

#WorldInCommon

EVALUATIONS

REPORT 2017/2018



Evaluations Report 2017–2018

At AFD, an independent operations department is specifically tasked with evaluating projects, programmes and strategies implemented by the Agency.

Evaluation cultivates a humble attitude that implies learning and applying the lessons learnt from our experience. This ongoing learning process aims to improve the effectiveness of our interventions and their impact on the quality of life in the communities we support.

This approach is based on the desire to fuel a long-term dialogue on the results of our interventions with our partners in the global South – the stakeholders are always invited to take part in these studies. Together, we take a step back to learn from both our successes and failures.

Evaluations are a source of independent and reliable analyses to ensure accountability for the way in which AFD uses its public funds.

This 2017–2018 public evaluation report is AFD's response to the French President's determination to extend the evaluation culture and contribute to the official development assistance debate.

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Case studies 2017–2018.

Multi-country – Protected areas

Dovetailing biodiversity conservation and development is the challenge met by the 19 projects supporting the implementation or reinforcement of protected areas, underway since the early 2000s.

→ pp. 30–37

Multi-country – Public policy loans

The potential of this burgeoning financial instrument and the areas for improvement to enhance the quality of its support have been studied in around ten evaluations in seven countries.

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Côte d'Ivoire – GeoPoppy

This mobile digital mapping tool helps boost the monitoring and evaluation potential of biodiversity projects.

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Mozambique – Limpopo National Park

Involving communities in the management of Limpopo National Park is the “inclusive” approach adopted to combine ecological conservation and economic development, which is examined in a written and filmed evaluation.

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Multi-country – FISONG

How to better share the benefits of biodiversity with village communities? The experience of actors in close proximity to communities, such as non-governmental organisations, is under analysis in three projects in Madagascar, Niger and Tanzania.

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Vietnam

In a rapidly changing country, AFD has been adapting for ten years and refocused its interventions around climate change and support for urban development.

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Multi-country – Biodiversity CIF

The Cross-cutting Intervention Framework (CIF) identifies the challenges and obstacles to overcome in order to better mainstream biodiversity into development policies in the countries in which the AFD operates.

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AFD in brief

AFD Group, at the service of French development policy, finances, supports and accelerates transitions towards a fairer and more sustainable world. Teams are engaged in over 4,000 projects involving biodiversity, peace, education, urban planning, health and governance both in Overseas France and 115 countries. AFD thus contributes to bringing France and French citizens on board with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

THE 2018–2022 STRATEGY

The development agenda has changed substantially since 2015 with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the French government's ambition to contribute an annual 0.55% of gross national

income to official development assistance by 2022. With this in mind, AFD Group has adopted a new strategy for the period 2018–2022 in line with the contract governing objectives and resources concluded between the Group and the French government.

A WORLD IN COMMON

AFD aims to help to build a world in common. A world in common is a world that protects and defends its five key common goods: the planet Earth, the well-being of populations, peace, economic prosperity and partnerships.

Public financing of sustainable development has a key role to play in the collective protection of these goods. It is both an accelerator and a facilitator. It is an investment that links France with its partners in the global South, in a mutual interest. For the period 2018–2022, we have thus made five foundational commitments to promote these five global common goods.

5 commitments

All financing must now be fully compatible with low-carbon development resilient to climate change. AFD is also tasked with mobilising public and private investment in this direction.



RÉMY RIOUX, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AFD

“ AFD is the French development policy platform. Creating a platform allows everyone to benefit from evaluation in order to build together, with humility and ambition, a world in common. ”

This biennial evaluation report derives from the Agence française de développement's threefold requirement.

An accountability requirement, now that French development policy has been vested with a new ambition. One driven by the strong political will of the French President of the Republic and the Government, who have set the objective of devoting 0.55% of gross national income to development. Also confirmed by the Nation's elected representatives, Members of Parliament and Senators from across the political spectrum, with increased means and greater vigilance. A framework act will soon give coherence, vision and a narrative to this profoundly renewed policy, indispensable at a time of common challenges symbolised by the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and adopted by all countries in 2015 under the aegis of the United Nations.

Next, an effectiveness requirement, because our action takes on full meaning if it facilitates and accelerates the ecological, social and civic transitions that sustainable development demands of all actors. Acting at grassroots level, for populations, with all stakeholders involved, requires our being able to evaluate our actions not only to prove their effectiveness, but also to continuously bolster their relevance and impact. In this report, we wished to highlight 44 project evaluations and 13 themed, strategic or geographic evaluations. There will be two zooms: one on climate change and urban development in Vietnam, the other on policy-based loans, an innovative financial instrument that promotes dialogue and which is implemented by AFD in over 20 countries. The central section is devoted to biodiversity, which raises salient questions on methodology and impact. This topic will be under the spotlight next year at the World Conservation Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Marseille, then at the 2020 Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in China.

Taking stock of these projects is to visit the cogs and wheels of development and show the daily work of 2,641 colleagues in 85 local agencies and 115 countries. It is the most objective way to shed light on the major development challenges for which we are co-building solutions. To achieve this, evaluation is key. We are looking to double the number of our evaluations by 2020.

Finally, an innovation requirement. AFD draws on an evaluation and learning culture stretching back 40 years. We deem it our overriding responsibility to share the lessons we learn from our projects. The message of the SDGs is that all countries are transitioning towards sustainable development. The *raison d'être* of an agency such as ours is to combine the urgency to act as of now – for climate, education and health and against inequality and poverty – and the long-term impacts. The evaluation process gives a voice to all those who take up these challenges and this report wishes to relay the accounts of some of them. They are the men and women with whom we carry out our actions, as well as actors from all types of public institutions – be it ministries or local authorities –, private sector entrepreneurs and civil society stakeholders, who we listen to and who tell us how to do more and better together. AFD is the French development policy platform. Creating a platform allows everyone to benefit from evaluation in order to build together, with humility and ambition, a world in common.

Building a fairer and more sustainable world – a world in common where no one is left behind – implies six major transitions, here and elsewhere: social, energy-related, territorial, digital, economic and civic. Succeeding in these transitions is crucial to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To achieve this, we must respect each country's specificities and the diverse development choices, while encouraging group action, exchange and partnerships to jointly create solutions that are beneficial to all.

Economic and financial

Promoting economic models and a range of financial systems and directing resources towards sustainable development.

Demographic and social

Funding basic social services such as education and health and promoting high-quality social link.

Political and civic

Reinventing more inclusive and participatory governance models.

Digital and technological

Making digital technology, technological transfer and cross-cutting innovation a means of accelerating development trajectories and achieving the SDGs.



Territorial and ecological

Sustainably developing the potential of all urban and rural territories while taking ecological and social challenges into account.

Energy

Providing reliable, sustainable, affordable and low-carbon energy for all to help keep global warming below 1.5 to 2°C compared with the pre-industrial era.



LAURENT BILI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF GLOBALISATION, CULTURE, EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (RIGHT)

GUILLAUME CHABERT, HEAD OF THE MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF THE TREASURY, MINISTRY OF THE ECONOMY AND FINANCE (LEFT)

In 2017, the French President decided to make the development and international solidarity policy one of the priorities of his five-year term. France's Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) of 8 February 2018 implemented the policy guidelines, consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The resources allocated to official development assistance (ODA) will thus be gradually scaled up to reach 0.55% of gross national income (GNI) by 2022. As of today, more than €1 billion of additional grants can be mobilised in 2019.

The French President also wanted a change in method with the implementation of new instruments to enhance the management, transparency and clarity of our actions. In 2019, a new framework act on development policy will be presented to the Council of Ministers in order to increase the predictability of our long-term ODA trajectory and renew the structure of our international solidarity policy. This framework act will also enable France to develop an ambitious evaluation policy to guarantee the systematic and objective assessment of its development policy, determine its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, and improve accountability reporting to French citizens.

AFD will fully contribute to this drive for greater transparency and accountability by improving the evaluation potential of its projects and giving more consideration to the lessons learnt from previous evaluations. To do so, synergies will be strengthened between AFD's evaluation department and the evaluation services of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Economy and Finance in order to more effectively report on the real impact of projects on the most vulnerable beneficiary communities. This will be carried out in conjunction with the Development and International Solidarity Observatory.

“ AFD will fully contribute to this drive for greater transparency and accountability by improving the evaluation potential of its projects and giving more consideration to the lessons learnt from previous evaluations. ”

The results of these evaluations will be reported annually to France's National Development and International Solidarity Council (CNDSI), and new provisions for our evaluation policy will shortly be put to a parliamentary vote as part of the framework act on partnership-based development and international solidarity policy.



Evaluation review 2017– 2018.

Buoyed by a growing interest from government, parliamentarians and AFD management, evaluation has been substantially bolstered over the last two years. The Evaluation and Learning Department has developed new forms of support for operational teams (statistical analyses, monitoring and evaluation tools and lessons learnt), while the number of AFD evaluation officers has almost doubled from 10 to 17. A growing number of evaluations are presented to the Board of Directors every year, as and when requested.

← Hanoi. Following demographic growth and rapid urbanisation, significant investment is needed.
© Laurent Weyl / Collectif ARGOS

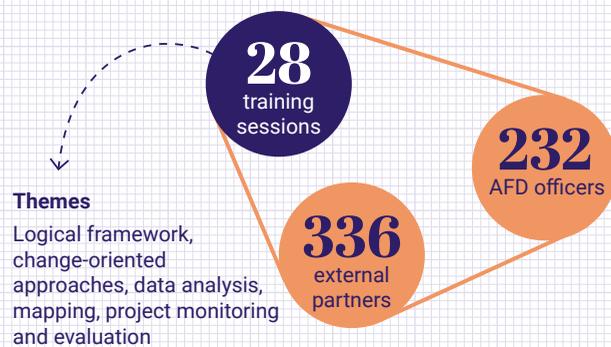
What was new in AFD evaluation in 2017-2018?

1 PROJECTS EASIER TO EVALUATE

A project can only be evaluated if supported by clear objectives and relevant indicators informed by reliable data. This is the cornerstone of any evaluation system or qualitative, high-performing project cycle.

2 EVALUATION CULTURE: BETTER DISSEMINATED

Training is one of the levers of dissemination.



3 MORE PARTNERSHIP-BASED GOVERNANCE

Evaluation governance at AFD includes AFD's Board of Directors and the Evaluation Committee, as well as the Development and International Solidarity Policy Observatory. The Observatory comprises various colleges that make up the National Development and International Solidarity Council (CNDSI), including parliamentarians. Every year, the Observatory gives its opinion on the three-year programme jointly presented by the three departments in charge of evaluating French official development assistance. It met four times in 2018.

4 CLOSER LINKS WITH OTHER EVALUATION AND COOPERATION ACTORS

The French cooperation ecosystem comprises the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Directorate General of the Treasury and AFD. These three institutions work together to implement the French development aid policy. Their evaluation departments jointly develop a three-year evaluation programme and conduct some joint evaluations. The three departments jointly publish a biennial report.

The Sahel Alliance is a group of 12 donors that finance and coordinate over 600 projects with the G5 Sahel countries to contribute to the stabilisation and global development of the region. AFD managed the secretariat of the Sahel Alliance in 2017 and 2018. It thus helped to develop the Alliance's results-monitoring framework.

The International Development Finance Club (IDFC) is made up of 24 national and regional development banks. AFD has chaired this group since 2017 and launched partnership-based work with a number of members at the COP 24 to strengthen the evaluation methodology for climate projects.

KfW is AFD's German counterpart and privileged partner. The two agencies lead joint evaluations on co-financed operations and exchange practices and staff, which is highly instructive (see interview with Martin Dorschel p. 37, and Eva Terberger, pp. 62-63).

5 ENHANCED LEARNING

To make its evaluations more useful, AFD acquired capitalisation and knowledge management skills in 2017 to help project teams to truly assimilate and use the lessons learnt from these evaluations when appraising new projects.

What is the point of evaluations?



Alexandre Berthon-Dumurgier

Project Manager in the Education, Training and Employment Division

AFD is supporting the education and training plan in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (2016–2025). The evaluation of middle-school policy has helped to finance a new intervention.

“On several occasions, the project team drew on the mid-term evaluation of Côte d'Ivoire's middle-school policy. The first evaluation results, shared with the Côte d'Ivoire government in July 2018, allowed us to highlight that the management of teaching staff (recruitment, training, allocation and payment of employees) played a critical role in the success of the middle-school policy. This theme was then set as a priority by the national authorities. As a result, it helped to define a new AFD middle-school intervention in the form of a €30 million policy-based loan approved in December 2018. A little later in December 2018, the draft recommendations from the evaluation were presented in Abidjan and further mobilised the national managers on middle-school policy challenges. Accordingly, an implementation strategy will be drawn up in the very near future, structured around two of the evaluation's recommendations. These both serve as a reminder, in line with the lessons learnt from the strategies to achieve universal primary education, of the need to gradually phase in middle-school policy so as to reconcile quantitative expansion and quality teaching. They also emphasise the importance of defining and implementing a system for the monitoring–evaluation and supervision of this policy by mobilising the education authorities' IT and management systems.”

+ **Read more stakeholder's views online**

What exactly are AFD evaluations?

As an official development assistance platform, AFD produces a range of evaluations to respond to the challenges of learning and accountability.

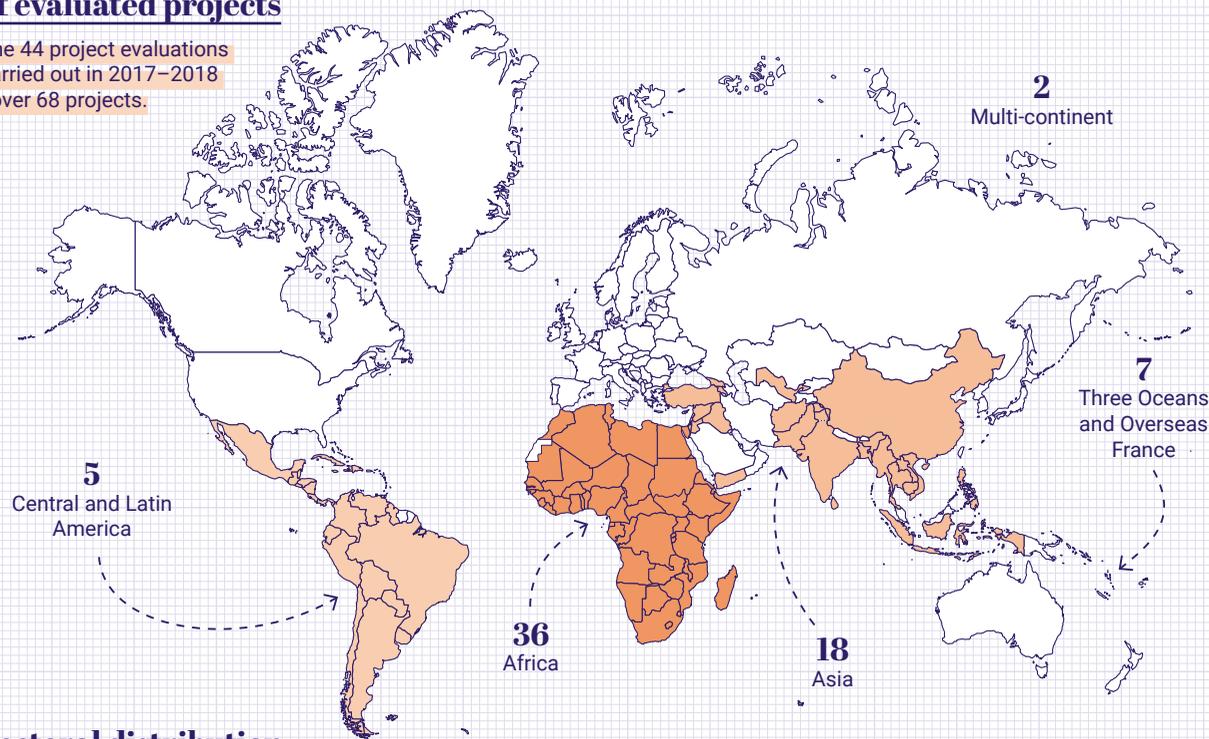
1

PROJECT EVALUATIONS

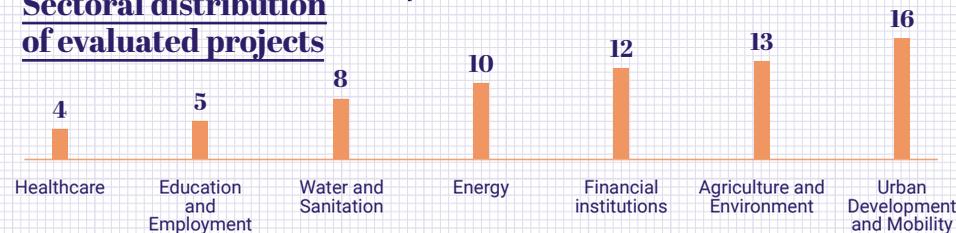
These evaluations are relevant for most AFD projects, whatever their funding sources (loan, grant, guarantee, etc.). Their purpose is to fuel the dialogue with stakeholders on project results, so as to encourage mutual learning. The evaluations are generally carried out by AFD's local agencies with methodological support from the Evaluation and Learning Department. They can use qualitative and/or quantitative methods depending on the data available and be carried out midway through a project or on its completion. A project evaluation may cover several projects in the case of successive phases of a project or clusters of similar projects. The evaluation summary is published.

Geographical distribution of evaluated projects

The 44 project evaluations carried out in 2017–2018 cover 68 projects.



Sectoral distribution of evaluated projects



3

CAPITALISATION

Capitalisation exercises meet a learning objective and are carried out using evaluation conclusions, analytical reviews, etc. Priority is given to capitalisation that encompasses several projects and draws on the findings of evaluations, analytical reviews, etc. They use participatory methods such as workshops and focus groups to give operational teams the opportunity to take a step back from their practices. Some are published.

2

SECTORAL, THEMATIC AND STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS

These evaluations are mostly relevant to strategic projects involving the same sector or financial instrument. They aim to respond to a knowledge gap on the results and impacts of an intervention and provide an understanding of the mechanisms linking the intervention to these results and impacts. These evaluations may also be relevant for sectoral, geographical or cross-cutting strategies such as gender or climate. In this case, they are intended to improve their quality and implementation.

They include impact evaluations, carried out using experimental, quasi-experimental and mixed methods, thus contributing to enhancing research in the field of international development issues. These evaluations are all published.

N.B.: Other activities financed by AFD Group are also evaluated: those run by NGOs, the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) or Proparco.

10 capitalisations undertaken in 2017–2018

4 completed

DEFINITION

Evaluation is one of the tools used to meet the accountability requirement. According to the OECD, accountability is the “responsibility to provide accurate, fair, and credible monitoring reports and performance assessments [of interventions]”. The first dimension of accountability involves monitoring the implementation of interventions and the ability to account for the correct use of funds, outputs and results, and to aggregate them at the level of an institution. This initial accountability dimension is covered by the monitoring and completion reports of the interventions financed by each institution and by the aggregated indicators it publishes. The second accountability dimension (“providing assessments of the performance of an operation”) involves the evaluation.

13

sectoral, thematic and strategic evaluations completed

5

evaluations jointly carried out with the Directorate General of the Treasury or the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

1 impact evaluation completed and 4 underway

+ Taking it further

“In Kinshasa, how an evaluation is put together” talks about an impact evaluation underway in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. <https://www.afd.fr/en/drc-kinshasa-how-evaluation-put-together>

FOCUS ON VIETNAM

Adapting to a rapidly changing country

In Vietnam, over the past ten years, AFD interventions have been more strongly focused on climate change and support for urban development.

