

Independent Evaluation of Quality at Entry for ADF-11 Operations and Strategies

Information Note for ADF-11 Mid-Term Review

Background Paper

ADF-11 Mid-Term Review
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Helsinki, Finland



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

Preface from Management

This paper, presented to the ADF-11 Deputies as an *Information Note*, summarizes the main findings of the independent evaluation of ADF operations and strategies undertaken by ADB's Operations Evaluation Department (OPEV). It responds to Deputies' request that the Fund submit an external evaluation of quality at entry (QaE) in ADF operations at the ADF-11 Mid-Term Review.

The paper is based on a detailed technical report commissioned by OPEV currently under review for submission to the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE). The views expressed by ADB Management in this preface must therefore be considered provisional as they relate to information and analysis that has not yet been presented to the Board of Directors. The final report and Management's accompanying response are scheduled for review by CODE in October.

General comments

Management welcomes OPEV's independent evaluation of the QaE of ADF operations and strategies. Overall, OPEV's evaluation provides an encouraging picture of the QaE of ADF operations and strategies. QaE for operations appears relatively strong and is improving. Progress already achieved is acknowledged, as are important directions being taken by the Bank to consolidate QaE. The need to continue to strengthen processes and tools for quality review is highlighted. More detailed analysis conducted at the dimension level, showing areas of strengths and weaknesses, provides useful insights for refocusing the Bank's efforts.

The evaluation validates Management's view that institutional and organizational reforms are beginning to have a powerful impact on operational quality and more specifically QaE. While substantial progress has been achieved in enhancing overall QaE, the evaluation also reinforces management's conviction that some persistent issues need to be addressed. To this end, Management intends to devote more resources to QaE, to pursue actions already engaged under the Action Plan on Quality and Results and to strengthen the operational review process.

QaE at the ADB: Management's view on current status and trends

QaE performance indicators Ensuring higher QaE and greater accountability for results across the organization is one of Management's principal ADF-11 commitments. To better track progress on this essential dimension of institutional effectiveness, the ADF Results Measurement Framework (RMF) has incorporated specific performance indicators under the label, "Ensuring Quality At Entry for Strategies and Operations." A separate discussion paper submitted to ADF Deputies¹ analyzes the positive trends observed in RMF

indicators. To summarize, between 2006 (baseline year) and end-2008, (i) the share of CSPs and operations with satisfactory baseline data increased significantly (from 33 to 38 percent for CSPs and from 37 to 50 percent for operations); (ii) the percentage of budget support operations disbursed on schedule jumped from 55 percent to 69 percent; and (iii) project readiness, as gauged by elapsed time from approval to first disbursement, improved from 24 months to less than 16.

QaE of operations. The progress measured by the RMF indicators is consistent with the trends noted by OPEV's evaluation. Indeed, notwithstanding some sampling issues, the evaluation indicates the relatively high and increasing percentages of operations with satisfactory ratings. In the samples considered, the share of operations rated moderately satisfactory and above grew by 5 percentage points between 2005 and 2008 and the share of operations rated fully satisfactory and above grew by 15 points over the same period.

Overall, of the eight quality dimensions considered, seven have improved since 2005 (poverty, gender and social aspects alone deteriorated). Management recognizes the need to strengthen two persistently weak operational dimensions: poverty, gender and social aspects and environmental aspects. To this end, a number of initiatives are under implementation. New Bank guidelines for collecting baseline data and incorporating core output and outcome indicators in operations—and the progress already noted in this respect—are expected to improve coverage of these cross-cutting issues. In 2008, the Sustainable Development Unit composed of gender, environmental and climate change specialists was established to mainstream these issues in operations. Furthermore, the Gender Action Plan was updated in 2009 and the Bank adopted its first Climate Risk Management and Adaptation Strategy in May 2009. The

¹ ADF-11 Mid-Term Review paper *Progress in Implementing the ADF-11 Results Measurement Framework*.

review process is also being strengthened to ensure better quality and coverage of social and environmental analysis. In parallel, the Bank is engaged in the global long-term effort aimed at improving national statistical systems in general and the availability of reliable poverty and environmental data in particular..

QaE of CSPs. Findings with respect to the quality of CSPs, derived from only four CSPs for 2008, must be interpreted with caution. Management thus agrees that OPEV's evaluation is essentially illustrative but can nonetheless provide insight into CSP preparation processes and gaps in analytical work. Limited data seem to indicate that the QaE of CSPs is not improving fast enough in certain dimensions. The fact that decentralization, regional integration, and the principles of the Paris Declaration, tended to be more extensively covered in the 2008 CSPs than in the 2005 CSPs, demonstrates the positive effects of the strengthened strategic directions that form part of the Bank's Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2012. The evaluation also confirms that the selectivity of country programs has improved, reflecting the effort of the Bank to enhance its strategic and operational focus.

Persistent difficulties in mainstreaming gender, HIV/AIDS, and the environment are noted in the sample of CSPs reviewed by OPEV. A tension seems to exist between selectivity and results focus on one hand and the growing number of Bank priorities and agendas on the other. In other words, while the "generic" QaE dimensions improves (more focus and selectivity in the Bank's strategic priorities), other aspects may receive lower priority in the context of specific Bank operations in a given country. Management is concerned with addressing this tension and is taking action to strengthen the review process. A new QaE tool further discussed below, the readiness review, will be extended to CSPs. However, to optimize the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in Bank operations and strategies, a thorough reflection that extends beyond QaE concerns will be required, involving action to allow for better selectivity of analytical work.

Among the constraints identified for both projects and operations, the review gives preeminence to process and resource issues such as limited staff time and capacities to undertake economic and sector work, limited opportunities for consultation, strict adherence to report formats and guidelines, and a lack of flexibility in processing schedules. While these are important concerns, Management's view is that resources are most efficiently used by exercising greater selectivity in analytical work,

focusing on areas of the Bank's comparative advantages, and promoting joint analysis with other development partners.

QaE at the ADB: Past and ongoing reforms

QaE within a longer-term perspective. The scope and period (2005-2008) of the evaluation did not permit OPEV to assess the impact on QaE of internal reforms currently under implementation. OPEV's evaluation rightly indicates that it is too early to gauge the effects of ADF-11 internal reforms. Nonetheless, from Management's point of view, it is necessary to consider QaE against the broader and more strategic setting of the institutional changes that have shaped the Bank over the past few years. To a large extent, successive ADF replenishment exercises provided a platform for maintaining a quasi continuous dialogue between the Bank and Deputies, and furnished the necessary impetus to adopt and implement difficult internal reforms.

Internal reforms engaged by the Bank prior to the period under review had an important effect on QaE. More recent initiatives, which the evaluation acknowledges but does not thoroughly discuss, aim precisely at addressing some of the recommendations made. These include the 2007 presidential directive on new operational review procedures and the Readiness Review process piloted by the Quality Assurance and Results Department (ORQR). Among reforms that have affected the QaE of ADF operations, Management would like to underscore the following:

Strengthening of matrix management. The 2006 reorganization sanctioned an organizational matrix supportive of constant interaction between country program staff and sector specialists. Regional departments (including Field Offices) were made accountable for the design of country strategies and lending programs, while sector departments were given authority over sector analysis and project preparation and implementation. By better synthesizing sector knowledge and country expertise, this structure helped focus Bank interventions on strategic priorities that are more responsive to country demands. Within regional departments, Field Offices were established and the positions of country program officers introduced to strengthen engagement with country authorities and executing agencies on the ground. This has stimulated more active portfolio management and facilitated

dialogue on generic project implementation issues such as loan effectiveness and start-up constraints.

Revised review process. Presidential directive No 07/2007 setting out “revised procedures for the review and approval of CSPs and operations” put in place a more systematic quality review process by cross-sectoral Country Teams and clearly delineated the responsibilities of the Bank’s various departments. The new quality review process features successive consultations and reviews by peers, Country Teams, and the Operations Committee (OpsCom) at both the concept and the appraisal stages. While a work in progress, endowing Country Teams with key responsibilities in the review of strategies and operations has undoubtedly strengthened the Bank’s QaE process. As the representative of Senior Management, OpsCom was tasked by the presidential directive to oversee the review process and provide clearance for subsequent preparation stages.

Pilot Readiness Reviews and Additionality and Development Outcomes Assessments. The July 2008 establishment of the Quality Assurance and Results Department (ORQR), responsible inter alia for setting, reviewing and reporting on Bank-wide quality standards, sent another strong signal of Management’s prioritization of QaE. The Readiness Review tool piloted by ORQR for public investment projects since the beginning of 2009 aims at establishing clear QaE standards and providing appropriate guidance during project preparation. While Readiness Reviews are still in the infant stage and require further refinement in both content and process, they have emerged as an essential quality assurance instrument during the project preparation process. A more targeted tool, the Additionality and Development Outcomes Assessment introduced in late 2008, examines the expected development results of private sector operations and is another important contributor to the quality of non-sovereign operations.

Overall, the changes implemented by the Bank over the past 5 years have had a significant impact on the QaE of ADF operations. While some of these changes did not fall within the scope of OPEV’s evaluation, their benefits are visible, especially in terms of improved project readiness and clearer quality standards.

The Way Forward

With this broader and longer-term perspective on QaE, Management reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the quality of ADF operations and strategies in order to achieve better results

on the ground. OPEV’s evaluation makes helpful suggestions about ways in which QaE can be further consolidated at the Bank, building on courses of action already engaged. Concurring with the main lines of OPEV’s findings and recommendations, Management is addressing current constraints by taking action in the following areas:

An enhanced focus on results for strategies and operations. Priority will be given to testing and developing simplified logframes for both CSPs and operations, with a clearer focus on expected results and results measurement. The simplified logframe will serve as the foundation for web-based reporting on results throughout the project cycle. Readiness Reviews will be progressively extended and rolled out to country strategies and policy-based lending operations in order to sharpen the focus on results aspects such as the rationale of the project, the presentation of the logical framework and the results chain, the identification of performance indicators, and the use of monitoring mechanisms.

Better adherence to enhanced quality standards. Capitalizing on lessons learned during the pilot phase, Readiness Reviews will be improved and further integrated in the Bank’s review process. QaE standards and processes will be periodically assessed through Readiness Review stock-taking exercises. Adherence to standards will be supported by appropriate guidance to staff.

