



# Comments from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on the DEval Evaluation Report “Meta-evaluation on the quality of (project) evaluations in German development cooperation”

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) welcomes the report “*Meta-evaluation on the quality of (project) evaluations in German development cooperation*” submitted by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval).

The meta-evaluation looks at the understanding of evaluation quality in eleven governmental and non-governmental organisations and the application of fundamental quality standards, especially the OECD-DAC and DeGEval standards. It is part of a series of assessments on the quality of evaluations (1999, 2009, 2015) that have continuously advanced the professionalism of evaluation practices in German development cooperation.

In order to ensure the high quality and beneficial use of evaluations in the entire German development cooperation evaluation system, in September 2021 the BMZ published its evaluation policy (“*Leitlinien für Evaluierung*”, LL-E) that define key objectives, principles and standards.

Although the meta-evaluation submitted by DEval was conducted while the BMZ evaluation policy was still in the process of being agreed, it allows a critical assessment to be made of the degree to which evaluation practices have been professionalised, including the identification of systemic weaknesses.

## Relevance of the findings

On a positive note, it should be noted that, despite the structural heterogeneity of all the organisations involved in this evaluation, the demanding international norms and standards for good evaluation practices are a guideline and a benchmark for these organisations. The application of the assessed quality standards is also firmly established for the most part in the organisations, although this is not always consistently documented.

The DEval meta-evaluation accordingly indicates that there is room for further improvement in terms of the systematic documentation of the quality steps applied in the organisations, and makes pertinent recommendations.

In the organisations involved, for example, there are deficits concerning the availability of data and access to evaluation reports by non-governmental organisations, and there is a lack of specific codified rules in some of the funding lines. DEval also recommends that financial support be provided for the exchange between organisations on quality standards, especially in the case of private agencies. The fact that non-governmental organisations apply the “involvement of partner organisations” and “capacity development” quality criteria more often than average is highlighted as a positive aspect by DEval.

As regards the official implementing organisations, the result of the meta-evaluation is positive. Compared with DEval’s “Sustainability” meta-evaluation in 2018, in the present meta-evaluation the application of the quality criteria has increased by 36%. For the BMZ, this outcome shows that the discussions on quality issues and pertinent agreements on common evaluation practices within the framework of the “evaluation” working group of the BMZ, DEval, GIZ, KfW, PTB and BGR have been successful. This working group will take the conclusions drawn from detailed findings of this meta-evaluation into account in its working programme.

## Conclusions drawn by the BMZ

In response to the recommendation made by DEval, the BMZ will include in its existing dialogue formats an exchange on questions relating to systematically identifying and prescribing all required quality standards in an organisation's documents, and also put this aspect on the agenda on this year’s meeting of German evaluation units, for instance.

In addition, the BMZ will develop – on the basis of the BMZ evaluation policy – an analysis grid for the application of the individual quality standards

specified in the policy, and make that grid available to the organisations.

For the non-governmental area, taking the BMZ evaluation policy as a basis and also taking into account upcoming updates to the funding conditions for certain budget lines for the promotion of projects by non-governmental actors, or as part of the further development of funding practices, the BMZ will include the guiding principles of the evaluation policy in these funding titles through specific rules and regulations.

The BMZ will also examine whether it is possible to provide additional financial support for evaluations of non-governmental organisations (and specifically private agencies).

In the BMZ’s view, it would be advisable to examine official implementing organisations and civil society organisations separately again in future meta-evaluations so as to take the specific characteristics of the two areas into account and thus obtain even more specific and nuanced results and conclusions.

The DEval report “*Meta-evaluation on the quality of (project) evaluations in German development cooperation*” can be downloaded at [www.deval.org/de/evaluierungsberichte.html](http://www.deval.org/de/evaluierungsberichte.html).

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