



# **Evaluation Policy**

## **ADRA Denmark**

*Approved by the Board*

*30 October, 2017*

## What is evaluation?

ADRA Denmark adheres to the OECD/DAC definition of an evaluation, which is:

*The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors (OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management).*

## Why evaluate?

Evaluation serves two overall purposes: **learning** and **accountability**. Learning is achieved when we as an organisation adapt our future interventions to past experience. Accountability is achieved when evaluations credibly analyse and document the impact of interventions.

### *To promote learning by active participation*

Everyone involved in evaluations should have learning at the forefront of their mind. Managers and staff should carry out evaluations of projects or programmes with a high potential for learning. Evaluators should make sure that the issues they focus on are formulated by the stakeholders involved and that these are involved in the evaluation throughout. Communication of findings should be prioritised. The goal is to explore the reasons for the successes and failures of activities funded by ADRA, and thus produce information that can help achieve future results more effectively and efficiently. The evaluation document must report recommendations for future actions targeted at ADRA Denmark as well as relevant ADRA partners.

### *To promote accountability by documentation and systematisation of experience*

ADRA subscribes to the definition of accountability formulated in the Core Humanitarian Standard of Quality and Accountability: *The process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power.* In evaluation, this translates into an obligation to document results to all stakeholders, and is not limited to upward financial accountability. For evaluations to contribute to accountability, they must be carried out transparently and independently. Consequently, they can be used as a point of departure for advocacy initiatives and activities.

## When to evaluate?

An evaluation can be conducted **during the implementation of a project or programme** to assess the performance of the intervention. In that case, it is usually intended to improve performance and will focus on operational aspects. This type of evaluation is also known as 'formative evaluation', 'mid-term evaluation' or 'review'. In this document, the term 'evaluation' covers all types. A 'thematic evaluation' may also occur at this time, focusing on a specific theme across a number of projects or programmes, such as innovation or a particular programmatic approach, such as advocacy. Thematic evaluations mostly look at the effectiveness and relevance of the project or programme.

An evaluation can also be undertaken **at the end of an intervention** (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which the anticipated outcomes were produced. This is what we term 'summative

evaluation'. These types of evaluations can also occur after an extended period of time has passed, for example to assess the long-term impact of the project or programme (impact evaluation). However, these evaluations are dependent on the availability of resources after the project or programme has come to a close. Evaluations are preferably planned (and budgeted for) in a projects or programme's design phase. In any case, evaluations must be approved during ADRA's annual planning process.

### Who evaluates?

Evaluations in ADRA are always external, i.e. carried out by people not employed by ADRA, typically contracted consultants. The evaluation team is selected based on their documented experience within fields relevant to the project or programme in question. Preferably, the team should include at least one person with extensive knowledge of the local context as well as both male and female consultants. Detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment are always developed before the start of the assignment.

### How does an evaluation relate to monitoring and reviews?

Evaluations are a part of ADRA's monitoring and evaluation framework. In this respect, the two key defining characteristics of evaluations are that they are external, i.e. carried out by external consultants, and they are comprehensive in that they are assessments covering whole projects or programmes, usually several years of activities. Monitoring is a series of small, frequent assessments of implementation progress, made to inform day-to-day operations. Finally, evaluation is different from financial audits in that it may include financial information, but focuses on the activities and their results.

### What to evaluate?

All of ADRA's international work must be evaluated regularly at project, programme or thematic level. To learn and to seek to improve constantly is a natural part of good practice in ADRA. Evaluation is an obvious tool for this and thus the decision to evaluate should depend on the potential for learning. As such, a small pilot project might not require an evaluation according to the formal criteria below, but it should be evaluated regardless, since the potential for learning is high.

Whether or not an evaluation is mandatory depends on the available budget of the project or programme, its duration and the specific requirements/allocations of the donor.

- ✓ As a general rule, **all projects or programmes running for three years or more must undergo an evaluation**. In some cases, back donors have stricter requirements, which should of course be adhered to. For projects or programmes with multiple phases, the duration is the total duration of all phases, as long as the activities taking place are similar in character. Not all donors will allow for budget allocations to evaluations, but they are to be conducted wherever possible.
- ✓ For projects or programmes less than three years and budgets of less than 500,000 DKK, the general rule is that they must be evaluated when a new phase has led to a total duration of activities of a similar character, for three years or more. A completion report must be completed for development projects or programmes, when no evaluation takes place.

All **long-term development projects or programmes** with an average annual budget of 500,000 DKK or more must be evaluated, regardless of the duration.