Strengthened review of environmental and social safeguards. While cross-cutting themes are already incorporated into the Bank’s review process and its Readiness Reviews, Bank-wide effort will be necessary to develop the appropriate expertise and ensure compliance with safeguard policies, including risk mitigation measures. Particular attention will be paid to enhancing gender mainstreaming in Bank operations. Specialized expertise is being developed in the areas of social and environmental safeguards through staffing of the Safeguards and Compliance Division established as part of ORQR. As the Bank will be completing its Environmental and Social Assessment Procedures (ESAP) policies in 2010, the Safeguards and Compliance Division will be responsible for strengthening ESAP compliance.

Enhanced QaE support for selected operations. Additional resources must be devoted to supporting QaE during the

processing of selected, possibly more complex CSPs and operations. To this end, central departments will be encouraged to adopt a more “hands-on” approach to QaE support.

Incorporation of core sector indicators and baseline data. In order to facilitate results monitoring and reporting, the Bank will continue to seek to improve the availability of baseline data. Efforts will also be pursued to enhance the quality of performance indicators at all levels and incorporate core sector indicators as well.

Staff development. Staff development is necessary to ensure the widespread acceptance and ownership of new instruments. For that reason, support to sector and regional department staff for the use and application of new results-based tools (logframes in the first instance) will be intensified in 2010 and 2011. This effort began in 2009 by targeting Field Offices as a means of intensifying the application of the Bank's decentralization policy and enhancing the human resource base across the organization.

Future QaE assessments. Additional data and larger samples are needed to derive robust findings and monitor progress on QaE. At the same time, and this is acknowledged in OPEV's report, QaE assessment methods need to be refined to become more results-oriented, flexible and geared to country settings. The readiness review is being developed as an innovative tool that possesses these features and can cover, at term, all operations and country strategies of the Bank.

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**OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT
(OPEV)**



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

Executive summary

i. This information note presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of an independent review of quality at entry of African Development Fund operations and strategies for the years 2005 and 2008, commissioned by the Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank. The objectives of the study were to: a) assess whether the quality at entry of strategies and operations financed through the ADF has improved in recent years; b) assess how far improvements can be attributed to recent reforms, or to other factors; and c) recommend further actions to strengthen the quality at entry of future ADF-financed strategies and operations.

ii. The overall quality at entry ratings for operations in 2005 and 2008 show an increase in the percentage of operations rated moderately satisfactory and above, which rose from 76% to 81%.² The percentage of operations rated fully satisfactory and above increased considerably, from 38% to 53%.³ Most of the underlying quality dimensions were rated highly, with the significant exceptions of social (poverty and gender) and environmental dimensions. Significant improvements were noted in the quality dimensions of a) Technical, financial and economic aspects; b) Policy and institutional aspects; and c) Implementation arrangements.

iii. Of the 12 CSPs reviewed, 6 were rated satisfactory overall at the level of moderately satisfactory and above. Two CSPs (Burkina Faso and Uganda) were found to be fully satisfactory, achieving satisfactory ratings against most quality dimensions. Of the remaining CSPs in the sample, five were rated moderately unsatisfactory and one was unsatisfactory.

iv. Quality at entry of CSPs was found to be better in countries where the Bank has relatively large portfolio of assistance and where the Bank has been undertaking regular portfolio reviews (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Zambia). The Joint Assistance Strategies have a significantly higher number of satisfactory ratings overall, except on efficiency and crosscutting issues.

v. In the four countries where comparison over period was possible, the number of satisfactory ratings increased on four criteria: selectivity, effectiveness, partnership and harmonisation, and learning from experience. At the same time, ratings deteriorated on four criteria: relevance, efficiency, managing for results and crosscutting issues. Risk assessment and fragile states criteria remained unchanged. Poverty analysis, mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, stakeholder participation and management for results have received considerable attention since 2000, but did not improve during the review period.

vi. The major factors that were found to be relevant to the quality at entry of operations and strategies include the commitment to results, the effectiveness of review structures and processes, adequacy of resources for preparation, availability of staff capacity and required skills-mix, and realistic planning cycles and lending targets.

vii. In recent years, the Bank has implemented several key measures to ensure quality at entry, including the creation of the Quality Assurance and Results Department (ORQR), a new review process spearheaded by the Operations Committee, simplification of procedures, in addition to various steps taken to ensure consistency of operations with CSP, training in economic analysis, financial analysis, and logical frameworks. The new PAR format issued in 2008 incorporates these measures and Task Managers have been following the new format. PARs are expected to include baseline information, a key requirement for improving quality at entry and measurement of results through the project cycle.

viii. Most significantly, in the course of 2009, ORQR has piloted Readiness Reviews (RR) targeted directly at improving quality at entry. RRs appear to offer a powerful tool for strengthening the focus on quality at entry, and the Bank should complete the piloting of RRs and build this instrument into its procedures, adapting it for use with a range of instruments.

ix. Some of the major reforms initiated by the Bank that have the potential to substantially influence quality at entry such as human resource augmentation and decentralisation are in the early stages of implementation and hence cannot be expected to have impacted quality at entry of operations and strategies.

² Though not strictly comparable on methodological grounds, the corresponding figure from the World Bank's most recent QEA (QEA8) is 93% moderately satisfactory and above, and 96% for the World Bank's Africa Region alone.

³ The corresponding figure from the World Bank (QEA8) is 63% fully satisfactory and above (level 5 and higher).

- x. In order to improve quality at entry, it is recommended that the Bank:
- a) **Set clear quality standards directly targeting quality at entry.** Readiness Reviews is a step in this direction but requires further refinement and validation across the Bank to fully play its role on quality at entry.
 - b) **Provide to Bank Staff and management high quality mandatory training appropriate for their responsibilities under the new quality standards for operations and country strategies.**
 - c) **Carefully monitor compliance by Bank staff and management with the new standards and processes.** Management should undertake annual QEAs to monitor the effectiveness of the ongoing reforms, including compliance with the relevant standards and procedures. Independent assessments should also be undertaken periodically for validation.
 - d) **Undertake, as a priority, a review of constraints contributing to weak quality at entry with regard to poverty, gender and environmental aspects in operations and country strategies, and take appropriate measures to promote improvements.**
 - e) **Put in place appropriate IT systems to enable archiving of PAR Annexes and supporting documentation for future use.**
 - f) **Re-emphasise the strategic role of the Operations Committee (OpsCom),** in the forthcoming review, in ensuring quality at entry by giving more attention to the factors driving quality at entry, and ensure effective management of the upstream processes of project identification and design.

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Abbreviations

ADB/AfDB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Fund
CODE	Committee on Operations and Development Effectiveness
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DARMS	Documents and Records Management System (of AfDB)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
GAD	Gender and Development
HQ	Headquarters
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NDP	National Development Plan
OPEV	Operations Evaluation Department
OpsCom	Operations Committee
ORQR	Quality Assurance and Results Department
OVE	Office of Evaluation and Oversight (of IADB)
PAR	Project Appraisal Report
PBL	Policy-based Lending
PCN	Project Concept Note
PFM	Public Finance Management
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QAG	Quality Assurance Group of World Bank
QEA	Quality-at-Entry Assessment
RBCSP	Results-based Country Strategy Paper
RBLF	Results-based Logical Framework
RMC	Regional Member Country
RR	Readiness Review
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WID	Women in Development

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF QUALITY AT ENTRY FOR ADF-11 OPERATIONS AND STRATEGIES

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This information note presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of an independent review of “quality at entry” of African Development Fund (ADF) operations and strategies for the years 2005 and 2008,⁴ commissioned by the Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank. Quality at entry refers to aspects of a Bank project, programme or strategy at the time it enters the portfolio—that is, after Board approval, but before implementation begins.
- 1.2 This section of the note outlines the scope, purpose and methods of the review. The next section describes the Bank’s approach to quality at entry, including ongoing reforms and the results of previous quality-at-entry assessments. Subsequent sections present findings on the quality at entry of operations and of country strategies; analysis of key reforms and factors relevant to improve quality at entry; and comparisons with other institutions. A final section presents conclusions and recommendations.

Scope and Objectives

- 1.3 The 2005-2008 Quality-at-Entry Assessment (QEA) was designed to contribute towards further strengthening the quality, performance and impact of the ADF strategies and operations. The review aims to assess whether the quality at entry of ADF strategies and operations has improved in recent years and to identify factors driving and constraining quality at entry, with a view to identifying practical and cost-effective ways and means of supporting sustained improvements in quality at entry in the future. The review also aims to benchmark the quality at entry of recent ADF-financed operations against selected past operations, and with comparable studies of operations in other MDBs where relevant information is available.
- 1.4 The objectives of the study were:
- a) to assess whether the quality at entry of strategies and operations financed through the ADF has improved in recent years;
 - b) to assess how far improvements can be attributed to recent reforms, or to other factors; and
 - c) to recommend further actions to strengthen the quality at entry of future ADF-financed strategies and operations.

Methods

- 1.5 The review is based on assessments of the quality at entry of (a) ADF investment lending operations and policy based lending (PBL); and (b) country assistance strategies prepared for countries receiving ADF finance during the period 2005-2008. The evaluation team⁵ sampled investment and policy-based lending operations from 2005 (the first year of operations under ADF-10) and 2008 (the first year of operations under ADF-11), with a view to comparing findings from each year to identify changes in quality at entry. The team also undertook assessment of 12 purposively selected country strategy papers (CSPs) for 8 countries

⁴ OPEV has prepared this information note as an input to the 2009 ADF-11 Mid Term Review. The note is drawn from the full report currently under preparation for submission to the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE) of the Bank’s Board. To ensure its work is independent of operations, OPEV reports to CODE, the body which approves OPEV’s work plan and budget.

⁵ A UK-based consulting firm, ITAD Ltd., was commissioned by OPEV to undertake the assessment. The team was led by Charles G. Chandler, supported by a team of seven consultants with a wide range of sector experience.

receiving ADF finance.

