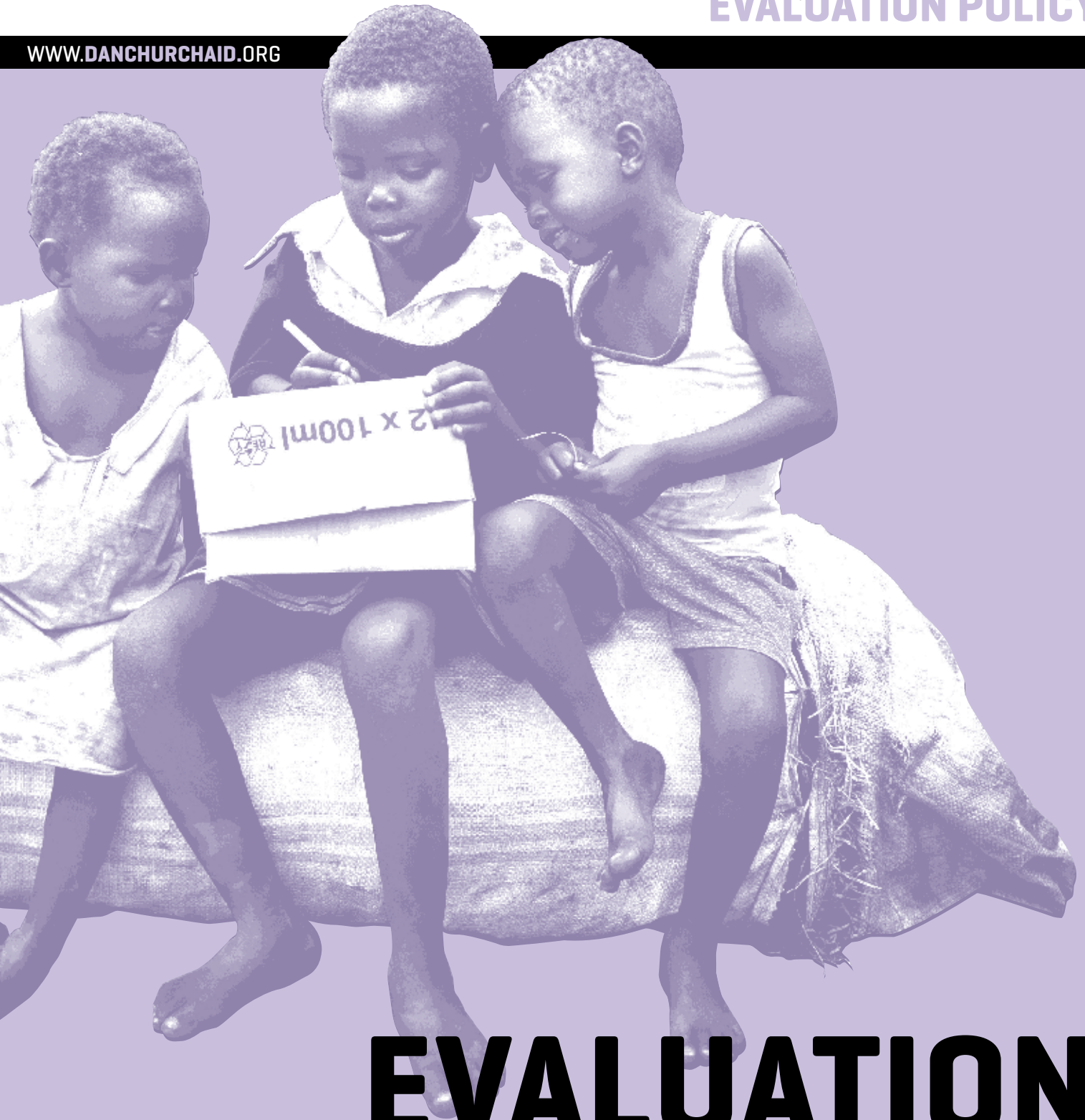


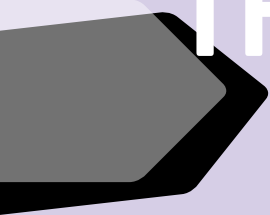
EVALUATION POLICY

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EVALUATION POLICY

EVALUATING FOR
LEARNING AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



THIS POLICY IN ONE PAGE

Why evaluate?

