EVALUATION POLICY

OF THE AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Preface

Evaluation has a long tradition in Austrian development cooperation and plays an important role as a tool for measuring the impact of our work. It provides an impetus for an ongoing learning process and lays major foundations for the continuous improvement of our development policy goals and contribution to implementing Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The present policy sets out the quality standards and benchmarks for Austrian development evaluation, with independence, transparency and quality as central pillars. It also defines the institutional requirements needed to ensure useful and credible evaluations and performs an important function in communicating Austrian development evaluation and its role to our partners and the public at large.

It sends a clear signal for coherence in development evaluation and is expected to further contribute to enhanced coherence in other policy areas as well. A joint interministerial evaluation policy is also expected to upgrade the role of evaluation in SDG monitoring and contribute to the greater use of evaluation reports as sources of evidence.

The policy deliberately sets high quality standards and requirements. Necessary foundations need to be laid and incentives provided to encourage its implementation. We are not only calling on our own institutions to put the policy into practice; we also encourage other actors - ministries, civil-society organisations and private-sector actors - to do the same.

Not least, the policy is expected to inform and contribute to relevant expert dialogue within and among the Austrian and international evaluation community, the scientific community and the interested public, so that we can continuously develop and improve our evaluation practice.

Vienna, in July 2019

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List of Abbreviations

3YP	Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC*	Austrian Development Cooperation
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
APolA	Foreign Policy Committee [of the Austrian Parliament]
BVergG	Federal Procurement Act
CSOs	Civil-Society Organisations
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DeGEval	Evaluation Society
DFIs	Development Finance Institutions
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group [of the international financial institutions]
EU	European Union
EZA-UA	Subcommittee on Development Policy [of the Austrian Parliament]
FA	Finance Committee [of the Austrian Parliament]
MFA	Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
MoF	Federal Ministry of Finance
FMST	Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IR	Inception Report
MR	Management Response (Formal Position of Management and Action Plan)
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OeEB	Development Bank of Austria
OOF	Other Official Flows
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PR	Peer Reviewer
RBM	Results-Based Management
RG	Reference Group
RTE	Real-Time Evaluation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

* **Note**: the present policy paper draws a distinction between the terms 'Austrian Development Cooperation' (ADC) on the one hand, and 'Austrian development cooperation' on the other. '**ADC'** is used as an institutional term, comprising the two development actors MFA and ADA, whereas the term, '**Austrian development cooperation'**, denotes the entirety of Austrian ODA actors and contents and therefore extends beyond ADC (MFA and ADA).

I. Context, Purpose and Scope

1. The policy for development evaluation sets out the quality standards and institutional requirements for evaluation practice in Austrian development cooperation. Besides the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), it addresses the Development Bank of Austria (OeEB) and relevant divisions in the Federal Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism (FMST). It can also be adopted by other actors of Austrian development cooperation.

2. The present policy provides management and staff with guidelines for carrying out independent, credible and useful evaluations, thereby setting out the framework for Austrian development evaluation. This is expected to contribute to both enhancing the evaluation function and improving the evaluation culture in Austrian development cooperation, with independence, transparency and quality as central pillars. The evaluative evidence gained can help further improve the effectiveness and quality of development cooperation. Moreover, the policy is anticipated to pave the way for joint evaluation practice among Austrian actors in official development assistance (ODA) and to promote the analysis of coherence aspects in evaluations. This in turn, can foster a greater understanding of coherence and policy coherence for sustainable development[1] and thereby contribute to coherent development policy and practice. The Theory of Change and assumptions underlying the present evaluation policy are outlined in detail in Annex 2.

3. Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the global frame of reference for Austrian development cooperation. Coherent approaches and joint investments in sustainable economic, social and environmental development are crucial to be able to respond to the complex and interlinked challenges of the 21st century. This makes the assessment of the relevance and impact of individual development contributions all the more important. At the same time, there is growing pressure and need to verify the efficient use made of Austrian ODA funds and other official flows (OOF). This calls for robust findings on impacts achieved. Evaluations make a major contribution in that regard and are essential for fostering a learning, evidence-based and strategically-orientated Austrian development cooperation.

4. The policy paper will first define the meaning, purpose and types of evaluation (Chapter 2) and set out the relevant principles and fundamentals (Chapter 3). It will then outline evaluation process (Chapter 4), architecture (Chapter 5) and responsibilities and stipulate the benchmarks for resourcing the evaluation function (Chapter 6) and for updating the policy (Chapter 7).

II. Definition, Purpose and Types of Evaluation

5. Based on the *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management* issued by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the term evaluation is defined as 'the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed [… intervention][2], its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development

[1] With the exception of MFA (which is tasked with evaluating ADA) and MoF (which is tasked with evaluating OeEB), this does not mean that the organisations involved in the present policy evaluate each other - there is no mandate for this, nor will or can any such mandate be issued as part of the policy.
[2] The term 'intervention' is employed in the present policy to denote the diversity of potential evaluation objects beyond projects and programmes. The object of an evaluation can be a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy, a theme, an institution, a financial instrument or any other form of development or humanitarian cooperation

efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learnt into the decision–making process of both recipients and donors.[3] Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an [… intervention].'[4]

6. The constitutive elements of an evaluation are therefore the application of scientific methods for the reliable and objective assessment of the object of evaluation. At the same time, each evaluation also entails an assessment and therefore differs from basic scientific research. The independent conduct of evaluations is a precondition for bringing both elements successfully to bear.

7. The term evaluation is distinct from similar concepts and complementary tools of results-based management (RBM), as follows:[5]

7.1. Research studies: Unlike pure research studies, evaluations have a specific use, that is, they are geared to practice and application.[6]

7.2. Reviews: As compared with reviews, evaluations make a comprehensive and/or detailed assessment of results and impacts that generally goes beyond the operational aspects of an intervention.[7]

7.3. Monitoring: As distinct from monitoring, most evaluations are conducted at a specific point in time. They go beyond the regular documentation of measures, outputs and outcomes and require good monitoring systems and data as the basis for reliable evaluation findings.[8]

7.4. Audits: As opposed to audits, evaluations examine and assess aspects that go beyond simple efficiency, such as the quality of results. They also perform functions in addition to accountability, which is the prime concern of audits (see Chapter II.a.).[9]

II.a. Evaluation Functions

8. Evaluation in Austrian development cooperation performs three interconnected functions.

8.1. Learning function: Evaluations support institutional learning and contribute to the ongoing improvement and optimisation of the quality and effectiveness of Austrian development cooperation.

8.2. Steering function: Evaluations supply reliable findings that contribute to the evidence-based planning of development-policy objectives and underpin strategic and operational decision-making processes.

