

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP



INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

Management Action Record System (MARS)

Status of Adoption (Implementation) of the Independent Development Evaluation's Recommendations

Annual Report 2019

APPROACH PAPER



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
BDEV	Independent Development Evaluation
CHIS	Corporate IT Services
CODE	Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness
LID	Lead Implementing Department
MAR	Management Action Record
MARS	Management Action Record System
MR	Management Response
OID	Other Implementing Department
OPEV	Operations Evaluation Department
SNOQ	Operations Committee Secretariat and Quality Assurance Department
SNDR	Delivery, Performance Management and Results Department
SNVP	Senior Vice Presidency

1 Background and Context

Tracking the progress of the implementation of evaluation recommendations is a good practice recognized among development institutions.¹ However, the monitoring of management actions following evaluation recommendations has been challenging in the past (especially before 2013) due to the absence of appropriate systems and processes.

In 2005, the Operations Evaluation Department (OPEV)² of the African Development Bank (AfDB or the Bank), called BDEV (Independent Development Evaluation) since 2014, in its report “Towards Closing the Evaluation Gap,” identified the lack of a follow-up system as a major constraint for monitoring the Management’s actions in response to evaluation recommendations. Since then, various reports and discussions subsequently highlighted this constraint.³ In 2013, the Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness (CODE) of the AfDB Board of Directors (or the Board) jointly requested BDEV and Management to set up a monitoring and reporting system on Management actions taken to implement the agreed evaluation recommendations.

On 23 October 2013, the proposal for a Management Action Record System (MARS) at the African Development Bank was adopted by the CODE. In 2014, the MARS, an automated IT system, was developed to record and follow up on all evaluations of BDEV for which the Bank Management prepares a Management Response, presented and discussed in a meeting of the CODE.

The purpose of MARS is to: (i) provide an effective and efficient mechanism for systematically tracking and reporting on the implementation of agreed evaluation recommendations made by BDEV; (ii) strengthen accountability; (iii) increase transparency in the Bank’s operations and decision-making; and (iv) increase the use of and learning from evaluations. The MARS is also intended to be a tool to assist the Board in its oversight role by providing up-to-date information and data on institutional changes, reforms and other crucial issues.

The MARS guidelines provide BDEV with the task to annually assess and report to CODE on the level of implementation of evaluation recommendations. Pursuant to this provision, BDEV is undertaking its first assessment since the implementation of the MARS to provide the Board with an overview of the progress made by the Management in adopting the recommendations approved by the Board.

2 Overview of the MARS⁴

The MARS is designed and implemented jointly by BDEV and the Bank Management to ensure crucial buy-in and ownership. It records all evaluations of BDEV: i) that are of strategic

¹ MDB-ECG Good-Practice Standards for Country Strategy and Program Evaluation Report. July 2008.

² Towards Closing Evaluation Gaps at the African Development Bank (ADB/BD/WP/2005/123 – ADF/BD/WP/2005/143) – November 2005

³ Closing the Evaluation Gap, ADF-VII-IX evaluation, 2005 external Review on independence of OPEV, discussions during ADF X replenishment and ADF XIII, OPEV rolling Work Program 2006-2008, 2012-2014 & 2013-2015, OPEV self-assessment 2012, OPEV Strategy 2013-2017.

⁴ Based on all data available in MARS in March 2019.

importance and have a broader impact on the Bank's performance and development effectiveness; and ii) for which the Bank Management prepares a Management Response, presented and discussed in a meeting of the CODE. The follow up concerns only the implementation of agreed or partially agreed recommendations.

2.1 Roles and responsibilities of actors

BDEV coordinates the update of new evaluations and its recommendations, uploads the evaluation reports, assesses and reports to the Board annually on the status of adoption (implementation) of recommendations.

On the Management side, the Senior Vice Presidency (SNVP) and the Delivery, Performance Management and Results Department (SNDR) have the most important roles. SNDR i) provides effective coordination, including identifying Lead Implementing Department (LID) and Other Implementing Departments (OIDs) for each recommendation; ii) ensure the quality of management's reporting (Management Response (MR) and Management Action Record (MAR)); and iii) reports on the status of implementation of actions twice a year to the Board. SNVP ensures that management updates the MARS at agreed upon dates and has the authority to make final judgments in case of any disagreement between the implementing departments.

The Bank's Board of Directors through CODE provides overall guidance, considers twice a year SNDR's report on the status of implementation of actions and BDEV's annual report.