Evaluations in DCA are assessments of completed activities carried out by external evaluators. Evaluation serves two overall purposes: learning and accountability. Learning is achieved when we as an organisation adapt our future interventions to past experience. Accountability is achieved when evaluations credibly analyse the impact of interventions.

What to evaluate?

- Programmes: Evaluation is mandatory for all programmes at the end of the programme cycle, i.e. three to five years.
- Projects: The primary purpose of evaluations is learning. As such, evaluations should be carried out when the potential for learning is greatest, for example in innovative pilot projects. Apart from that, evaluation is mandatory for projects with a duration of more than three years or an annual budget above certain limits; 500,000 DKK for development projects and 5m DKK for humanitarian response and humanitarian mine action projects. The specific limits are listed in Annex 1, Mandatory evaluations – which projects? Apart from these projects, three to five projects are randomly selected for evaluation each year by the Programme Policy Unit.
- Finally, DCA carries out thematic evaluations, which are initiated by the Programme Policy Unit.

Making evaluations useful: 1-3-25 and the evaluation event

An evaluation consists of a process and a product. The process should involve all stakeholders and be followed by an evaluation event, for example a meeting where findings are presented or even a chat-session with interested parties. All evaluations should be followed up to ensure learning across countries and programmes. The division of responsibilities is spelled out on in Section 6. The product is the evaluation report. The report must follow a 1-3-25 format. The first page must contain recommendations for future interventions, the following three pages should contain an executive summary and the evaluation itself should be no more than 25 pages. See Annex 2 for more information on 1-3-25.

How to evaluate?

In general, involvement of stakeholders including beneficiaries, implementers and managers in the preparation, implementation and follow-up of evaluations is a prerequisite to learning. The crucial issue to agree on is the evaluation question. What question should the evaluation answer? Accountability is achieved by considering the counterfactual question: what would have happened without the intervention? The method of evaluation should match the question to be answered and we welcome new methods. There is no specific DCA Evaluation Guidelines. We refer to what we think are good guidelines in Section 5.

About this policy and related tools

This policy is written by the Programme Policy Unit with substantial input from Regional Offices and other units. It was approved by Senior Management on 5/3/2012 and by the Board on 10/4/2012. It will be revised at least every five years, i.e. in 2017. It was updated from an earlier version approved in 2006. See Section 8 for more information on the process and background. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Advisor on Evaluation or the head of the Program Policy Unit. Minor revisions are approved by the international director only.



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WHAT IS EVALUATION?

DanChurchAid (DCA) adheres to the OECD/DAC definition of evaluations:

An evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed development intervention, its design, implementation and results. In the development context, evaluation refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of a development intervention (OECD QUALITY STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT EVALUATIONS, OECD DAC, 2010).

Furthermore, evaluations in DCA are always external, i.e. carried out by people not employed by DCA, typically contracted consultants.

How does evaluation relate to monitoring and reviews

Evaluations are a part of DCA's monitoring and evaluation framework. In this respect, the two key defining characteristics of evaluations are that **they are external**, i.e. carried out by external consultants, and **they are comprehensive** in that they are assessments covering whole projects, usually several years of activities. Other parts of DCA's monitoring and evaluation framework are reviews, which are internally conducted assessments to monitor whether a project or programme is on track and produces the immediate outputs that are agreed upon in the cooperation agreement and project document between the partner and DCA. Monitoring is a series of small, frequent assessments of implementation progress, made to inform day-to-day operations. Finally, evaluation is different from financial audits in that it may include financial information, but focuses on the activities and their results.

THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATIONS IN DANCHURCHAID

Evaluations in DanChurchAid (DCA) have two overall purposes: learning and accountability. These two purposes are described below.

To promote learning by active participation

Everyone involved in evaluations should have learning at the forefront of their mind. Managers and staff should carry out evaluations of projects with a high potential for learning. Evaluators should make sure that the issues they focus on are formulated by the stakeholders involved and that these are involved in the evaluation throughout. **Communication of findings should be prioritized.** The goal is to explore the reasons for the successes and failures of activities funded by DCA, and thus produce information that can help achieve future results more effectively and efficiently. The evaluation document must

report recommendations for future actions targeted at future project managers, DCA headquarters and policy makers.

To promote accountability by documentation and systematization of experience

In DCA, accountability is the responsible use of power. Being accountable is a process of **taking into account the views of different stakeholders and primarily the people affected by authority or power**, as described in the standards for the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership. In evaluation, this translates into an obligation to document results to all stakeholders, and is not limited to upward financial accountability. For evaluations to contribute to accountability, they must be carried out transparently and independently.