- 1.6 The evaluation team also reviewed Bank documentation providing guidance on quality at entry, and on the current reforms aimed at strengthening the Bank's operations; conducted interviews with key staff; and organised a wider online staff survey.
- 1.7 The approach follows the methods developed by the Quality Assurance Group at the World Bank and also used by AfDB in previous QEAs. Further details on approach and methodology appear at Annex I.

2. Context

Does Quality at Entry Matter?

- 2.1 Quality at entry is the foundation on which successful implementation is built. According to the World Bank's Quality Assurance Group, "Quality at entry is a prime determinant of successful development outcomes, and deficiencies in design are difficult to correct during Implementation."⁶ Clear confirmation of this is provided by statistical work undertaken by the World Bank's independent evaluation office, which identified a strong correlation between sound quality at entry and successful development outcomes, as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Quality at Entry and Development Outcomes in World Bank Projects

	<i>Unsuccessful (%)</i>	<i>Satisfactory outcomes (%)</i>
<i>Adequate Quality at Entry</i>	20	80
<i>Inadequate Quality at Entry</i>	65	35

Source: L.G.Morra, U.R.W. Thumm, 1997 (n=1125)

- 2.2 Quality at entry is an important determinant of successful outcomes, but of course effective implementation and supervision are also required to ensure delivery of good results. This is especially so for interventions which depend on stakeholder participation to achieve results, as is often the case with community development activities. But even where a "process approach" is taken to project implementation, thorough analysis and careful design is required at the outset. Although quality at entry and supervision is largely within the control of the Bank, implementation depends on the efforts of many stakeholders, especially the client.
- 2.3 Quality at entry has become an important operational consideration for many development institutions, including multilateral development banks. Section 6 below presents some information comparing approaches and results from several institutions.

Addressing Quality at Entry at the African Development Bank

- 2.4 The African Development Bank recognised the importance of project quality as long ago as 1994, with the publication of the landmark report of the Task Force on Project Quality, widely known as the "Knox Report."⁷ The Bank has since made considerable efforts to improve the quality of projects and country strategies. In 2004, a substantial independent evaluation of ADF VII-IX⁸ found that "Country Strategy Paper processes and products have improved steadily" (p.9); and that, with respect to projects, "Progress on quality at entry has clearly been made...but much remains to be done," especially with regard to better preparation and use of logical frameworks (p.101).

⁶ *Annual Report on Portfolio Performance FY06*, Quality Assurance Group, World Bank, 2007, p.51

⁷ *The Quest for Quality: Report of the Task Force on Project Quality for the African Development Bank, 1994*: otherwise known as the 'Knox Report.'

⁸ African Development Bank, Operations Evaluation Department. 2004. *Stepping up to the Future: An Independent Evaluation of the ADF VII, VIII and X*, ADF/BD/WP/2004/110

- 2.5 In 2003, the Bank introduced a results measurement framework (RMF) for the ADF, and enhanced this for use in the ADF-10 period (2005-2007). During this period, the Bank introduced a more results-oriented logical framework for operations and also guidelines on risk management. A new, annotated format for Results-Based Country Strategy Papers (RBCSPs) was introduced in December 2004 and modified over the next two years. This provided detailed guidance for preparation of RBCSPs, which was followed in preparing the CSPs from 2005, including those reviewed in this report.
- 2.6 AfDB's first Quality-at-Entry Assessment was conducted in 2005-2006, which confirmed a critical need to improve logical frameworks for projects, strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems and increase the availability of baseline data, in order to improve operational performance and results reporting. A subsequent review of nearly 100 operations going to the Board in 2006-2007 found, among others, that only 37% had adequate baseline data.⁹ This is a critical weakness in quality at entry, as baseline data is a prerequisite for subsequent results monitoring and evaluation.
- 2.7 The ADF-11 background report on Results Reporting for ADF-10 and Results Measurement Framework for ADF-11 defines a medium-term agenda on quality and results which focuses on institutional reforms in five areas: i) enhancing quality at entry of operations and strategies; ii) instilling a results-oriented supervision culture; iii) enhancing learning and accountability through evaluation; iv) improving data and results reporting systems; and v) accelerating decentralisation and harmonisation for better results on the ground. This report and the overall ADF-11 Deputies Report of December 2007 acknowledge the need to enhance the overall quality of Bank country strategies and operations. Noting that "We must improve the quality at entry of operations so that countries and development partners have clarity as to their purpose, fit and expected impact," the report defines a number of reform commitments related to strengthening development effectiveness and the results focus of ADF operations. More specifically, the ADF-11 Results Framework includes a set of four quantitative institutional effectiveness indicators to monitor progress in improving the quality at entry of Bank interventions (see Table 2) and spells out a range of reform measures to ensure the quality at entry of Bank country strategies and operations:
- improving analytic work to underpin country strategies and sector programmes;
 - enhancing quality review early in the preparation process, at concept stage;
 - providing just-in-time guidance to task teams on quality at entry standards;
 - strengthening results-frameworks for country strategies and operations;
 - including baseline data on expected results in appraisal reports submitted to the Boards;
 - including standard output and outcome indicators in operations; and
 - reducing delays from operations approval to disbursement.

Table 2: Institutional Effectiveness – Internal Reform Indicators During ADF-11: Ensuring Quality-at-Entry for Strategies and Operations

Indicator	Baseline Value 2006	Latest Value 2008	Target Value 2009
Percentage of new CSPs with satisfactory baseline data at entry	33	38	60
Percentage of new operations with satisfactory baseline data at entry	37	50	60
Percentage of budget support disbursed on schedule	55	69	75
Average elapsed time from approval to first disbursement (months) *	24	16	12

Notes: (*) Calculated on the basis of ADF operations whose first disbursement occurred in 2008.

Source: African Development Bank 2009a

⁹ Results Reporting for ADF-10 and Results Measurement Framework for ADF-11. Background Paper for ADF-11 Replenishment.

- 2.8 To stimulate and coordinate the implementation of the agenda on Managing for development results, the Bank established in July 2008 the Quality Assurance and Results Department (ORQR). One of the main functions of ORQR is to lead Bank-wide efforts to improve quality at entry of Bank operations. Key activities with respect to this function include: (i) developing a coherent set of quality standards and review tools for country strategies and operations; (ii) reviewing and providing guidance to Regional and Sector Departments on country strategies and operations to ensure their compliance with the Bank's policies, notably with social and environmental safeguards; (iii) promoting Bank-wide ownership and institutionalisation of new results-based approaches through staff development and establishing effective working relationships with Departments; and (iv) reporting and monitoring progress on quality at entry dimensions and undertaking related analysis. An important recent initiative led by ORQR is the piloting of a 'Readiness Review' exercise aimed at setting quality at entry criteria and standards for operations (see Box 1).
- 2.9 Over the past year, the Bank has also developed an important tool for assessing the quality of its private sector operations—the Additionality and Development Outcome Assessment (ADOA). This has been developed by the Chief Economist's complex, and provides an *ex ante* approach to assessing the likely development outcomes of private sector operations, thereby strengthening the system of peer reviews and risk analysis already in place.

Box 1: Readiness Reviews to Enhance Quality-at-Entry and Results Focus

In early 2009, the Bank launched a new review tool, the "Readiness Review" (RR), to support the quality-at-entry and results orientation of country strategies and operations. The RR focuses on *generic* quality at entry aspects, thereby complementing technical peer reviews, and provides operations Task Managers with a structured set of comments geared towards improving the conceptual quality and design of Project Appraisal Reports (PAR) and Project Concept Notes (PCN) prior to Board submission. Specific RR templates for PARs and PCNs were developed, containing a well-defined set of review criteria, together with guidance to Task Managers on the standards to be met and rating methodology. An overall rating is arrived at with a summary assessment, while specific problem areas that require attention are also flagged. The RR intervenes at Country Team Review stage, thereby providing feedback to project teams early in the preparation process.

ORQR has effectively started to undertake RRs for investment projects at the beginning of January 2009 on a pilot phase basis. Preliminary findings from the RR confirm the need to improve the analytical underpinning of projects, enhance lessons learning, strengthen alignment and harmonisation to the Paris Declaration principles, and improve the results-frameworks of projects.

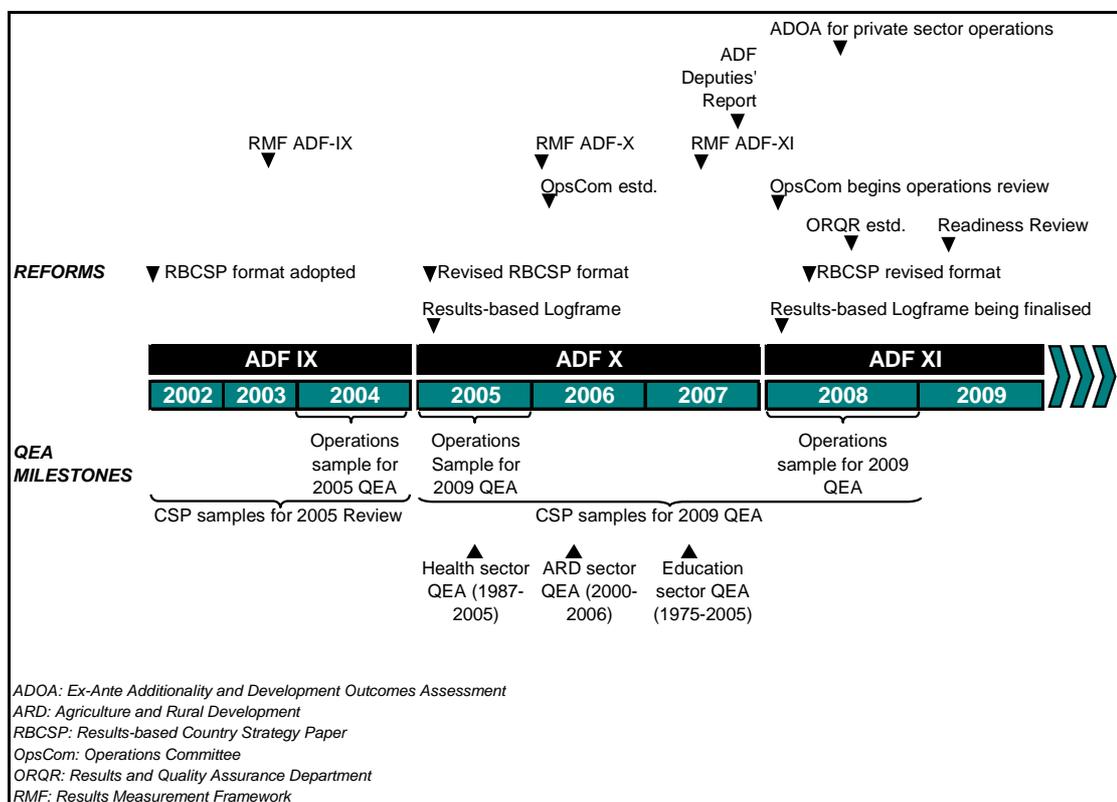
Sources: i) *African Development Bank 2009a*; and

ii) *The Readiness Review formats for CSPs, Public Sector Investment Projects, and Policy-based Lending*.