8.3. Accountability and communication function: Evaluations give account of the use of public funds and the related impacts achieved to partners, donors and the public. This is done through reporting and communicating the findings. In that way, evaluation findings support the communication function.

9. These functions are not always performed in equal measure - i.e. the functional focus differs with each evaluation. The function and type of evaluation are closely related - that is,

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[3] OECD 2009:27-28
[4] Ibid.
[5] For further details, see Definition of Terms in Annex 1.
[6] DeGEval 2016:25
[7] OECD 2009:43-44. A review must be distinguished from a 'systematic review'. Systematic reviews are a specific method of analysis, whereby the findings of multiple evaluations are analysed in combination.
[8] OECD 2009:35-36
[9] OECD 2009:22

certain types of evaluation (see Chapter II.b) are better suited for performing certain evaluative functions than others.[10] The relevant expectations of the commissioning party must be clarified beforehand and specified accordingly in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of an evaluation.

II.b. Types of Evaluation

10. Evaluations can be classified according to different criteria. A common subdivision pertains to the point in time an evaluation is being conducted in relation to the course of the intervention that is being evaluated.[11] Another classification is made according to the object of an evaluation (evaluand).[12] Another takes into account the method and methodology[13] and yet another the mode of implementation.[14] Taking into account the 'evaluand', 'method & methodology', 'time' and 'mode of implementation', the following types of evaluation can be identified as being of particular relevance to the Austrian development cooperation:[15]

Evaluand (in alphabetical order)

10.1. Institutional evaluation:[16] An evaluation that examines and assesses the performance and/or practices of an organisation in its environment and in relation to its available institutional capacities. The purpose is often to raise efficiency and upgrade the institutional strategy/vision/ mission. Example: ADA Evaluation (2019), OeEB Evaluation (2017)

10.2. Cooperation strategy evaluation:[17] Evaluation of the entirety of development interventions taken by one or several donors or development organisations in a partner country and/or partner region and the underlying development cooperation strategy. Example: Evaluation of the ADC Country Strategy for Bhutan 2015-2018 (2017)

10.3. Project/Programme evaluation: Evaluation of a single development measure designed to attain specific objectives with a pre-specified budget and a set plan of action (project evaluation) or evaluation of a combination of measures put together to attain specific development objectives at global, regional, national or sectoral levels (programme evaluation). Example: Evaluation of Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development, APPEAR (2018)

10.4. Thematic/Sectoral/Instrumental evaluation: Evaluation of a combination of development measures in a specific thematic area/sector/instrument in one or several countries that jointly contribute to attaining a specific development objective. Example: Good Governance Evaluation (2020)

Method & methodology (in alphabetic order)

10.5. Evaluability assessment: Assessment of how far the object of an evaluation (a measure, project, programme, instrument, strategy or organisation) can be evaluated in a reliable and plausible way. It requires an ex-ante appraisal to ascertain

[10] Real-time evaluations, for example, primarily perform a steering and learning function; ex-post evaluations in contrast primarily contribute to accountability and learning, but not to steering (Herson, Mitchell, 2006).
[11] Ex-ante/Ex-post evaluation, Real-Time evaluation (RTE), Mid-Term evaluation (MTE), Formative/Summative Evaluation, etc.
[12] Evaluation of an institution, a policy, a strategy or programme, a sector, a theme, a project, etc.
[13] Impact evaluation (theory-basedor experimental), Meta-Evaluation, Systematic Review, Evaluability Assessment, etc.
[14] Joint Evaluation, External/Internal Evaluation (ADC 2008:3), etc.
[15] This does not claim to be exhaustive. Where not otherwise specified, the definitions adhere to the Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (OEDC, 2009).
[16] The definition adheres to Paulmer and Cummings (2009).
[17] These can also be conducted in a 'review' format (see demarcation between evaluation and review in 7.2.).

whether the objectives set have been appropriately defined and the results achieved can be verified. Example: Evaluability Assessment of ADC's Gender Activities (planned for 2020)

10.6. **Impact evaluation**:[18] Evaluation that examines and assesses the causal links and effects of development interventions at different levels. The term is based on the intention of causally attributing impacts to specific development measures. It does not pre-determine the use of a specific evaluation design, but is amenable to different notions of causality.[19]

10.7. **Systematic review[20]/Meta-evaluation**: Evaluation that synthetises the findings of various evaluations (systematic review) or assesses the quality of evaluations and/or the performance of evaluators (meta-evaluation). A systematic review is frequently preceded by a meta-evaluation, which denotes the evaluation of evaluations. Example: Systematic Review of Results of the Whole-of-Government Approach in Austrian development cooperation (planned for 2020); Meta-Evaluation of ADA Project and Programme Evaluations 2016-2018 (2019)

Timing

10.8. **Real-time evaluation** (RTE):[21] Participatory evaluation that delivers direct (real-time) feedback on an ongoing intervention in order to identify and address policy, organisational and operational constraints as they arise. This feedback is usually provided during evaluation fieldwork and not afterwards. The term is often associated with humanitarian interventions. RTEs are geared to steering and learning and can fill the gap between monitoring and ex-post evaluations.

10.9. **Ex-post evaluation**: Evaluation of a development measure after completion. This type of evaluation can be conducted directly after the end of a measure or much later. The intention is to identify factors for success and failure, assess the sustainability of results and impacts and to draw conclusions that may inform other interventions. Ex-post evaluations perform two functions: learning and accountability.[22]

Mode of implementation

10.10. **Joint evaluation**: Evaluation involving several donors and/or partners. There are different degrees of joint responsibility, depending on how far the individual partners take part in the evaluation, bundle their evaluation resources and report together. Example: Evaluation of the Austrian contribution to mitigating climate change and its impacts (planned for 2021)

III. Quality Standards, Principles and Criteria

11. This chapter defines the quality standards and principles for good evaluations in Austrian development cooperation as well as the criteria for Austrian development evaluation. In doing so, it draws on the current quality standards, norms and principles for evaluation specified by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC), the German Evaluation Society (DeGEval) and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) as well as the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the international financial institutions (ECG).

[18] The definition adheres to Rogers (2014).
[19] Within ADA there is also the specific instrument of impact assessment that has certain similarities with impact evaluations.
[20] The definition adheres to Petticrew and Roberts (2005).
[21] The definition adheres to INTRAC (2017) and Polastro (1999).
[22] See Herson and Mitchell (2006).

III.a. Standards and Principles for Good Evaluation

12. The following standards and principles make up key features of good evaluation in Austrian development cooperation. They provide guidance to stakeholder institutions, partners and actors for planning and conducting evaluations. They also provide a key point of reference for the professionalism of Austrian development evaluation.