WHAT DOES DANCHURCHAID EVALUATE?

To learn and to seek to improve constantly is a natural part of good practice in DanChurchAid (DCA). Evaluation is an obvious tool for this and thus the decision to evaluate should depend on the potential for learning. As such, a small pilot project might not require an evaluation according to the formal criteria below, but it should be evaluated regardless, since the potential for learning is high.

All of DCA's international work must be evaluated regularly at project, programme, thematic and cross-cutting levels. This includes work in long-term development, humanitarian response and humanitarian mine action. Since these three areas differ in their planning horizons and working practices, the evaluation approach and evaluation criteria chosen will, to some extent, also be different and are clarified below.

In all cases, the budget figure excludes DCA administration costs.

Project evaluations

Whether or not a project evaluation is mandatory depends on the project's budget and its duration. The specific criteria for when interventions are evaluated are outlined below. For a quick overview, see Annex 1, Mandatory evaluations – which projects?

The figures below describe DCA minimum requirements independently of funding source. Back donors or other stakeholders may have stricter requirements. Furthermore, whenever an ACT

agency carries out an evaluation of a DCA-funded project, the ACT evaluation is accepted as a DCA evaluation. For ACT Appeals, which are a funding modality used for some humanitarian projects, the decision about evaluation follows ACT policies and standards. In 2011, these stated that all projects with a total expenditure of more than 1 million USD must be evaluated, regardless of duration.

For projects with multiple phases, the duration is the total duration of all phases, as long as the activities taking place are similar in character.

Dispensation from the criteria can be given in writing by the Development Director, the Humanitarian Director or the International Director.

RANDOMLY SELECTED PROJECTS FOR EVALUATION Apart from the mandatory evaluations required by the tables below, between three and six projects are randomly selected each year to undergo an accountability evaluation. Projects are selected among a pool of finished or soon-to-be finished projects. Evaluations of these projects follow the same standards as normal evaluations, but are initiated by DCA's Copenhagen Office. As such, these evaluations are particularly focused on global learning and accountability.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PROJECTS All projects with an average annual budget of 5,000,000 DKK must be evaluated, regardless of duration. Moreover, projects running for three years or more must undergo evaluation. The details are shown below.

DURATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET IN DKK		
	LESS THAN 3,000,000	3-5,000,000	MORE THAN 5,000,000
ONE YEAR OR LESS	Not mandatory	Not mandatory	Mandatory
ONE OR TWO YEARS	Not mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
THREE YEARS OR MORE	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS All projects with an average annual budget of 500,000 DKK must be evaluated, regardless of the duration. Similarly, all projects running for three years or more must be evaluated, regardless of budget. For projects less than three years and budgets of less than 500,000 DKK the general rule is that they must be evaluated when a new phase has led to a total duration of activities of a similar character, for three years or more.

DURATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET IN DKK	
	LESS THAN 500,000	MORE THAN 500,000
LESS THAN THREE YEARS	Not mandatory	Mandatory
THREE YEARS OR MORE	Mandatory	Mandatory

A project completion report must be completed for development projects, when no evaluation takes place.

HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION Evaluations of humanitarian mine action projects follow the same criteria as projects within humanitarian response, although the budget limits are somewhat different as shown in the table below.

DURATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET IN DKK		
	LESS THAN 5,000,000	5,000,000 - 10,000,000	MORE THAN 10,000,000
ONE YEAR OR LESS	Not mandatory	Not mandatory	Mandatory
ONE OR TWO YEARS	Not mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
THREE YEARS OR MORE	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

Apart from the evaluations mandated by the table, external quality assurance is carried out by UN Mine Action Coordination (UNMAC) or a National Mine Action Coordination (NMAC) which ensures that National Mine Action Standards are adhered to. The UNMAC/NMAC checks DCA's work both in terms of the end-product and in terms of working methods. Quality assurance reports are filed with DCA and faults corrected on an ongoing basis.

Programme evaluations

Programmes are strategic frameworks that ensure synergy and cohesion among projects in a geographical area. As a logical consequence of the programme approach, focus is on programme evaluation. This is where the bulk of resources should be spent and where planning takes place at country level. All programmes should be evaluated upon completion. Here, joint evaluations with other funding partners are more difficult given the particular programme approach of DCA, but if relevant and if possible joint evaluations should be pursued. If practical, thematic evaluations of a programme type carried out across countries may supersede individual programme evaluations.