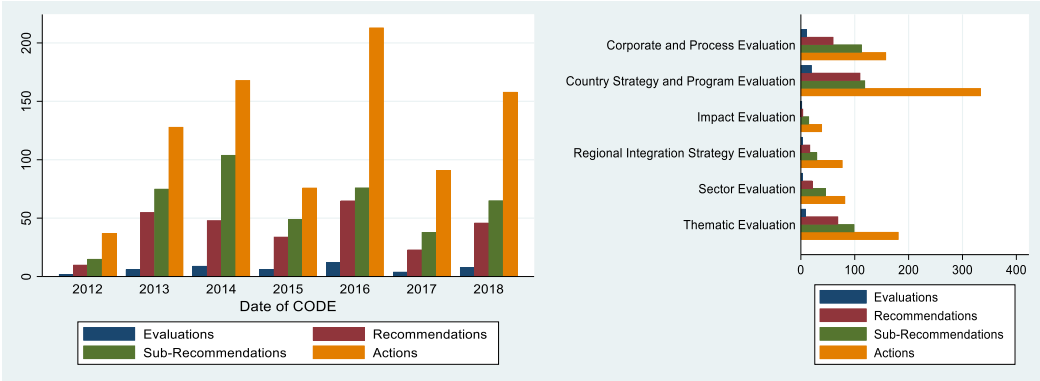
Table A1 provides a summary of the roles and responsibilities of each actor or stakeholder while Figure A1 describes in detail the different steps of operation and updating of the information in the MARS.

2.2 Overview of evaluation, recommendations, sub-recommendations and actions in MARS

Since the establishment of MARS, until the end of December 2018, 47 evaluations were registered in MARS (Figure 1), composed of country strategy and program evaluations (CSPEs) 42.5%, corporate and process evaluations 21.3%, thematic evaluations 9.1%, sector evaluations 6.4%, regional integration strategy evaluations 6.4% and Impact Evaluations 4.2%.

From these evaluations, 285 recommendations and 423 sub-recommendations have been issued. The Management agreed with 252 (88%) recommendations, partially agreed with 30 (11%) and disagreed with three (1%). In response to the 282 recommendations with which Management agreed or partially agreed, 873 actions have been planned. On average, there is six recommendations per evaluation, 1.5 sub-recommendations per recommendations and 3.06 actions per recommendation.

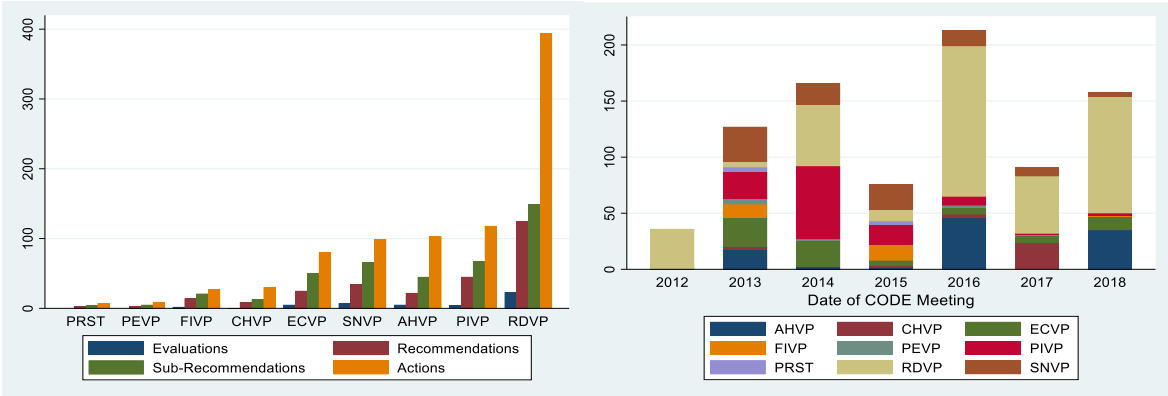
Figure 1. Distribution of Evaluation, recommendations, sub-recommendations and actions by year CODE meeting and type of evaluations.



Source: MARS data.

The predominance of country strategy and program evaluations is reflected in the distribution of the evaluations by Complex (Figure 2). Indeed, the RDVP complex is in charge of the implementation of the country strategy papers (CSPs), and represents 51% of the portfolio of evaluations in the MARS. The Vice Presidency of Regional Development, Integration, and Business Delivery (RDVP) is responsible for 45% of the recommendations, 35% of the sub-recommendations and 45% of the actions. The Vice Presidency of Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialization (PIVP), the Vice Presidency of Agriculture, Human and Social Development (AHVP), SNVP and the Vice Presidency for Economic Governance And Knowledge Management (ECVP), with an average of 5 evaluations each, represent respectively 13.5%, 11.8%, 11.3% and 9.1% of the portfolio of the actions to be implemented.

Figure 2. Distribution of Evaluation, recommendations, sub-recommendations and actions by Complex and by year CODE meeting.