The country evaluation¹ jointly carried out with the Directorate General of the Treasury and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs affirmed the overall relevance of the positioning of French development assistance, and the successful adaptation of its interventions to the changing development challenges. France stands out from most donors inasmuch as its interventions integrate sustainable development and climate challenges in a cross-cutting and almost systematic way. Thus, in the areas of climate change, AFD has managed to adapt its aid modalities to the country's challenges by co-financing a climate policy loan – the Support Programme to Respond to Climate Change (SP-RCC)² – with the World Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This policy-based loan was one of the first climate budget support loans to be approved by AFD in 2009. The policy dialogue between the donors and the Vietnamese Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has been a key, well-structured component but has not led to any major involvement by the other ministries concerned. Despite the modest funds allocated to technical assistance, the Vietnamese appreciated AFD as a valuable partner in the dialogue. In the energy sector, AFD has drawn on its substantial operational knowledge to feed the dialogue.

The SP-RCC has helped to formulate and improve climate-related policies. It has also helped to quicken the formulation and enactment of the associated regulations. However, the evaluators were unable to demonstrate that the SP-RCC had helped to raise the ambition of the policies supported. A more detailed analysis of the lessons learnt from the implementation of policy-based loans is developed later in this report (see p. 16).

SUPPORTING URBAN DEVELOPMENT

AFD has supported the Municipal Development Funds since 2005, and is the only international donor, alongside the World Bank, to finance them. As public financing institutions, these funds are established on the initiative of each province's People's Committee to finance priority infrastructure as part of their provincial development strategy via various financial tools, such as loans, direct investment and equity participation.

This intervention method is particularly relevant to meeting the growing needs for basic services among urban populations (health, education, transport infrastructure, etc.).

The evaluation of three AFD-supported urban funds in Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho and Da Nang)³ shows that they responded to the urgent need to develop urban infrastructure in a macroeconomic climate still under the effects of the 2008 financial crisis. **The supported funds have financed basic infrastructure projects (transport, electricity, social housing, healthcare, etc.) that achieved their objectives, but proved more successful in social than environmental terms.** These interventions were also aimed at strengthening the funds' capacity to appraise and monitor investment projects. Capacity building results have been more mixed for the Can Tho and Da Nang funds. At an institutional level, the evaluation recommended that provincial committees and the government step up their support to these funds.

FLEXIBILITY TO MEET VIETNAM'S NEEDS

Adapting to climate change, promoting sustainable and inclusive urban development and supporting modernisation of the productive sector are some of the new challenges facing Vietnam. While the French stakeholders (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Directorate General of the Treasury and AFD) have been present in these priority areas, the country evaluation shows that they have also exercised flexibility in meeting the needs expressed by the Vietnamese. ●●●

+ To go further

1. Evaluation of French development aid in Vietnam (2005–2015).
2. Evaluation of the Support Programme to Respond to Climate Change (SP-RCC)
3. Evaluation of support to the investment funds for urban development in Ho Chi Minh City (credit line and technical assistance), Can Tho and Da Nang (credit line and technical assistance).

Evaluations of projects conducted in Vietnam

2005–2015

NUMBER OF PROJECTS FUNDED BY AFD

51

AMOUNT COMMITTED

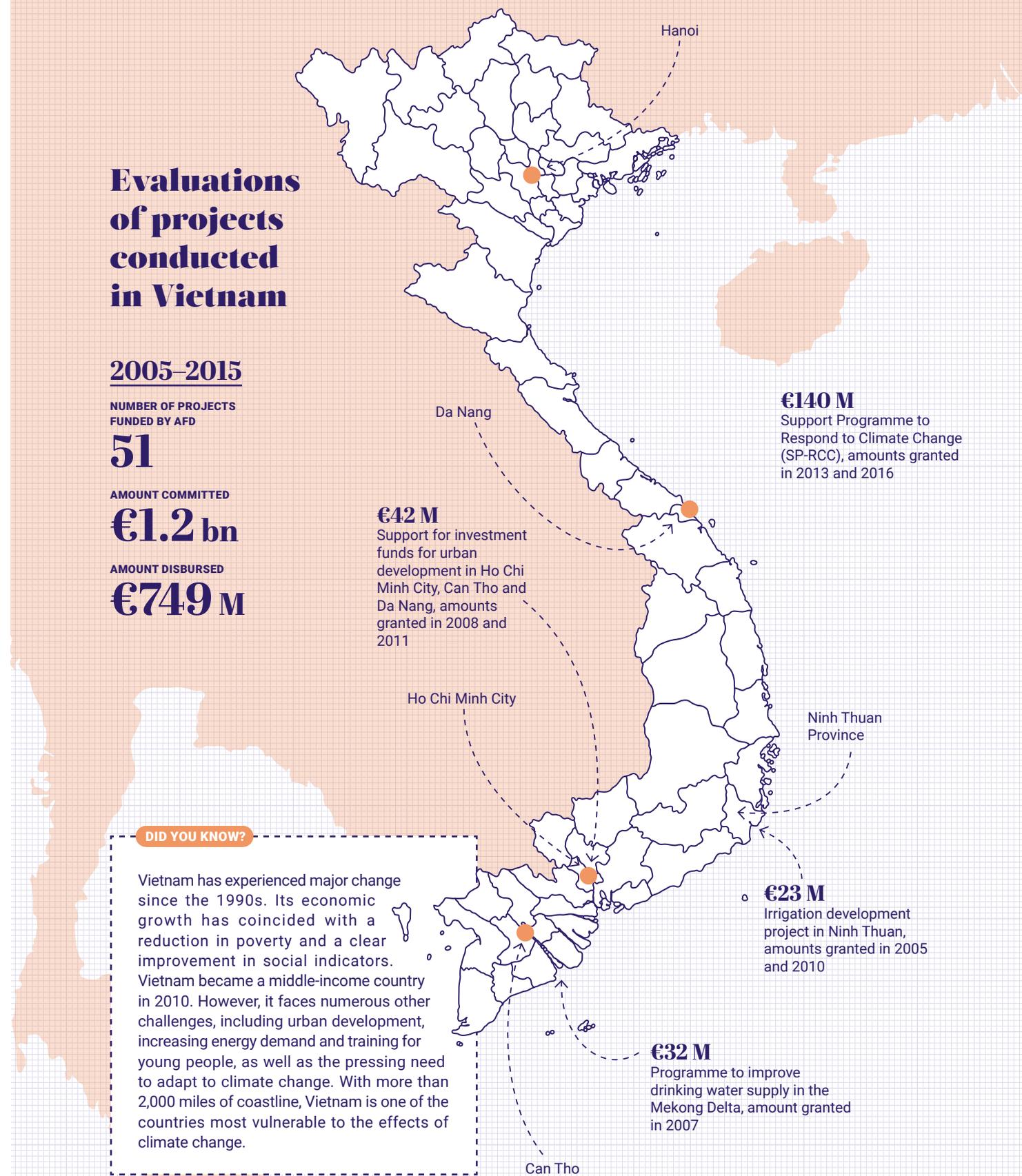
€1.2 bn

AMOUNT DISBURSED

€749 M

DID YOU KNOW?

Vietnam has experienced major change since the 1990s. Its economic growth has coincided with a reduction in poverty and a clear improvement in social indicators. Vietnam became a middle-income country in 2010. However, it faces numerous other challenges, including urban development, increasing energy demand and training for young people, as well as the pressing need to adapt to climate change. With more than 2,000 miles of coastline, Vietnam is one of the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.



While rural development interventions were preponderant in AFD's intervention portfolio before 2007, they are now pursued on a smaller scale, and many donors have altogether abandoned this theme in Vietnam. Access to development for minorities has also been taken into account by specific French interventions. However, this theme has generally lacked the financial resources to meet the needs expressed by the Vietnamese over the evaluated period. The aim of the irrigation development project in the province of Ninh Thuan⁴ was to increase farm income for the territory's ethnic minorities to allow them to better integrate into the region. This rural development project specifically targeted minorities while meeting the need to adapt agricultural practices to climate change.

The project evaluation shows that five hydraulic structures on the tributaries of the Cai River and the planned canal networks were built, ensuring the irrigation of 2,800 hectares of land. Although the reservoirs meet water demand during periods of normal rainfall, they are unable to meet irrigation needs in the event of a rainfall shortage. While the project aimed for two to three crop cycles a year, the evaluation observed that the land could yield only one crop during drought years. The project failed to adequately monitor and supervise the use of water resources. The technical choices were not properly suited to irrigators' practices or the changes in climate. Furthermore, the evaluators were unable to find monitoring or evaluation data on the environmental impact of this project.

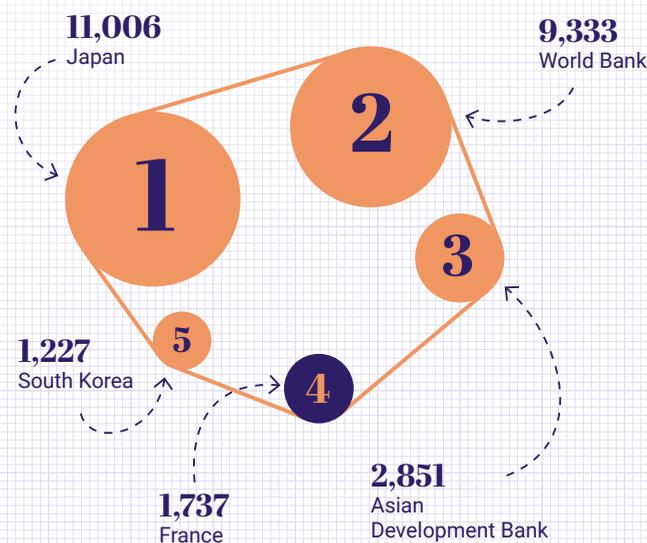
In conclusion, Rémi Genevey, AFD's Director of the Asia Department, considers that evaluations of policy-based loans or specific projects and broader-based evaluations (e.g. a specific geography) are a valuable contribution to guiding country strategies and changes in practices. He points out, for example, that **"the country evaluation has helped to confirm and consolidate AFD's strategic positioning in Vietnam** on the fight against climate change and on the resilience of regions and communities".

+ To go further

4. Evaluation of project: Development of the Ninh Thuan irrigation system.

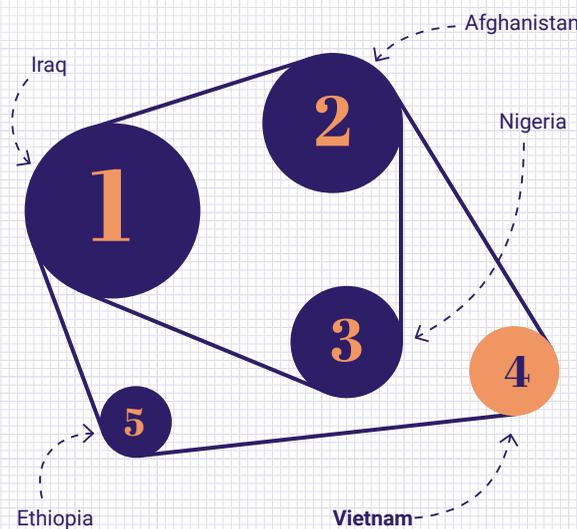
Main donors in Vietnam

Ranking of donors by ODA amount disbursed between 2005 and 2015, in millions of dollars. (source: OECD)



Main ODA recipient countries worldwide

Ranking of countries by ODA amount received between 2005 and 2015. (source: OECD)



Interview.

Olivier Gilard



Olivier Gilard, Water and Sanitation Project Manager at AFD, Evaluator of the Drinking Water Supply Programme in the Mekong Delta

"The exercise is fascinating and helps to improve the projects I'm currently setting up. In some ways, it's the only chance a project manager gets to analyse a project from the identification stage through to completion."

Peer evaluation is carried out by a project manager not involved in the design and monitoring of the evaluated project.

How did the project you evaluated meet the urban development challenges in Vietnam?

Given the country's demographic growth and fast-paced urbanisation over the last 30 years, colossal investment is needed to develop services that are increasingly in demand from communities. Initially identified as the first in a series, this project was well-aligned with this issue.

What are the results of this project?

The investments in the 4 provinces and 6 urban centres in the Mekong Delta have undoubtedly helped to extend the coverage of the drinking water supply service. This has benefited 72,000 households – no small number! This first painstaking project has unfortunately not been renewed.

What have you gleaned from this first peer evaluation?

External evaluations are sometimes disappointing because the consultants often find it hard to identify the most relevant information and assess in detail AFD's precise role in the factors of success or failure. Peer evaluation is an easier way of undertaking this "self-criticism". The exercise is fascinating! It does require substantial involvement but it helps to improve the quality of the new projects I'm setting up. In some ways, it's the only chance a project manager gets to analyse a project from the identification stage through to completion.

+ To go further

Evaluation of the programme to improve drinking water supply in the Mekong Delta

FOCUS ON POLICY-BASED LOANS

Boosting the potential of a booming instrument

The evaluations carried out in 2017 and 2018 show that policy-based loans are an ambitious and potentially powerful tool that enables AFD to foreground its strengths. However, AFD needs to improve its appraisal and implementation modalities to guarantee the quality of its support.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) established the guiding principle whereby donors align their interventions on the priorities, policies and procedures of their partners. AFD, which had until then mainly been operating on a project basis, then developed budget support. To begin with, this was mostly in the form of grants for social sectors in sub-Saharan African countries.

Since 2008 and the approval of the loan to support Indonesia's climate change policy, AFD's budget support has been developed in the form of loans, and covers a broader palette of sectors. Known as policy-based loans, they support sectoral or multi-sectoral policies and use a three-pronged approach to assist in designing and implementing public policy: financial transfers, a policy dialogue backed by a matrix of indicators, and technical cooperation.

A MAJOR LEARNING CHALLENGE

As these operations have only recently been implemented on a broad scale, they present a major learning challenge for AFD teams and the whole of the development community. Like the multilateral development banks (World Bank, Asian Development Bank), AFD undertook a particular effort to evaluate these operations to report on their performance and, more importantly, to identify their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve future interventions.

As a result, in 2017 and 2018, AFD conducted some ten evaluations of policy-based loans (see map opposite) using a specific methodology inspired by the three-step methodology endorsed by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These evaluations seek to assess the relevance of the support provided and gauge the extent to which the resources provided by AFD (financial transfers, public policy dialogue and technical cooperation) have impacted the design and implementation of the policy in question and the related public institutions (Step 1 of the DAC approach). They also document the main developments in the sector concerned (access to public services, the energy mix, greenhouse gas emissions, etc.), but make no attempt to attribute them to the supported policy, as this would require a more in-depth analysis. ●●●

€1.3 bn of commitments authorised in 2018

+ To go further

South Africa – Evaluations of support to the Spatial Development Strategy of the City of Johannesburg and of the partial financing of the City of Cape Town's Integrated Development Plan

Brazil – Evaluation of budget support to urban mobility and integration policy in the metropolitan area of the State of Rio de Janeiro

Brazil – Evaluation of the investment support programme for essential services infrastructure in the State of Minas Gerais

Colombia – Evaluation of the programme for reinforcement of the Colombian healthcare system

Mauritius – Evaluations of budget support to the Environment Aid Programme: implementation of the "Mauritius Sustainable Island" (MID) policy and of support to the sustainable energy policy

Mexico – Evaluations of the support to climate change policies I and II

Turkey – Evaluation of budget support to the forestry sector in Turkey – Forest programmes I, II and III

Vietnam – Evaluation of the Support Programme to Respond to Climate Change (SP-RCC)

Evaluations of policy-based loans



THE STRENGTHS OF A POWERFUL TOOL

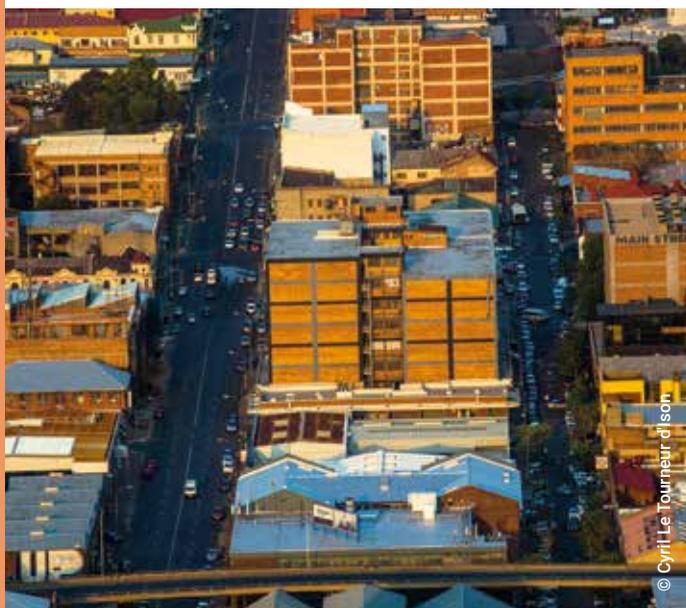
● Encourages intra- and inter-ministerial coordination

In Turkey, evaluators pointed out that the partnership with the French National Forests Office (ONF) had improved communication and coordination between the various departments of the Turkish General Directorate of Forestry, as well as coordination with the departments of other ministries (Energy, Agriculture, Environment). “Climate” budget support loans to Vietnam also contributed to strengthening the role of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment as coordinator of the response to climate change. However, few examples exist showing that AFD supported sectoral ministries in their dialogue with Finance and Budget ministries.

● Promotes a multi-stakeholder dialogue to further sustainable public policies

In Johannesburg, thanks to a partnership between AFD and South African research institutions and the mobilisation of decentralised cooperation, AFD’s support has helped to increase university and think-tank participation in the policy dialogue, and the monitoring – evaluation of these policies. This is a key aspect of ensuring that the lessons learnt and the evidence brought to light by research feed public policies and sustainable programmes.

AFD’s support to the Mauritius Sustainable Island programme has led to an adapted version of the French “Grenelle Environment Forum” model and convened 300 people from civil society, the economic world, the government and trade unions. These coordination efforts have raised the level of what citizens expect from decision-makers. For evaluators, this is the most important legacy of the momentum initiated by the Mauritian government and supported by AFD.



● Encourages coherence between donors

The evaluation of the loan for Vietnam’s Support Programme to Respond to Climate Change shows that, despite differing views on policy priorities, the three partner donors (AFD, World Bank and JICA - Japan International Cooperation Agency) have managed to share out the work and speak with one voice. This coherent support has not, however, managed to encourage effective coordination with the other donors supporting Vietnam’s fight against climate change, notably the European Union, which contributes a hefty amount of budget support.

● Removes constraints affecting the sustainability of projects

Budget support is a choice instrument to help further reforms that are recognised as crucial to the sustainability of investment projects. In Mexico, policy-based loans propelled the implementation of a regional governance model, which then resulted in the setting-up of inter-municipal associations able to dovetail rural development and sustainable management of natural resources on a wider scale and over a longer period of time. As a result, the effects of projects funded by the World Bank and AFD in forestry and biodiversity are more likely to stand the test of time.

● Makes the most of one advantage of bilateral cooperation: peer exchange

In Colombia, support to reinforce the healthcare system has mobilised French public expertise as part of a peer dialogue that is highly valued by the Colombian authorities, who are unaccustomed to this form of cooperation. The evaluators have highlighted the relevance of this peer-to-peer cooperation, which they consider – despite the small sums mobilised – a pivotal component of AFD’s added value and a key driver of the benefits of budget support.