Thematic evaluations

Thematic evaluations are carried out when the examination of a particular topic would benefit from a cross-regional approach. These types of evaluations assess an issue of interest to DCA as an organisation. As such, they are not confined to specific regions or offices, although field work may take place in a limited number of sites. They may for instance assess the effectiveness of the programme approach, or the implementation of the cross-cutting issues such as Rights Based Commitment, Gender Equity, Partnership Policy or Organisational Development.

Once a year, Senior Management discusses and decides on the need for thematic evaluations. Terms of Reference (ToR) are prepared in consultation with staff and the Board.



HOW DOES DANCHURCHAID EVALUATE?

Even though this policy contains standards for evaluations, an evaluation must always be designed to maximize learning in its specific context. As such, methodology, scope and budgets may vary greatly. In many cases, it is more effective for learning and accountability to concentrate funds on a few very thorough evaluations and thus to carry out smaller evaluations in the remaining cases. For example, evaluations can focus on an evidence-informed learning workshop where the evaluation report is primarily the workshop report. Or the evaluation can focus on careful analysis of data and communicate findings through a video. In all cases, the basic requirements below must be fulfilled.

The core of all DanChurchAid (DCA) evaluations is **to determine whether DCA operations have achieved the intended results**, but they should also look into any unintended results and possible side-effects. This means that the point of departure is always DCA's approved documents, for example project or programme documents, including the predefined objectives and their indicators, or thematic, cross-cutting global policies.

Evaluations are preferably planned in a project's design phase. In any case, evaluations must be approved during DCA's annual planning process, which takes place the year before the evaluation is intended to take place. Transparency and time schedules of planned and completed evaluations are crucial and should be listed in DCA's normal planning and reporting systems such as the Annual Programme Reports, Global Report and the annual Vision & Plan. Each DCA unit should plan evaluations as a group to share responsibility and share knowledge.

Some simple bullets can serve as a checklist for the basic standard of the final evaluation report:

1. The Terms of Reference for the evaluation must clearly **describe the context** of the evaluated intervention, the evaluation objective, relevant stakeholders and expected outputs. The format 1-3-25 should be mentioned in the Terms of Reference.
2. The evaluation must reflect on the five OECD-DAC criteria: **Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability**.
3. The evaluation report must follow the **format of 1-3-25**.
4. The method should be **gender sensitive** and it must describe how it fits the purpose of the evaluation.
5. In terms of impact, the evaluation must reflect on the **counterfactual question**: What would have happened without the intervention?
6. Evaluations should always assess the extent to which a project or programme contributes to delivering **DCA's Accountability Framework**, in particular in relation to Benchmark 3 (Sharing information), Benchmark 4 (Participation) and Benchmark 5 (Handling complaints).
7. The deadline for the receipt of the final project evaluation is **six months**.

Focus on learning

DCA wants to enhance the sharing of knowledge and learning potential of all types of evaluations. Evaluations must be utilisation-focused in the sense that part of the responsibility for learning lies with the evaluator, in particular when it comes to identifying and involving expected users. The evaluation pro-

cess is seen as an opportunity for DCA staff and partners to look back and reflect about a particular intervention, a policy or an approach and form conclusions about what can be learned from it and put to use in future. **The process should be participatory from beginning to end** and include all stakeholders including rights-holders and partners as well as other NGO's and the back donor when relevant.

The main opportunities for learning in the evaluation process are:

- involving relevant stakeholders in designing the ToR. This includes partners and DCA staff locally and in HQ, as well as ACT sister agencies and back donors when relevant. These must be mentioned by name in the Terms of Reference.
- identifying one key evaluation question;
- ensuring meaningful contact with rights-holders, DCA staff and other stakeholders during field visits;
- an evaluation event, for example a debriefing session in-country, a meeting with all stakeholders or a video conference with all relevant DCA staff. In-country this could take place at Programme Platforms. It could also include a public event;
- DCA's response to the recommendations and formulation of follow-up plan;
- using lessons learned in designing new projects, programmes or policies;
- including lessons learned in the annual report and other reports.

See the Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-Fe) Checklist link in the resource section.