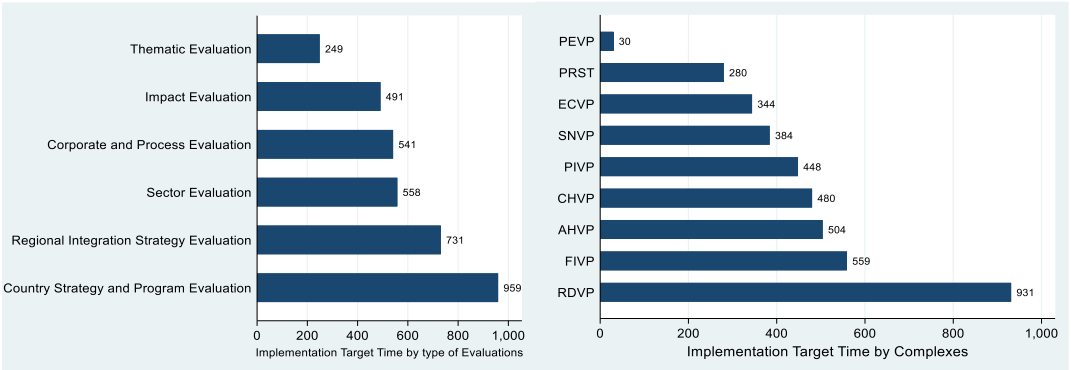


Source: MARS data.

The target implementation time (Figure 3), defined as the difference between the date of the CODE meeting and the target completion date fixed by the management, is on average 757 days (just over two years). It varies considerably according to the types of evaluation. Thematic evaluations and impact evaluations have the shortest implementation target times with 249 days and 491 days, respectively. On the other hand, the country strategy and program evaluation and the regional integration strategy evaluation have the longest implementation targets with 959 days and 731 days, respectively. The RDVP complex has logically the longest implementation times (on average 931 days) because it is in charge of the implementation of the

recommendations of the country strategy and program evaluations and the regional integration strategy evaluations that have the actions with longest implementation timeline.

Figure 3. Implementation target time (number of days) by type of evaluations and by Complexes



Source: MARS data.

2.3 The status of implementation of the actions

As part of its mandate, the Management reports to CODE twice a year on the progress in implementing the actions which it has committed. In practice, the focal points of the relevant departments recorded in MARS the status of implementation of the actions and a Flashlight Report summarizing the progress of the implementation of the recommendations is prepared by SNDR and presented to the Board. The first edition of this report was presented to the CODE in September 2017. According to the last update of the MARS data (15 February 2019), Management had completed 63% of all recorded actions, 34% are in the process of implementation and 3% have been retired after the action completion date.

For tracking purposes, the following classification of the status of implementation of actions is used:

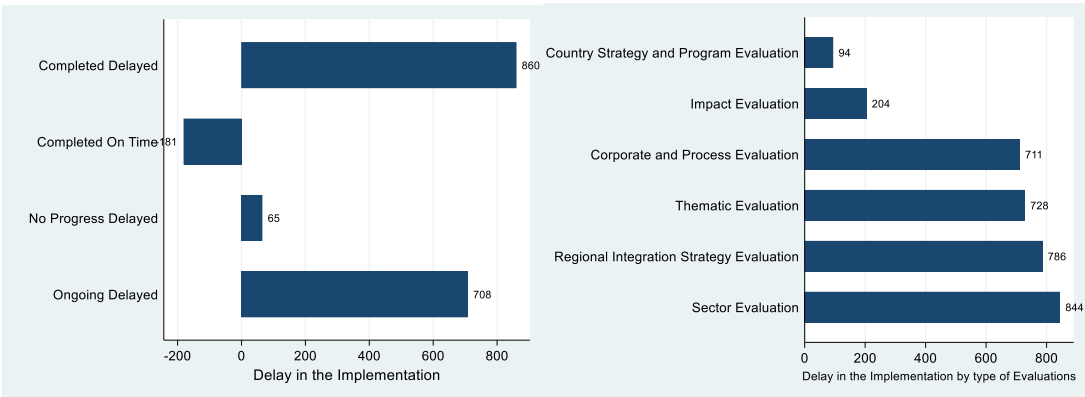
- **Completed on time:** the action has been implemented on or before the target completion date;
- **Completed delayed:** the action has been implemented after the target completion date;
- **Ongoing on time:** the action is being implemented and the target completion date is not yet reached;
- **Ongoing delayed:** the action is being implemented but the target completion date is exceeded;
- **No Progress on time:** the implementation of the action has not yet started, and the target completion date is not yet reached; and
- **No Progress delayed:** the implementation of the action has not yet started but the target completion date is exceeded.