● Supports the search for common positionings on the international stage

Interventions in Mexico assisted the authorities in organising the COP 16 in Cancun. They also enhanced a high-level dialogue that helped to shape a common positioning between France and Mexico during the summit. This relationship has continued and led to collaboration during COP 21 negotiations.

← In Johannesburg, AFD supports the City’s Spatial Development Strategy.

CONDITIONS FOR MAKING HEADWAY

● Formulate clear and shared objectives

To ensure that policy-based loans produce results, AFD must set clear and shared objectives with its partners and reach a joint agreement on how these are to be achieved. This means that the three components of the support – financial transfer, policy dialogue and technical cooperation – must be aligned with these objectives.

A lack of clarity around the expected results reduces the relevance and effectiveness of this type of operation. This was the case of the support to Turkey’s forestry policy. The support targeted a relevant and correctly implemented policy but failed to identify the specific changes that were to be funded. On the other hand, technical cooperation activities were commended for their capacity to contribute to improvements in the fight against climate change.

In Brazil, the evaluation of support to the State of Minas Gerais highlighted the lack of coherence between the three components: the loan was intended to reduce government debt towards the state-owned power company; the dialogue focused on 11 poverty and inequality reduction programmes; and technical cooperation focused on other subjects. All in all, AFD support had little impact on the policies, although it did draw attention to the most deprived regions even during the change of government.

● Feed a strategic dialogue

In Vietnam, AFD led a high-quality policy dialogue by capitalising on substantial operational knowledge accumulated during projects it had funded in the energy sector for several years. A real dialogue among all stakeholders also took place during the appraisal of support to the State of Minas Gerais in Brazil. This dialogue continued during programme execution: an annual report provided by the State helped to monitor its financial situation, the expenses committed and incurred for programmes and some 30 results indicators. However, this was more a matter of monitoring than a strategic dialogue: the figures provided were analysed by AFD but this failed to lead to a search for corrective measures. In Colombia, the dialogue above all enabled AFD and its partner to gain insights into their country’s respective social protection systems and manage technical cooperation. Here again, the dialogue was technical in nature.



↑ Vietnam: “climate” budget support loans have also helped to strengthen the role of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in coordinating climate change policy.

Various evaluations recommend that AFD strengthen its local teams (see evaluations for Turkey and Colombia) in order to enhance a strategic dialogue outside of the missions led by Head Office project managers. Evaluators also point out that disbursements rarely function as levers to create moments of a strategic dialogue in policymaking. The disbursements are often one-off or made at the beginning of the support intervention, with no guarantee of subsequent funding, which means that they cannot bolster the dialogue (see evaluations for Brazil and South Africa). In Mauritius, AFD funding had been approved to help the country tackle the 2008 crisis. However, donor funding turned out to be so copious that the Ministry of Finance sought rather to stagger the disbursement schedule, which had a negative impact on support for the public policy.

Interview.

Ricardo Moncada Suarez



*Ricardo Moncada Suarez,
Advisor on the national
government's external debt
financing strategy at the Ministry of
Finance and Public Credit in the
Republic of Colombia*

“The evaluation of policy-based loans in Colombia has helped to create a space for dialogue and exchange of views between all stakeholders involved, a space that has made it easier to identify the main lessons learnt from this experience.”

In your opinion, what are the advantages of the policy-based loan granted by AFD and its stand-out impacts?

For Colombia's Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, the experience of the policy-based loan with AFD has been a great success. I'd like to highlight one of its main features: the predictability of the amounts and disbursements when the initially agreed indicators are respected. If we compare them with investment loans, policy-based loans are easier to structure and the risk of non-compliance with the commitments is lower. All this is possible if the supported policy is robust and implemented by quality operators able to make the most of technical cooperation. This technical support has proven valuable inasmuch as it enabled France to provide us with its knowledge and expertise in an open and constructive way. The whole operation was developed as part of a collaborative, flexible and quality relationship with AFD.

What have the benefits of the evaluation process been?

The evaluation of the policy-based loan, which supports improvements to the Colombian social protection and healthcare system, was immensely useful to us and the reason why we became directly and actively involved in it. Our objective, as the Ministry of Finance, was to ascertain exactly how this support was perceived and what concerns and expectations it had created among the various stakeholders. We now have a clearer idea of how to better prepare and implement these policy-based loans. The information gathered has also allowed us to work on clarifying the roles and expectations of each stakeholder, as well as the requirements that need to be complied with for this instrument. Finally, it is important to underline that the evaluation, conducted by an external consultant, has helped to create a space for dialogue and exchange of views between all stakeholders, a space that has made it easier to identify the main lessons learnt from this experience.



↑ In Mauritius, AFD supports implementation of the sustainable energy policy. The sugar cane harvest is used to produce ethanol and thermal electricity.

A photograph of a man standing on a rocky path next to a waterfall in a lush forest. The man is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark shorts. The waterfall is on the left, and the forest is dense with green foliage. The text 'Bio— diversity & develop— ment?' is overlaid on the right side of the image in white font.

Bio— diversity & develop— ment?

Why is it so difficult to implement biodiversity protection given that it has been a key component of international discussions and commitments for several years now? The evaluation results of projects implemented in many countries are instructive. As the Aichi 2010 targets come up for revision by the international community, they outline potential answers to what works and does not work in the area of biodiversity protection, and solutions to be implemented. Many points to ponder in the reflections underway and the forthcoming debates.

← 70% of the world's poorest communities live in rural areas and depend on biodiversity for their survival and well-being.
© Nyashadzashe Kadandara

CHALLENGES

Biodiversity: a key development issue

"Ensuring truly sustainable development for our growing human family depends on biological diversity and the vital goods and services it offers." This message from Ban Ki-moon, then Secretary General of the United Nations, during the launch of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity in 2011 was clear. Eight years later, it remains topical. There has been no shortage of political discussions and commitments. Since 1993, there has been an international negotiation framework: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which has 196 state parties. In 2010, this body enabled the adoption of ambitious objectives for 2020: the 20 Aichi Targets. Biodiversity also features prominently in the Sustainable Development Agenda as most of the 17 SDGs adopted in 2015 integrate targets directly linked to maintaining biodiversity. And let's not forget that SDGs 14 and 15 are dedicated to this topic.

We need to act urgently. Since 2005, the amount of biodiversity lost – very often permanently – has been highlighted by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessments, established by 1,360 experts from around the world upon the request of the Secretary General of the United Nations. These assessments have shown that human activity over the last 50 years has led to faster and wider-reaching changes in ecosystems than in any other period in the history of humanity.

DEFINITIONS

MAINTAINING BIODIVERSITY

This involves safeguarding interactions between genetic heritage, species and the various ecosystems covering the planet.

BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Area with a significant reservoir of biodiversity under particular threat from human activity. These hotspots may be terrestrial or marine.

Since then, the scientific community has issued a series of warnings. Biodiversity loss is occurring at a faster rate and many sensitive ecosystems are poorly or not at all protected. Beyond the growing number of species in danger of extinction, the collapse of species populations across the planet is reaching unprecedented levels.

PARTIALLY ACHIEVED OBJECTIVES

The next CBD Conference of the Parties (COP 15) will take place in China in November 2020. It will report on the progress made since the adoption of the Aichi Targets and set a new direction for the future. With just a few months to go, it appears that only a few targets will be reached: ratification of the Nagoya Protocol, update of national biodiversity plans and an increase in terrestrial and marine protected areas. Estimates show that, currently, around 15% of land ecosystem areas and 7% of marine ecosystems¹ enjoy protected status, moving respectively closer to the 17% and 10% needed to reach Aichi Target 11.² It is important to commend this progress, even though the stated ambitions of the international community are far from being achieved overall.

NUMEROUS POINTS FOR DEBATE

More worryingly, some objectives may seem to have been achieved in quantitative terms, but a qualitative study of the situation on the ground could call their relevance and effectiveness into question. For example, numerous protected areas are considered to be "paper parks": their boundaries appear on maps but on the ground they are exposed to all manner of depredation and failing to achieve their conservation objectives. The challenge is not therefore limited to simply extending protected areas – it is also crucial to improve the management of pre-existing protected areas, which has by no means been achieved.³

1. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2018) *Marine Protected Planet* [on-line], [October, 2018], Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net.

2. "Convention on Biological Diversity, Progress Report towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, National commitments fall short of action needed to safeguard nature", Rspb, WWF, Birdlife, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, 2016.

3. Leverington, F., Costa, K. L., Pavese, H., Lisle, A., & Hockings, M. (2010). "A global analysis of protected area management effectiveness". *Environmental Management*, 46(5), 685-698.

The tension between biodiversity conservation objectives and economic development also remains high. The difficulty in reconciling them is all too obvious, as shown by the evaluation results of AFD projects (see the evaluation summary of 19 protected-area projects pp. 30-36) and many scientific articles.⁴

The evaluation of biodiversity development projects has to contend with the frontiers of scientific knowledge, for example, when it comes to establishing reliable baselines for ecosystems (see pp. 45-46). While new technologies cannot resolve all difficulties, some digital tools can help to improve evaluation and monitoring techniques (pp. 47-48).

WHAT IS FRANCE DOING?

In this international context, France defined several major objectives which were presented to the CBD. These set out the priorities of its biodiversity strategy: foster, enhance and share a nature-oriented culture, reinforce mobilisation and citizen-based initiatives, turn biodiversity in a positive issue for decision-makers, preserve species and their diversity and build green infrastructure. In addition to various national strategies (French National Biodiversity Strategy 2011–2020), France has contributed to the Aichi Targets through specifically targeted support for various issues in which it has an interest and expertise: the fight against poaching and the trafficking of endangered species, as well as the protection of coral reefs and biodiversity hotspots.

HOW HAS AFD CONTRIBUTED?

AFD began funding biodiversity conservation projects in the early 2000s. This is part of the international component of the national biodiversity strategy which aims to preserve, restore and increase living diversity. The strategic intervention framework for biodiversity that AFD set itself in 2013 was ambitious. Spanning all the Group's activities, it aimed to double its financial commitments in favour of biodiversity over the 2013–2016 period compared to 2006–2010.

4. Andam K. S., Ferrar P. J., Sims K. R. E., Healy A., et al., 2010, "Protected areas reduced poverty in Costa Rica and Thailand", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 107, no. 22, pp. 9996-10001. Lewis David J., Hunt Gary L. and Plantinga Andrew J., 2003, "Does public lands policy affect local wage growth?" *Growth and Change*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 64–86.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

"Create a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010" was the commitment made by the international community in 2002 under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This objective has not been reached. Global leaders once again united in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, during the tenth Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the CBD. The objective? To negotiate a new global agreement to preserve nature. They then adopted the strategic plan for biodiversity and 20 targets (Aichi Biodiversity Targets) for the 2011–2020 period. The latter form the framework of action for all countries and stakeholders in order to protect biodiversity and improve the advantages for communities until 2020.

20 objectives structured around 5 strategic goals:

- 1 Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society,
- 2 Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use,
- 3 Improve the state of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity,
- 4 Enhance the benefits for all from biodiversity and ecosystem services (the Nagoya Protocol targets equal access and the sharing of genetic resource benefits),
- 5 Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE BIODIVERSITY CRISIS IN NUMBERS

60% of wildlife populations have been lost in the past 40 years.

Source: Living Planet Report 2018 WWF

40% of insect species have been in continuous decline for around 30 years. This extinction rate is much faster than the rate for mammals, birds or reptiles. At this rate, most insects may have disappeared from the planet within a century.

Source: Worldwide decline of the entomofauna: A review of its drivers, Francisco Sánchez-Bayo and Kris A.G. Wyckhuys (2019)

70% of the world's poorest communities live in rural areas and depend on biodiversity itself for their survival and well-being.

Source: Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2009)

15% of terrestrial ecosystem areas and 7% of marine ecosystems have protected status.

Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2018) Protected Planet Report [Online], [October, 2018]

A 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved through nature-based solutions creating co-benefits for biodiversity and climate.

Source: Griscom, Bronson W., et al. "Natural climate solutions." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114.44 (2017): 11645-11650

26,840 endangered animal species in 2018. Of these species, 40% of amphibians, 14% of birds and 25% of mammals are facing the threat of global extinction. This is also the case for 33% of reef-building corals and 34% of conifers.

Source for 26,840, 33 and 34%: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

What was the funding for biodiversity conservation in 2010?

Source: Parker, C., Cranford, M., Oakes, N., Leggett, M. ed., 2012. *The Little Biodiversity Finance Book, Global Canopy Programme; Oxford.*

Global needs

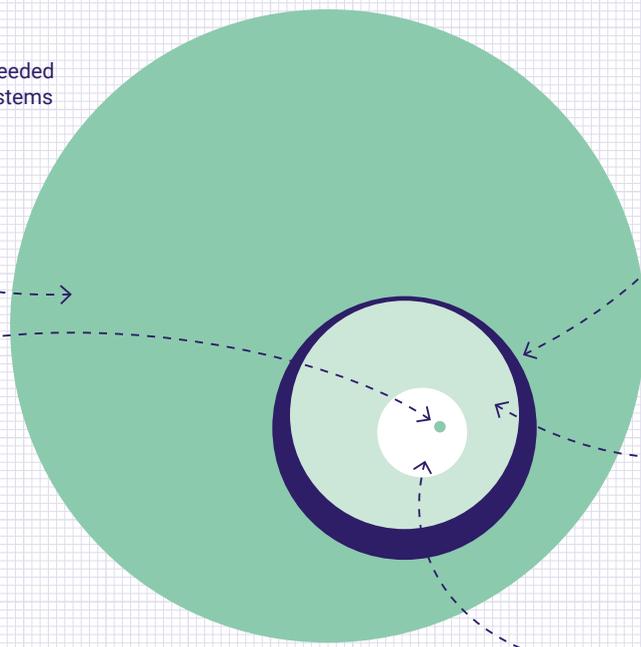
US\$300-400 billion a year are needed to fund the protection of ecosystems across the planet

The reality of global funding
US\$52 billion a year of total annual funding

AFD
US\$0.1 billion a year of AFD funding (0.3 over 2013-2017)

Public funds
US\$39 billion a year of total annual public funding

Global ODA
US\$6 billion a year of official development assistance for biodiversity (8 bn in 2015-2016)



EVALUATION RESULTS: BIODIVERSITY CROSS-CUTTING INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

Can we mainstream biodiversity into all projects?

Adopted in 2013 and extended until 2018, AFD's biodiversity cross-cutting intervention framework (CIF) has undergone evaluation. Backed by a survey involving 800 internal and external respondents, the evaluation focused on the second objective of this strategic document, namely, the mainstreaming of biodiversity into all development policies. Below, we review the main lessons learnt from the exercise.

WEAK OWNERSHIP OF THE STRATEGY

The evaluation showed that AFD officers took less ownership of the guidelines and recommended tools than they did for other thematic strategies such as climate and gender. This CIF seems to have been less widely disseminated. As a result, the inhouse and external surveys carried out with AFD's partners and counterparts indicated that the Institution was not perceived as a biodiversity leader.

A NEED FOR IMPROVED LINKS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS OBJECTIVES

Although the approach to mainstreaming biodiversity is certainly relevant, the intervention logic chosen by this strategic document seems suboptimal. The evaluation observed a mismatch between the objectives and their sub-objectives, as well as an overlap between their various components

DEFINITION

Mainstreaming biodiversity into development policies means:

- reducing impacts that are potentially negative
- maximising the co-benefits of biodiversity by mainstreaming it into projects (nature-based solutions)

("facilitating private investments" and involving private investors in "sharing conservation costs") (see p.29). Furthermore, the CIF does not clearly identify the responsibilities for its implementation or the associated human resources.

REDUCING NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND INCREASING CO-BENEFITS, MOVING TOWARDS A SYNERGY?

Combining both approaches is crucial. This long-standing issue once again became central to the debate during the latest international negotiations. As part of its Biodiversity CIF, AFD specifically aims to create a synergy between these two approaches: reduce the negative impacts of development projects on the ecosystems while maximising the co-benefits derived from biodiversity. This is a relevant guideline which draws on relevant tools to assist in implementing the cross-cutting objective of mainstreaming biodiversity.

However, these tools are limited to methods to reduce negative impacts. They barely deal with maximising the potential co-benefits of biodiversity projects, or in other words, reaping the benefits to be gained by integrating ecosystem balances into all sectors. AFD is working on this in the forestry, fisheries management and agriculture sectors, but other sectors remain sidelined (e.g., transport, energy and cities).

FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES EXCEEDED

AFD set the target of doubling its financial commitments to reach €160 million per year as of 2013. This objective was exceeded with €284 million pledged annually between 2013 and 2018. The expected financing for cross-cutting Objective 2 has thus been greatly exceeded, showing +44% (versus +21% expected) of total commitments for the period 2013-2018.

NEW SECTORS TO INTEGRATE INTO THE APPROACH

AFD-initiated projects with positive biodiversity co-benefits mostly involve wastewater treatment and integrated water management and agriculture. AFD's other areas of activity are not represented. Yet, over the same period, projects with a high risk of negative environmental impact focused, in fact, on transport, energy, water and sanitation. As a result, no commitments were made for projects with positive biodiversity co-benefits for the period 2013-2017 in the energy, transport and education sectors.⁵ However, some transport and education projects had been identified as having a potentially positive impact on biodiversity during the ex-ante sustainable development assessment conducted at the time of their appraisal. At present, it appears difficult to identify the positive impact on biodiversity when these projects are implemented. ●●●

5. The situation is relatively similar for other members of the OECD DAC; see OECD (2018), *Mainstreaming Biodiversity for Sustainable Development*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

RETHINKING THE ACCOUNTING OF NEGATIVE IMPACTS

The measures to reduce the negative impacts associated with the CIF's cross-cutting objective to mainstream biodiversity were satisfactorily implemented. However, while the integration of biodiversity impacts has been making headway at AFD, the financial commitments do not necessarily mean that this theme has been better integrated into the set objectives or the content of development projects. The CIF evaluation highlighted that the framework's monitoring only allows projects with positive biodiversity co-benefits to be included in ODA accounting, whereas Objective 2 mainly lists tools geared to reducing the negative impacts of projects. If the financial commitments related to negative impact mitigation are not monitored, this increase in commitments with positive impacts may give an incomplete picture of the impacts of AFD interventions as a whole.

A NUMBER OF OBSTACLES REMAIN

The evaluation shows that reducing negative impacts is still considered a brake rather than a solution for development. The institutions that design and implement AFD-funded projects are often difficult to convince when it comes to the challenges and benefits of biodiversity. In a number of sectors of activity, AFD officers themselves do not automatically perceive the projects as a source of potential positive impacts for biodiversity. Moreover, the consultation carried out at AFD revealed that the institutions responsible in AFD's countries of intervention are viewed as unable to bear the additional costs incurred by taking biodiversity into account. Other donors, however, manage to finance this type of measure through loans.

DIFFICULTIES AKIN TO THOSE MET BY OTHER DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

AFD is not the only donor to focus its financing for projects with positive biodiversity co-benefits mainly on sectors such as water and sanitation or agriculture. As underlined by a report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2018, the other members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) have encountered similar difficulties in initiating projects in the energy and transport sectors. More generally, the OECD has observed that the cross-cutting integration of biodiversity is insufficient in development projects. Efforts are needed not only to better communicate on the practical and concrete methods for biodiversity mainstreaming but also to better evaluate the results of these cross-cutting efforts in order to inform public policy about the feedback obtained.