Attribution of impact: The counterfactual question

Any good evaluation considers the following question: What would have happened in the absence of our project or programme? This counterfactual question is essential in answering the questions about impact, effectiveness and efficiency mentioned below and is used to establish attribution of impact to a project's activities. There are several methods of answering the question and no one method fits all situations. In some situations, **an evaluation might trace the process of impact in sufficient detail to establish what would have happened in the absence of the project**. In other situations, the progress of project participants might be compared to a non-participating control group in which case it is key to ensure as much similarity in the participating and the control group as possible, for example by selecting the group in the same way participants were selected or by randomly selecting people or project sites for participation. The latter will only be possible in certain cases and extreme care has to be taken to ensure ethical procedures are followed. Such projects must be approved by the International Director and will usually involve a separate impact assessment. See the list of resources in the section on "Other resources" for more information.

Regardless of the specific methodology applied, all project evaluations must include data creation or data collection among the final beneficiaries or rights-holders, the method used must be gender sensitive, i.e. pay specific attention to the role of gender and present disaggregated data wherever possible.

Making evaluation reports readable

The final evaluation report should follow a 1-3-25 format: One page of main messages directed at future implementers and decision makers; three pages containing an executive summary; and the evaluation findings in no more than 25 pages of text. Adoption of a standard format was recommended by a review of DCA's evaluation practice carried out in 2009 in order to enhance learning. See Annex 2 for more information.

Quality in project evaluations

For evaluations of development and humanitarian projects, DCA applies the five basic criteria defined by OECD/DAC and applied widely everywhere in international aid.

RELEVANCE

- Are the development interventions relevant to DCA and partners' development policies, goals and strategies?
- Is the activity relevant in relation to the needs and priorities of the intended beneficiaries?

EFFECTIVENESS

- Have the primary objectives identified been achieved?
- Have the planned or expected results been achieved, including whether the intended population was reached?

EFFICIENCY

- How economically have resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) been converted to results?
- Are the investment and recurrent costs justified?
- Could the same results have been achieved with fewer resources?

IMPACT

- What positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects have been produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?

SUSTAINABILITY

- What is the probability of long-term benefits?
- Will the intended benefits continue when development co-operation is terminated?
- Is local ownership established?

For humanitarian assistance projects, due consideration must be given to the specific issues relevant in this context, for example difficult access to key informants due to the disruption caused by the crisis and rapid turnover in staff; an often polarised perspective on the same event due to ongoing conflict; missing indicators due to hasty planning and in general a rapid

change in circumstances meaning that many assumptions about normal social and physical conditions may no longer be justified.

Furthermore, the following issues should be considered in evaluations of humanitarian response, together with the Sphere Standards:

APPROPRIATENESS

In the case of evaluation of DCA's humanitarian assistance, relevance is often supplemented with the criteria "appropriateness of the intervention". Although an intervention is relevant at macro level, it may not be appropriate in terms of activities selected. Appropriateness is tailoring the intervention to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability and cost-effectiveness accordingly. Cultural appropriateness should also be considered.

COVERAGE

This includes targeting and involves determining who was supported with assistance and protection proportionate to their needs and why. The Code of Conduct from International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement that DCA adheres to stipulates clearly that aid is given regardless of race, creed or nationality and devoid of any extraneous political agenda. Under the coverage criteria the evaluator should look at targeting and pay attention to possible inclusion/exclusion bias.

CONNECTEDNESS

Sustainability may not be as important given the often short duration of the assistance. But instead the intervention should be evaluated for its connectedness – or its linking of relief, rehabilitation and development. Connectedness refers to the need to ensure that humanitarian assistance activities of a short-term nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account. An evaluation should look at the existence of a sound exit strategy, examine how local capacity is supported and developed and analyse the nature of partnerships supporting connectedness.

All evaluations in DCA must live up to the following international standards. They must be independent, impartial, transparent, participatory, feasible, cost-efficient, accurate, and fair and must not single out individuals for judgement. Additionally, the standards set out in the DCA Partnership Policy such as mutual ownership, accountability to all stakeholders, equality, harmonization and alignment must be applied.

DCA's approach to project evaluations must live up to the values stipulated in DCA's Partnership Policy, which means that DCA wants to ensure that all project-specific evaluations also contain information and observations about the relationship between DCA and the partner, the relevance and effectiveness of the partnership, and mutual learning aspects regarding the project.