The analysis shows that most of the completed actions were implemented with delay compared to the target completion date. Of the 63% of the completed actions, 22% of the actions have been completed on time compared with 41% completed with delay. Of the 26% of the ongoing actions, 14% are ongoing on time compared to 12% ongoing with delay. Finally, 8% have not

made any progress in the implementation (among which 7% are still on time, but 1% are already delayed) and 3% have been retired.

As shown in Figure 4, the actions completed on time were implemented by taking an average of 181 days before the target completion date, while the actions completed delayed were implemented with a delay of 860 days on average. The actions whose target completion date is exceeded and are not yet fully implemented have delays of 708 and 65 days on average respectively for the actions with the status ongoing delayed and no progress delayed. It also appears that the sector evaluation, the thematic evaluations and the corporate and process evaluations are the ones that are the most delayed in implementation, with delays on average of 844 days, 786 days and 728 days respectively. Finally, country strategy and program evaluations and impact evaluations have delays of only 94 days and 204 days on average respectively.

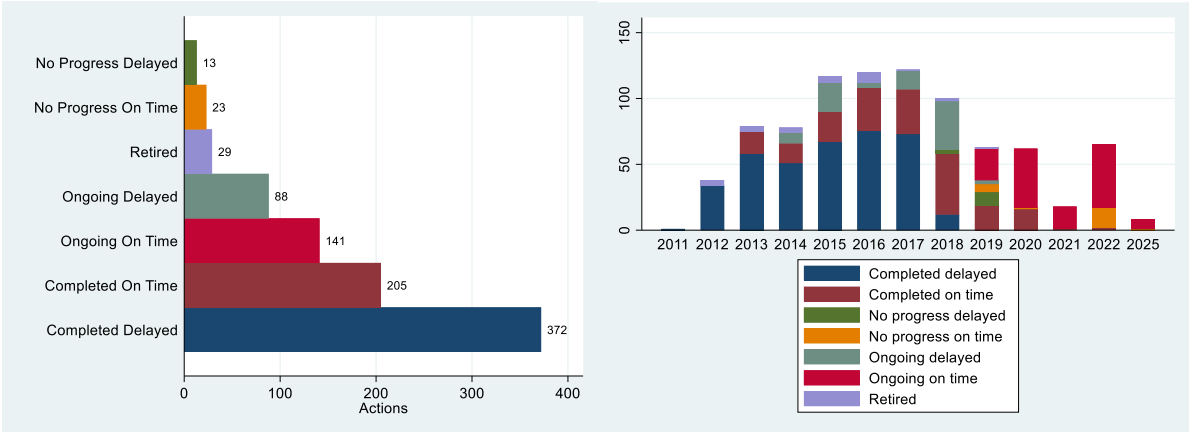
Figure 4. Delay in the implementation (number of days) by implementation status and by type of Evaluations



Source: MARS data.

The distribution of the actions according to the target completion date and the status of the implementation (Figure 5) shows that the number of actions completed on time has increased considerably between 2017 and 2018, from 27% to 44%. This improvement is linked to the first management report on the status of implementation of actions in September 2017. However, the proportion of actions due in 2018 completed with delay, ongoing with delay and without progress with delay is still very significant (54%) even if there has been an improvement compared to 2017 (71%). 2% of actions have been retired in 2017 and 2018.

Figure 5. Distribution of actions by Management’s status of implementation and by completion target year.



Source: MARS data.

3 Purpose and Objectives of the BDEV’s Assessment

The purpose of the report is to provide CODE annually with an analytic status of the implementation of the recommendation recorded in the MARS.

The overall objective of the report is to examine the extent to which the Management has adopted the agreed recommendations of BDEV. It does not purport to fully assess the MARS (implementation, process and results), which would require a full evaluation. However, the report will analyze the effectiveness of the actions taken by the Management for a small sample of recommendations. In addition, the assessment will also provide the Bank’s Senior Management with lessons on ways to improve the adoption of BDEV’s recommendations. In particular, the assessment will seek to:

- Benchmark the process of following up, reporting and assessment of the level of implementation of recommendations among the international development institutions.
- Examine the level of adoption of recommendations by assessing the alignment of the actions to their respective recommendations and the degree of implementation of the actions.
- Enhance learning from evaluations by strengthening the evaluation feedback loop and improving the Management accountability in implementing the agreed upon recommendations.
- Assist the Board of Directors in its oversight role.