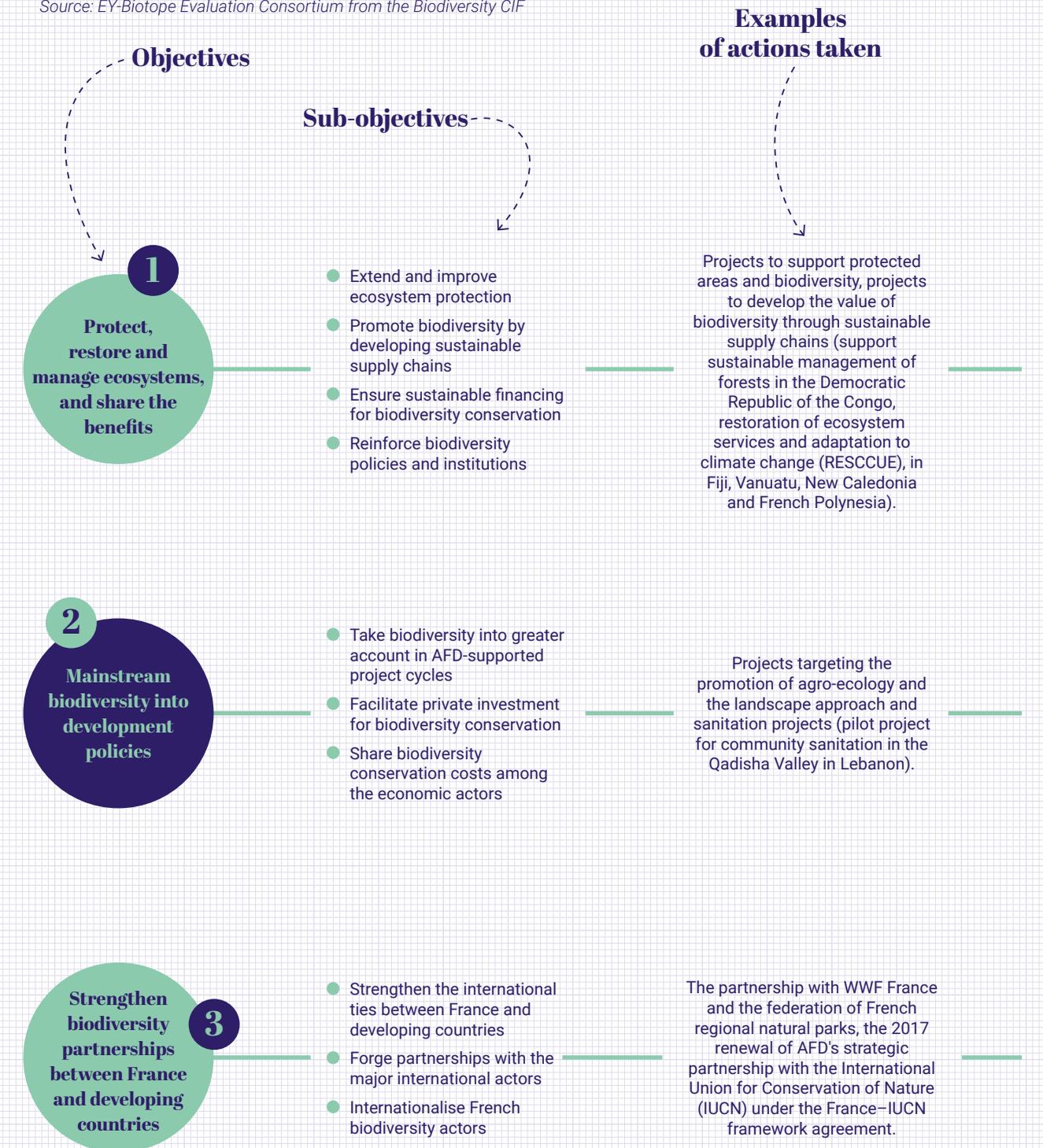
↑ Log traceability is part of sustainable forest management good practice.

+ To go further

Evaluation of the second objective of the Transversal Intervention Framework for Biodiversity (2013 – 2017), EY-Biotope Consortium.

AFD's CIF objectives for biodiversity

This evaluation focused on the CIF's Objective 2 (mainstream biodiversity) and its sub-objectives. Objectives 1 and 3 have not been evaluated.
Source: EY-Biotope Evaluation Consortium from the Biodiversity CIF



EVALUATION RESULTS: PROTECTED AREAS

Reconciling biodiversity conservation and development?

To what extent is it possible to achieve biodiversity conservation objectives while meeting the socioeconomic development needs of local communities? While the concomitant achievement of both objectives is a central concern for the CBD – which will once again be discussed at the next Conference of the Parties in China in 2020 – the wherewithal remains up for debate. Lessons learnt from an evaluation of 19 support projects for protected areas

To respond to this question, AFD conducted an evaluation of a sample of 19 protected-area projects supported by AFD and FFEM between 2000 and 2017. The projects were selected from a portfolio of 53 projects that it financed between 2000 and 2017, for almost €342 million (see the key figures below). The 19 projects include completed (8) and ongoing (11) projects located mainly in Africa as well as Asia and Central America. The evaluators split these 19 projects into four types

KEY FIGURES

€342 million were invested by the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) and AFD between 2000 and 2017.

Geographic distribution: the Asia-Pacific region accounts for 60.1% of financing mobilised for the period (China alone represents 41% with €140 M of financing), versus 20.7% for East and Southern Africa, 15.1% for West and Central Africa, 3.3% for the Mediterranean and 0.9% for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Types of financing: 64.2% of support has been financed by loans, 13.4% as part of the Debt Reduction-Development Contract (C2D) and 22.1% through grants (12.3% by AFD and 9.8% by the FFEM). Funding directly granted to NGOs accounts for 12.8% of grants and 2.2% of committed amounts.

depending on how their objectives were designed to achieve the common goal of biodiversity conservation (see diagram opposite). They observed a shift over time between 2000 and 2017 – the more recent projects focused more on socioeconomic development objectives, whereas the earlier projects more on conservation.

THE PROJECTS ARE RELEVANT, COHERENT AND EFFICIENT OVERALL

The projects are generally relevant in that they respond to the challenges and needs of the targeted territories even if their intervention logics need clarifying. They are coherent and well aligned with the priorities of national policies and AFD's strategic focus areas. The governance and management methods and budgets are generally well-suited to the implemented activities with the exception of the sometimes insufficient financial resources allocated to the infrastructure and socioeconomic development activities. Their efficiency is deemed satisfactory by the evaluators despite the fact that most of these projects experienced delays in implementing the activities.

PROVEN RESULTS THAT VARY DEPENDING ON THE PROJECT TYPE

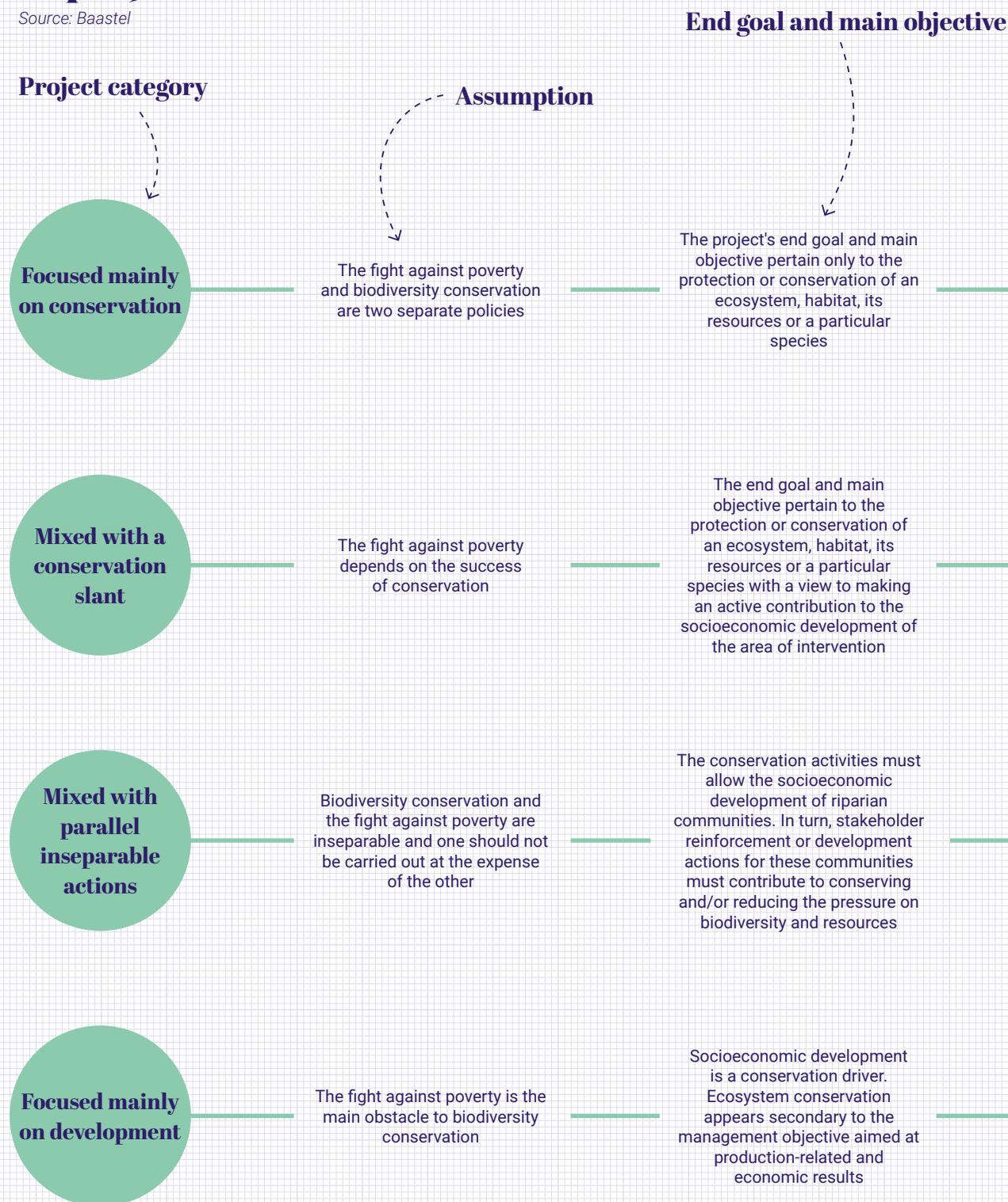
The evaluation concludes that the general level of project execution is satisfactory despite the fact that most, bar a few (see box, p. 33), did not achieve satisfactory results for either objective. This finding echoes those in the scientific literature, which presents a less unequivocal picture than the traditional discourse on the win-win synergy between biodiversity conservation in protected areas and socioeconomic development, and points to highly contrasted situations depending on the sites studied.

The vast majority of evaluated projects helped to enhance the management and governance of protected areas by strengthening institutional and management systems. Some succeeded in influencing national conservation policies⁶ and many helped to implement innovative management systems involving local communities alongside national partners and local authorities. The projects geared to socioeconomic development objectives generally achieved the best results. They promoted co-management or shared governance models, thus leading to greater social acceptability. ●●●

6. By way of example, the projects in West Africa have helped to reinforce marine environment protection policy and better integrate marine biodiversity issues into fisheries policy. The project supporting the Ameca-Manantlán Corridor in Mexico is set to conclude with the adoption of a new category of protected area in Mexico (biocultural landscape) adapted from the French regional natural park model. In Kenya, the support project for Meru National Park has indirectly contributed to the adoption of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act.

The 4 main intervention strategies identified in projects*

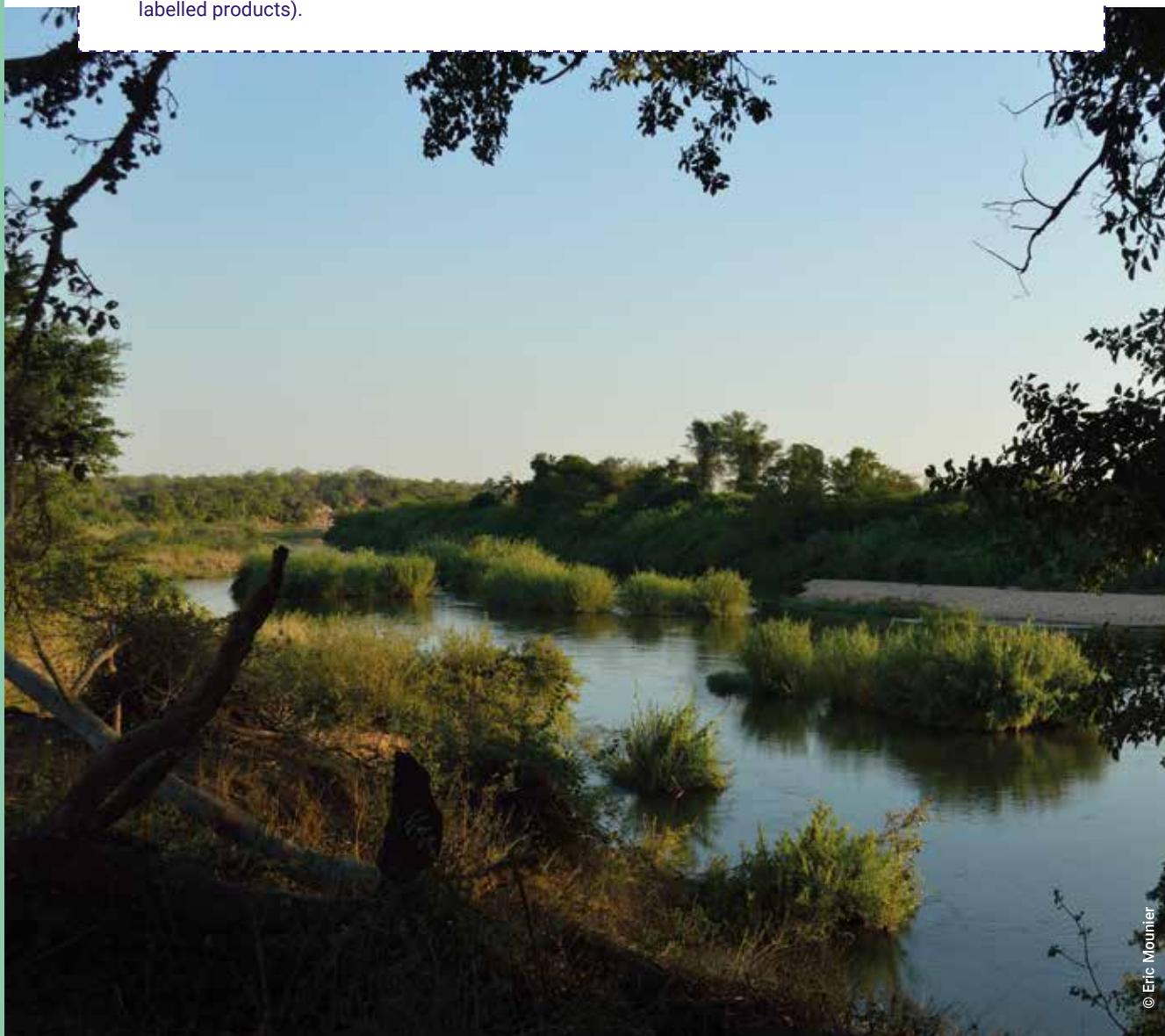
Source: Baastel



* Diagram inspired by the article Adams William M. et al., 2004, "Biodiversity conservation and the eradication of poverty". *Science*, vol. 306, no. 5699, pp. 1146-1149.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO RECONCILE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Prioritise the territorial approach and professionalise economic development activities by focusing on channels and value chains and sizing them correctly based on the number of targeted beneficiaries and the size of areas.
- Offer differentiated support to protected areas based on their particularities and their potential sustainability.
- Mobilise technical development skill in addition to protected area support teams more specialised in biodiversity conservation (e.g., for the adoption of agro-ecology techniques and the marketing of labelled products).
- Involve communities more in selecting activities aiming to reduce pressure on the protected areas.
- Draw on AFD's ability to combine various forms of funding in the same project and further mobilise grants to prepare and back loans.



© Eric Mounier

↑ The diverse environments guarantee the wide range of services provided by nature.

The majority of evaluated projects contribute directly or indirectly to maintaining or restoring ecosystems, endangered species and their habitat, and productive resources. The evaluation notes that the projects more focused on biodiversity conservation objectives generally achieve more significant results in this field.

However, the results for the socioeconomic development of communities generally fall short of expectations for several reasons: an often marginal number of beneficiaries, few resources invested compared with the size of the target communities and surface areas, low level of the communities' involvement in selecting activities, etc. However, some projects geared to development objectives have made real progress in terms of the financial sustainability of protected areas due to growing revenues from ecotourism and from the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism⁷ to the benefit of park management authorities.⁸

Finally, the evaluation observes that the projects also yielded non-economic benefits: raising awareness, educating people about environmental issues, developing knowledge and sometimes reducing conflict around protected areas and making the area more secure for people living in and around the park. ●●●

7. This initiative aims to use carbon credits to remunerate the marginal gains achieved in terms of carbon storage, while preventing deforestation and forest degradation, compared to a without-project situation which would have accelerated deterioration.

8. As a result of the Holistic Conservation Programme for Forests (HCPF) project in Madagascar, protection actions linked to a protected area have been included in the REDD+ document submitted to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. The Indo-Burma Hotspot project in South-East Asia has supported a public-private partnership with a carbon credit sales agreement signed in 2015 by the Walt Disney Company and the Cambodian Ministry of the Environment, and a second agreement drawn up with a consortium of French companies allowing for the sale of carbon credits worth US\$120,000.



© Antoine Raab/melonrouge.asia

↑ Labelling rice helps protect bird populations.

DID YOU KNOW?

RECONCILING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IS POSSIBLE!

Some initiatives have successfully reconciled socioeconomic development and conservation actions and may serve as inspiration for the future:

- Creating the “biocultural landscape” label in Mexico to support the commercialisation of products closely linked with the regional identity. With this system, each protected area (PA) producer following the sustainable practice specifications outlined in consultation with the PA manager can affix the park logo and label to their products. They can thus promote the environmental qualities when marketing them.
- Establishing two labels for “wildlife-friendly” rice in sustainable and biological agriculture in Cambodia. It is purchased by the specialised company Ibis Rice at 30% and 50% respectively above the conventional market price and sold to German and Cambodian markets with a well-documented effect on the local avifauna.
- Supporting conservation and development contracts in Madagascar. These documents lay down the collaboration framework between the project (commitments in terms of technical support for agro-ecological practices) and each local beneficiary producer (commitments to reduce deforestation practices and follow community management rules and support provided by the project).

Views from

Edwin Wanyonyi

Deputy Director of Strategy and Change,
Kenya Wildlife Service, Nairobi

“ We played host to an independent consultant to evaluate AFD’s funding of Kenya Wildlife Service projects in the Meru and Marsabit National Parks. It was useful because it gave us the chance to review the available information against the expected results and impacts. Nevertheless, the visit was too short and the consultant did not have time enough to deepen parts of his mission. We had to discuss some of his assumptions in order to strengthen his analysis. We also realised that some of the activities that we thought were relevant and effectively implemented, actually encountered difficulties and did not achieve conclusive results. We then had a chance to review and implement them following a new approach (e.g., by improving pastureland). ”

DIFFICULT-TO-EVALUATE IMPACTS

The impacts in terms of biodiversity conservation, natural resource management and especially economic development are difficult to evaluate for all projects. This is mainly because baselines have not been clearly or adequately established before project start-up. The weakness and lack of sustainability in monitoring systems also prevent the collection of long-run datasets and, yet, this is the only way to truly measure the impacts. With no comprehensive monitoring systems, it is impossible to identify the real impacts.