- 2.10 Another important step taken to enhance the quality of operations has been the establishment of the senior level Operations Committee (OpsCom) with the mandate to strengthen strategic selectivity, internal cohesion, and compliance across all Bank operations, and provide oversight of quality assurance of operations. Although chartered in 2006, OpsCom did not begin active review of operations until January 2008, following streamlining of the process for preparation and review of investment operations. It now meets regularly and provides an important quality filter for PCNs and PARs (see section 5 for further discussion).
- 2.11 However, it is important to note that many of the reforms focused on quality at entry and the wider results agenda have only been introduced in the course of 2008 and 2009. Many stem from the recommendations set out in the ADF Deputies' Report of December 2007. As noted above, it is as recently as July 2008 that the major step was taken to establish ORQR with a mandate to take the results agenda forward.
- 2.12 It follows, therefore, that operations approved in 2008, the first year of ADF-11 operations, could have been impacted by the ongoing reforms to only a limited degree. Many operations approved in 2008 would have been identified and prepared in previous years. Figure 1 below illustrates this point.

- 2.13 Careful analysis of ongoing reforms bears out this conclusion. Assessment of 27 key reforms indicates that most had not yet progressed sufficiently to impact upon operations approved in 2008, or are not directly relevant to quality at entry. Nevertheless, the review identified three sets of reforms which may have influenced quality at entry significantly. These are further discussed in Section 5.

Figure 1: Quality at Entry Milestones



Previous QEAs at AfDB

- 2.14 **Bank-wide QEA 2005.** The Bank undertook the first QEA in 2005 based on the review of a sample of 20 projects and 7 PBL operations approved in 2004. The QEA was organised by the Operation Policy and Compliance Department (ORPC), and implemented by Bank staff within a peer review framework rather than by an independent external panel. The QEA used the QAG assessment criteria to track the quality of design logic, development objectives and intended results of Bank Group operations.
- 2.15 The QEA rated all sample operations satisfactory overall, perhaps indicating that the rating standard was not very stringent. However, the assessment did highlight significant variations in specific quality dimensions, especially between investment and adjustment operations. Adjustment operations were found to be well prepared in several major quality dimensions, including technical, policy and institutional aspects, fiduciary aspects, implementation arrangements and the Bank inputs and processes. Adjustment operations were however weak in social and poverty aspects, and environmental safeguards. These aspects were given better ratings in investment operations. Investment operations were also rated positively with regard to project/programme concept; objectives and approach; as well as technical, policy, institutional and fiduciary aspects. However, the quality of gender analysis received low ratings.
- 2.16 The major constraints to quality at entry identified by the QEA concerns staff shortages and skills-mix, and severe time constraints during preparation. The analysis identified shortcomings in many areas of project preparation, especially those that required analytical work in gender, governance, poverty analyses, assessment of political capacity and will,

financial management capacities of Borrowers, and environmental aspects. The QEA made recommendations to refine the quality improvement measures outlined in the ADF-10 Action Plan 2005-2007, and to improve Bank's institutional capacity especially in the Review Process, Mid-term Reviews, training programmes by the Bank and the Joint Africa Institute, and strategic partnerships for development effectiveness.

- 2.17 **CSP Reviews and Sector QEAs.**¹⁰ OPEV has undertaken reviews of quality at entry of operations in the sectors of agriculture and rural development, education and health, as well as a review of CSPs. These reviews found that although the Bank's overall country strategies were relevant to clients' needs, lending programmes did not consistently have a corresponding degree of relevance. Some projects were insufficiently underpinned by analytical work and lessons from experience; and some were constrained by weak policy environments in the borrowing countries. The reviews also found an apparent disconnect between the generally high relevance of project objectives and low efficacy and sustainability of implementation, pointing to the need to strengthen the results focus in project design.

3. Key Findings from the 2005/2008 QEA of Operations

Introduction

- 3.1 This section presents the findings of the assessment of investment lending and policy based lending (PBL) operations. It sets out the overall results, and the results of analyses of the underlying quality dimensions and sub-dimensions. It identifies the major areas of good performance and those that require improvement.

Methods

- 3.2 The review assessed the quality at entry of ADF investment and policy based lending (PBL) operations sampled from 2005 (the first year of operation under ADF-10) and 2008 (the first year of operations under ADF-11). The purpose was to identify changes in quality at entry by comparing findings from each year.
- 3.3 **Sample size and coverage.** The evaluation team undertook analysis of a random sample of around 40% by number of all operations approved in those years. The sample comprised 39 operations (19 in 2005 and 20 in 2008), randomly selected from a total of 96 operations approved in these years. In terms of financial value, the 2005 sample covered 47.1% of the total commitment for that year, while the corresponding figure for 2008 was 35.3%, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Coverage of Sample in Terms of Financial Value

Year	ADF commitment (UA million) for all operations	ADF commitment (UA million) for the sample operations	% of sample commitment to total commitment
2005	977.78	460.61	47.1 %
2008	1,426.82	504.02	35.3 %

- 3.4 In terms of distribution of operations by sector and by region, the sample profile for each year broadly corresponds to the profile of total operations, as shown in the figures below. (The northern region does not feature as it does not include countries receiving ADF finance).

¹⁰ The sector QEAs are available with OPEV as Working Papers for the respective sector evaluations.

Figure 2: Distribution of all ADF Operations in 2005 & 2008 across Sectors

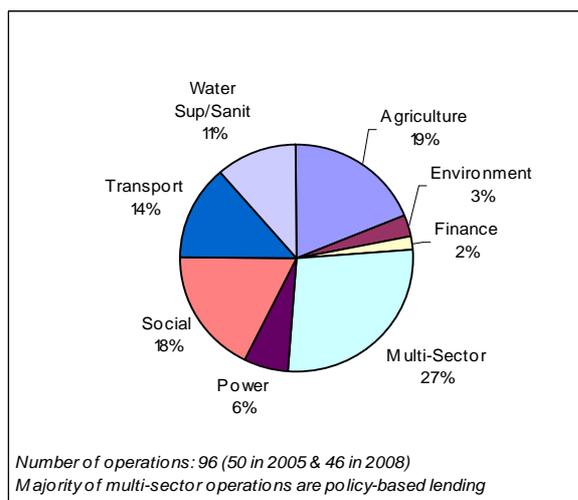


Figure 3: Distribution of Sample Operations 2005 & 2008 across Sectors

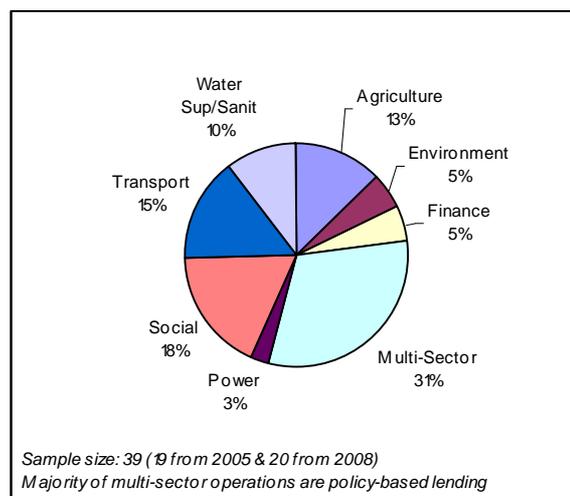


Figure 4: Distribution of all ADF Operations in 2005 & 2008 across Regions

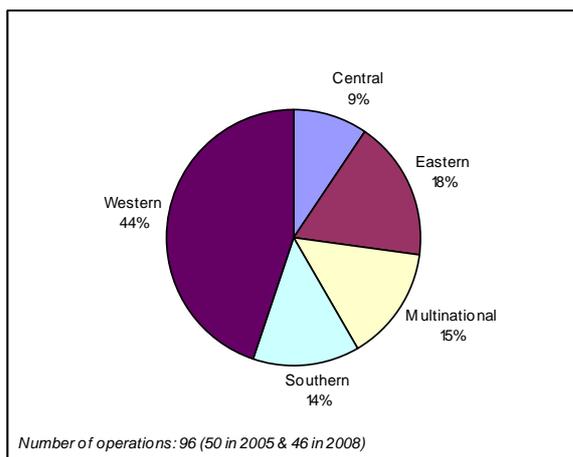
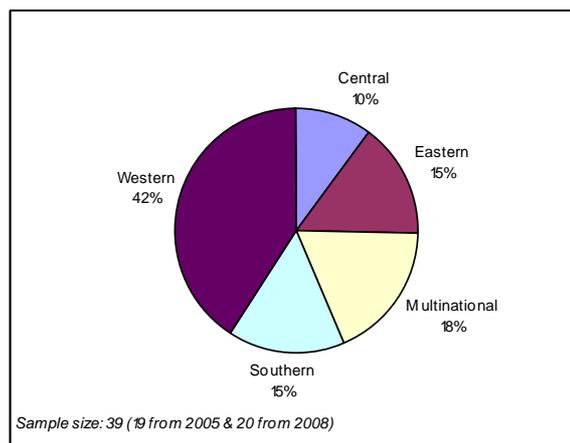


Figure 5: Distribution of Sample Operations 2005 & 2008 across Regions



- 3.5 **Limitation of the sample.** Although the sample is broadly representative of the overall portfolio of operations, the small number of operations in the sample limits the robustness and statistical significance of some of the results, especially at the sectoral or regional levels.
- 3.6 **Assessment criteria.** The quality at entry of the Bank's operations was assessed in terms of nine quality dimensions, each broken down into a series of sub-dimensions for detailed analysis.¹¹
- 3.7 **Ratings.** The ratings scale used to assess quality dimensions and sub-dimensions appears in Box 2 below.
- 3.8 **Other data sources.** The systematic analysis of the documentation relating to each operation was supplemented by interviews with staff and an online survey which received response from 65 Bank staff, and by review of other documents including policy papers and guidance documents.