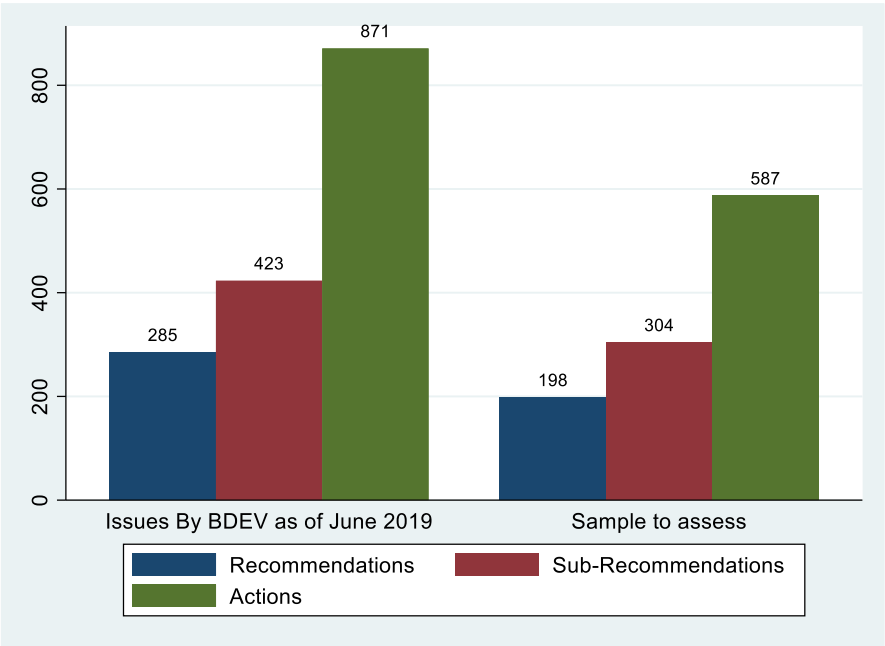
4 Methodology

4.1 Sampling of recommendations

The unit of analysis is the recommendation, which is issued and should be considered in the context of each evaluation. The assessment will examine the actions taken by the Management to implement the agreed recommendations by considering three dimensions: a) the level of alignment of all actions to the recommendation; b) the level of implementation of all actions related to the recommendation; and c) the overall level of adoption of recommendations. As much as possible, each action must be assessed in the context of the overall recommendation.

Only the recommendations with all their actions due by December 2018 will be assessed, which include only the recommendations with all their actions completed on time, completed with delay, ongoing with delay (over the target completion date) or no progress with delay. It contains 198 recommendations, 304 sub-recommendations and 587 actions (Figure 6). As of March 2019, out of the 587 actions to be assessed, the focal points provided justification (evidence) on the actions actually taken by the management for only 217 actions (37%). Given this low number and the importance of the evidence to assess the level of implementation of the actions, it was agreed with SNDR to open the MARS IT platform, for three weeks, to allow focal points to update and complete missing information. This helped to improve the share of actions (without taking into account the relevance and quality of the evidence provided), with evidence from 37% to 88.5% as of June 20, 2019.

Figure 6. Distribution of recommendations, sub-recommendations and actions in overall and assessment samples



Source: MARS data.

4.2 Analytical Framework

The main challenge related to the level of adoption of recommendations is that the actions committed by the Management may not be well aligned with the recommendations of BDEV and the degree of implementation of the actions may differ from one action to another.



To address the potential misalignment between the agreed recommendations and committed actions by the Management and agreed recommendations, the *level of alignment* is defined as: the extent to which the committed actions in the Management Response is aligned with the

agreed recommendations of BDEV; and the *Degree of implementation* is defined as: the extent to which actions have been implemented as planned.

BDEV analyzed management's progress in implementing the committed actions using a four-point scale based on the evidence provide by the Management in the MARS's IT Platform. For actions implemented or ongoing with delay, the assessment will go beyond the status of implementation (completed with delay, ongoing with delay or No progress with delay) to take into account the extent of the delay. The longer the delay is, the lower the score will be. Indeed, the degree of adoption will be higher for an action implemented with three months delay than an action implemented with two years delay.

The assessment will consist of in-depth analysis of the level of adoption of the recommendations by applying a rating scale to each action. The rating scale includes four levels: High, Substantial, Moderate and Low (described in detail in Table 1). To reach an overall rating on the level of adoption, again using a four-point scale, the individual ratings on the level of alignment of the action and the level of implementation of the same action will be combined, as described in Table 1.

To ensure consistency, the assessment process will follow the following four steps:

- i) two evaluators⁵ will review the entire set of actions;
- ii) the assessment templates by recommendation will be reviewed by the task manager or a team member of the evaluation;
- iii) BDEV management will review and validate the assessment templates;
- iv) the assessment templates will be sent to the Management for comments (giving opportunity for Management to provide additional evidence if necessary); and
- v) the assessment team will finalize the assessment templates taking into account the comments and draft the technical report.