Duration of long-term development programme	Average annual budget in DKK		
	Less than 500,000	More than 500,000	More than 5,000,000
Up to two years	Not mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Three years or more	N/A	Mandatory	Mandatory

All **humanitarian response projects** with an average annual budget of 5,000,000 DKK must be evaluated, regardless of duration. Not all donors will allow for budget allocations to evaluations, but they are to be conducted wherever possible.

Duration of humanitarian response	Average annual budget in DKK		
	Less than 500,000	More than 500,000	More than 5,000,000
Up to two years	Not mandatory	Not mandatory	Mandatory
Three years or more	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

**Thematic evaluations** are carried out when the examination of a particular topic would benefit from a cross-regional approach. These types of evaluations assess an issue of interest to ADRA as an organisation – e.g. something that has been tested on a pilot basis. As such, they are not confined to specific regions or offices, although field work may take place in a limited number of sites. They may for instance assess the effectiveness of specific approaches or methods such as LRRD, advocacy or Farmer Market Schools, or new innovative approaches.

### How to evaluate?

An evaluation must always be designed to maximize learning in its specific context. As such, methodology, scope and budgets may vary. The core of all ADRA evaluations is to determine whether ADRA operations have achieved the intended results, but they should also look into any unintended results and possible side-effects. This means that the point of departure is always ADRA's approved documents, for example project or programme documents, including the predefined objectives and their indicators, or thematic, cross-cutting global policies.

An evaluation consists of a **process** and a **product**.

- ❖ The **process** should involve all stakeholders and be followed by an evaluation event, for example a meeting where findings are presented or a workshop with relevant stakeholders at country level. During, this event, the evaluators will present their preliminary findings and conclusions and invite relevant stakeholders to respond to these. If possible, the evaluation should include all interested stakeholders, including other ADRA partners and/or donors.
- ❖ On this basis, the draft evaluation report – the **product** – is developed. The ADRA office in question as well as ADRA Denmark should have the opportunity to comment on the draft report, before the final report is developed. The report must follow a 1-3-30 format: The first page must contain recommendations for future interventions, the following three pages should contain an executive

summary and the evaluation itself should be no more than 30 pages. Additional, supporting annexes should also be included, however, these do not need to be within the 30-page limit.

### Focus on learning

ADRA wants to enhance the sharing of knowledge and learning potential of all types of evaluations. Evaluations must be utilisation-focused in the sense that part of the responsibility for learning lies with the evaluator, in particular when it comes to identifying and involving expected users, so that participation in the learning process is an integrated part of the evaluation. The evaluation process is seen as an opportunity for ADRA staff and partners to look back and reflect about a particular intervention, a policy or an approach and form conclusions about what can be learned from it and put to use in future. The process should be participatory from beginning to end and include all stakeholders including rights-holders and partners as well as other NGO's and the back donor when relevant. However, the long-term responsibility of generating learning lies with ADRA. The main opportunities for learning in the evaluation process are:

- ✓ involving relevant stakeholders in designing the Terms of Reference. This includes partner staff as well as other ADRA supporting offices when relevant. These must be mentioned by name in the ToR.
- ✓ ensuring meaningful contact with rights-holders, ADRA staff and other stakeholders during field visits;
- ✓ an evaluation event, for example a debriefing session in-country, a meeting with all stakeholders or a video conference with all relevant ADRA staff;
- ✓ ADRA's response to the recommendations and formulation of follow-up plans;
- ✓ using lessons learned in designing new projects, programmes, policies or advocacy;
- ✓ including lessons learned in annual reports and other reporting opportunities.

The following bullets can serve as a checklist for the basic standard of the final evaluation report:

- ✓ The Terms of Reference for the evaluation must clearly describe the background for the evaluated intervention, the evaluation objective, scope of work, methodology and expected outputs (see template).
- ✓ In terms of impact, the evaluation must reflect on the counterfactual question: What would have happened without the intervention?
- ✓ The method should be gender sensitive and it must describe how it fits the purpose of the evaluation.
- ✓ The evaluation must reflect on the five OECD-DAC criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (see below).
- ✓ The evaluation report must follow the format of 1-3-30.
- ✓ An evaluation should always be designed to contribute to ADRA's commitment to the PANT principles of Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and Transparency.

### Attribution of impact: The counterfactual question

Any good evaluation considers the following question: What would have happened in the absence of our project or programme?