The majority of conservation-focused projects help to maintain endangered species populations and manage conflict between people and wildlife through the measures promoted by the projects. However, the impacts in terms of ecosystem restoration are mixed. Conversely, some actions have negative effects that can only be measured over time: exacerbated dissension among supervisory ministries and heightened pressure on protected areas, conflicts, etc. More systematic and in-depth environmental and social impact assessments in the early stages of projects would help to minimise these impacts.

For projects more focused on conservation, positive economic effects stemming from the increase in biodiversity and the improved management of natural resources by stakeholders living outside protected areas are often observed. Yet, they are rarely substantial enough to compensate for the immediate losses caused by the restrictions on access to protected areas and their use.

+ To go further

Evaluation of the AFD “Protected Area”
conservation and development intervention
contributions (2000–2017)

Interview.

Martin Dorschel



*Martin Dorschel, Head of the KfW
Operations Evaluation Division and
member of the evaluation reference
group* for “protected-area
contribution to biodiversity
conservation and development” in
2017 and 2018*

* Comprises external and AFD experts in view of
monitoring and improving consultants’ work.

**“AFD and KfW are facing
similar challenges in their
support to protected areas.”**

Did you notice any differences between the practices in use at the KfW development bank’s Evaluation Division?

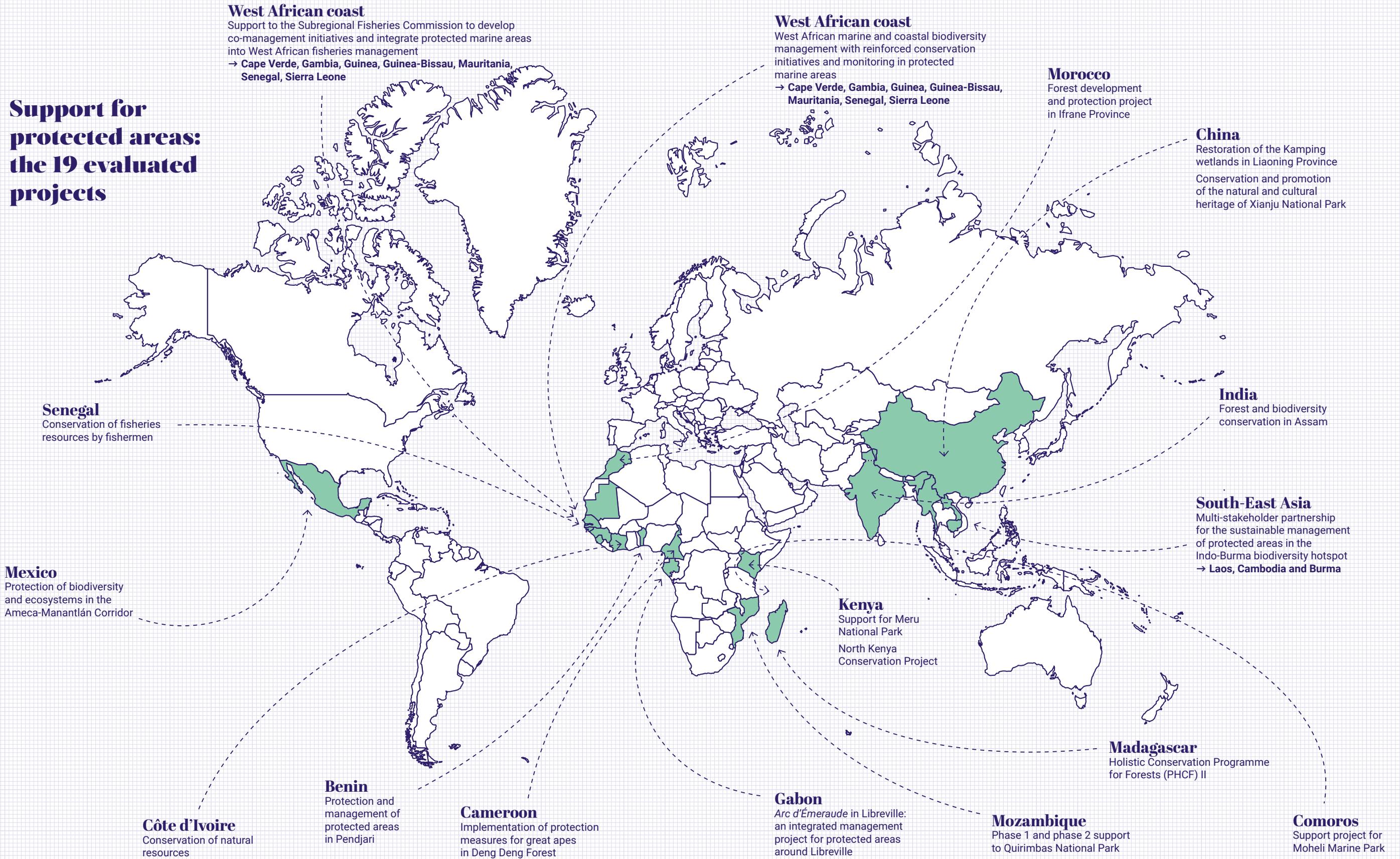
AFD’s evaluation, in which I had the pleasure to participate, differed from those that we typically conduct in two respects. First, KfW primarily evaluates individual projects ex-post, whereas AFD’s evaluation of protected areas covered a large sample from the 2000-2017 portfolio including ongoing and completed projects. Accordingly, KfW’s evaluations have a strong focus on individual development results, whereas AFD’s evaluation allowed for more generally valid conclusions. Secondly, our evaluations are mainly conducted by KfW staff (excluding people involved in implementing the project in question) – a great instrument for internal learning. AFD typically hires consultants to produce external strategic input. AFD’s evaluation was similar to what we call a thematic evaluation or a portfolio review, something we do less frequently. All in all, it was a great experience for me to witness how much value a reference group can add to such a strategic study.

What lessons from this AFD evaluation echo your own learnings?

Both AFD and KfW seem to face very similar challenges with regard to the sustainable functioning of protected areas. Very few areas can cover their operating costs with tourism revenues. Protected areas need reliable funding and a strong commitment from their respective governments.

AFD’s evaluation confirms that conservation is an extremely complex and challenging field for development agencies in general and evaluators in particular. We face similar challenges to AFD, such as missing baseline data, weak analysis of the initial situation, poor definitions of objectives, indicators that are hard to measure.

Support for protected areas: the 19 evaluated projects



CASE STUDY

Feedback from 3 NGOs

In 2012, AFD launched a call for NGO projects on “Biodiversity and Development: sharing biodiversity benefits to help village communities”. Funded by the Sectoral Innovation Facility for Non-governmental Organisations (FISONG), the call for projects aimed to promote specific know-how and NGO innovation capacities. In early 2013, three NGO projects were selected in Tanzania, Niger and Madagascar.

At their inception, these three projects received support to implement a harmonised monitoring system to facilitate final evaluations and capitalise on experience-sharing. While the three interventions had similar purposes, their intervention logics were different and tailored to their respective situations.

RELEVANT PROJECTS WITH MIXED EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

The evaluation concludes that the projects implemented relevant interventions in the sense that they responded well to the needs of biodiversity conservation and local community development. However, their expected results were only partially achieved and the efficiency of some projects was questioned due to high management costs. Finally, the projects’ sustainability and impacts were difficult to evaluate, and variable depending on the sites, despite the methodological support provided for monitoring them.

USEFUL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NGOS AND AFD

- **Ensure minimum good governance conditions**

The two projects carried out in Niger and Madagascar show that minimum good governance conditions are key to the success of projects under public-private partnerships (the means to operate, enforce security, law and order and anti-corruption measures). As NGO projects cannot take over the state’s sovereign functions, it is important to support public policies and the state’s capacities to uphold their commitments.

- **Establish a baseline to assess impacts**

Despite the support for implementing a monitoring system before project inception, the NGOs did not manage to establish a detailed baseline. The evaluation recommends that AFD pay more attention to these baselines before approving financing. As the FISONG financing system requires NGOs to pay for these baselines with their own financial resources, the evaluation recommends that AFD design a suitable financing method allowing NGOs to produce them before project inception.

- **Synergy between conservation and socioeconomic development, a change in scale**

Although the three projects achieved biodiversity conservation results, it was more difficult for them to quantify the development-related results. This is explained by the overly small scale of most of the development activities compared to the size of targeted populations: a few guard jobs created for tens of thousands of inhabitants living on the periphery of the protected area and a few hundred beneficiaries of income-generating activities compared with the thousands of individuals affected by the restrictions on the use of resources in the protected area.

- **Tailor ambitions to the resources allocated**

All project documents studied aimed to achieve conservation and development results in short time frames without necessarily taking into account the initial situation in the protected area from the outset. However, none of the projects achieved their ambitious objectives. Yet, had their ambitions not been “oversized”, the NGO project initiators risked having their proposal rejected by the call-for-projects system. This competitive system in fact pushes NGOs to make highly ambitious proposals in the hope that their project will be selected. The evaluation recommends helping NGOs to adopt more reasonable objectives or developing multi-tranche financing to support interventions over longer time frames by using a results-based monitoring tool. The consultants thus suggest pairing these new types of funding with a graphic tool to monitor project progress. This tool would allow AFD to evaluate the advisability of continuing or halting its financial support in light of the interim results achieved.

- +
- To go further**

Evaluation and cross-cutting capitalisation of the Biodiversity and Development FISONG. How to transition from specific examples to generic lessons?

DID YOU KNOW?

THREE PROJECTS AND THEIR RESULTS IN BRIEF

- **The project in Saharan Niger**

Associating two NGOs and the national authorities, this project involved improving management at the Termit and Tin Toumma National Nature Reserve in the east of the country and offsetting the negative impacts of nearby oil block operations.

→ This project reduced the pressure of poaching, implemented nature reserve management tools and conducted numerous education and awareness-raising actions. Although it was impacted by major insecurity conditions triggered by terrorism, the project achieved various results in the area of biodiversity conservation. However, its management costs were high and the sustainability of results remain uncertain,* as further international funding is now required.

- **The support project for new protected areas in Madagascar**

Led by three conservation and development NGOs, this project aimed to develop consultation and management methods for two new marine, coastal and terrestrial protected areas in the north-west of the country.

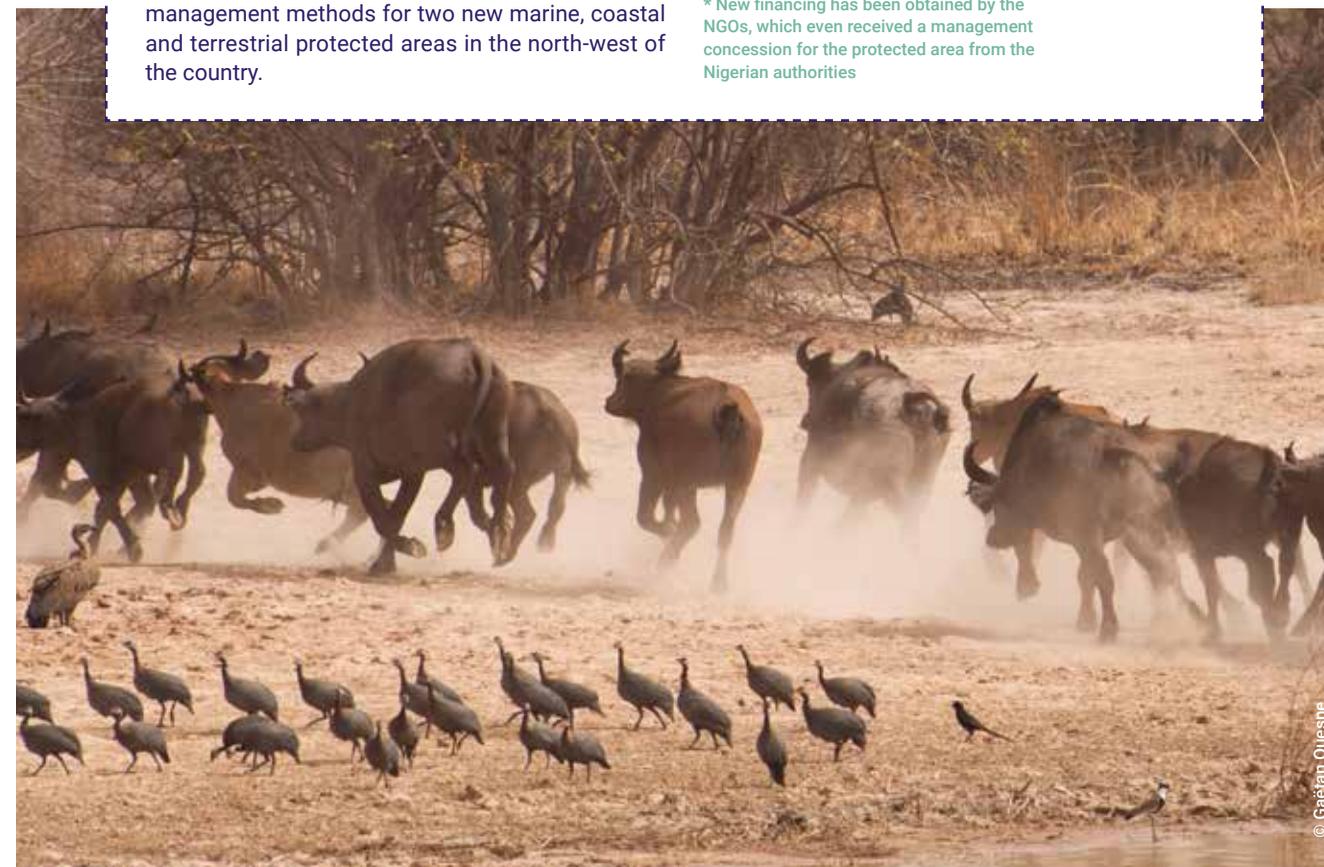
→ The intervention succeeded in several ways: local governance was strengthened; income-generating activities were developed for local communities; protected area effects were monitored; and best practices were capitalised on and disseminated. Yet, these results are still greatly affected by poor public governance, the police being unable to travel to book locally identified offences and corruption.

- **The support project for wildlife corridors in Tanzania**

→ Associating a French NGO and local NGOs, the project aimed to safeguard the wildlife moving between Lake Manyara and Tarangire National Parks by encouraging local stakeholders to develop “socio-ecological corridors”.

This project achieved many of its governance and development objectives. In particular, it led to a 37% reduction in the conflicts sparked by the damage that wildlife predators inflicted on farmers’ livestock. The impacts on biodiversity conservation remain difficult to evaluate.

* New financing has been obtained by the NGOs, which even received a management concession for the protected area from the Nigerian authorities



↑ Improving wildlife populations monitoring is a prerequisite to assessing biodiversity conservation impacts.

Rehabilitating Limpopo National Park

CASE STUDY

Created in 2002, the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park is a “Peace” park encompassing Kruger National Park (KNP) in South Africa, Limpopo National Park (LNP) in Mozambique, and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe. In 2016, some ten years after it had begun to support Limpopo National Park, AFD evaluated the results achieved. Feedback on the approach integrating biodiversity conservation and development.

Focusing on the results of AFD-funded activities, the evaluation concluded that the project objectives were relevant to the local and regional context, national policies and the needs identified in the Limpopo National Park development plan.⁹ The conservation approach developed by LNP places equal importance on the ecological conservation and economic development objectives in an “inclusive” approach that promotes community participation in park management. It is also an “open” approach, without fencing and a preferred option for natural repopulation by wildlife from the neighbouring KNP in South Africa.

AN UNCLEAR INTERVENTION STRATEGY

To achieve the conservation and development objectives simultaneously, the intervention logic was based on implementing a community-based tourism offer. Its goal was to create jobs, encourage opportunities for entrepreneurial activities and generate higher revenue for local communities while also making a sustainable contribution to biodiversity conservation.

9. They were also consistent with the objectives to extend the protected area, recommended for 2010 by the Convention on Biological Diversity and further extended by the Aichi Targets after 2010.

However, the work to reconstitute the project’s intervention logic revealed many implicit underlying assumptions. For instance, tourism development is contingent on the availability of land for use. The unrealistic nature of some preliminary assumptions was also clearly brought to light: for example, the initial proposal to have tourism-generated revenue cover LNP’s operating costs within two years.

Likewise, the interdependence of development and conservation activities was barely made explicit and therefore little anticipated in the project intervention logic: protecting ecosystem integrity depends, for example, on the success of protection and community development programmes. As a result, a delay in just one part of the project (population displacement activities funded by KfW) had an impact on the other activities, particularly on development activities.

CONTRASTED RESULTS

The ecological integrity of Limpopo National Park has been preserved and wildlife populations have increased and now circulate freely after part of the fence between Kruger National Park and Limpopo National Park was removed, even though the wildlife is concentrated along the border with KNP in South Africa and the northern part of LNP.

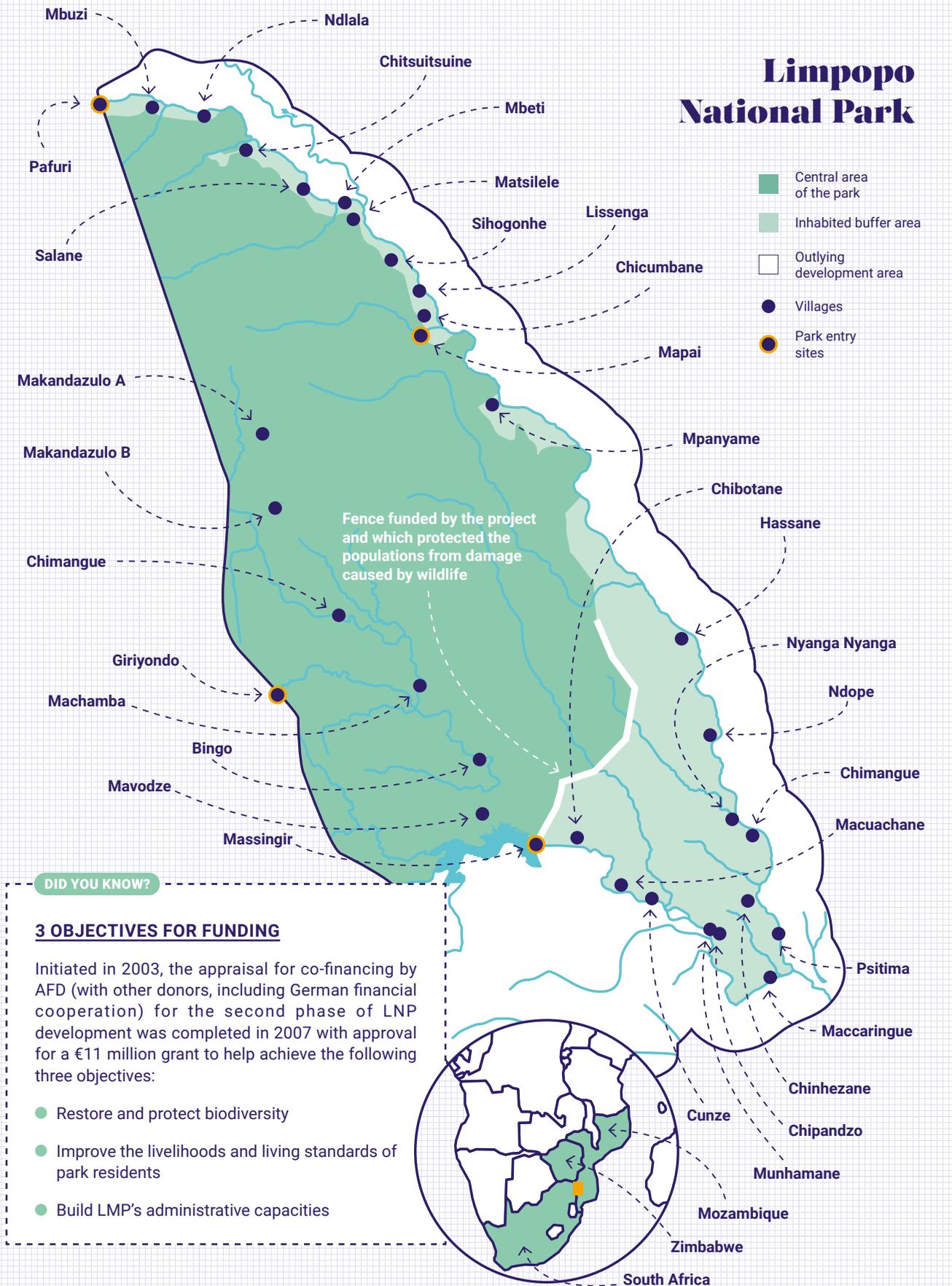
The annual number of tourists visiting Limpopo National Park is still limited compared to initial forecasts because it is still difficult to observe wildlife and the park infrastructure is not adequate enough to retain tourists, despite the accommodation and access roads created. As a result, tourism generates modest revenues that only partially cover the park’s operating costs and 16% of this is transferred to the communities.