12.1. **Independence**: Evaluations must be designed and carried out independently of policymaking and operational management of development cooperation. Independence lends an evaluation legitimacy and makes a major contribution to its credibility. It also reduces the potential for conflicts of interest. Independence is a requirement at systematic (see Chapter IV.) and structural level (see Chapter VI.). When carrying out an evaluation, evaluators must be able to act without undue influence from other parties and have free access to information.

12.2. **Impartiality**: Evaluations should take into account different views and must be seen to be impartial in their execution and reporting by evaluators. Key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity and unbiased evaluators. This gives an evaluation legitimacy and affords it greater credibility. Impartiality is a requirement in all phases of the evaluation process (see Chapter V.).

12.3. **Credibility**: Evaluations have to be credible to be accepted and put to use. Credibility depends on the independence, impartiality and transparency of the evaluation process. Of crucial importance, also is the quality of an evaluation, which depends on the professional and methodological competency of the evaluators and the use of reliable data. Credibility also demands the involvement of relevant actors and quality assurance entities as well as ethical conduct in evaluations.

12.4. **Transparency**: Evaluations must be made accessible to the public. The transparent disclosure of evaluation findings and reports builds confidence and enhances the ownership of all participants and accountability for the use of public funds.

12.5. **Utility**: Evaluations must have a defined purpose and meet the information needs of its intended users. They must also have a clearly defined intended use. This means clarifying the purpose of an evaluation, identifying its users and ensuring its timeliness to make sure that the findings and recommendations can be channelled into pending decision-making or improvement processes or other intended uses.

12.6. **Feasibility**: Evaluations must be planned and carried out realistically, thoroughly and with due regard to costs. This calls for the application of appropriate evaluation designs and due consideration of efficiency, i.e. the costs of an evaluation must stand in reasonable relation to its benefit.

12.7. **Fairness**: Evaluations must treat all actors with respect and fairness. This means reaching a formal agreement on the rights and duties of all stakeholders and safeguarding individual rights. It also entails a comprehensive and fair assessment, impartial execution and reporting as well as the disclosure of findings and reports.

12.8. **Accuracy**: Evaluations must produce and communicate valid and verifiable findings. This includes the description of the evaluation object, the documentation of information sources, the use of reliable data, systematic error checks, appropriate analysis and sound assessments and conclusions.

12.9. **Participation**: Evaluations must be designed and carried out in a participatory manner to foster ownership and ensure that their findings are put to use. This is why major interest groups and relevant actors should be involved in the evaluation process at an early stage.

12.10. **Partnership**: Where possible and meaningful, evaluations should be designed and carried out in consultation with other Austrian ODA actors, donors, and partners. The evaluation of Austrian contributions to international organisations and development banks is based on the subsidiarity principle.[23]

[23] I.e. no separate evaluations are conducted as a rule. Instead, reference is made to and use made of the findings from evaluations of those organisations and of external assessments or evaluation processes (such as MOPAN).

III.b. Evaluation Criteria

13. Evaluations in Austrian development cooperation adhere to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. These provide a conceptual framework for assessing development policy or humanitarian interventions and give structure to the substantive focus of evaluation questions, thereby making a valuable structural contribution to Austrian development evaluation. Besides providing a conceptual framework, the criteria also set important incentives for planning and designing development interventions according to certain criteria and yardsticks that will later be applied for determining their benefit, value and significance. Moreover, they lay the foundation for the comprehensive assessment and comparability of interventions and therefore contribute to harnessing and unleashing inter-organisational learning potential.[24]

14. The current OECD/DAC evaluation criteria[25] - **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, **impact** and **sustainability** – were being revised at the time of drafting the present policy.[26] The aim is to adapt and possibly extend as well as to clarify the list of criteria in keeping with Agenda 2030. At this point in time, the completion, scope or substance of the revised criteria cannot be anticipated.

15. Regardless of the ongoing revision and supplementary to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria as available at the time the present policy enters into effect, the following criterion for evaluating a development-policy and humanitarian intervention by Austrian development cooperation should be taken into account and applied as relevant:[27]

15.1. **Coherence**: The extent to which an intervention is designed and conducted in consultation with other relevant Austrian actors in a particular development and/or humanitarian context. This includes both aspects of policy coherence (i.e. account taken of and alignment with the policies and priorities of other actors) and operational coherence (i.e. coordination with other actors during implementation).

16. Humanitarian evaluations are subject to the following criteria based on the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) Manual on the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action:[28]

16.1. **Connectedness**: Extent to which short-term humanitarian measures are carried out in a context that takes into account longer-term and interconnected problems (replacing the sustainability criterion).

16.2. **Coverage**: Extent to which the main population groups facing life-threatening suffering are reached through humanitarian measures.

16.3. **Coordination**: Extent to which the interventions of different actors are harmonised to harness synergies and avoid gaps, duplications and resource conflicts (frequently a part of the effectiveness criterion).

17. It is not necessary in Austrian development evaluation to mechanically apply all evaluation criteria. Instead, relevant criteria should be selected on a case-by-case basis in keeping with the specific expectations, purpose and object of an evaluation. In line with OECD/DAC quality standards for development evaluation[29] the selection of criteria should be explained and described both in the terms of reference and the evaluation report.

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[24] See DEval (2018)
[25] See OECD (1991) and OECD (2002)
[26] Austria, represented by MFA and ADA, is actively engaged in the process and advocates for more precise criteria and the moderate extension of the list of criteria by a coherence criterion.
[27] If coherence is adopted as a new evaluation criterion in the revised OECD/DAC list, the definition cited here will be replaced by that of OECD/DAC.
[28] See ALNAP 2016:114.
[29] See OECD (2010). This states that 'if a certain criterion is not applied and/or other criteria are added, this will be explained in the evaluation report (OECD 2010:9).'

IV. Key Aspects of the Evaluation System

18. The quality of evaluation is of primary importance in Austrian development cooperation. Evaluations must be planned, carried out and used in adherence to the norms and standards of the OECD, possibly ECG, DeGEval and the standards and principles outlined in the present policy (see Chapter III.). This requires adequate human and financial resources (see Chapter VII.) and detailed preparations in the planning, implementation and application of evaluations in order to ensure useful and credible evaluation findings and their utilisation.

19. The evaluation system generally comprises three central elements: (i) planning, (ii) implementation and (iii) application/utilisation (Fig. 1). Each element will be addressed separately in the following chapters. Related minimum requirements will be defined and a menu of options presented to help meet these and ensure adequate quality assurance and monitoring throughout all three elements of the evaluation system.

