1. The Development Effectiveness Committee of the Board of Directors (DEC) held a meeting on 8 September 2022 to discuss the Independent Evaluation Department’s (IED) proposed Work Program for 2023-2025 and Budget Outlook for 2023. The meeting was held virtually and chaired by the DEC Vice-Chair.

2. The IED Director General provided brief introductory remarks and an overview of the main features of the work program. The program reflects consideration of external and internal developments and input from Management.

3. The DEC endorsed the proposed work program while highlighting interests in terms of content, evidence members expect to be produced, and use. One member asked for further consultation on the Topical Paper for domestic resource mobilization once it is scoped. IED set out the criteria it uses when developing its rolling work program and explained why reducing the current 100% validation target would in its view lead to less meaningful aggregate findings on performance while producing only small savings. IED noted that a random sample might be sufficient once ADB’s portfolio reaches a critical mass. One DEC member cautioned that IED should only evaluate items that are clearly within its mandate and area of expertise. This member also called for IED to be part of the network of economists envisaged in the Organizational Review as well as ensuring the proposed data management unit and staff are integrated into a broader vision and strategy for digitalization for the bank and avoid further creating additional siloed data sets.

4. Committee members suggested topics for future evaluations, such as capital market development including green and blue bond products, innovative financing instruments such as the ETM, social protection, aging, and the future of work.

5. The committee discussed the Annual Evaluation Review (AER) and IED’s decision to discontinue its recommendations. IED explained that the AER is not meant to be another thematic evaluation but provide a synthesis of previous products. While most DEC members had no objections to this decision, there was general agreement on the importance of the AER being clear on the issues that in IED’s view need a solution as well as a formal Management response. There was also consensus that the absence of recommendations should not take away from the relevance and take-up of the evidence and findings of the AER.

6. There was unanimous support in the DEC for the call to produce evaluations with a view to how DMCs can use them so that they clearly add value to their development. The DEC welcomed IED’s ongoing work on managing and spreading evaluation knowledge as well as on building evaluation capacity. The DEC invited IED to carry on and expand this work.

7. While the committee acknowledged that the proposed IED budget was preliminary, they expressed understanding of the underlying budget estimates and general support for the proposal, including IED’s staffing needs for 2023. IED
explained that they currently rely on specialized evaluation or sector staff and need to complement this with staff having a more generalist profile. One DEC member asked IED to present a solid case for approving a budget which would be about $2 million higher than the expected expenditure in 2022. He noted that more flexible budget implementation could be a way of preventing overbudgeting. Another member asked that IED and Management collectively look for opportunities to streamline the country partnership reviews and validations as part of the development of new country partnership strategy evaluation guidelines in the proposed work program.

Meeting Attendees:

DEC: AED Roger Fischer (Vice-Chair); ED Sameer Kumar Khare; AED David Cavanough; AED Karen Murray; AED Keiko Takahashi

IED: Emmanuel Jimenez, Director General; Sona Shreshta, Deputy Director General; Benjamin Graham, Advisor

Secretariat: Sisse Arias, OSEC