The evaluators concluded their work by highlighting the organisational and institutional reinforcement of Limpopo National Park following the decision to position the Mozambican authorities as the contracting authority for the AFD project. Finally, this written and filmed evaluation was an opportunity to present the results to the LNP teams, the Mozambique government and the communities living in the park (see p.42).

+ To go further

Ex-post Written and Audiovisual Evaluation of the Limpopo National Park Development Project

Limpopo National Park



METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Evaluation through writing and images

Filmed evaluation is a way of disseminating evaluation results to a wider audience. A written and filmed evaluation of Limpopo National Park (LNP) was carried out in Mozambique in 2016 by AFD.

The LNP project evaluation (see p. 40) was unusual in that it was both written and filmed. AFD was counting on the fact that the film images, interviews and animated maps would give a less austere rendering of the goals of the funded development, the physical environment and wildlife, the villages' economic development and the concrete results achieved. As part of a learning objective, this approach aimed to turn the evaluation into a fresh opportunity for dialogue among the project stakeholders and, further afield, to reach development professionals, especially those interested in biodiversity-related issues.

METHODOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

Several difficulties arose in this "mixed" evaluation. The first involved ensuring a **methodological coherence between the two evaluations (written and filmed)** as it needed to lead to the same evaluative conclusion. The solution devised was to co-develop the evaluation methodology and systematically ensure an exchange of viewpoints at every stage of this method. It was decided at the outset that the written and filmed evaluations would take place simultaneously and follow exactly the same construction and validation steps. As a result, just one purchase order was issued to recruit an integrated team.

One difficulty encountered during data collection: the challenge of fully coordinating the two evaluations carried out by an integrated team that had distinct specialties (written and filmed), in the same field and with the same actors. It was decided that joint interviews would be held, especially during framework interviews, to gather general information on the issues under discussion and the interviewee's role in the project. However, the written evaluation interviews needed to go into greater detail than was relevant for the filmed evaluation. Thus, to limit the number of interviews and boost efficiency, the teams divided up the interviews depending on the role of the project stakeholder interviewed.



A COMPLEMENTARY VIEW OF THE PROJECT RESULTS

The LNP filmed evaluation confirms that this filmed approach shows the practical aspects, the dynamics and context of the project but is ill-suited to analysing organisational, financial and methodological processes. It gives value to stakeholders' (beneficiaries or not) contextualised accounts and actual words. **In short, the informative value of images is more powerful but less precise than the written word.**

The evaluative film is more than a written report – it helps to raise awareness and encourage debate. This makes it an effective way of training development practitioners. It is also an opportunity to educate a wider audience about development challenges.

The approach based on a concomitant written and filmed evaluation of the Limpopo project **reinforced the evaluative analysis** thanks to the exchange of the team's different viewpoints. The filmed interviews were used to validate the secondary data collected and thus refine the analyses of the stakeholders' interactions as well as the challenges and policies related to the project. The film more easily revealed the various or even opposing perspectives of some stakeholders. These divergences were often less obvious in the written report, mainly as this calls on the intermediation of an author.

The film also influences the narrative structure as it gives more detail on the history of the project and its challenges, whereas the written evaluation presents an analysis based on pre-defined evaluative criteria. Although the film does not replace the detailed sections on the institutional, budgetary, political and technical aspects of the written evaluation, it completes and strengthens the messages, notably for the project stakeholders.

AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR AWARENESS-RAISING AND DIALOGUE

At the feedback sessions on the conclusions of the LNP evaluation, the film – which explores the highly complex topic of national park protection together with its multiple stakeholders – made it easier to share the results and encourage debate, especially among the communities and staff in charge of protecting LNP. Misunderstandings were resolved and the dialogue on the LNP's future development has continued.

DID YOU KNOW?

The use of audiovisual media in the social sciences is not recent. Anthropologists and ethnologists have been discussing the role of this tool for observational work since the 1930s when the equipment enabled the first field recordings. Over the last three decades, the widespread use of audiovisual technology, along with hefty reductions in cost and lighter equipment, have led to a new and increasingly frequent use of video in the development field*.

* Excerpt from "The filmed evaluation" in [Changing evaluation: evaluation practices and challenges in the context of aid effectiveness](#). Coord. by E. Aberlen and C. Boistreau, Coll. AFD Conferences and Seminars, February 2014

Finally, the filmed evaluation also helped to draw the public's attention to its messages – a public that extends beyond the project stakeholders to include, for example, students or citizens interested in development. In short, a broader and more varied audience.

TO CONTINUE THE FILMED EVALUATIONS

What are the prospects for filmed evaluations? The complementarity of written and audiovisual formats could be further developed in order to use the specific qualities of both words and images in the evaluative approach. **Using the medium (written or filmed) that is best suited to understanding and evaluating each project component would provide a fairer and more relevant perception.** This approach could be formulated as a specific methodological reference that would help to frame the contexts in which a filmed evaluation would be much more relevant and clarify the methodology combining both formats. The AFD teams will test this in 2019 with new projects under development.

“ The use of the audiovisual format basically depends on what the sponsors want to do with it. What objectives did the evaluation set? Are they looking for the most in-depth evaluation possible or would they prefer a study of the salient points and dynamics of the project? ”

Eric Mounier,
Film director for the LNP evaluation

DID YOU KNOW?

AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH LAUNCHED IN 2008

Before the Limpopo National Park evaluation, AFD had funded three filmed evaluations:

- *Building against the Tides* (2008), a filmed evaluation of the Prey Nup hydro-agricultural project in Cambodia, made a few years after the written evaluation. Given AFD's long history in the country, the objective was to "build on experience" more than evaluate the project results already covered by the written evaluation.
- *Water Project in Soweto* (2011): a filmed evaluation that is interesting due to its strictly audiovisual approach, but no less rigorous than a written evaluation. It followed the five evaluation criteria from the OECD Development Assistance Committee. Based on accounts and interviews, this evaluation has not only captured the interplay

and interactions among project stakeholders, but has gone further as it shows them in a broader institutional context, particularly regarding the social aspects.

- *Palestinian Municipalities: Looking for the Future* (2012), a filmed evaluation funded by local partners, which rounds off a prior written evaluation. The evaluation focused on a support project for Palestinian municipalities in the areas of investment and governance. The objective was to more deeply explore one of the key challenges identified by the written evaluation and relating to the sustainability of the project. The goal was to gain better knowledge and analysis of the processes supporting the institutional organisation and the roles played by the different stakeholders. The local partner was closely involved in much of the preparatory work for this filmed evaluation.



© Eric Mounier

↑ Limpopo Park: supporting efforts to fight poaching.

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

On the threshold of science



Views from

Professor François Sarrazin

Professor at Sorbonne University and researcher at UMR 7204 Centre of Ecology and Conservation Science MNHN-CNRS-SU Paris, Chair of the FRB Scientific Council.

“ There is no universal method to describe an ecological reference system prior to a restoration programme. Methods differ depending on the level of the organisation of living organisms in the system studied and on the disciplines. It is one of the most significant and most difficult challenges to contend with in the real world of biodiversity management and restoration. The starting point is unstable and you often have not one but several possible targets. And these also shift depending on whether you are considering a past, current or future state of the system to restore. Defining the potential for restoration and evaluating its achievement with a relevant monitoring tool takes a long time. A specific example of this is the reintroduction of vultures in the Grands Causses in southern France, which began in the 1980s and which has seen a continuous population growth. At what size will this population find an equilibrium with its environment? The evaluations are continuing today to understand the dynamics of this introduction, growth and regulation. A tension exists between the short-term approach of evaluators, funders and decision-makers and the underlying ecological processes. The solution consists in setting milestones and carrying out evaluations based on several sets of interim indicators as part of long-term processes. These programmes have to use adaptive management approaches to jointly improve knowledge and management. ”

The French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (FRB) works to support and act with the research community to enhance knowledge on biodiversity. It serves as an interface between the scientific community, civil society and the world of business. In 2018, its Scientific Council published a first assessment of its members reflections on several “scientific fronts” in the field of biodiversity research.

Some “knowledge frontiers” identified in this publication echo some of the methodological challenges for evaluating biodiversity conservation projects mentioned in this report:

- The lack of baselines established prior to project inception in order to evaluate the effects of the implemented project through comparison or trajectory tracking.
- The difficulty of identifying and anticipating the intended or unintended changes produced by interventions during project execution, for the purpose of defining indicators and targets and steering the evaluation.

Two researchers from the FRB Scientific Council confirm the proximity between these questions and show that some of the challenges for evaluation methods are now contemporary research topics.

BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION

The challenge for AFD: How can we go about taking a “reference snapshot” of an ecosystem that will be impacted by a project? What frame of reference should we use to evaluate the effects of a biodiversity conservation project? ●●●

INTERACTION BETWEEN EVOLUTIONARY AND FUNCTIONAL ECOLOGY

The challenge for AFD: During a project evaluation, the evaluator sets out to confirm whether the assumptions of an often linear change induced by the project have indeed materialised. However, ecosystems evolve intrinsically and independently under pressure from external factors.

“Evaluating the state of an ecosystem is a complex matter due to the wide variety of ecological interactions!”

Dr Sébastien Barot



Find the scientific fronts on the FRB site: www.fondationbiodiversite.fr



Views from

Dr Sébastien Barot

IRD Research Director, head of the research team for integrative ecology: from mechanisms to ecosystem services (EMS) at the Institut d'écologie et des sciences de l'environnement, Paris and Vice-Chair of the FRB Scientific Council.

“The dynamics of ecological systems (an elephant population, a savannah ecosystem, etc.) are often complex and hard to predict. The difficulty is that, in most cases, ecological ecosystems depend on a wide variety of factors and interactions, such as climate, all trophic interactions between organisms, etc. In theory, on top of the purely ecological dynamics, we must also factor in evolutionary dynamics in the Darwinian sense of the term: organisms evolve over time and thus their characteristics change. Conservation objectives often focus on organisms, whereas my work involves understanding how the ecosystem functions. It seems that many conservation projects do not pay enough attention to ecosystem factors when defining their targets. This is the case for vegetation, but also for soil, for example! Each project should take the time to step back and imagine the most obvious interactions that could occur, for example, during a project to reintroduce a species or restore a degraded ecosystem. Taking the time to step back could also help to build mathematical models to predict the dynamics of the reintroduced species or the ecosystem.”

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Digital technology: a magic wand for evaluations?

Evaluators are unanimous: it is difficult to establish a baseline, then monitor changes in biodiversity in order to assess the results and impacts of an intervention. How can digital technology help provide solutions?

According to Claire Zanuso, Research and Evaluation Officer at AFD, and Julien Ancelin, Geographical Information System Administrator at the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), the mobile digital mapping tool GeoPoppy can help to improve the monitoring and evaluation potential of a project. Joint interview.

● **In practical terms, what does monitoring a biodiversity project mean?**

Claire Zanuso: The question of monitoring tools can only be addressed after substantial iterative work with all project stakeholders to clarify the logical framework and define the monitoring indicators for outputs, outcomes and, ideally, impacts. Let's take the example of the REDD+ project in the Mé region of Côte d'Ivoire (see box below): based on preliminary work and all the indicators specified in the monitoring protocol, we knew that we had to define the observation plots and be

REDD+ IN THE MÉ REGION, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

The objective of the Mé REDD+ project is to develop zero-deforestation agriculture to help growers to earn a living without clearing forest areas and receive an equivalent income for farming and forestry. By the end of 2019, the Nitidæ NGO teams expect to be supporting 2,250 growers across 5,000 hectares. The project uses GeoPoppy to precisely monitor developments in the cultivated and wooded areas. Using this solution, the Nitidæ operators are able to collect more data. To date, more than 330 beneficiaries and 635 hectares have been thoroughly georeferenced. The acquisition rate averages five plots a day thanks to a simple tablet and a mini server (Raspberry Pi) with no Internet connection required.

familiar with their size, the plot type (agriculture or forestry), the crop type (cocoa, coffee, rubber tree, etc.) and the support activities they had benefited from.

Julien Ancelin: After this initial stage, it is essential to design a logical data model or, in other words, to convert the information we want to collect into computer language, which means modelling the architecture of the data and the way they interrelate. These crucial steps require specific skills. Digital tools are not a magic wand!

● **What is the added value of digital tools compared to pencil and paper?**

JA: To come back to the Côte d'Ivoire example, digital tools now enable field workers to delineate the plot on the map by identifying a number of points on the site, possibly using satellite images. The essential information such as the crop type is added directly during the field observation. The size is then automatically calculated. Other information needed to inform the project monitoring-evaluation indicators is also added.

CZ: The operators' work is greatly facilitated by these digital tools as they used to collect data in the field using one or more paper data sheets, a camera and a GPS. Once back at the office, they then had to enter and aggregate the collected data in a computer database. Today, field officers no longer have to duplicate this task, which reduces numerous errors or approximations that could occur when transcribing the data collected on paper.

● **What is the added value of free software versus proprietary software?**

JA: Open-source tools comprising free software give the option of adapting to the users' situations and needs, unlike a proprietary solution which imposes formatting. This is where the use of electronic field notebooks that can embed databases and customisable interfaces really makes sense.

The production of these tools is a collaborative effort with the code and documentation offering complete transparency. This ensures that the tools are reproducible and allows any improvements made by the community to be shared. ●●●

“Anyone can use GeoPoppy, from local communities to small businesses, from cities to countryside.”

Denis Mea, Nitidæ NGO

CZ: An open-source solution designed to collect spatial data, GeoPoppy is an affordable new-generation digital tool based on free software and can be used for project monitoring and evaluation. We are also in contact with the owners of a forest project in Benin who are interested in adapting this tool to their needs.

● **Is it more difficult to implement?**

JA: No, quite the opposite. Without a centralised system, the user has to collect all the data files, make them compatible and compile them whenever they are modified. This tiresome work also requires a rigorous version management. On the other hand, an adapted digital tool allows collectors to centralise standardised data in a central database, whatever their location.

CZ: The monitoring protocols require time series datasets covering several years and these digital tools make collection more easily reproducible and long-term data more easily comparable. Furthermore, in addition to improved archiving, all of the data production procedures are documented, which ensures better traceability.

● **How accessible is the collected data?**

CZ: Centralising data is also an opportunity to extend access to mapping portals to analysts and the general public. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, an open website tracks the progress of the REDD+ project step by step. This is very useful for transparency and accountability strategies, especially for the French and Côte d'Ivoire governments, the Ivorian Ministry for the Environment and AFD, which funds this project.

JA: In addition to simply displaying the results, digital tools that are compatible with international standards make collected data remotely accessible and usable by analysts via any type of application. Producing data that can be reused by the scientific community, or even the general public, is the main challenge for open science. We now hear the term FAIR data, which meet standards of findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability. Having good quality data is thus a key prerequisite, and implementing it needs to be envisaged as soon as the data are collected.

+

To go further

GeoPoppy challenges deforestation
<https://www.afd.fr/en/cote-divoire-geopopy-challenges-deforestation>

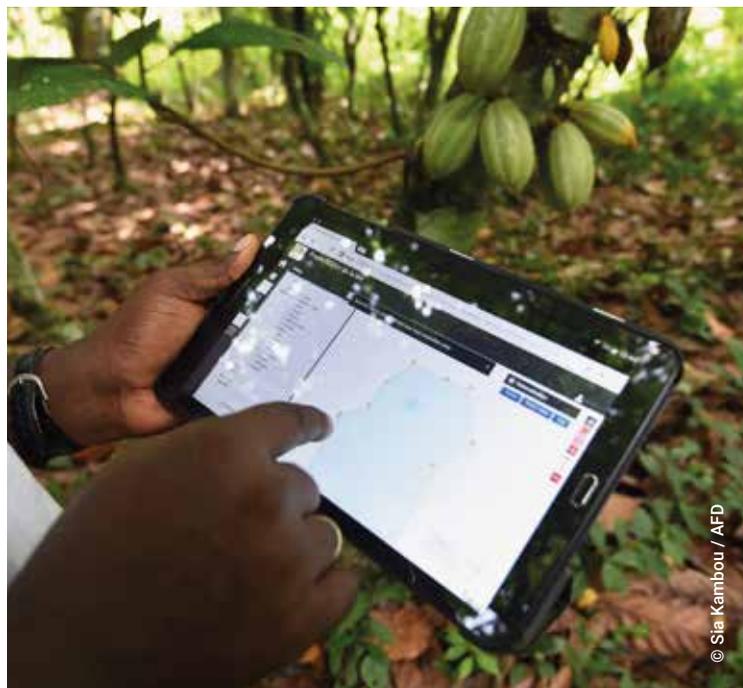
FOCUS

GEOPOPPY: AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

GeoPoppy is an innovative data collection solution developed with free software. Initially developed by Julien Ancelin from INRA to monitor poppy fields in France, GeoPoppy is a mobile digital mapping tool that helps to improve the monitoring and evaluation potential of a project. It is a user-friendly and affordable geographic information system on a digital tablet. Once the hardware has been purchased, GeoPoppy can be used with no charge or restrictions on registration or user numbers.

Tested with the help of CartONG on a REDD+ sustainable forest management project in Côte d'Ivoire with the NGO Nitidæ, it can precisely monitor the development of cultivated and wooded areas. GeoPoppy was adapted to this pilot project with support from the AFD evaluation teams.

The first results were shared during the GeONG conference – one step further in a support strategy for the open data community. Based on free, no-charge software (PostgreSQL, QGIS and LiZMap), GeoPoppy can also be used by other actors (NGOs, local communities, businesses, etc.).



↑ GeoPoppy: an open source solution for collecting spatial data.

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

Heading for COP 15 in China

The evaluation of 15 years of biodiversity interventions may help to shed light on two important themes in the forthcoming international negotiations in 2019 and at COP 15 in China in 2020: achieving conservation and development objectives for protected areas and mainstreaming biodiversity into development policies and programmes in a cross-cutting manner.

PROTECTED AREAS WHERE CONSERVATION DOVETAILS WITH DEVELOPMENT

This objective of the international community translates into various intervention logics in the field. Experience shows that these two outcomes are rarely achieved simultaneously and that one is generally more prominent than the other. However, intervention logics can be improved by adapting the scale of projects to the size of their targeted communities and surface areas, and by tailoring development and conservation actions to the targeted landscape features. Crucially, these development projects need to include actions enabling any pressure exerted on protected areas to be mitigated. Local communities must also be more involved in selecting the development activities. Yet, good feasibility studies and good intervention logics are not enough. What often makes the difference is the quality of the project sponsors and the local project management – and therefore human resources – along with the dynamism of local institutions and the political and institutional will.