This common rating scale aims to ensure sound qualitative assessment based on evidence. The assessment will be done not only based on the information present in MARS but also on the documentation provided by the Management. In the absence of evidence, the level of implementation of the action will be rated "Low." Interviews with the SNDR, in particular with the MARS coordinator, the various MARS focal points in the lead implementing departments and, if appropriate, with the task managers of the agreed actions will help to finalize BDEV's analysis.

⁵ For instance, at EBRD, the evaluator responsible for developing the recommendation is generally responsible for inputting the EvD response into the system.

Table 1. The rating scale and criteria

Score	Low: 1	Moderate: 2	Substantial: 3	High: 4
Level of Alignment	Very weak or nonexistent alignment of most of the committed actions with the recommendation.	Limited alignment of most of the committed action with the recommendation.	Strong alignment of most of the committed actions with minor shortcomings.	Very solid alignment of all committed actions with the recommendation.
Level of implementation	If most of the action have been completed with a delay greater than or equal to two (02) years Or are ongoing with a delay greater than or equal to one (01) years Or the management did not provide enough evidence on the implementation of the actions.	If most of the actions have been completed with a delay greater than one (01) year but less than two (02) years Or are ongoing with a delay less than one (01) years.	If most of the actions have been completed no later than one (01) year after the target completion date.	If all actions have been completed as planned.
Level of Adoption=Level of Alignment + Level of Implementation				
Level of Adoption (Overall rating)	If Alignment OR Implementation were rated “Low.”	If Alignment AND Implementation are rated at least “Moderate.”	If Alignment AND Implementation are rated at least “Substantial.”	If Alignment AND Implementation were rated “High.”

4.3 Classification of recommendations

The evaluations and recommendations will be classified according to a pre-determined framework to serve as a complementary analytical tool for the follow up of recommendations through MARS. The rationale for classifying evaluations and recommendations is to improve the learning value and utilization of data. By assigning each evaluation and each recommendation to a specific class the analysis of the MARS becomes more meaningful and can help understand which areas the Bank needs to put more effort on and what types of evaluations or recommendations are more challenging to implement compared to those that are quick-fixes. It will also enhance the clarity of reporting.

The recommendation will be classified in the following categories:





- **Strategic Framework:** Recommendations related to the strategies of AfDB.
- **Organizational Structure of the AfDB:** Recommendations related to the functioning of the AfDB Group with the aim of improving processes, corporate systems, guidelines, protocols, tools, and incentives.
- **Quality at entry:** design, preparation and additionality of AfDB activities, i.e. recommendations aimed at improving the quality of project at entry.
- **Human Resources:** Recommendations relating to human resources management.

- **Results measurement:** recommendations aimed at improving monitoring and evaluation of AfDB activities and results.
- **Knowledge generation and dissemination:** Recommendations related to the creation and management of knowledge.
- **Operational Policy Framework:** Recommendations related to the AfDB’s operational Policy framework.
- **Client engagement:** Recommendations related to the relationship between the Bank and its clients (RMCs, public and private sectors).
- **Instruments:** Recommendations related to the nature, quality and use of the lending and non-lending instruments (loans, guarantees, grants, equity investments, line of credits, PBOs, technical cooperation, etc.) of the AfDB.
- **Sustainability.**
- **Environmental and social safeguard.**
- **Civil society organizations.**
- **Gender.**

4.4 Score, Traffic Codes and Aggregation Methods

For a question of harmonization and to facilitate the comparison between BDEV scoring and the self-evaluation by SNDR, the choice has been made to adapt the latter’s scoring format and color codes.

Table 3. Status of action score and color code

Status label	Status score (low: 1, high: 4)	Status color code
Low	1	
Moderate	2	
Substantial	3	
High	4	

5 Quality Assurance Process

The SNDR is the main point of contact for this report. The SNDR, through the MARS focal point, will be involved at each stage of the development of this report. The opportunity will also be given to the evaluators of BDEV and all the focal points of the MARS to comment and provide additional evidence once the assessment templates by recommendations are completed.

6 Deliverables and Dissemination

The first deliverable of the assessment is this approach paper, which include an in-depth descriptive analysis of the MARS database, the sampling of recommendations that will be analyzed in this report and the methodology. The assessment of the adoption of the recommendations will lead to an assessment report. A synthesis report combining results from the two components of less than 20 pages, excluding annexes, will be prepared and submitted to the CODE for consideration.

7 Work plan, management and arrangements

7.1 Work plan

The report will be prepared in 2019, with the CODE discussion expected to be scheduled in the first quarter of 2020. The work plan is expected to involve the following steps and timeline (see table 4).