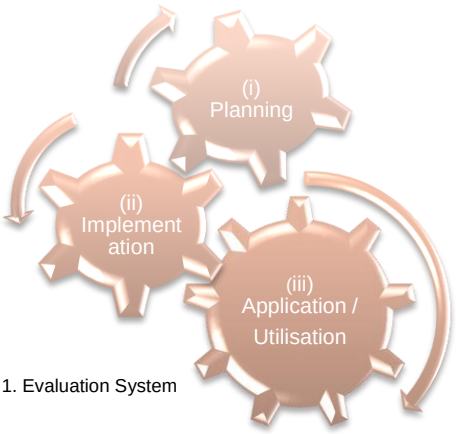

Fig. 1. Evaluation System

IV.a. Planning

20. Evaluations must be properly planned. In particular, the timing of an evaluation should be decided carefully so that findings and recommendations can inform pending decision-making and improvement processes and can be put to effective use. It is also important to allocate adequate time and budgets in order to enable robust evaluation findings (see Chapter III.) and to cater sufficiently for the dissemination phase of an evaluation so that findings are put to use.

21. At institutional level, we recommend drawing up periodic evaluation plans for overarching, strategic evaluations.[30] Strategic evaluation plans can also be drafted jointly by several actors and/or can be mutually exchanged to harness synergies and facilitate coherent evaluation practice in Austrian development cooperation. Strategic evaluation priorities should be set according to specific selection criteria[31] defined by each institution. Strategic evaluation plans should also contain an appropriate mix of types of evaluation (see Chapter II.b.). Suitable measures must be taken to implement and to monitor the implementation of these plans (for example, through regular implementation monitoring and reporting to key entities/governing bodies of an institution).

22. The decision on whether, when and what to evaluate rests with each institution that adheres to the present policy. In general, every intervention (whether strategy, programme or project) should be evaluated at least once during its cycle (coverage) and priority should be attached to evaluating large-scale (scope/volume) and/or strategically important (strategic relevance) interventions and pilot projects with a potential for scaling-up. To ensure this, adequate resources must be made available for evaluations (see Chapter VII.) and related decision-making competencies over setting evaluation priorities must also be defined in the respective institution (see Chapter VI. for strategic evaluations).

23. To ensure the evaluability of an intervention and to enable the meaningful execution of an evaluation, evaluative thinking should be incorporated and accounted for throughout the

[30] This refers to evaluations that go beyond programme and project evaluations, that pursue the purpose of steering, accountability or learning at the institutional level and/or that have strategies or other strategic guidelines or directives as the evaluation object (e.g. a country strategy).
[31] Aspects that could be accounted for may include, for example, coverage, scope/volume and strategic relevance as well as the scaling-up potential of the evaluation object - whether a project, a programme, a strategy, etc.

entire project, programme or strategy cycle. That is, relevant decisions and measures should be taken at the outset of an intervention in order to allow for its subsequent evaluation.[32]

IV.b. Implementation

24. In principle, evaluations should be conducted by independent, external individuals and/or institutions. This independence in the implementation of evaluation is a major cornerstone of Austrian development evaluation and makes an essential contribution to their credibility. The evaluation units/staff in the respective institutions subscribing to the policy are therefore primarily responsible for managing[33] and for providing quality assurance[34] to evaluations. They do not usually conduct evaluations themselves.

25. Provided that the independence of the evaluation is ensured by other factors[35] and that certain structural (see Chapter VI.) and capacity (see Chapter VII.b.) requirements are in place, institutions subscribing to the policy are able and encouraged to conduct or take part in evaluations.[36]

26. The operational setup of an evaluation should ensure its independence, impartiality and credibility. This means that an evaluation should not be managed or carried out by an individual or institution that has been involved in the design or implementation of the project, programme, strategy or institution that is being evaluated. Setting up a reference group (RG) to support the evaluation process can also make a substantial contribution to fostering transparency and impartiality and harnessing learning potentials. This can further be achieved by involving external experts as peer reviewers (PR).

27. The engagement of a reference group and of peer reviewers also makes an important contribution to the quality and therefore credibility of an evaluation. Quality assurance, including the verification of factual accuracy should be conducted both in the design phase and implementation of an evaluation (see Chapter V.). It is performed at three key points in the evaluation process: (i) the terms of reference, (ii) the draft evaluation report and the final evaluation report. The evaluation units/staff in the participant institutions perform an important role in quality assurance and coordinate the engagement of RG and peer reviewers.

28. Evaluation reports at project, programme and strategic levels should be regularly subjected to external quality assessments (e.g. via meta-evaluations) to identify shortcomings, point out room for improvement and enable the continuous advancement in the quality of evaluation reports.

[32] For example, by developing a Theory of Change or via regular collection of monitoring data during the implementation of an intervention in preparation and as a precondition for their subsequent evaluation.
[33] Of strategic evaluations.
[34] Of programme and project evaluations.
[35] For example, through the structural/budgetary independence of the evaluation unit/staff from operational management.
[36] For example, when learning from the evaluation and from the evaluation process per se are of prime concern.

IV.c. Application/Utilisation

29. By definition, evaluations are geared to practice, that is, findings and recommendations must feed into practical application and use. Evaluations that are not put to use constitute mal-investments and lost opportunities for institutional learning, steering, accountability and/or communication.

30. The timely availability, effective presentation and communication of evaluation findings are essential preconditions for the utilisation of evaluations. Moreover, the credibility of an evaluation, which *inter alia* depends on its independence and quality, and the transparent disclosure of findings and reports also contribute to utilisation. All evaluation reports in Austrian development cooperation should be published and made accessible to stakeholders, affected groups and the interested public. To that end, a communication plan should be drawn up at the beginning of an evaluation. Depending on the information needs of different target groups, the use of innovative information and communication technologies and of different communication channels and products can make a significant contribution to trigger demand for and promote utilisation and use of evaluation findings.

31. Developing a management response (MR) also makes a major contribution to the utilisation of evaluation findings. A MR consists of a formal position of the management and a specific action plan. The formal position of the management identifies which recommendations will be implemented and which not, along with providing a relevant rationale. The action plan defines specific measures, responsibilities and a timeframe for implementation of the approved recommendations. The institutions engaged in the present policy should develop management responses and demand these at operational level from their implementing partners. A MR should be developed soon after completion of an evaluation and finalised up to three months after. MR for strategic evaluations are generally adopted by the management of the institutions concerned (see Chapter VI.). In the event of diverging opinions, a decision should be taken by a higher entity independent of the operational management. The formal position of the management is generally made available to the public.

32. Action plans should be implemented and incorporated into relevant strategic and/or programmatic decision-making processes in a timely manner, i.e. within a suitable timeframe in relation to the duration of and/or scale of the object of evaluation. It is the responsibility of each institution to take necessary preparations and to set incentives for the timely implementation of action plans. One possibility is the establishment of an implementation monitoring system for strategic evaluations combined with regular reporting to a higher institutional entity /governing body. This in turn requires the appointment of a unit or entity that keeps track of and bears responsibility for monitoring the implementation of action plans to strategic evaluations.