SYSTEMATISING BASELINES AND MONITORING-EVALUATION

Most projects struggle to demonstrate the results and impacts achieved because they do not have baselines prior to project inception or systems to monitor biodiversity and economic outcomes during implementation. It is, however, possible to minimise these difficulties **by using free digital tools, by applying a robust open data policy to the biodiversity monitoring data and by encouraging participatory scientific monitoring.** This enables knowledge to be shared with local stakeholders, while reducing the cost of ensuring the sustainability of the monitoring system.



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ADAPTING FINANCIAL TOOLS TO STRATEGIC NEEDS

International donors must tailor their financial tools to the strategic results they want to achieve. Otherwise, they run the risk of conducting a strategy guided rather by what financial resources they can commit and their clients' demands. Loans have become AFD's most used instrument for financing biodiversity conservation. The volume of grants has been reduced and interventions are now geared in priority to the major emerging countries – to the detriment of the African continent and least developed countries (LDCs). This means there is a real risk that projects will be undertaken in creditworthy countries with satisfactory public finances at the expense of countries with a greater need for them. **Grant funding, which is crucial to biodiversity conservation in LDCs and other developing countries, must be maintained and, if possible, increased.** Moreover, projects produce better results when an action spans 10 to 15 years, whereas AFD only funds projects over an average of 3 to 5 years. One avenue towards improvement would be to acquire financing instruments that can fund a wider spectrum of activities over significant areas, with interventions being phased in over longer periods of time. One of the evaluations thus recommends implementing a 12-year system with three four-year phases based on multi-tranche funding. ●●●

BACKING POLICIES THAT MAINSTREAM BIODIVERSITY

Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation as a cross-cutting issue implies reducing the negative impacts of interventions not dedicated to conservation. **This means being able to assist contracting authorities – often little mindful of this issue –** via policy dialogue, an analysis of their capacity-building needs, and dedicated resources to help them move towards sound environmental standards.

BETTER MONITORING OF THE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

This means that not only the maximisation of biodiversity co-benefits, but also the financial commitments and results in terms of reducing negative impacts on biodiversity should be counted as aid dedicated to biodiversity mainstreaming. This will give an overall, non-truncated picture.

DEVELOPING INTERVENTIONS WITH BIODIVERSITY CO-BENEFITS

Moving into this field on sectors that are currently sidelined (urban development, transport, energy, education, health, etc.) supposes measuring impacts more effectively, quantifying them in terms of project portfolios and sharing the lessons learnt with the beneficiary countries as part of a high-level political dialogue. Furthermore, **strengthening nature-based solutions is an opportunity to obtain both climate and**

biodiversity co-benefits if we furnish sufficient efforts and resources on impact monitoring.

SETTING VERIFIABLE OBJECTIVES AND MONITORING PERFORMANCE

As for climate, setting verifiable objectives and giving countries the means to monitor their performance are priorities for developing a “positive agenda” for biodiversity and reaching an ambitious international agreement on biological diversity at the next CBD conference of the parties. The lessons of the Paris Climate Agreement and the recent biodiversity conservation negotiations show **that the challenge should enable each country to identify the pressures on biodiversity and make commitments to reduce them. Support for public biodiversity policies backed by AFD could accompany these voluntary approaches.**¹⁰

¹⁰ See the lessons from the evaluations of policy-based loans presented in this report pp. 16–20.

↓ Fishery ecosystem management is a prerequisite for safeguarding the marine environment.



© Isabelle Bomillo

Interview.

Gilles Kleitz



Director of the Ecological Transition and Natural Resources at AFD

“Our objective? That each euro spent by AFD help to safeguard the planet.”

3 KEY POINTS

- Improve the effectiveness of our interventions on biodiversity conservation as well as mainstreaming it into projects, while costing and monitoring AFD’s corresponding financial effort.
- Financing a truly pro-biodiversity economy.
- Contribute to a 2020 agreement in China that strongly supports sustainable use within a pro-nature economy, with high commitments from development and private banks.

How should we understand the conclusions of the 2017–2018 report regarding a better balance between conservation and development results?

The linkage between conservation and development must be reaffirmed loud and clear. It is crucial that we find the resources to attain good conservation and good local development results in our project interventions. To do so, we need to encourage intervention logics that better link the rural world and the conservation world. This can be done by fostering approaches that integrate the two objectives more satisfactorily. Yet, our counterparts’ requests often separate the two. The beginnings of convergence are taking shape but it is no easy task and examples are still rare.

How can we better mainstream biodiversity into interventions?

Each relevant project could be given a quantified co-benefit target for biodiversity. In parallel, all projects must reduce their negative social and environmental impacts by working with very long-term commitments or implementing effective and verified corrective measures. More broadly, it would be desirable to have much more robust baselines to more precisely evaluate the impact of these projects and corrective measures. How robust do corrective measures for biodiversity impacts need to be for AFD to fund a project? Loan approval and disbursement must be much more closely tied to environmental performance obligations.

What messages should we take from the biodiversity evaluations in view of the 2020 COP 15 in China? Which focus areas will feed the debates at this major international event?

Until COP 15, we are making all efforts to consolidate the biodiversity accountability system at AFD and share this experience with other bilateral development banks. This accountability effort must draw on specific technical systems, be funded by appropriate tools and managed in a strategic cross-cutting manner. We also need to improve the performance of measures and exclusion lists to limit the negative impacts in our development projects and increase the volume and quality of our biodiversity projects. We now have the tools to achieve this. The objective is thus to finance an economy that is truly biodiversity-friendly and favourable to the SDGs as a whole.



Eva— luation culture: past and future.

Over the last 40 years, we have seen the evaluation of official development assistance become more structured and gradually expand. This observation is borne out by the trajectory of evaluation at AFD. The purpose of evaluation is twofold: learn and report on results. Disseminating an evaluation culture is an everyday challenge and a priority at all times as it challenges organisations and people to ensure transparency and commit to continuously learn from success and failure alike.

← Rehabilitation of the Stung Chinit river irrigation scheme (Cambodia). In Kandal Province, a farmer waters vegetables using an irrigation canal funded by AFD.
© Chor Sokunthea

Chronicle of the rise of evaluation at AFD

In 2019, evaluation celebrates its 40th anniversary in AFD. Its rise within the Group reflects the institutional transformations in the organisation whose mandate and influence has expanded considerably over the last 40 years. It is in line with the evolving international agenda on official development assistance and the growing importance given to evaluation, as well as the mounting echo of the general public's demands for accountability.

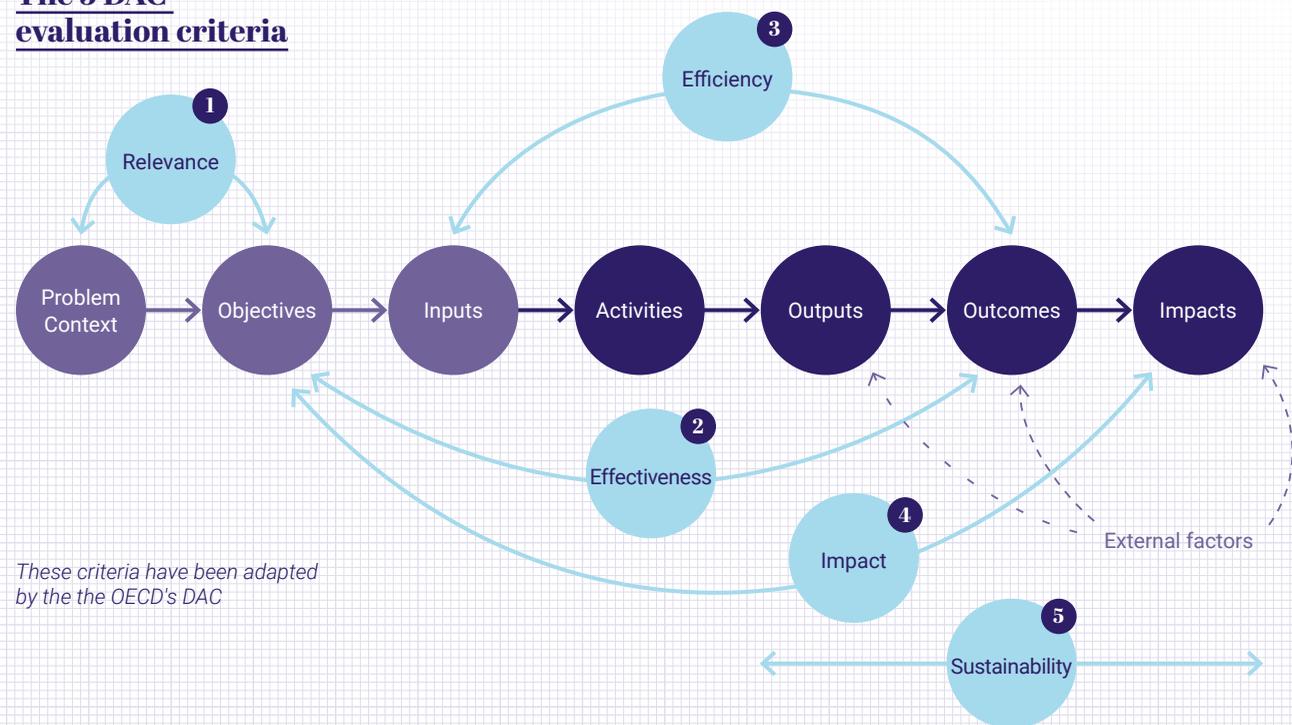
1979-2019

1979-2000 EVALUATION DEVELOPS AND BEGINS TO FIND ITS FEET

It all began in 1979 in what is still known as the Caisse centrale de coopération économique (CCCE – Central Fund for Economic Cooperation). An ex-post analysis officer reporting to the Director of Financing reviewed and completed the analyses conducted by the agencies at Head Office's request. At this time and for the following 20 years, the CCCE mostly financed public infrastructure and rural and industrial development projects through the government or other public and private economic operators. Evaluation was primarily grounded on economic analyses of projects and on results analyses drawing on the financial accounts of the supported companies.

In the early 1980s, the issue of evaluation emerged in the international arena, and an expert group was set up at the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) to reflect on aid effectiveness and how this should be evaluated. Since then, the group has evolved and become a permanent evaluation entity. It was not until ten years later, in 1991, that the OECD implemented the DAC evaluation criteria (see diagram below).

The 5 DAC evaluation criteria



In the 1980s, the World Bank was the benchmark for evaluation – as for many other areas – having created the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) some ten years earlier. Operating independently, it comprised some 15 experienced senior executives. Evaluation then involved approving and finalising the project completion reports produced by operational teams and processing the impact of operations a few years after their completion. The OED then summarised these evaluations for each country, sector and topic.

In September 1981, the first evaluation department of the CCCE, the forerunner of AFD, was created when the institution was reorganised along the lines of the World Bank's matrix model (divided into geographic departments: three for Africa, one for Overseas France). It was integrated into a research department, underscoring the desire to ensure its independence from operations and establish a direct line between evaluations, studies and development policies. The idea was to both produce project evaluations and sectoral studies and create a space where project managers could exchange and reflect. The aim was to run work groups in order to develop operational guidelines on the basis of findings from evaluations, sectoral studies and field experience.

In parallel, an evaluation department took shape at the Ministry for French Cooperation. Meanwhile, the Ministry of the Economy took on an evaluation function in 1987 and called on the expertise of the same officer who had developed this function at the CCCE. In charge of examining the Ministry's financing to support export policy, this evaluation unit was supervised for more than 15 years by experienced staff formerly from the CCCE's evaluation unit, thus demonstrating the close links between the two institutions.

In the 1990s, evaluation became increasingly prominent on the French political agenda. Many reports on the modernisation and rationalisation of public action were published (initiated by the Rocard government in 1988–1991) as part of the rise of "new public management" confirmed by the Fuchs report.¹ As for development aid, with the end of the Cold War and in a climate of strong budget constraints, these reports highlighted the need to design an aid policy that was more effective and also subject to evaluation like the other public policies. The same shift was happening at international level and gave rise to the notion of "aid quality", thus obliging evaluations to focus more on context, processes and results rather than quantitative and financial ratios.

Having an independent evaluation department at AFD then became imperative. Faced with the lower priority given to ex-post project assessments compared to sectoral studies – which were preferred by operational staff – AFD decided to strengthen the "control" aspect of evaluations.

1. Fuchs, J.-P. "For an effective, controlled and transparent development policy": report to the Prime Minister, December 1995.

As a result, a retrospective evaluation department was created in 1993 in the Audit and Control department. The focus was independence and thoroughness. Sectoral studies continued to be produced in the policies and studies department.

FROM THE 2000S TO THE PRESENT DAY, EVALUATION IS A KEY AND INCREASINGLY INSTITUTIONALISED CHALLENGE

After supporting structural adjustment policies for many years, the United Nations' adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2000 placed the fight against poverty and access to essential services as key priorities on the international aid agenda. With the 2003 Rome Declaration on Aid Harmonization followed by the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, it became essential to measure the effectiveness and impact of aid. Mention was also made of the need to take into account the social and environmental impact of projects at the time of their design. ●●●

“ I observed that evaluation remained very fragile as long as there was no autonomous budget or direct reporting to the Board of Directors. An institution works when it no longer depends on people but on rules. ”

Laurent Fontaine, former Manager of AFD's Evaluation and Learning Division between 2014 and 2017

+ Discover the interview online

Views.

Hans Lundgren

Hans Lundgren, Manager of the OECD's DAC Evaluation Network.

“In addition to normative and synthesis work, the Network facilitates peer exchanges on best practice and innovation to improve the quality and frequency of evaluations. In this way, evaluation promotes learning and decision-making, offering a valuable contribution to achievement of development objectives.”

The evaluation of development assistance was already an issue in the early days following the creation of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1960. In 1982, the DAC established the first work group dedicated to evaluation. At this stage, most governments had established an evaluation system in one form or another, while aid effectiveness was increasingly a topic of debate.

Since these first debates, the DAC Network's work on evaluation has evolved, adapting to ever-changing circumstances. Over the years, joint evaluation and synthesis studies have been carried out on subjects of interest to decision-makers, including the Paris Declaration, governance, gender issues, refugee situations and more.

Exchanges on evaluation in the context of the 2030 Agenda are now underway. Normative work has also been a key element of the Evaluation Network. In 1991, the Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance were adopted. This was followed by the publication of a glossary of key terms for evaluation and results-based management in 2002 aimed at facilitating cooperation. Finally, 2010 saw the adoption of the quality standards for development evaluation. Specific support has also been designed for humanitarian aid, peace-building activities and joint evaluation management. The Network is currently adapting the DAC evaluation criteria to the current development context. Widely used, there are five: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

In addition to normative and synthesis work, the Network facilitates peer exchange on best practice and innovation to improve the quality and frequency of evaluations. In this way, evaluation promotes learning and decision-making, providing a valuable contribution to achieving development objectives.

It was at this time that AFD underwent a rapid transformation as part of the reform of French Cooperation initiated in France in the late 1990s. AFD's new Chief Executive Officer, Jean-Michel Severino, appointed in 2001, implemented full decompartmentalisation of aid and the government positioned AFD as the key operator of French aid. This reform gave AFD a new mandate in the healthcare and education sectors, which until then had been the responsibility of the Ministry for French Foreign Affairs, as well as new intervention areas, particularly in emerging countries. AFD Group then embarked on a period of strong growth: its volume of financing commitments rose from €1.3 billion in 2001 to €3.1 billion in 2006. In parallel, the adoption of the Constitutional Bylaw on Budget Acts (LOLF) then the French General Review of Public Policies (RGPP) laid emphasis on evaluation and the identification of performance indicators. This new ambition, summarised in the mission statement entrusted by the government to AFD's new chief executive officer in 2001 – “Make French aid more effective and more legitimate” – conferred more strategic importance on the evaluation department. Thus, in 2002, evaluation was entrusted to a “mission” in the Strategy Department as part of AFD's first Strategic Orientation Plan (2002–2006). This positioning reflected a return to evaluation with a focus on acquiring experience and assisting strategic decision-making. The mission expanded its scope beyond traditional project evaluations to include sectoral evaluations and participation in joint public policy evaluations. Budgets grew and the use of external consultants increased.

In 2005, the otherwise unchanged evaluation and capitalisation structure was integrated into the Research Department as the Evaluation and Learning department. Bringing research, evaluation and capitalisation together within a single department attests to the growing focus on intellectual production and its orientation towards support for strategies and operations. This is visible in the launch of the first impact evaluations.

These focus areas, earmarked in the second Strategic Orientation Plan (2007–2011), coincided with the desire to extend the evaluation culture to all operational structures. This has materialised in the decentralisation of ex-post project evaluation management: since 1981, evaluations had been steered and often produced by the Head Office evaluation team, but since 2006 they have been carried out by AFD's agencies in the intervention countries. Evaluations are becoming more systematically outsourced and aim to develop a results-based dialogue with AFD's project sponsors. They thus serve the dual purpose of accountability and learning. ●●●

“Evaluation is not necessary for an institution – it always needs to prove its legitimacy and justify its role, which is a relatively healthy thing. If we make it compulsory, we run the risk of making it bureaucratic. It is important that the accountability requirement be upheld, but as a useful exercise.”

Jean-David Naudet, former Manager of AFD's Evaluation and Capitalisation Division between 2006 and 2011

+ Discover the interview online

FOCUS

A PUBLICATIONS POLICY FOR GREATER TRANSPARENCY

In 2007, AFD first began to publish its evaluation and capitalisation work in the *Ex Post* collection: evaluations, capitalisation documents and methodological notes have since been published, as well as short 4-page summaries. The filmed evaluations are also posted online. Since 2012, a joint biennial report (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Directorate General of the Treasury and AFD) on the evaluations of French official development assistance has been published. AFD's Evaluation and Learning Department has been working on new formats for its paper and online publications since 2017. The aim is to enhance the readability, transparency, diffusion and usefulness of evaluations and move beyond an audience of experts.

In 2013, AFD adopted its first formal public evaluation policy. This resolutely places evaluation in a learning perspective – even though it naturally also reinforces accountability. This new orientation is reflected in the broader scope of evaluated projects, which now includes budget support, and in the return to a selection process based on exchanges with the operational departments in order to identify the projects for evaluation.

Given the recurrent observation that it is difficult to evaluate projects with insufficiently clear intervention logics and baselines, since 2014 the emphasis has been on strengthening the evaluability of projects. This means improving their quality and anticipating their evaluation early in the appraisal stage, as well as providing support to project managers.

At international level, 2015 saw a radical change in the aid agenda paradigm with the UN's adoption of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. In France, the cooperation reform continued and AFD was entrusted with new sectoral mandates and new intervention countries, thus bolstering its position as a key actor of French aid. The Group's growth was sustained: in 2018, it had 2,531 officers and approved €11.4 billion of project financing.

This very robust growth in the aid volumes financed by AFD has focused greater attention on the appraisal of new projects and less on their evaluations. However, the challenge in the coming years is to continue to step up funding and, at the same time, strengthen efforts for accountability and transparency.