This counterfactual question is essential in answering the questions about impact, effectiveness and efficiency mentioned below and is used to establish attribution of impact to a project or programme's activities. There are several methods of answering the question and no one method fits all situations. In some situations, an evaluation might trace the process of impact in sufficient detail to establish what would have happened in the absence of the project or programme. In other situations, the progress of beneficiaries might be compared to a non-participating control group in which case it is key to ensure as much similarity in the beneficiaries and the control group as possible, for example by selecting the group in the same way beneficiaries were selected or by randomly selecting people or project sites for participation. The latter will only be possible in certain cases and extreme care has to be taken to ensure ethical procedures are followed. Regardless of the specific methodology applied, all project and programme evaluations must include data creation or data collection among the final beneficiaries or rights-holders, the method used must be gender sensitive, i.e. pay specific attention to the role of gender and present disaggregated data wherever possible.

### Quality in evaluations

For evaluations of projects and programmes, ADRA applies the five basic criteria defined by OECD/DAC and applied widely in international aid:

#### *Relevance*

- ✓ Are the development interventions relevant to ADRA and partners' development policies, goals and strategies?
- ✓ Is the activity relevant in relation to the context and the needs and priorities of the intended beneficiaries?

#### *Effectiveness*

- ✓ Have the primary objectives identified been achieved?
- ✓ Have the planned or expected results been achieved, including whether the intended population was reached?

#### *Efficiency*

- ✓ How economically have resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) been converted to results?
- ✓ Are the investment and recurrent costs justified?
- ✓ Could the same results have been achieved with fewer resources?

#### *Impact*

- ✓ What positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects have been produced by the development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?

#### *Sustainability*

- ✓ What is the probability of long-term benefits?
- ✓ Will the intended benefits continue when development cooperation is terminated?
- ✓ Is local ownership established?

In the case of **programme evaluations**, cross-programme and cross-country learning is particularly important. Therefore, all programme evaluations must have a follow-up plan that spells out how the lessons from that particular evaluation will be used in other programmes and countries.

For **humanitarian assistance** projects, due consideration must be given to the specific issues relevant in this context, for example difficult access to key informants due to the disruption caused by the crisis and rapid turnover in staff; an often polarised perspective on the same event due to ongoing conflict; missing indicators due to hasty planning and in general a rapid change in circumstances meaning that many assumptions about normal social and physical conditions may no longer be justified. Furthermore, the following issues should be considered in evaluations of humanitarian response, together with the compliance to the (other) commitments of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability:

### *Appropriateness*

In the case of evaluation of ADRA's humanitarian assistance, relevance is often supplemented with the criteria "appropriateness of the intervention". Although an intervention is relevant at macro level, it may not be appropriate in terms of activities selected. Appropriateness is tailoring the intervention to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability and cost-effectiveness accordingly. Cultural appropriateness should also be considered.

### *Coverage*

This includes targeting and involves determining who was supported with assistance and protection proportionate to their needs and why. The Code of Conduct from International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement that ADRA adheres to stipulates clearly that aid is given regardless of race, creed or nationality and devoid of any extraneous political or religious agenda. Under the coverage criteria the evaluator should look at targeting and pay attention to possible inclusion/exclusion bias.

### *Connectedness*

Sustainability may not be as important given the often short duration of the assistance. But instead the intervention should be evaluated for its connectedness – or its linking of relief, rehabilitation and development. Connectedness refers to the need to ensure that humanitarian assistance activities of a short-term nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account. An evaluation should look at the existence of a sound exit strategy, examine how local capacity is supported and developed and analyse the nature of partnerships supporting connectedness. All evaluations in ADRA must live up to the following international standards: They must be independent, impartial, transparent, participatory, feasible, cost-efficient, accurate, and fair and must not single out individuals for judgement. Additionally, the standards set out in ADRA Denmark's Approach to Partnership such as mutual ownership, accountability to all stakeholders, equality, harmonisation and alignment must be applied.

### **Follow-up on evaluations**

All evaluations should be followed up to ensure learning across countries, projects and programmes. Based on the recommendations of the evaluation report, a management response with an action plan should be developed by the responsible ADRA office. It is the responsibility of the respective ADRA Denmark programme coordinator to follow up on the implementation of the follow-up plan. This is also particularly relevant in cases of thematic or cross-country evaluations, where sharing and cross-country/programmatic learning and joint follow-up needs to be supported by the various ADRA Denmark staff.

## Making evaluations public

To ensure accountability and transparency, all evaluations are public, unless specific precautions need to be taken regarding the safety of partners and ADRA staff, or the effectiveness of a strategy or advocacy campaign. Specifically, programme and thematic evaluations along with ADRA's response are made public on ADRA's website.

## About this policy and related tools

This policy is written by the Programme Department and approved by the Board of ADRA Denmark. It should always be shared with external consultants assigned to carry out evaluations on behalf of ADRA Denmark.

The policy will be revised at least every five years, i.e. in 2022. Minor revisions can be approved by the Programme Director only.