



From the Evaluator General's Desk

Plato asked, "...why should we not calmly and patiently review our own thoughts, and thoroughly examine and see what these appearances in us really are?" From wherever we stand in the 21st Century, pressure to deliver on objectives in a corporate environment distances us from Plato's slow-paced 400 BC. International Financial Institutions (IFIs) are spurred by their shareholders to achieve development results with the highest levels of efficiency and are constantly seeking ways to achieve more and better.

Recognizing that institutional policies, processes and practices influence performance, and that improvements can make an institution more effective in its quest for results, IFIs are now increasingly subject to scrutiny from the inside out. Departments for quality assurance, results monitoring, process efficiency etc. have been established, and independent evaluation functions are also increasingly examining organizational management to ensure that the internal machine is "well-oiled" and fit-for-purpose. ►►

► *The same applies to IDEV. Its evaluations of projects, sectors and regions still reach the four corners of the African continent, but to ensure that the internal organization and practices are optimal to achieving development. But now, more than ever before, we also look at how the AfDB manages itself to deliver, holding up a mirror to the Board, so it can thoroughly examine and see the AfDB's appearance. Plato's advocacy for introspection is proving relevant in today's quest for performance through evaluation in the organizational space.*

“Despite years of evolution in development evaluation, systematic learning and its application continues to present challenges”.

For IDEV, which has both accountability and learning in its mandate, corporate evaluations are an important instrument in driving reform. In recent years, it has examined institutional questions ranging from administrative budget management, policy – and strategy-making, procurement and the quality at entry of Country and Regional Integration Strategies to the implementation of Management commitments. It recently presented to the Board an evaluation of the Bank's Human Resources management (see article in this edition), and is currently undertaking evaluations of the quality at entry of public sector operations, quality of supervision, the Bank's self-evaluation systems and processes, and the Bank's Integrated Safeguards System.

Because they focus on key strategies and processes critical for institutional efficiency and development effectiveness, corporate evaluations are well appreciated by both the Board and Management of the AfDB. ►►



► *They inform the Bank as it continually tries to improve its performance through ambitious transformation processes such as the new Development and Business Delivery Model and a policy of decentralization.*

Corporate evaluations are not the only drivers of reform. In this edition, contributors also examine harmonization and collaboration, the use of results tools, and the power of management-style language to bring IFI stakeholders closer to the corporate world, among other ideas for improving the organization in IFIs.

We hope you enjoy reading the contributions from authors within and outside the Bank in this edition of Evaluation Matters and look forward to hearing your stories of how evaluation is working for development.

Happy reading!

About the Evaluator General

Rakesh Nangia is the Evaluator General for Independent Development Evaluation at the African Development Bank. Prior to joining the AfDB, he spent 25 years at the World Bank, where he held several positions including Director of Strategy and Operations for the Human Development Network and Acting Vice-President for the World Bank Institute. He attended the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and Harvard University and holds degrees in business administration and engineering.