lessons to promote a wider learning experience.

- Be Flexible
 - During the evaluation process, options may surface for delivering better findings and recommendations. The Evaluation Specialist should be receptive to midstream decision making that takes advantage of potentially rewarding opportunities.
- Keep Messages Simple
 - Data and information should be used to facilitate informed decision making, ease understanding, and minimize opportunities for misinterpretation. Too much data and information is unmanageable, counterproductive, and expensive.
 - The main text should not exceed 30 pages. Its focus should be on drawing strategic conclusions from the data and information that is collected in the process of evaluation. Technical discussions should be placed in appendixes.

Reaching Out. Disseminating findings and recommendations in a timely manner provides the chance to improve developmental practice and the organizational performance associated with it. Effective and efficient dissemination can help to build meaning and understanding, develop support, and generate learning opportunities. However, effective dissemination requires a plan to get the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, and to help them to apply it in ways that improve organizational performance. If findings and recommendations are disseminated this way, the credibility of the evaluation will be enhanced and incentives to act on it will be created. To reach out, it is necessary to

- Assign Responsibilities
 - Planning for effective and efficient dissemination of findings and recommendations and the use of associated communication methods will be the responsibility of the Evaluation Specialist in consultation with the supervising Director. After the evaluation report is finalized, responsibility for dissemination will fall on the Evaluation Specialist.
 - When the evaluation report is being finalized, the Evaluation Specialist will be responsible for preparing a dissemination plan for knowledge developed for target audiences and for coordinating related actions to be taken by consultants, national officers, and evaluation assistants. The dissemination plan will be submitted to the Director General when the evaluation report is submitted for approval.
 - The Knowledge Management Unit will support dissemination of findings and recommendations with advice on dissemination planning and the selection of dissemination options.
- Develop a Dissemination Plan
 - From the onset and throughout the evaluation process, the Evaluation Specialist will develop answers to questions such as (i) who is the target audience? (ii) what is the key message? (iii) who needs to know what? (iv) how can the target audience best be reached? and (v) what data and information should be emphasized? Early answers to these questions should be included in the evaluation approach paper submitted to the Director General at the onset of the evaluation.
 - After the target audiences have been identified, data and information can be packaged to meet their requirements while respecting ADB's [Public Communications Policy](#). The degree to which data and information are to be shared with executing and implementing agencies, local stakeholders,

other development agencies, nongovernment organizations, etc. will be specified in the dissemination plan.

- Assess Dissemination Options
 - The level of sophistication of a dissemination plan and its extent should be a function of the significance of the evaluation and its potential for making a contribution in ADB and its developing member countries. Dissemination works best when several communications methods are used.
 - In many cases, oral briefings are a good option for disseminating findings and recommendations. Briefings gather people who share an interest and provide a fertile ground for discussion. Decision makers are also more inclined to attend a briefing than read a lengthy report. Briefings can take the form of workshops or brown-bag lunches, at which participants should be provided with a copy or summary of the evaluation report. Briefings should also be provided to executing and implementing agencies and to local stakeholders in the course of the evaluation and at the end of it.
 - Web-based communications techniques can expand ADB's capacity to learn and contribute to informed decision making. The website of ADB's Operations Evaluation Department serves as the primary means for capturing, storing, and disseminating findings and recommendations. Full evaluation reports are accessible there. Web-based communications techniques can play an important role in ADB's capacity to learn and contribute to informed decision making. For each evaluation report, the Evaluation Specialist should also prepare an abstract of key issues, findings, and recommendations and upload it on the website as the report's landing page. When finalizing evaluation reports, the Evaluation Specialist should select accurate and concise titles that are more searchable on the internet and to identify appropriate keywords.¹
 - Other media include (i) bilingual summaries² on ADB's website and electronic mail announcements, (ii) articles in internal newsletters and bulletins, (iii) two-pagers such as the *Learning Curves* prepared by ADB's Operations Evaluation Department, (iv) conferences, seminars, and peer review sessions, (v) press releases, including news releases via ADB's Department of External Relations, and question-and-answer statements, (vi) references in speeches, (vii) articles in professional journals, (viii) the Lessons Database in ADB's Operations Evaluation Department, and (ix) just-in-time electronic mail.

Characteristics of a Successful Dissemination Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dissemination plan reflects the needs of the target audiences. It relies on appropriate form, language, and information content levels for findings and recommendations from operations evaluation. • The plan incorporates various dissemination techniques such as written, graphical, electronic, print, broadcast, and verbal media. The methods include summary documents; electronic dissemination within ADB and to key informants outside of ADB; cross postings on web pages; press releases;

¹ The basic rules to follow in identifying keywords are to (i) indicate geographical coverage, (ii) prioritize important words, (iii) apply the lowercase form of words, (iv) employ the longest form of words, (v) provide a maximum of 10–12 keywords, (vi) keep to a maximum of 3–4 clusters of keywords and (vii) use commas, not colons, to separate keywords and clusters.

² English is the working language of ADB. But, dissemination of findings and recommendations into languages other than English will encourage understanding and support of evaluation reports by stakeholders and shareholders.

Characteristics of a Successful Dissemination Plan	
	media coverage; flyers, posters, and brochures; letters of thanks to study participants; newsletters to study participants; events and conferences; and seminars. Each method calls for its own format and means of dissemination and includes both proactive and reactive channels—that is, it includes information content that the target audiences have identified as important and information content that the audiences may not know to request but is likely to be of interest. The dissemination techniques are more likely to succeed when their packaging and information content has been influenced by inputs from the target audiences.
•	The dissemination plan draws on existing capabilities, resources, relationships, and networks to the maximum extent possible. It also builds the new capabilities, resources, relationships, and networks that the target audience needs.
•	The dissemination plan includes effective quality control mechanisms in ADB and in developing member countries to ensure that the information content is accurate, relevant, representative, and timely.
•	The plan identifies the resources required for implementation.