V. Evaluation Process

33. Similar to the central elements of the evaluation system more broadly, the implementation process of individual evaluations can be divided into three phases:

33.1. **Design phase**: This deals with the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, the evaluation object and the key evaluation questions. Ideally, relevant stakeholders are involved at this stage to promote transparency, participation and ownership. This phase culminates in the development of terms of reference (ToR) defining the evaluation purpose, object and initial evaluation questions in line with OECD and possibly ECG standards. Evaluators should be selected and commissioned[37] in an open, transparent process in keeping with BVergG.[38] In line with the SDGs and the

[37] Note: OeEB is not bound by BVergG as it is neither part of the government nor a federal agency, unlike the other actors involved in the present policy.
[38] BVergG 2018 as last amended.

principle of 'leave no one behind', the evaluation design should cater for geographical and gender diversity and the participation of local evaluators.

33.2. **Implementation phase**: This comprises three sub-phases: (i) the *inception phase* detailing the evaluation design and methods, which are then described in more detail in the inception report (IR); (ii) the *inquiry* phase where data is collected, analysed and validated in a participatory manner, i.e. with the involvement of major stakeholders and local institutions in partner countries, and in keeping with scientific and ethical principles[39] ; and (iii) the *synthesis phase*, where findings, conclusions and recommendations are derived and articulated in an evaluation report. These phases correspond to the ideal course of an evaluation; certain evaluation types[40] or methodologies[41] that are based on iterations deviate from this course.

33.3. **Utilisation phase**: This is where an essential part of the evaluation begins: the use of its findings and recommendations. This phase starts with the publication and dissemination of the evaluation report and culminates in the preparation of a management response (MR), which consists of a formal position of the management and an action plan and defines specific measures, responsibilities and a schedule for implementing individual evaluation recommendations. Ideally, all institutions that are addressed in the recommendations should be involved in the development of the MR. Due consideration should also be given to ensure that a MR can be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.

VI. Evaluation Architecture

34. The structural independence of an evaluation is a key element and affirmation of the independence of Austrian development evaluation and should be assured accordingly. Where a fully independent evaluation unit as called for in the 2015 OECD/DAC Peer Review of Austria[42] cannot be put in place, the evaluation unit/staff in an organisation should not have a direct reporting line to the programmatic-operational management, but to a higher unit/entity that is independent of the programmatic-operative level. Each institution is called upon to structurally embed the responsibility and competence for evaluation in adherence to the principle of independence.

35. The accountability for evaluation does not rest with an individual organisational unit or person but spreads across different institutional levels that fulfil different roles and jointly contribute to an effective evaluation function (see Chapter II.a.). These levels differ depending on the institutional setup and the type of aid provided. A broad distinction can be made between the following levels: (i) management level, (ii) evaluation unit/staff, (ii) programmatic-operational level and (iv) decentralised level (where available). Via introduction of communication and reporting channels, the evaluation architecture should ensure, that all levels receive relevant information. The general role and related responsibilities to strengthen key aspects of the evaluation system (see Chapter IV) at each institutional level are outlined below. Focus is placed on strategic evaluations, not project and programme evaluations.

35.1. **Management level**: Ensures the integrity of the evaluation function and bears responsibility for implementing the present policy, including through provision of adequate resources (see Chapter VII.). Fosters an in-house learning culture and error

[39] See UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (UNEG, 2008). In a further step, a code of conduct for carrying out evaluations in Austrian development cooperation could be framed as a separate module of the present policy. As an example of this, see: Ethics and Disclosure Code of Conduct of the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR).
[40] For example, developmental evaluation
[41] For example, grounded theory
[42] The Peer Review recommends setting up an evaluation committee under a supervisory board/body that could help enhance the commitment to implement the recommendations from evaluations at all levels (OECD 2015:19).

tolerance within an organisation and generates demand for evaluative evidence to substantiate strategic steering and decision-making processes. Plays an important role in promoting the utilisation of strategic evaluation findings, inter alia by accounting for the endorsement and timely implementation of management responses. As relevant, reports to a higher-level entity[43] on evaluation findings and on progress in implementing management responses to strategic evaluations.

35.2. **Evaluation unit/staff**: Plays a key role in strategic evaluation planning, including through the consultative prioritisation and selection of evaluation objects and development of the strategic evaluation plan. Ensures timely implementation of the evaluation plan and application of the present policy as well as quality assurance and independence in conducting strategic evaluations. Coordinates the development of MR for strategic evaluations and, depending on the specific institutional requirements, ensures regular implementation monitoring and related reporting to relevant entities. Is responsible for in-house evaluation capacity development.

35.3. **Programmatic-operational level** (headquarters): Is familiar with the programmatic contents and development cooperation measures and takes a key part in evaluation planning and specifying strategic evaluation priorities. Depending on the evaluation object, is actively involved in the implementation of strategic evaluations both as a source of information and member of the reference group, and is a key user of evaluation findings. Is responsible for defining concrete measures to address relevant recommendations, ensuring their timely implementation as well as regular monitoring and reporting on the status of implementation to relevant units/entities.

35.4. **Decentralised level** (where available): Is familiar with the local context in a partner country and takes part in setting strategic evaluation priorities. Depending on the evaluation object, is involved in the implementation of strategic evaluations, both as a source of information and member of the reference group as well as acting as liaison with partner governments. Is a key user of evaluation findings and is in part also responsible for defining measures for relevant recommendations, their timely implementation as well as regular monitoring and reporting on the status of implementation to relevant units/entities.

36. Besides supporting institutional learning and steering, Austrian development evaluation performs another important role in accounting for the use of public funds (see Chapter II.a.).[44] The evaluation function therefore goes beyond the institutional realm of an organisation to also concern the Austrian Parliament and its development cooperation-related parliamentary committees[45] and sub-committees[46] in particular. As these demand evaluations and their utilisation, they play an important role in communicating evaluation findings to the Austrian public. While the institutions involved in the present policy are not obliged to report to parliament, it is an important task of parliament to demand evaluations and the use of evaluation findings.

37. The policy deliberately employs a generalised and broad terminology relating to the evaluation architecture in Austrian development cooperation. To provide a more detailed picture, the below figure summarises the different levels responsible for evaluation within and beyond the institutions involved, notably MFA, ADA, MoF, OeEB and FMST (Fig. 2).