¹¹ The assessment variables include 8 quality dimensions and a criterion relating to Bank Inputs and Processes, and correspond to the World Bank Quality Assurance Group (QAG) framework which was used by the Bank in the 2005 QEA and by OPEV sector level QEAs in: i) Health sector (2005); Education sector (2007); and Agriculture and Rural Development sector (2007).

Box 2: Rating Scale

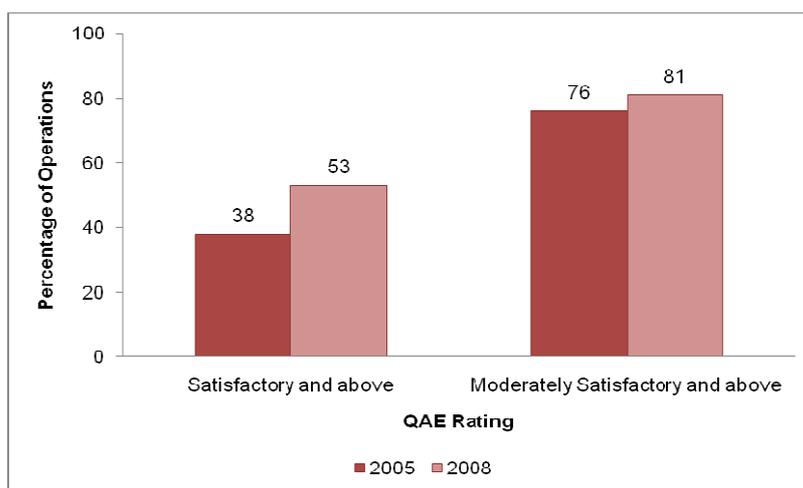
A 6-point scale was used to assess the quality dimension and sub-dimensions of operations and CSPs. An operation or CSP can receive a maximum score of 6 (best) and a minimum of 1 (worst). The various levels on the rating scale are defined as follows:

6 - Highly Satisfactory:	Best practice model, suitable for emulation
5 - Satisfactory :	Fully satisfactory quality
4 - Moderately Satisfactory:	Generally sound, but not fully satisfactory
3 - Moderately Unsatisfactory:	Quality deficient in some respects
2 - Unsatisfactory :	Quality deficient in important respects
1 - Highly Unsatisfactory :	Quality highly deficient in most respects

Operations: Overall Quality at Entry

- 3.9 The overall ratings for 2008 indicate that the quality at entry of Bank operations is fairly good, with over 80% of the sample rated moderately satisfactory or better, and well over half of the sample rated fully satisfactory or better. Most of the underlying quality dimensions are rated highly, with the significant exceptions of social and environmental dimensions.

Figure 6: Overall Ratings Comparison, 2005 and 2008 Portfolios



- 3.10 The overall quality at entry ratings for operations in 2005 and 2008 show an increase in the percentage of operations rated moderately satisfactory and above (level 4 and higher), which rose from 76% to 81%.¹² The percentage of operations rated fully satisfactory and above (level 5 and higher) increased considerably, from 38% to 53%.¹³ Figure 2 illustrates the improvements in ratings.
- 3.11 However, it should be noted that the small sample size and the high variability in the underlying quality ratings among individual operations limit the robustness and statistical significance of this result.

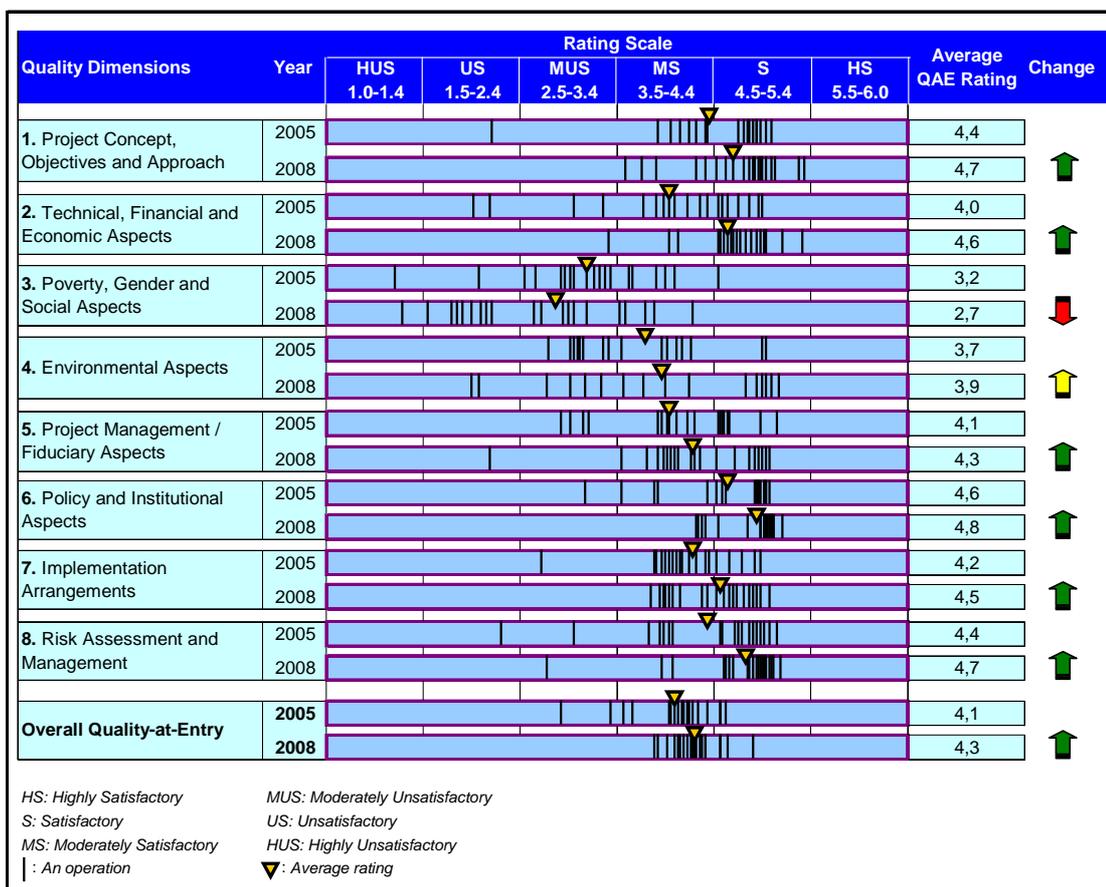
¹² Though not strictly comparable on methodological grounds, the corresponding figure from the World Bank's most recent QEA (QEA8) is 93% moderately satisfactory and above (level 4 and higher), and 96% for the World Bank's Africa Region alone.

¹³ The corresponding figure from the World Bank (QEA8) is 63% fully satisfactory and above (level 5 and higher).

Operations: Quality at the Quality Dimension Level

3.12 The quality at entry of the Bank's operations in 2005 and 2008 was assessed and rated along eight quality dimensions as shown in Figure 7 below.¹⁴ The ratings for 2008 present a fairly positive picture, with five of the eight quality dimensions rated fully satisfactory. Statistically significant improvements were noted in three quality dimensions, viz. a) Technical, financial and economic aspects; b) Policy and institutional aspects; and c) Implementation arrangements.

Figure 7: Quality-at-entry dimension-wise ratings of operations 2005 & 2008 compared



Operations: Areas for Improvement

3.13 Despite the evidence of good performance and improvements in several areas in recent years, there is scope for further progress in addressing quality at entry both at the overall level and with respect to certain issues, notably the social and environmental dimensions of its work. The weak QEA ratings indicate that poverty and gender are major areas of concern.

3.14 **Poverty analysis.** The majority of the operations reviewed in the sample have used quantitative income-related indicators to measure poverty, thus omitting significant aspects of poverty in Africa, reflected in such areas as access to and use of basic services, justice and security. The nexus between poverty, gender-based disadvantages and governance issues were usually not addressed well. Poverty analyses rarely disaggregated the population, making it difficult to identify likely impacts on different groups or target interventions efficiently. Project designs rarely included a baseline, impeding measurement of any reduction in poverty attributable to the specific project, although this issue is now being addressed by the requirement that all PARs should include baseline data. It is important to note that the

¹⁴ A ninth dimension concerning Bank inputs and processes could not be assessed for lack of adequate relevant information.

availability and reliability of poverty data at the country level and weaknesses in statistical systems are important factors affecting the quality of poverty analysis. While the Bank is assisting with statistical capacity building, the quality and availability of statistical data will take time to improve, especially in fragile states.

- 3.15 **Gender analysis.** The Bank has recently stepped up its work on gender equality with the approval of an updated Gender Plan of Action and the appointment of more gender specialists. But there is much to be done to improve the treatment of gender issues in project design. The majority of projects reviewed lacked a contextual gender analysis: this was usually found only when a project focused on women in the traditional areas of health and child care. None of the projects reviewed included a monitoring and evaluation framework integrating gender indicators with indicators for poverty.

4. Quality at Entry of Country Strategy Papers

Introduction

- 4.1 This section presents findings from the assessment of country strategy papers from the period 2005-2008. It identifies areas of good performance as well as aspects which require improvement.