“ The Evaluation and Capitalisation Division has become the Evaluation and Learning Department, represented on the Management Committee. This title clearly affirms learning as a purpose. Today, accountability is a huge issue, but we have set it as the third priority for evaluation. ”

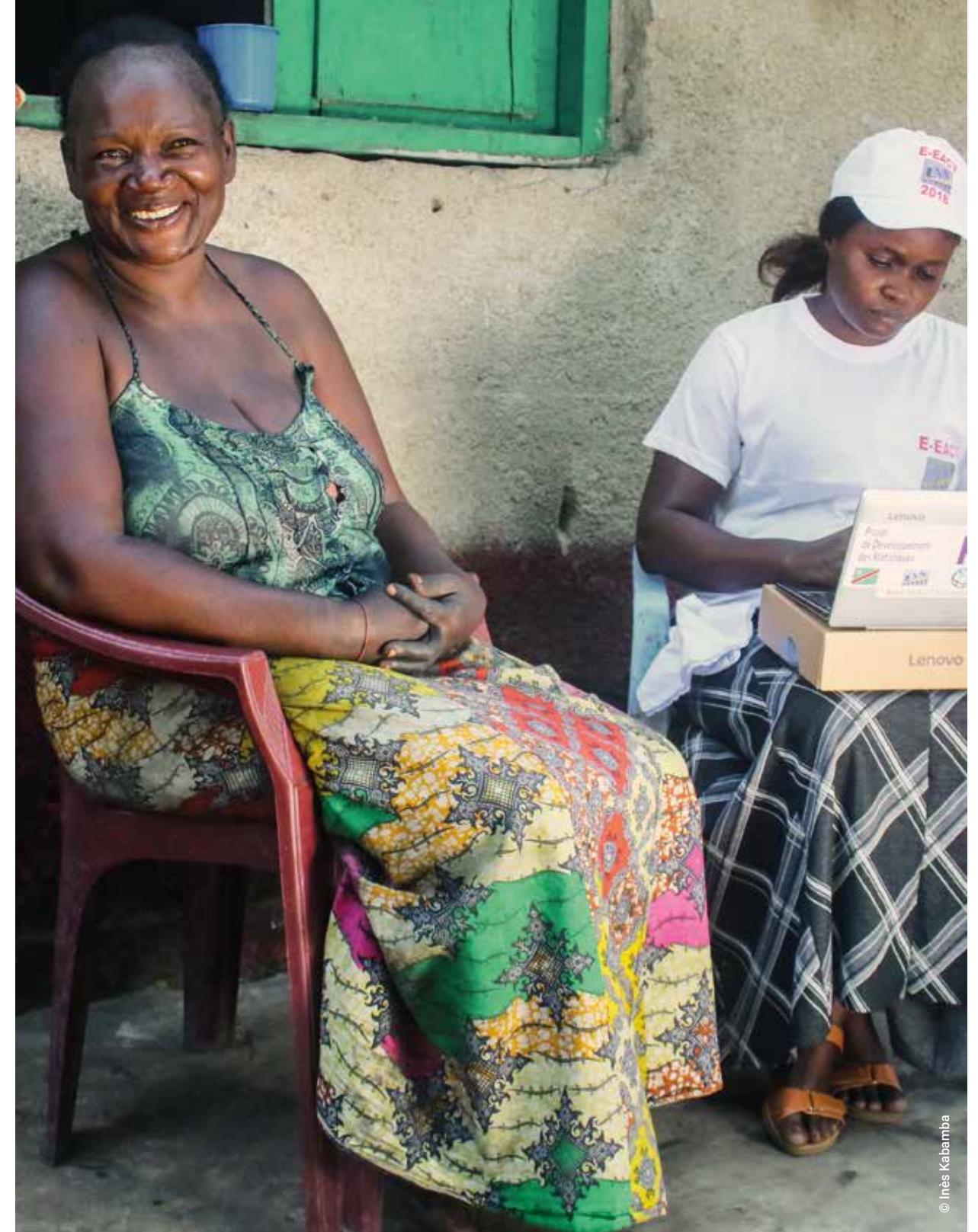
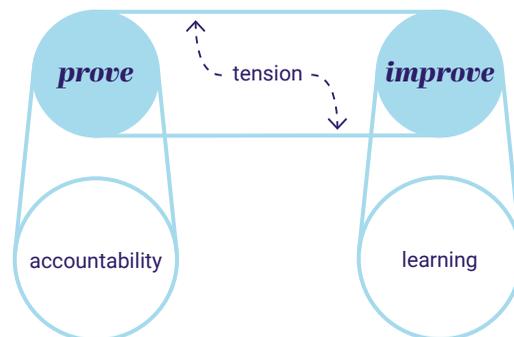
Bertrand Loiseau, former Manager of AFD's Evaluation and Learning Department between 2014 and 2017

+ Discover the interview online

DID YOU KNOW?

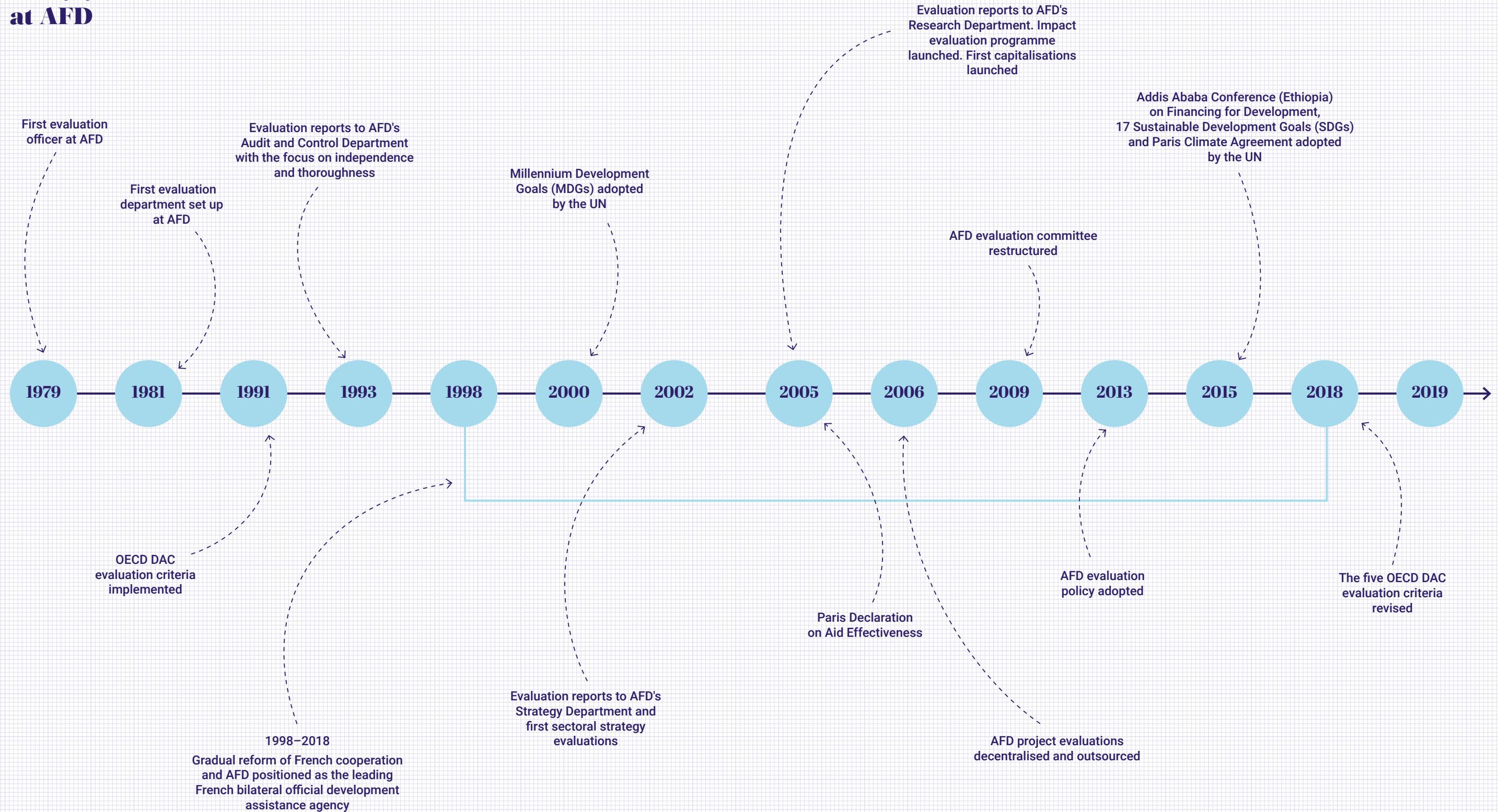
THE TENSION BETWEEN LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The world of evaluation is continually torn between the purposes of learning (learning from evaluations to improve interventions and build up knowledge on development) and accountability (reporting its actions to supervisory ministries, citizens and beneficiaries). Learning and accountability are certainly not at odds with one another. An evaluation often seeks to satisfy both. But the focus necessarily leans one way or the other. Both the evaluation questions and method will depend on where this focus lies. English speakers – who have a way with words – refer to the tension between *prove* and *improve*.



↑ Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, March 2018. The baseline survey is being carried out with the help of a beneficiary as part of an impact evaluation. The objective of this study: measure the sanitary and socioeconomic impacts of the water infrastructure.

Forty years of evaluation at AFD



JOINT INTERVIEW

AFD: a partnership platform

The managers of the Evaluation Departments at AFD and its German counterpart, KfW, Nathalie Le Denmat and Eva Terberger take stock of the partnership that their two departments have developed over the last few years.

- As peers and partners, what are the major facets of your collaboration?

Eva Terberger: I have been Head of the KfW Evaluation Department for more than ten years and I have always admired AFD's evaluation work. We are often in contact and our constructive relationship has intensified recently with staff transfers and joint workshops that bring us mutual benefit from the advances made by both agencies and address our common challenges.

Nathalie Le Denmat: The peer exchanges we are developing with KfW through comparative analyses of our practices are mutually enriching. KfW is more advanced than AFD on some subjects such as the dissemination of evaluation culture largely thanks to the peer evaluation process (see the interview on p. 15). We have also been able to try this out and enhance our evaluation strategy. Furthermore, KfW's experience in monitoring-evaluation, which is key to evaluation quality, has helped us to raise the awareness of operational staff, systemically deploy these tools first in the Sahel zone and today envisage generalising their implementation.

AFD'S EVALUATION PRIORITIES FOR 2019 AND 2020:

- More evaluations: 50% of projects will be evaluated in 2020
- More inclusive evaluations with our partners in the global South and our project beneficiaries
- Results of evaluations supported by AFD managers and implemented by operational staff
- Evaluations that fuel the public debate on official development assistance



↑ Eva Terberger, Evaluation Department Manager at KfW.

Eva Terberger: AFD is very advanced in the use of georeferenced and satellite data that make your evaluations more reliable. Staff exchanges and the jointly organised workshops have been particularly helpful in this area and all of our nature conservation evaluations now follow this standard.

- What challenges have you encountered while disseminating evaluation culture in your respective institutions?

Eva Terberger: The evaluation culture is already well-established at KfW. Our main challenge is to better promote our evaluations externally, at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and among evaluation practitioners. Furthermore, we only do project evaluations, whereas AFD carries out sectoral evaluations offering a broader perspective that I would have liked to develop.

Nathalie Le Denmat: The evaluation culture is growing in our institution and our senior management has delivered a very strong message on this count. We are implementing a series of actions designed to involve more operational staff not only in the evaluations themselves, but also in the efforts to capitalise on these for our new projects. With this in mind, AFD took on a Knowledge Management function in 2018 and the evaluation officers are now integrated into the various AFD communities working together to further develop their practices.

- At COP 24, you launched a work group on the evaluation of climate projects at your respective institutions. Why?

Nathalie Le Denmat: Although AFD has reaffirmed its climate strategy, we still have few ex-post evaluations that give a cross-cutting analysis of the subject. To move forward, we contracted a study to identify our partners' practices in this area. The study revealed some useful sectoral initiatives but no truly integrated approach. The COP 24 in Poland was an opportunity to share our thoughts with a group of institutions willing to work together to share their practices and move forward, and to put together a pilot group with KfW and the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

- What are the prospects for official development assistance internationally and for your respective institutions?

Eva Terberger: Evaluation is becoming increasingly salient in Germany's political discourse on policy and governance but evaluation results are not used as much as they could be. It may be that we need to deliver more direct messages tailored to political needs. Among the topics to be further explored, we need to focus more on the evaluation of mixed financing tools, referred to as "blended finance", in order to see what official

development assistance conditions could leverage private financing. The OECD is already working on this issue and much remains to be done in the area.

Nathalie Le Denmat: Yes, our evaluations must offer a better answer to the questions that politicians and citizens ask about official development assistance. We need to ensure the usefulness, relevance and ownership of our evaluation results if they are to become a genuine tool for strategic and political decision-making. We must also improve our methodologies to evaluate priority issues such as climate, social link and gender, and the leverage effect of official development assistance funding on private-sector financing. Finally, I think we should be more inclusive, integrating more stakeholders into our projects and involving their beneficiaries in the evaluations. And why not see evaluation support projects as an aspect of good governance with our partners in the global South?

Eva Terberger: I like this innovative idea! This is another theme we should investigate further together.

“ Our evaluations must offer a better answer to the questions that politicians and citizens ask about official development assistance. ”



← Nathalie Le Denmat, Manager of the AFD Evaluation and Learning Department.

Appendix: list of 2017–2018 evaluations

PROJECT EVALUATIONS

AFRICA

South Africa

Supporting the integrated and sustainable development strategy in Cape Town and the spatial development of the city of Johannesburg

South Africa

Encouraging access to social housing – Lines of credit at three banks: Rand Merchant Bank (RMB), Nedbank and Amalgamated Banks of South Africa (ABSA)

South Africa

Accelerating the energy transition – Sere wind farm built – ESKOM company

Burkina Faso

Backing the management system reform for hydraulic drinking water supply systems in rural and semi-urban environments / Supporting the drinking water supply and sanitation programme in the Centre-North (PAEPA-CN)

Cape Verde

Improving water and sanitation services in the municipality of Santa Catarina on the island of Santiago

Comoros

Improving the healthcare offer and capacity building in Caritas Comores

Côte d’Ivoire

Improving the quality and accessibility of maternal and child health services as part of the healthcare system capacity-building project (PRSS)

Ethiopia

Diversifying the energy mix – Wind farm built in Ashegoda, Mekele, a region of Tigray

Ghana

Developing access to small and medium microfinance companies by supporting Pro Credit and Advans

Kenya

Supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy investments by SUNREF credit lines to banks

Madagascar

Supporting the recovery of the national electricity company, JIRAMA

Madagascar

Increasing agricultural production and promoting the environment – Lake catchment area project II

Morocco

Supporting the implementation of national management strategies for medical emergencies and end-stage kidney disease treatment (emergencies and transplants)

Morocco

Improving the urban environment and access to the city with funding for the Casablanca tramway

Mauritius

Supporting the implementation of the “Mauritius Sustainable Island” environmental policy and the sustainable energy policy

Niger

Supporting food security (PASAM I and II)

Niger

Improving access to drinking water – Village hydraulic project in the Taouha region

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Supporting the budgeting (mechanisation) of teaching posts (APEP II)

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Improving access to water for communities in the outlying districts of Kinshasa and three Bas Congo towns (PILAEP)

Senegal

Supporting rural communities in the Senegal river valley (PACR/VFS)

Togo*

Supporting the development of the Wages microfinance institution

Togo

Improving rainwater purification and waste processing in Lomé (PEUL, phases 1 and 2)

Togo

Making school accessible to everyone – Education for all project in Togo (EPTT)

Tunisia

Sustainable city planning – National urban regeneration programme (NURP) – Support programme for the city policy (PROVILLE, mid-term evaluation)

Multi-country – Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad
Supporting the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) in the implementation of its Integrated water resources management (IWRM II)

Multi-country – French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa

Promoting bilingual learning in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa. Supporting the school and national languages initiative in Africa – ELAN

Multi-country – West Africa

Supporting food and nutritional security in West Africa (PASANAO)

Multi-country – Africa

Evaluating the expert unit in Dakar educational policy

LATIN AMERICA

Brazil

Supporting the urban mobility policy in the State of Rio de Janeiro

Brazil

Supporting investments in essential service infrastructure in the State of Minas Gerais

Colombia

Supporting the healthcare system and social protection improvement programme

Mexico

Supporting climate change policies I and II

ASIA

China

Improving district heating in the cities of Taiyuan and Jinzhong

Indonesia

Improving the sustainable management of natural marine resources by using and promoting spatial oceanographic data – INDESO

Indonesia

Restoring and building drainage infrastructure in Banda Aceh

Laos

Protecting heritage and supporting urban development in Luang Prabang and Vat Phu (PADUL I and II)

Turkey

Protecting the Turkish forest – Forestry programme I, II and III

Vietnam

Developing irrigation in the Ninh Thuan Province

Vietnam

Promoting sustainable urban development through the Ho Chi Minh City State Financial Investment Company (HFIC) (line of credit and assistance), Can Tho City Development Investment Fund (CADIF) and Da Nang City Development Investment Fund (DDIF) (line of credit and assistance)

Vietnam

Supporting the climate change policy

Vietnam

Reinforcing drinking water supply in the Mekong Delta

Multi-country – Pacific Islands

Improving the management of solid waste in Pacific countries and island territories (SWMI)

MULTI-CONTINENT

Multi-country – Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia

Reinforcing the governance of veterinary services through support for the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) in the form of technical assistance

Multi-country – India, Mauritius and Tunisia

Supporting investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy through credit lines to SIDBI and IREDA in India and banks in Mauritius and Tunisia

* The project has been evaluated. However, as the partner did not agree to share the report, AFD is not legally authorised to post it online

NB: The number of evaluation summaries does not match the number of evaluated projects or the number of evaluations mentioned in the report. When projects are closely linked or carried out in succession, just one evaluation summary can be drafted for several projects. On the other hand, projects with different components are likely to require one summary for each component.

THEMATIC, SECTORAL AND STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS

Biodiversity

Cross-cutting evaluation and capitalisation of the Biodiversity and Development FISONG. Transitioning from specific examples to generic lessons

Biodiversity

Evaluation of the contributions of AFD's "protected area" interventions to conservation and development (2000–2017)

Local development

Evaluating 15 years of support for rural development for rural territories in sub-Saharan Africa

Water and sanitation

Analytical review of water and sanitation project conditions looking to improve national sectoral frameworks

Multi-sector – joint evaluation

Mid-term evaluation of the fund for technical expertise and experience transfers – FEXTE

Education – joint evaluation

Joint evaluation of France's contribution to basic education in the G5 Sahel countries

Education

Interim evaluation of the school policy and assessment of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in Côte d'Ivoire

Energy

Evaluation of the energy strategic intervention framework (CIF) 2012–2016

Country evaluation – joint evaluation

Evaluation of budgetary support in Ghana (2005–2015)

Country evaluation – joint evaluation

Evaluation of French development aid in Vietnam (2005-2015)

Country in crisis – joint evaluation

The French contribution to multi-donor funds in crisis and post-crisis situations

Healthcare

In itinere evaluation of the Health Solidarity Initiative for the Sahel (I3S)

SCIENTIFIC IMPACT EVALUATIONS UNDERWAY IN 2017–2018

Biodiversity

Impact of forest management methods on deforestation in the Congo Basin (2017–2019)

Water and sanitation

Impact of decentralised drinking water supply systems on living conditions in the outlying districts of Kinshasa (2017–2021)

Impact of improving the drinking water supply system on cholera and acute diarrhoea diseases in Uvura, South Kivu (2015–2020)

Healthcare

Impact of a maternal care funding scheme on access to healthcare, the quality of this healthcare and child health in Mauritania (2014–2018)

Education

Impact of the proximity of schools on labour market integration in Côte d'Ivoire (2018–2021)

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