[43] For example, the supervisory board (where available) or the Austrian Parliament.
[44] Since this (largely) concerns the administration and implementation of public funds.
[45] Foreign Policy Committee (APolA), Finance Committee (FA)
[46] Subcommittee on Development Policy (EZA-UA)

Parliament	Subcommittee on development cooperation, Foreign Affairs committee		Financial committee		Enviromental committee
	MFA	**ADA**	**MoF**	**OeEB**	**FMST**
Policy level	Foreign minister	MFA	Finance minister	MoF/ MFA	Environment minister
Administraive level	Secretary General	Supervisory Board	Secretary General	Supervisory Board	Secretary General
Leading functionaries	Directorate-General VII Development Cooperation	Managing Directorate	Directorate General III Economic Policy, Financial Markets and Customs Duties	Executive Board	Directorate General I Environment and Water Management
Evaluation unit/person	Dept. VII.4 Development Cooperation Strategy, Public Relations, Evaluation, (+ UN/EU evaluation units)[47]	Executive Unit Evaluation and Statistics (+ UN/EU evaluation units)[48]	Dept. III/3 International Financial Institutions + IFI-evaluation units[49] [50]	Executive Unit Development Policy/Evaluation	Dept. I/9 International Environmental Affairs
Programmatic-operational level (head office)	Dept. VII.5 Planning and Programming of Bilateral and Regional Development Cooperation Dept. VII.2 Thematic Issues and Development Financing Dept. VII.3 Humanitarian Assistance	Dept. Programmes and Projects International Executive Unit Development Communication and Education in Austria	Operational IFI levels	Departments: Investment Finance Equity Participations Business Advisory Services	Diverse departments with a focus on international cooperation
Dezentralised organisations	Embassies, ADC field offices (+ UN/EU-country offices)	ADC field offices (+ UN/EU-country offices)	IFI country offices	None	None
Partner-organisations	UN, IFIs, EU (Commission and member states)	Private sector, CSOs	IFIs, UN, OECD, private sector	IFIs, DFIs[51]	UN, IFIs, OECD

Fig. 2. Evaluation Architecture (Last updated: August 2019)

[47] Pertains primarily to multi-bilateral finance, i.e. bilateral ODA payments allocated for specific projects/programmes by multilateral organisations.
[48] Pertains primarily to multi-bilateral finance, i.e. bilateral ODA payments allocated for specific projects/programmes by multilateral organisations.
[49] As the Republic of Austria is a co-owner of the IFIs, their structures also constitute structures of the Republic of Austria, as represented by MoF.
[50] Reporting to the IFI board of directors.
[51] DFIs are specialised development banks that are usually majority-owned by national governments.

38. Evaluations in the context of an international financial institution (IFI) and for multi-bilateral finance[52] provided through a UN agency are carried out by the evaluation unit of the respective IFI/UN agency in accordance with its rules and organisational framework.

VII. Resourcing the Evaluation Function

39. High-quality, credible and useful evaluations (see Chapter III.) require investments and call for sufficient financial and human resources. Based on international benchmarks[53] and lessons learned from ADC[54], the policy derives and defines benchmarks for resourcing the evaluation function in Austrian development cooperation to provide orientation for participating institutions.

VII.a. Financial Resources

40. Evaluation budgets can come from different funding sources. At institutional level, the principle of budgetary independence applies, i.e. strategic evaluations should be funded from a separate budget line independent of the operational budget. At project and programme level, the evaluation budget should generally be included in the respective project and programme budget and should be earmarked as such before the start of an intervention.[55] Other studies, reviews and surveys, including monitoring data, must be funded separately and outside the evaluation budget.

41. To meet the minimum requirements for Austrian development evaluation as set out in the policy (see Chapter IV.), an appropriate in-house budget should be made available for overarching, strategic evaluations. The budget depends *inter alia* on the envisaged evaluation coverage (see Chapter IV.a.) and types of evaluation (see Chapter II.b.). Where relevant, each institution should also earmark at least 3 per cent of the project- and programme-budget for evaluation at operational level. This depends on the focus and type of ODA contributions and is not equally applicable to all institutions that subscribe to this policy. Multi-bilateral finance and multilateral ODA payments as core contributions to multilateral organisations are exempt from this.

42. Actual expenditure for evaluation at both strategic and programme and project levels should be monitored and analysed by the respective evaluation units/staff vis-à-vis the targets set out in this policy, and periodically reported to the entity responsible for implementing the present policy.

VII.b. Human Resources

43. Qualified staff are essential for carrying out and managing evaluations and for effective quality assurance. In particular, the in-house implementation of evaluations requires sufficient human resources. At institutional level, appropriate, i.e. qualified evaluation capacities that meet the institution's evaluation requirements, must be assured. In addition, suitable provisions must be made to ensure the integrity of the evaluation function and the application of the present policy. In that regard it is important that evaluation units/staff receive adequate backing and support from management, particularly when they bear responsibilities that go beyond evaluation.

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[52] Multi-bilateral finance comprises bilateral ODA payments that are allocated for specific projects/programmes by multilateral organisations. They differ from multilateral ODA payments as core contributions to multilateral organisations. In 2016, 39.5% of Austrian ODA payments were multilateral and 60.5% bilateral - of which 10.1% were in turn multi-bilateral finance (OECD 2018:291).
[53] UNEG Standard 1.2: 0,5-3% of total turnover of an organisation should be spent on evaluations (UNEG 2016:16); UNICEF: at least 1% of total programme costs are earmarked for evaluations, (UNICEF 2018:19).
[54] 3-5% of the total project or programme budget is usually earmarked for an evaluation (ADC, 2008:3).
[55] This is not always feasible - e.g. in ex-post evaluations that by definition are carried out after project/programme completion. In this case, the evaluation budget must be obtained from another, separate source.

44. Evaluation units/staff perform an important function as an in-house competence centre for development evaluation. This entails *inter alia* the performance of advisory services, the implementation of training measures and the institutional representation in international evaluation fora. Participation in training courses and engagement in reference groups should be facilitated to develop and further strengthen available evaluation capacities and to stay abreast of latest developments in the field of evaluation. Also important is the maintenance of a roster of external institutions/individuals for conducting evaluations. This can be jointly developed by several actors and/or be mutually exchanged to harness synergies.

45. Staff exchange in the area of evaluation should be facilitated among national ODA actors that subscribe to this policy to foster mutual learning and to contribute to a greater joint evaluation culture and practice in Austrian development cooperation. Regular information exchange should also take place.

VIII. Implementing and Updating the Policy

46. Responsibility for implementing the policy lies with the respective institutions in charge of administering Austrian ODA funds. It is therefore the task of each institution or institutional unit to take appropriate measures and to provide incentives for the application of the policy (for example by developing a specific organisational action plan to operationalise the policy). The in-house documentation, monitoring and reporting on progress in implementing the policy, while recommended, is at the discretion of each institution.

47. The policy will be updated on a regular basis (every 5 years) and adapted to changing environments and further developments in development evaluation.[56] This will ensure its ongoing relevance, usefulness and utility.