Methods

- 4.2 OPEV conducted a review of CSPs in 2005 which provides a baseline for seven of the eight countries included in the present QEA. The results of the 2005 review and the present QEA are directly comparable. The current review has also assessed important aspects of alignment, macroeconomic analysis, partnership and harmonisation which were not covered in the 2005 review.
- 4.3 The present QEA rated a purposively selected sample of 12 CSPs from eight different countries.¹⁵ Very few CSPs were prepared in 2008, the first year of the ADF-11 period, limiting the number of recent CSPs available for assessment. However, for four of the eight countries included in the review, CSPs were prepared both in 2005 and in 2008, allowing comparison between CSPs for these countries from the respective time periods. Although these flag certain issues for consideration, it is unwise to generalise from a very small number of cases.
- 4.4 A six point ratings scale was used (see Box 2 above). The assessment criteria comprised 11 quality dimensions: Relevance, Selectivity, Effectiveness, Risk Assessment, Partnership and harmonisation, Efficiency, Managing for Results, Crosscutting Issues, Fragile States, Impact and sustainability, and Lessons from experience. Assessments were based on consideration of 27 sub-dimensions. Although the analysis was systematic, the conclusions drawn are necessarily indicative given the small sample size.
- 4.5 The assessment was supplemented by staff interviews and the online staff survey to which 47 staff members responded.

¹⁵ The 2008 CSP for Angola was an Update of the 2005 CSP, not a new CSP.

CSPs: Overall Quality at Entry

4.6 The overall quality at entry ratings of the 12 CSPs reviewed are presented in Table 4. Half of the sample CSPs were rated satisfactory overall at the level of moderately satisfactory and above (level 4 and higher). The Burkina Faso and Uganda CSPs were found to be fully satisfactory (level 5), achieving satisfactory ratings against most quality dimensions.

However, no CSP was found to be satisfactory on all criteria. Of the remaining CSPs in the sample, five were rated moderately unsatisfactory (level 3) and one unsatisfactory (level 2). None were highly unsatisfactory (level 1).

Table 4: Overall Ratings for Sample Country Strategy Papers

Country Strategy Paper	Year	No. of satisfactory ratings *	Rating					
			HUS	US	MUS	MS	S	HS
Angola	2005	8			3			
Burundi	2005	9			3			
DRC	2005	10			3			
Kenya	2005	11			3			
Burkina Faso	2005	22					5	
Uganda (JAS)	2005	20					5	
Ethiopia	2006	17				4		
Zambia (JAS)	2007	16				4		
Angola (Update)	2008	4			3			
Burundi	2008	14				4		
DRC	2008	4		2				
Kenya	2008	14				4		

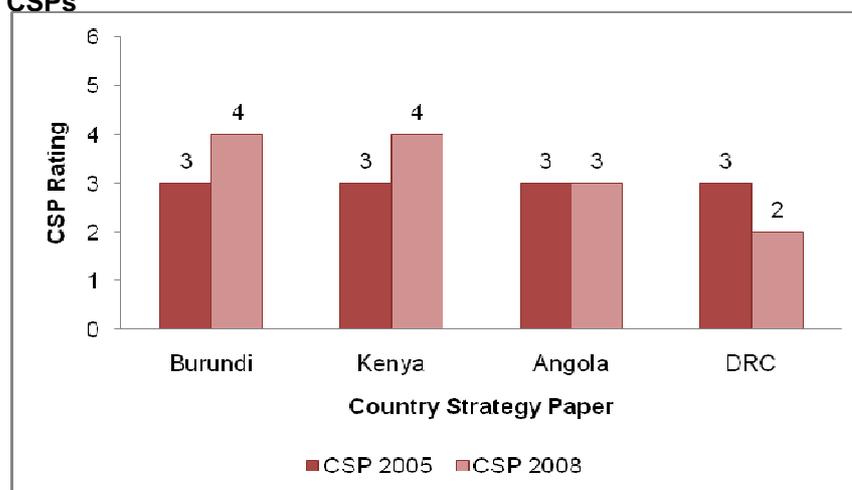
* Note: out of the 27 criteria rated to assess 11 CSP quality dimensions

HS: Highly Satisfactory; S: Satisfactory; MS: Moderately Satisfactory

HUS: Highly Unsatisfactory; US: Unsatisfactory; MUS: Moderately Unsatisfactory

4.7 Quality at entry of the sample CSPs was found to be better in countries where the Bank has a relatively large portfolio of assistance. The CSP review confirms that in countries where the Bank has been undertaking regular portfolio reviews (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Zambia), CSP quality were generally higher on all criteria.

Figure 8: Comparison of Ratings (2005-2008) for Case Study CSPs



4.8 The Joint Assistance Strategies have a significantly higher number of satisfactory ratings overall, except on efficiency (where they are rated similar to Bank CSPs) and on crosscutting issues (which are rated lower than good Bank CSPs). They are generally satisfactory on quality aspects including selectivity and focus, effectiveness and risk assessment, as well as – perhaps to be expected – on partnership and harmonisation. On alignment, they are rated highly satisfactory (level 6) because they are not only aligned with country policies but also with country systems. However, on the sub-dimension of regional integration, the JAS were rated as unsatisfactory, in contrast to the CSPs for Burundi (2008), Kenya (2008), DRC (2005), Burkina Faso (2005) and Ethiopia (2005), all rated moderately satisfactory on this aspect.

- 4.9 For four of the eight countries included in the review, CSPs were prepared both in 2005 and in 2008. Hence it has been possible to compare the changes in quality between the two time periods, as shown in Figure 8 above. For two countries (Burundi and Kenya), quality at entry of the CSP improved from moderately unsatisfactory to moderately satisfactory. For Angola, the quality of the CSP remained unchanged. For the Democratic Republic of Congo, the quality of the CSP declined from moderately unsatisfactory in 2005 to unsatisfactory in 2008.

CSPs: Quality at Entry at the Quality Dimension Level

a. Areas of Improvement

- 4.10 The analysis of satisfactory ratings across the CSP sample shows (a) that variation between countries is more substantial than changes over time and (b) that improvements of ratings on some criteria between 2005 and 2008 were offset by deteriorations on other criteria in case study countries.
- 4.11 In case study countries, the number of satisfactory ratings increased on four criteria: selectivity, effectiveness, partnership and harmonisation and learning from experience. At the same time, ratings deteriorated on four criteria: relevance, efficiency, managing for results and crosscutting issues. Two criteria remained unchanged: risk assessment and fragile states.
- 4.12 ***Selectivity***: Selectivity has improved and is now “moderately satisfactory” or better in all recent strategies. Selectivity was rated higher in recent CSPs because they present a clear attempt to reduce the number of sectors of engagement. Selectivity was most effective in Zambia, Ethiopia and Burundi where the Bank has managed to focus approval of new projects on three sectors over the review period.¹⁶ (Zambia is one of the few examples where the CSP demonstrates a decision to withhold engagement in certain sectors - in this case agriculture - because of capacity constraints).
- 4.13 However, the use of broadly defined “pillar,” which cover a wide range of sectors, seems to have undermined the effort to focus Bank interventions on fewer projects and sectors. The 2005 Annotated Format for CSPs introduced the concept of strategic pillars linking to higher level objectives as part of its drive to strengthen alignment with country priorities. Most CSPs selected two pillars, as required by the Annotated Format, but the pillars often cover several sectors or even several themes in some cases. In eight out of the twelve CSPs assessed, pillars were found to be too broad to be effective in determining strategic focus and selectivity.

¹⁶ OPEV Data on approved operations between 2005 and 2008.

Box 3: Country Strategy Papers: Changes in Quality at Entry

Burundi Country Strategy Papers:

Improvement in Quality at Entry

The case of Burundi shows that the Bank can be successful in addressing aspects of alignment and harmonisation if it joins strong partnerships. The 2008 CSP presents a focused and well-aligned approach, which builds on and improved understanding of the fragile state context and provides budget support in partnership with other donors. CSP preparation was linked to a joint World Bank /AFDB mission (in preparation of budget support) and therefore could make use of a wider range of expertise (including governance) and analysis.

The main changes noted between 2005 and 2008 include:

- **Selectivity** was very weak (2) in 2005 and improved; it is now moderately satisfactory (4).
- **Risk analysis and mitigation** improved (moderately satisfactory/4), mainly through use of joint analysis.
- **Portfolio performance and mix of funding instruments** improved slightly and is now moderately satisfactory (4); however there is still limited justification of the choice and mix of aid instruments included in the CSP.
- **Use of national systems** has clearly improved with the provision of budget support and is now moderately satisfactory (4).
- **Donor harmonisation** -and AfDB's participation in it- has improved significantly between 2005 and 2008 and is now moderately satisfactory (4).
- The Burundi CSP has a particular focus on **governance**; but there are still substantial weaknesses in a number of areas that are relevant in this aspect.
- However the **analysis of policy and institutional aspects** deteriorated between 2005 and 2008.
- No further improvement with regard to **analysis of governance** aspects between 2005 and 2008; it is still moderately satisfactory (4).

The Bank's support is provided as budget support through the Fragile States Facility, which is better tailored to the context of a fragile state; but the analysis of fragility is weak (3).

DRC Country Strategy Papers:

Decline in Quality at Entry

The 2005 CSP demonstrates good analysis and strategic thinking. The argument for the Bank's engagement is clearly explained; the rationale provided is focused on development priorities and results. Similarly to other strategies at that time (e.g. Burundi), the CSP is more concerned about relevance criteria than selectivity; as a result the Bank spreads itself across a large number of sectors and there is no obvious focus in its portfolio.

Compared to this, the 2008 strategy is poorly presented, with unsatisfactory analysis and strategic focus. Most of the mainstreaming issues (gender, environment, HIV/AIDS) have not been covered. The overall score therefore went down from "moderately unsatisfactory" (3) to "unsatisfactory" (2).

The DRC CSP demonstrates limited understanding of the country context and limited interaction with partners or other donors.

The Bank has opened a field office in 2007; the improved engagement within the country which was expected at that time has not yet translated into an improved strategy. There may be limited donor coordination in DRC but, unlike Burundi where the Bank does not have a field office; there were no visible efforts to conduct joint analysis or missions with partners such as the World Bank, which would have benefited the quality of the strategy.