Table 4: Tentative Timeline

Description of Tasks / Key Deliverables	Responsibility	Time Frame
Approach Paper (Final version)	Task Manager	End-June 2019
Report (Assessment)	Evaluation Team	End –November 2019
Final Summary Report for CODE	Task Manager	End-December 2019

7.2 The Assessment Management

The Task Manager for this report is Eric KERE, Senior Evaluation Officer in BDEV.2 (Team Leader) and Gilbert Onionkiton ADJIMOTI, Junior Consultant, will provide research and analytical support. Ms. Henda AYARI, Archivist/Documentalist will provide administrative support.

Under the overall guidance of Madhusoodhanan MAMPUZHASSERIL, Division Manager, OIC, BDEV2 and Karen ROT-MUNSTERMANN, Acting Evaluator General of BDEV, the Task Manager will provide inputs and lead the work of the consultant and other team members, and will produce the final summary report to CODE.

The Task Manager will be responsible for organizing communication processes with stakeholders within and outside the Bank, with the support of the Knowledge Management Division (BDEV3). Aminata KOUMA, Evaluation Knowledge Assistant, will be in charge of leading the evaluation knowledge management, communication and dissemination.

7.3 Communication and Dissemination

The objective of communication and dissemination is to ensure that timely and relevant information and knowledge are available to stakeholders, and that they are given the opportunity to provide feedback and interact with the report team throughout the entire assessment process and beyond. A set of communication and dissemination activities will be undertaken before, during and after the assessment. During the assessment, the team will deploy a strategy aiming at, inter alia: (i) involving the main stakeholders in decision making about report design and implementation; (ii) informing about the evaluation activities and progress; and (iii) communicating the findings. After the assessment, the final findings will be disseminated. This will be done to support change and improvement, to show results and to demonstrate accountability and foster learning.

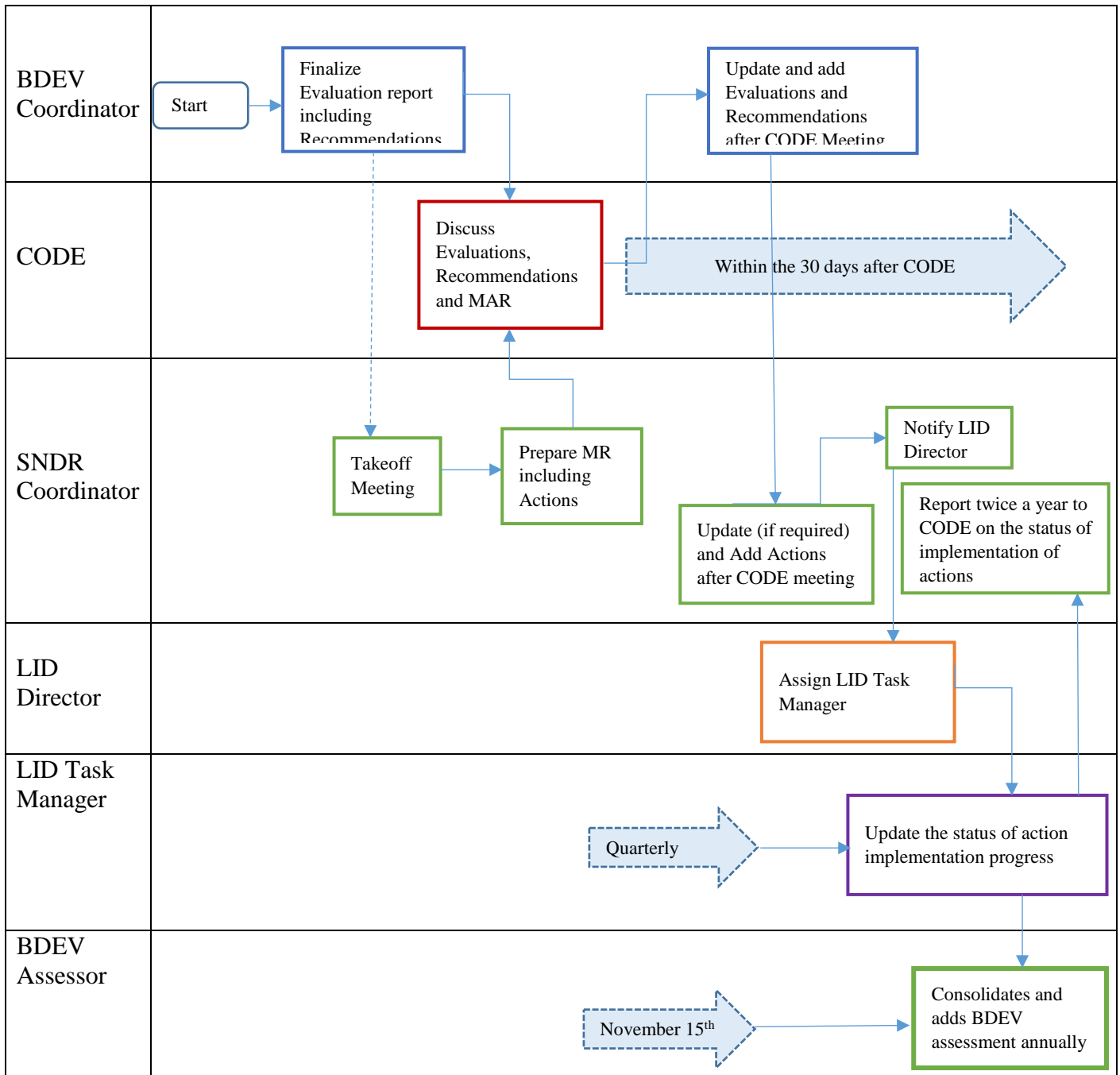
The audience for the communication and dissemination include AfDB Board of Directors, Bank staff in the operations departments, SNDR, the country and regional offices, BDEV, and the evaluation community. An overview of a preliminary communication and dissemination plan is given in Annex B. A detailed communication and dissemination strategy will be ready at the draft final report stage.