48. An independent review of the implementation and performance of the policy is envisaged for 2023 as a specific contribution to its continuous development and improvement, which is ensured, inter alia via regular updates.

[56] If the ongoing revision of the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria has not been completed in time to be taken into account and reflected in this policy, an earlier revision can be conducted ahead of the coming 5 years.

Annex 1: Definition of Terms

Outcome – The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs (OECD, 2009:36).

Impact – Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended (OECD, 2009:31).

Evaluation architecture[57] – Denotes the organisational setup and interaction of various institutional levels and actors with different evaluation roles and responsibilities in- and outside of an institution. Together, these contribute to an effective evaluation function. A distinction is drawn between the following intra-institutional levels: *(i) management level; (ii) evaluation unit/staff; (iii) programmatic-operational level (headquarters) and (iv) decentralised organisations (where available)*. Via introduction of communication and reporting channels, the evaluation architecture ensures that all levels in- and outside an institution obtain relevant information to be able to contribute to an effective evaluation function and a conducive evaluation culture.

Evaluation function[58] – In Austrian development cooperation, evaluation performs three interconnected functions: a *learning function* to upgrade quality and effectiveness, a strategic and operational *steering* function and an *accountability and communication function*.

Evaluation culture[59] – Denotes a systemic culture of conduct within an organisation and outside of it, i.e. beyond its institutional limits, where there is a demand for and supply of information and evidence on outputs, results and impacts and also an enabling environment for its utilisation. Defining features of an evaluative culture are: (i) *leadership,* i.e. appropriate support at management level; provision of adequate resources; development of capacities; demand for information in and outside the organisation; (ii) *intra-institutional exchange*, i.e. common standards, regular coordination among different actors; (iii) a robust *evaluation architecture*, i.e. clearly-defined roles and responsibilities at different levels; and (iv) a sound *evaluation system*, i.e. suitable provisions in planning, implementing and utilising evaluations to ensure useful and credible findings.

Evaluation system[60]– Comprises three key elements: the planning, implementation and application/utilisation of evaluations, and denotes the requirements and provisions needed in each of these in order to ensure useful and credible evaluations and their use. Unlike the evaluation process of an individual evaluation, the evaluation system is concerned with general aspects of quality assurance and monitoring in an organisation to meet the quality demands of Austrian development evaluation.

Coherence[61] – Denotes the extent to which interventions are planned and carried out in a concerted way with other relevant actors in a specific context. It comprises three aspects: (i) policy coherence (see definition below), (ii) strategic partnerships for a coordinated response to an identified problem, and (iii) operational coherence and coordination with other actors in a particular context during the implementation of an intervention.

Outputs - Products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (OECD, 2009:36).

Monitoring - A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and on the use of allocated funds (OECD, 2009:35-36).

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[57] See Chapter VI. of the present evaluation policy.
[58] See Chapter II.a. of the present evaluation policy.
[59] In adherence to the draft definition of the new coherence criterion by OECD.
[60] See Chapter IV. of the present evaluation policy.
[61] In adherence to the definition by Mayne (2008) and Owen (2003).

Policy coherence – A distinction is made between policy coherence for development (PCD) and policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD). PCD is 'a process for integrating multiple dimensions of development at all stages of policy making. Its main objectives are to 1) exploit the potential of positive synergies across policies to support development, pursuing win-win situations and mutual benefits; 2) increase governments' capacities to balance divergent policy objectives and help them to reconcile domestic policy objectives with broader international or global objectives; and 3) avoid or minimise the negative side-effects and impacts of policies on development.' (OECD 2015, Element 8, Paper 1). PCSD is often seen as a continuation or adaptation of PCD whose goals adhere to the SDGs and therefore as universal goals appertaining to both national policies and their international, global dimensions.[62] PCSD is 'an approach and policy tool to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policymaking. Its main objectives are to 1) foster synergies across economic, social and environmental policy areas; 2) identify trade-offs and reconcile domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives; and 3) address the spillovers of domestic policies.' (OECD, undated:1)

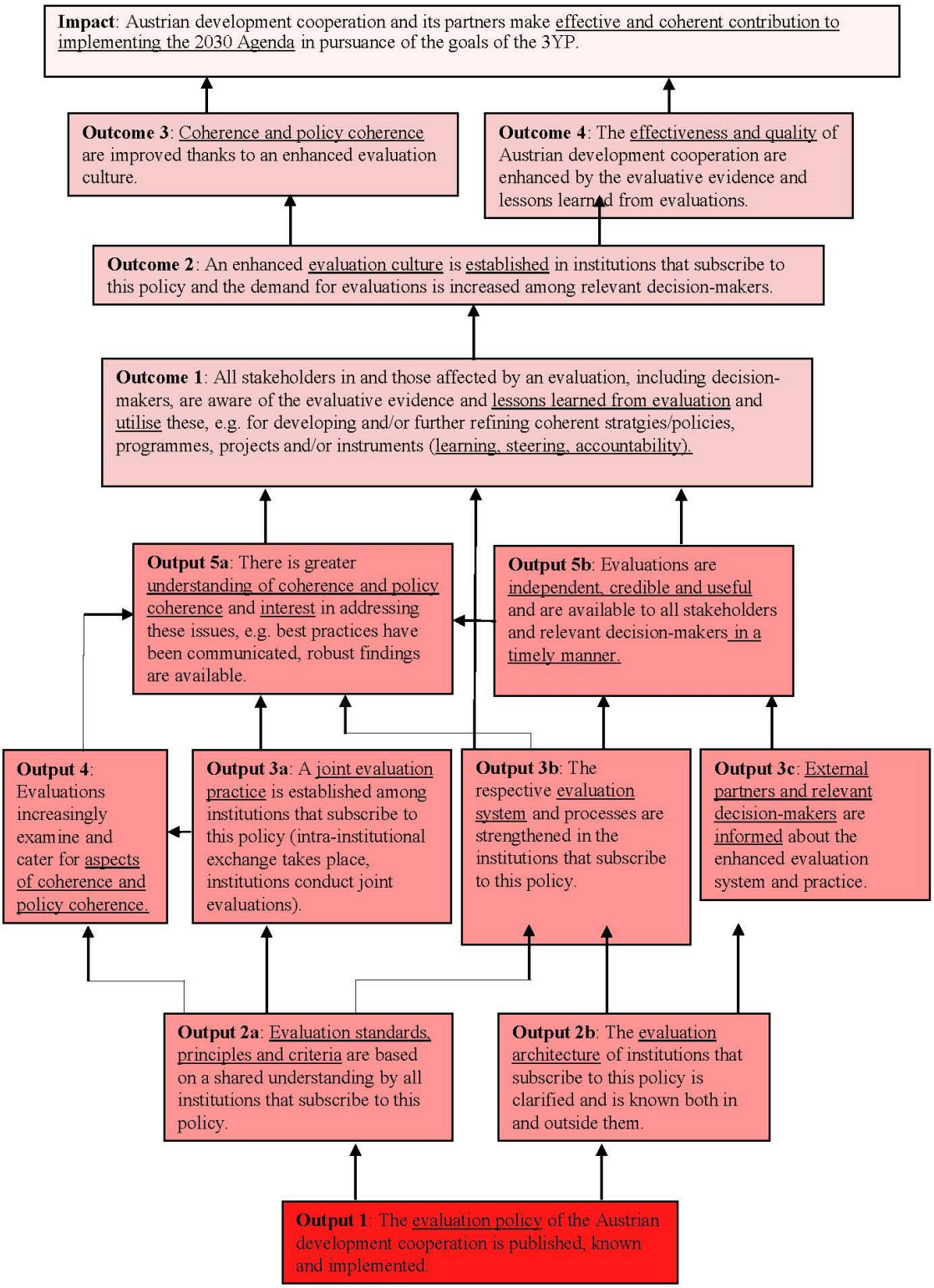
Inputs - Financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention (OECD, 2009:32).