- 4.14 **Knowledge management and lessons learning.** These aspects were visibly strengthened over the review period. For a number of countries, Country Governance Profiles and Country Gender Profiles were prepared over the review period, and have strengthened the analysis included in recent CSPs. The extent to which countries use existing economic and sector work to inform the CSP preparation process varies. A number of CSPs were planning ESW for the CSP period, although only a few of them intended to support joint donor analysis (Burundi 2008, Kenya 2008). Improvements were also noted with regard to lessons learning. Most CSPs include a substantial discussion of specific lessons learned, often derived from preceding portfolio reviews. Several CSPs include specific actions suggested by portfolio reviews (Burkina Faso 2005, Burundi 2008, Kenya 2008, and Zambia 2007); two CSPs include lessons with regard to results (Burkina Faso 2005 and Kenya 2008).

b. Aspects Requiring Attention

- 4.15 Some aspects of quality have received considerable attention since 2000, but did not improve during the review period. This includes poverty focus, mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, stakeholder participation and management for results.
- 4.16 **Poverty focus:** This aspect was rated “highly satisfactory” (level 6) for the Uganda JAS (2005) and “satisfactory” for Ethiopia (2006) and Burkina Faso (2005). However, it was rated significantly lower for the four 2008 CSPs compared to 2005 ratings in case study countries. Although the availability of poverty data should have improved rather than deteriorated over the years, the analysis included in the 2008 CSP was only “moderately unsatisfactory” or less. This deterioration can be partly attributed to the seemingly lower emphasis put on poverty in the Revised CSP Format 2008 (compared to the 2005 CSP format), which combines analyses of social, gender and crosscutting themes in one section. Most CSPs do not provide a convincing argument that they will make a substantial contribution to poverty reduction in the country. The underlying assumption in most CSPs is that alignment with national PRSP will ensure sufficient poverty focus within the portfolio.
- 4.17 There are limited guidance and tools available to Bank staff to guide good poverty analysis. Lack of reliable and adequate data and analysis was mentioned as a major issue undermining CSP quality in the CSP staff survey. A majority of the respondents in the CSP staff survey thought that poverty expertise within CSP preparation teams was “slightly deficient” (50%) or “insufficient” (20%). The quality of poverty analysis included in the CSP was rated “good enough” by 55.6% of the respondents, but 38.9% thought it was “deficient.”
- 4.18 **Cross-cutting issues:** Despite supportive corporate policies, progress in mainstreaming gender, HIV/AIDS and environmental issues was found to be limited.¹⁷ The 2008 CSPs show little improvement and even some deterioration in addressing crosscutting issues. On the other hand, regional integration has been successfully launched as a new cross-cutting issue in recent CSPs.
- **Gender:** There was limited progress on gender between 2005 and 2008. The gender analysis included in the CSPs was unsatisfactory or missing in seven CSPs assessed, including the JAS Zambia (2007). Four CSPs suggested concrete ways to support gender equality within the country (including gender mainstreaming); but only one CSP (Ethiopia 2007) was rated fully “satisfactory” (level 5) with regard to gender. 61.1% of the respondents in the staff survey agree that the gender analysis included in CSPs is deficient.
 - **HIV/AIDS:** Mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS was unsatisfactory in most of the 2005 CSPs, but issues of HIV/AIDS are barely addressed in the 2008 CSPs. Only three CSPs include HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies (DRC 2005, Kenya 2005 and Uganda 2005) and are therefore rated “moderately satisfactory” (level 4). The Bank has addressed HIV/AIDS through social sector projects; the CSPs contain no evidence that HIV/AIDS risks are mitigated in other high-risks sectors, such as transport, or addressed strategically at country level.
 - **Environment and climate change:** Environmental issues are generally discussed in more depth and detail in CSPs where the Bank has ongoing or planned interventions in the environment sector (Angola, Burkina Faso and Kenya). There is little discussion of wider issues of sustainable development.
- 4.19 **Stakeholder participation:** Stakeholder participation was rated at least moderately satisfactory (level 4) in all 2005, 2006 and 2007 CSPs. But it was rated unsatisfactory in three of the 2008 CSPs assessed (Burundi, DRC, Angola). Although a description of the consultative process is required by the 2008 Revised Annotated CSP Format, the recent CSPs reviewed did not describe stakeholder consultations. It appears that CSP priorities are usually developed during general consultations between Bank staff and selected

¹⁷ Between 2000 and 2005, the Bank has adopted a number of policies to ensure that cross-cutting issues are mainstreamed in operations and CSPs. Efforts to mainstream gender, HIV/AIDS and environmental issues became effective in the 2005 CSP; the 2005 Annotated CSP Format includes clear requirements to address crosscutting issues.

representatives from government institutions. Only one CSP (Burkina Faso 2005) includes evidence that the stakeholder meetings resulted in an adjustment of CSP priorities. In only two cases (DRC 2005, Ethiopia 2007) was it clear that the Bank had consulted with the private sector during CSP preparation: this is surprising, considering the importance of private sector development in a number of CSPs.

- 4.20 **Managing for results:** The CSPs reviewed provide limited evidence that a focus on results has shaped country portfolios, that feasible and rigorous arrangements for monitoring results were set up and that the Bank will be accountable for delivering its support according to the objectives set in the CSP. However, as noted above, those programmes where regular portfolio reviews were conducted demonstrate generally higher quality at entry ratings.

5. Factors Relevant to Quality at Entry

- 5.1 The analysis has brought forth several factors relevant to the quality at entry of operations and strategies in the Bank. The factors that would positively affect quality at entry include: a) strong commitment to results; b) effective review structure and processes; c) adequate resources for preparation; d) adequate capacity in terms of staff strength and skills-mix; e) realistic planning cycles and lending targets; and f) flexibility in the document size limit of PARs and strategy documents.

Commitment to Results

- 5.2 In recent years the Bank has taken several steps to strengthen the results focus of its operations and strategies to enhance the quality at entry. While the steps taken are in the right direction, the effects are being realised at a pace slower than expected. The results based logical framework was introduced in 2005 followed by a series of staff training sessions for its application. The PAR format was revised in 2008 and requires baseline data before appraisal. Enforcement of these requirements has definitely helped ensure that baseline data are included,¹⁸ in the 2008 operations sample for this QEA. The new PAR format contained a modified logical framework that moved away from the 'traditional' Logframe 4x5 layout to a new 6x3 results-based logical framework (RBLF) layout. The intent of these changes was to draw distinction between levels of the results hierarchy and establish a causal chain. The changes however have caused certain degree of confusion among the users. The definitions and standards set by the new format and Logframes need to be tested, refined and validated across the Bank to ensure wider acceptance and effective use. A simplified project Logframe format is currently being developed and tested for this purpose. Results-based management and results training have the potential to improve quality at entry but they require updating and uptake by all concerned staff.
- 5.3 In 2002 the Bank introduced a Results-based Country Strategy Paper (RBCSP) format which was revised in 2005 and 2008, notably to simplify the structure of CSPs. This, simplification however, was perceived by the staff as placing less emphasis on analyses of poverty and mainstreaming issues and more focus on strategic design and selectivity, alignment and partnership. The quality and depth of analysis of poverty and crosscutting issues have affected overall quality of operations and strategies (Box 4).

¹⁸ ADF-11 Mid-term Review Paper: Impact of Institutional and Business Process Reforms on Programming and Delivery

Box 4: Comments on CSP Format from CSP Staff Survey

“The CSPs prepared before the 2008 format were often too heavy because adequate time was not allocated towards the preparation process and the economists tend to repeat a lot of analysis made by other donors that did not give much consistency and specificity to our strategy papers which were some kind of board documents.”

“The introduction of the 2008 annotated format has severely weakened the quality of analysis in the CSPs giving priority to visual designs which only summarises them as in a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation of the business plan approach should rather come after the strategy has defined the operational actions.”

Review Structure and Processes

- 5.4 With the issuance of the “Presidential Directive (07/2007) concerning the operations review and approval process” the Bank put in place a more stringent quality review process based on successive reviews by peers, Country Teams and the Operations Committee (OpsCom), by replacing the prevailing system of another three-tier review process.¹⁹
- 5.5 The OpsCom was established in 2006, but began reviewing operations only in February 2008. Based on a review of the minutes,²⁰ it was found that OpsCom carried out a useful function of strengthening internal co-ordination among operational units. However, when it came to improving quality at entry and development impact, the effect is less certain. OpsCom tended to micromanage its review function for operations, rather than establishing appropriate quality at entry standards and robust upstream processes to meet the standards. Being a high level management body, OpsCom would need to position itself more strategically to be more effective.
- 5.6 In the absence of an updated Operations Manual, the Bank has been piloting since early 2009 a Readiness Review exercise aimed at providing quality at entry standards and building them into project preparation, as elaborated in Section 2. This initiative though, requires further refinement and validation across the Bank to fully play its role on quality at entry.

Resources for Preparation

- 5.7 The available resources for preparation are still a major constraint for operations and CSP quality at entry. Staff survey and consultations show that the time, resources and efforts going into the preparation are the most important factors affecting the quality of CSP documents. In many cases the CSP process is limited to the obligatory two missions, carried out mostly by HQ staff; there are few underpinning reviews or studies carried out to support preparation. At the same time, improved coordination with other development partners at the strategic level and joint analytic work could limit the need for Bank studies to inform CSPs. This would also help focussing the Bank’s economic and sector work on its core areas of expertise and develop comparative advantages while addressing the noted resource constraints. In this context, it may be noted that the CSP review indicates quality gains in countries where the Bank has been undertaking regular portfolio reviews (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Zambia).
- 5.8 Time is usually limited as are opportunities to engage in wider consultations with stakeholders, partners, donors and representatives of civil society. The ongoing decentralisation process and increased field presence would respond to the need for broader consultation and participatory approaches in strategy formulation. It was also noted that coordination between departments within the Bank and the availability of technical expertise are also limited; all issues that were brought up during the staff survey.

¹⁹ At the levels of: a) Departmental Working Group, b) Interdepartmental Working Group, and c) Senior Management Committee.

²⁰ Only minutes from 28 August 2007 until 25 June 2008 were available on the web site.

Capacity: Staff Strength and Skills-Mix

- 5.9 Capacity constraints in terms of staff strength and skills-mix seem to limit the attention given particularly to poverty analysis, governance, gender or social issues including participatory processes. The need for selectivity and cost-effectiveness in project preparation seems to have delimited the attention paid to certain crosscutting issues. Key reforms such as decentralisation and staff augmentation are progressing, but inadequacies in human resource capabilities and process efficiency persists within the operational departments at HQ and Field Offices. A majority of the staff felt that the reforms had only a moderately positive impact on quality at entry so far, especially because some of these key reforms are still ongoing.