Annex A - What is the MARS

Table A1. Summary of the roles and responsibilities

Who	Roles and responsibilities
CHIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develops, maintains and manages the system i.e. the IT platform/software under the overall guidance of SNDR and BDEV. ✓ Provides technical support to users.
BDEV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Uploads recommendations in the system after finalization of evaluation report. ✓ Independently assesses management’s reporting on implementation of actions and the level of adoption of recommendations once a year. ✓ Reports to the Board annually on the status of adoption (implementation) of recommendations.
SNVP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensures timely compliance with reporting requirements to the MARS. ✓ Has the authority to assist in addressing issues or conflicts related to the uploading and reporting.
SNDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coordinates the MR, MAR and MARS including identifying Lead Implementing Department (LID) and Other Implementing Departments (OIDs) for each recommendation. ✓ Together with Lead Implementing Departments (LID) and Other Implementing Departments (OIDs) prepares MR and MARs including Action Completion Target Dates (ACTDs), baselines, targets and indicators (where applicable). ✓ Ensures quality and consistency of the MARs & the inputs in the MARS including action updates. ✓ Uploads the MAR in the MARS after CODE discussion. ✓ Reviews twice a year the reporting by LIDs and OIDs and provides technical advice and quality control. ✓ Reports twice a year to the Board on the status of implementation of actions.
Lead Implementing Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Together with SNDR and OIDs prepares MR and MARs including Action Completion Target Dates (ACTDs), baselines, targets and indicators (where applicable). ✓ Updates the MARS: Self-assesses and reports on the status of implementation of actions. ✓ <i>Seeks input from OID for the above when applicable.</i>
Other Implementing Departments (OID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Together with SNDR, LIDs and other OIDs prepares MR and MARs including Action Completion Target Dates (ACTDs), baselines, targets and indicators (where applicable). ✓ Provides inputs to the LID on actions taken and end-of year input and self-assessment.
CODE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provides overall guidance. ✓ Considers twice a year SNDR’s report on the status of implementation of actions. ✓ Considers BDEV’s annual report on the level of adoption of recommendations.

Figure A1. MARS high level process



Annex B - Preliminary Communication and Dissemination Plan

Knowledge product	Audience	Communication Channel	Communication product	Timeframe
Approach paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDEV Management • Delivery, Performance Management and Results Dept. (SNDR) • Operations Dept. • Bank Regional & Country offices • RMC authorities • Other evaluation & development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • BDEV Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach paper document (PDF) • Web article 	End May 2019
Draft/Final Technical Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery, Performance Management and Results Dept. (SNDR) • Operations department • BDEV team • Internal reviewers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Summary report document 	Mid –September 2019
Summary Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CODE members • Board Members • Delivery, Performance Management and Results Dept. (SNDR) • Operations Departments/ Country offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CODE Meeting • Email • DARMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary report document 	End September 2019
Summary Report (laid out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CODE • Bank Senior Management and staff (headquarters, regional & Country Offices) • Delivery, Performance Management and Results Dept. (SNDR) • RMC authorities • Other evaluation & development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand delivery and shipping • Email • ECoP meeting • BDEV Website and AfDB intranet • Evaluation Matters • eVAL Blog • BAOBAB • BDEV’s display stands (HQ& CCIA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published Summary report • Briefs and/or Highlights • Executive summaries • Infographics • Blog • Web article • Short video (Animation) 	October to November 2019