Review - An assessment of the performance of an intervention, periodically or on an ad hoc basis. Note: Frequently 'evaluation' is used for a more comprehensive and/or more in-depth assessment than 'review'. Reviews tend to emphasise operational aspects. Sometimes the terms 'review' and 'evaluation' are used as synonyms (OECD, 2009:43-44)

Theory of change - Explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. […] Sometimes the term is used generally to refer to […] a results chain […] from inputs to outputs, outcomes and impacts or a logframe, which represents the same information in a matrix. Other times it is used to refer to specific types of representations – especially those that provide more detail about different levels of change, different actors and different causal pathways […]. Sometimes these representations show the contextual factors that help or hinder this change, and the assumptions on which it is built (Rogers 2014b:1-2)

[62] See Obrovsky (2019)

Annex 2: Theory of Change



Assumptions are listed in the accompanying text.

Assumptions

Impact:
Austrian development cooperation and its partners make an effective and coherent contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda In pursuance of the goals of the 3YP.

- ➔ **Assumption:** All decision-makers and institutions that subscribe to this policy have an interest in Austrian development cooperation and its goals.

Outcome 3:
Coherence or policy coherence63 are improved thanks to an enhanced evaluation culture.

- ➔ **Assumption:** All decision-makers and stakeholder institutions have an interest in evidence-based and coherent strategy development and policymaking.

Outcome 4:
The effectiveness and quality of Austrian development cooperation are enhanced by the evaluative evidence and lessons learnt from evaluations.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Lessons learnt from evaluations are reflected and taken into account in different institutions.
- ➔ **Assumption:** All decision-makers and stakeholder institutions have an interest in the effectiveness and quality of Austrian development cooperation.

Outcome 2:
An enhanced evaluation culture is established in institutions that subscribe to this policy and the demand for evaluations is increased among relevant decision-makers.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Leadership in different bodies, management levels and functions is in place for an evaluative culture (this applies to all outputs and outcomes).
- ➔ **Assumption:** There is an interest in reflecting on experience (reflective culture).
- ➔ **Assumption:** Findings from evaluations are shared and put to use. An exchange platform or communication formats are established as needed.

Note: An enhanced evaluation culture has not been established until evaluation findings are put to use.

Outcome 1:
All stakeholders in an evaluation, including decision-makers, are aware of the evaluative evidence and lessons learnt from evaluation and utilise these, e.g. for developing and/or further refining coherent strategies/policies, programmes, projects and/or instruments (learning, steering, accountability).

- ➔ **Assumption:** Robust evaluation findings are available in time and are considered as useful.

Output 5a:
There is greater understanding of coherence and policy coherence and interest in addressing these issues, e.g. best practices have been communicated, robust findings are available.
Note: This is premised on the possible prior need to generate interest in coherence or policy coherence.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Evaluation findings on coherence and policy coherence are available.
- ➔ **Assumption:** Communication channels are established with relevant decision-makers that have a decisive influence on coherence and policy coherence.

Note: It may be necessary to take additional aspects into consideration of how evaluation findings can be channelled into the political environment or also into other bodies.

Output 5b:
Evaluations are independent, credible and useful and are available to all stakeholders and relevant decision-makers in a timely manner.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Evaluations are communicated to all stakeholders and relevant decision-makers, subjected to prior quality assurance by competent evaluation managers, rated as being of 'high quality' and released.

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[63] With the exception of MFA (which is tasked with evaluating ADA) and MoF (which is tasked with evaluating OeEB), this does not mean that the organisations involved in the present policy evaluate each other - there is no mandate for this, nor will or can it be issued as part of the policy.

Output 4:
Evaluations increasingly examine and cater for aspects of coherence and policy coherence.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Stakeholder institutions place related demands on the their (joint) evaluations.
- ➔ **Assumption:** Revised DAC evaluation criteria place a suitable emphasis on coherence and policy coherence.

Output 3a:
A joint evaluation practice is established among institutions that subscribe to this policy (intra-institutional exchange takes place, institutions conduct joint evaluations).

- ➔ **Assumption:** There is an interest in joint exchange and communication formats are established.
- ➔ **Assumption:** Institutions that subscribe to this policy agree on issues to be evaluated and resources are available for joint evaluations.

Output 3b:
The respective evaluation system and processes are strengthened in the institutions that subscribe to this policy.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Supervisory boards, management levels and senior management, etc. ensure and support an independent evaluation system.

Output 3c:
External partners and relevant decision-makers are informed about the enhanced evaluation system and practice.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Relevant information is communicated. Various communication channels are set up as needed.

Output 2a:
Evaluation standards, principles and criteria are applied based on a shared understanding by all institutions that subscribe to this policy.

- ➔ **Assumption:** The evaluation standards, principles and criteria cited in the evaluation policy are interpreted in the same way.

Output 2b:
The evaluation architecture of the institutions that subscribe to this policy is clarified and is known both in and outside them.

- ➔ **Assumption:** Supervisory boards, management levels, senior management, etc. support the structural set-up and interaction among the various institutional levels or actors and perform their respective tasks as regards the evaluation architecture.

Output 1:
The evaluation policy of Austrian development cooperation is published, known and implemented.

- ➔ **Assumption:** An evaluation planning process respectively and evaluation plan is in place in all stakeholder institutions.
- ➔ **Assumption:** Adequate resources in keeping with expectations are available to the respective evaluation unit (qualified staff and budget).
- ➔ **Assumption:** External, competent evaluators are available and are being selected.
- ➔ **Assumption:** The interventions are evaluable and access to robust data is assured.

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