Planning Cycles and Lending Targets

- 5.10 It was evident from the staff survey and consultations that the managers and staff are operating under extreme pressure to meet the Board dates and/or planning cycles and lending targets. These are often rigid, and as a result the managers and staff at times show a tendency to push operations forward without sufficient attention paid to meeting the necessary quality characteristics.

Document Size Limit and Quality

- 5.11 While acknowledging the merits of the 20-page limit of 2008 PAR format, it appears to have constrained the efforts to adequately justify and document preparation processes, particularly for investment operations. The Bank's document management system does not routinely capture background documents during preparation. The restriction on page limits has in fact exacerbated quality problems through superficial treatment of some of the issues relevant to the context. Such a short report needs to be complemented by a set of mandatory technical annexes to ensure that quality analysis is conducted and later used for implementation and supervision purposes.

6. Comparators

- 6.1 Several multilateral development banks have taken steps to assess quality at entry. The World Bank established its Quality Assurance Group in 1996. The QAG developed a robust methodology and has undertaken a series of QEAs which have helped management to improve quality at entry over the past decade. Few bilateral agencies appear to have undertaken systematic work on quality at entry. However, AusAid has published several QEA reports.²¹
- 6.2 The effort to compare and benchmark quality at entry of ADF operations and strategies with other MDBs is complicated by several factors including a) the assessment methodology followed; b) the assessment periods; and c) the degree of independence of panellists from Management. The context of operations and the human and financial resources available also vary. However, the available data merit consideration.
- 6.3 QEAs at the World Bank. The latest quality-at-entry assessment (QEA8 for FY06-07 operations) by the World Bank's Quality Assurance Group showed that, globally, 93% of the World Bank's operations were moderately satisfactory or better. The corresponding figure for FY04-05 operations was 92%. The operations in the Africa region of the World Bank performed better at 96% satisfactory or better for FY06-07, an increase of 13 percentage points from the QEA for FY04-05 operations. The noticeable improvements were in strategic relevance, candour and realism of operations. Environmental aspects were found to be weak in the Africa region operations (on a par with this aspect of ADF operations). For comparison, the overall rating of ADF operations in 2008 (at 81%) is 15 percentage points lower than the overall rating for the World Bank Africa Region for FY06-07.

²¹ The most recent was published in 2005: *Rapid review of Quality at Entry (QAE) 2004: innovative activity design*. Australian Agency for International Development. Quality Assurance Group, 2005.

- 6.4 QEA at the Asian Development Bank. The QEA carried out by the Asian Development Bank for the projects and country strategies approved in 2004–2005 found that 81% of the 31 sample projects assessed were of satisfactory or better quality at entry.²² Coincidentally, the overall rating for ADF operations in 2008 is the same.
- 6.5 Evaluability Assessments of IADB. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) does not usually carry out full-fledged quality-at-entry assessments but the Office of Evaluation and Oversight (OVE) has conducted evaluability assessments as part of the Bank’s commitment to improve management for results. The evaluability assessment examines a set of design-specific aspects that allow these projects to be evaluated, and hence defined as “evaluability.”²³ The ratings are not directly comparable with the QEA ratings as the quality dimensions and assessment methodologies are not harmonised.
- 6.6 OVE carried out evaluability assessments of operations approved by the Board in 2001 and 2005. The 2005 evaluability scores of the quality aspects were found to be generally very low ranging between 1.2% satisfactory for the quality of “diagnosis” to 69.9% for “output indicators.” Comparison of 2001 and 2005 showed no significant progress in quality.
- 6.7 The study found that the general orientation of operations was towards achievement of outputs rather than achievement of outcomes and identified the immediate need to significantly deepen the analytical underpinnings of all operations in order to respond to the typically complex situations found in the member countries.²⁴ Despite the difference in regional context, these observations are largely relevant to the ADF operations reviewed in the current QEA.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- 7.1 This assessment of quality at entry of the Bank’s operations indicates that, for 2008, the quality at entry of Bank operations is fairly good, with over 80% of the sample rated moderately satisfactory or better for overall quality, and well over half of the sample rated fully satisfactory or better. Most of the underlying quality dimensions are rated fully satisfactory, with the significant exceptions of social and environmental dimensions.
- 7.2 In recent years, the Bank has implemented several key measures to ensure quality at entry, including the creation of the Quality Assurance and Results Department (ORQR), a new review process spearheaded by the Operations Committee, simplification of procedures, in addition to various steps taken to ensure consistency of operations with CSP, training in economic analysis, financial analysis, and logical frameworks. The new PAR format issued in 2008 incorporates these measures and Task Managers have been following the new format. PARs are expected to include baseline information, a key requirement for improving quality at entry and measurement of results through the project cycle.
- 7.3 Most significantly, in the course of 2009, ORQR has piloted “readiness reviews” targeted directly at improving quality at entry. This QEA has not evaluated RRs in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency. But they appear to offer a powerful tool for strengthening the focus on quality at entry, and the Bank should complete the piloting of RRs and build this instrument into its procedures, adapting it for use with a range of instruments.
- 7.4 However, it is too early for many of the recent reforms to have made a substantial impression on quality at entry in 2008. This QEA sampled operations from 2005 and 2008: but it was only in the course of 2008 that many of the reforms directly relevant to quality at entry were initiated, and their effects can only be expected to show in terms of improved quality at entry in future years. The 2008 findings therefore provide a useful baseline against which

²² *Managing for Development Results in the Asian Development Bank: A Preliminary Assessment Special Evaluation Study 2007*, p. 25.

²³ Evaluability scores for each project are based on the nine dimensions, viz. (i) diagnosis; (ii) definition of objectives; (iii) project logic; (iv) assumptions and risks; (v) outcome indicators; (vi) outcome indicator baselines; (vii) output indicators; (viii) output indicator baselines; and (ix) monitoring and evaluation.

²⁴ IADB, OVE. August 2004. Instruments and Development: An Evaluation of IDB Lending Modalities.

impending changes could be measured in 2011 or 2012.

Recommendations

7.5 In order to improve quality at entry, it is recommended that the Bank:

- a) **Set clear quality standards directly targeting quality at entry.** Readiness Reviews provide a set of criteria against which to assess quality at entry, but they do not provide a clear statement of the standards to be met. Explicit quality standards should be included in the forthcoming revised Operations Manual.
- b) **Provide to Bank Staff and management high quality mandatory training appropriate for their responsibilities under the new quality standards for operations and country strategies.** Training in this area has so far not been mandatory and has been somewhat piecemeal. A concerted effort to raise the level of staff skills and awareness is required.
- c) **Carefully monitor compliance by Bank staff and management with the new standards and processes.** Management should undertake annual QEAs to monitor the effectiveness of the ongoing reforms, including compliance with the relevant standards and procedures. Independent assessments should also be undertaken periodically for validation: the Board should consider tasking OPEV to undertake a further independent QEA review in 2011.
- d) **Undertake, as a priority, a review of constraints contributing to weak quality at entry with regard to poverty, gender and environmental aspects in operations and country strategies, and take appropriate measures to promote improvements.**

7.6 In addition to the key recommendations to directly address quality at entry of operations and country strategies, it is recommended that the Bank:

- a) **Put in place appropriate IT systems to enable archiving of PAR Annexes and supporting documentation for future use.** Currently, this material cannot be readily retrieved, despite its utility for project implementation.
- b) **In the forthcoming review of the Operations Committee (OpsCom), re-emphasise the Committee's strategic role in ensuring quality at entry.** OpsCom has devoted considerable attention to the details of quality at entry on a case by case basis. It needs to give more attention to the factors driving quality at entry, and ensure effective management of the upstream processes of project identification and design.

Annex I: A Note on Review Approach and Methodology

QEA Sample

For the review of operations, a sample of 39 operations comprising 19 operations approved in 2005 and 20 operations approved in 2008 were randomly selected. The sample covered both investment projects and policy-based lending. The sample size works out to be 40.6% of all approved ADF operations during these years, i.e. 50 operations approved in 2005 and 46 in 2008.

For the assessment of country strategies, a sample of 12 CSPs was selected from a total of 8 countries: Angola (2), Burundi (2), Democratic Republic of Congo (2), Kenya (2), Burkina Faso (1), Ethiopia (1), Uganda (1), and Zambia (1). The CSP samples had representation from Fragile States, ADF-eligible countries with large medium and small portfolios, and countries that produced two CSPs during the review period.

Information gathering

The QEA exercise resorted to extensive review of documents related to operations and country strategies. These include the sample PARs and CSPs and all background documents from the identification stage till approval with all related policy papers and Presidential Instructions. The QEA team carried out interviews with concerned professional and managerial staff at different levels. Separate online perception surveys on operations and country strategies were administered for wider participation by the Bank staff. Sixty-five responses were received from the online survey for operations quality at entry and 47 responses were received from the CSP quality at entry survey. The results of the surveys are analysed and integrated into the evaluation report.

Rating Scale

A 6-point scale was used to assess the quality dimension and sub-dimensions of operations and CSPs. As per this rating scale, an operation or CSP can receive a maximum score of 6 and a minimum of 1. Different levels on the rating scale are as defined below.

Level 6 - Highly Satisfactory	: Best practice model, suitable for emulation
Level 5 - Satisfactory	: Fully satisfactory quality
Level 4 - Moderately Satisfactory	: Generally okay, but not fully satisfactory
Level 3 - Moderately Unsatisfactory	: Quality deficient in some respects
Level 2 - Unsatisfactory	: Quality deficient in important respects
Level 1 - Highly Unsatisfactory	: Quality highly deficient in most respects

The sub-dimension level scores were averaged to dimension level scores and further to overall quality at entry. The average scores were classified as follows to determine level of quality:

5.5 - 6.0	: Level 6 - Highly Satisfactory
4.5 - 5.4	: Level 5 - Satisfactory
3.5 - 4.4	: Level 4 - Moderately Satisfactory
2.5 - 3.4	: Level 3 - Moderately Unsatisfactory
1.5 - 2.4	: Level 2 - Unsatisfactory
1.0 - 1.4	: Level 1 - Highly Unsatisfactory

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