Quality in programme evaluations

Programme evaluations focus on DCA's capacity as a partner and the capacity to achieve its own strategic goals as set out in Vision and Plan and approved programme documents. The partners are involved through the Partner Platforms where they contribute to the design of the entire evaluation exercise. Partners are requested to comment on the ToR and to make sure that (what they see as) key issues at the programme level are included in the ToR. By default they are also key informants during the exercise and they participate in the debriefing and the final workshop, where the follow-up on the recommendations is decided upon.

Key documents in programme evaluation include:

- context analyses
- programme strategies
- programme budgets
- programme overviews
- programme review reports
- programme logical frameworks.

Programme evaluations must not become only the sum of findings from project evaluations, but must also assess the extent to which:

- the project portfolio is relevant to the programme objectives;
- DCA gets added value;
- the programme approach has improved synergy and achieved results at output, outcome and (to the extent possible) impact level;
- DCA's capacity as a partner in the development process is validated;
- the programme is contributing to the achievement of the strategic objectives as defined in Vision and Plan.

Cross-programme and cross-country learning is particularly important in the case of programme evaluations. Therefore, all programme evaluations must have a follow-up plan that spells out how the lessons from that particular evaluation will be used in other programmes and countries.

Making evaluations public

To ensure accountability and transparency, all evaluations are public, unless specific precautions need to be taken regarding the safety of partners and DCA staff, or the effectiveness of a strategy or advocacy campaign. Specifically, **programme and thematic evaluations along with DCA's response are made public on DCA's website** by the Programme Policy Unit. Project evaluations are only available upon request, due to the vast number of reports. Whether the programme and thematic reports should be published in the form of printed reports will be considered on a case by case basis.

Harmonisation, alignment and budget support

DCA is committed to enhancing development effectiveness through harmonisation, alignment and budget support. In DCA,

harmonisation is when a group of agencies agree on a common set of requirements. In evaluation, this could mean agreeing on following common standards for evaluation. Alignment is when DCA follows partner's standards. When DCA provides budget support to partners, no specific project is supported. All three modalities require evaluation to be done differently, but this should not prevent DCA from promoting them.

In the case of harmonisation and alignment, **DCA might choose to follow partners' or others' evaluation standards.** As with other exceptions to the policy, this should be approved by International Management in writing and communicated to the Programme Policy Unit.

When it comes to budget support, an organisational assessment should take place before the budget support agreement and an organizational audit, i.e. an organizational assessment focused on tracking organisation level results, should follow at least every three years. Guidelines and terms for organisational audits can be found in DCA's Partner Development Guideline. Again, approval of a budget support agreement from International Management serves as derogation from the present policy. However, the organisational assessment should involve the Regional Representative and the relevant staff in Programme Policy Unit.

As harmonisation, alignment and budget support become more prevalent in DCA, guidelines to ensure accountability and learning will be expanded, building on experience.

Other resources

DanChurchAid has no specific guidelines for how to carry out an evaluation, since these depend on the context and are available elsewhere. We recommend the following guides and resources and most of them are available free online or via DCA's intranet.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Patton, M.Q., 1997, Utilization-focused evaluation, 3rd edition. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Patton, M. Q. 2006, Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-Fe) Checklist

OECD/DAC 2010: The DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation

OECD/DAC 2010: Summary of Key Norms and Standards - Second Edition

ALNAP 2006: Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria - An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies

Spencer et al 2003: Framework for Assessing Qualitative Evaluations, Government Chief Social Researcher's Office, London

World Bank 2011: Writing Terms of Reference for an Evaluation: A How-To Guide

World Bank 2004: Monitoring and Evaluation Tools, Methods and Approaches

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING

TREND Statement: Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Nonrandomized Designs (TREND)

ETHICS OF EVALUATORS

UK Evaluation Society Good Practice Guidelines

STANDARDS

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership's Standards
SPHERE Standards

RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIALS

Duflo, E., Glennerster, R. and Kremer, M., 2007. Using randomization in development economics research: A toolkit. Handbook of Development Economics, 4, 3895-3962.



PHOTO MIKKEL ØSTERGAARD

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS?

The Programme Policy Unit (PPU) is the central evaluation function and has the responsibility for managing thematic evaluations, supporting project and programme evaluations, and promoting organizational learning by ensuring the dissemination of evaluation findings.

Responsibilities for evaluations are summarised in the following table

	PROJECTS			OTHER	
	DEVELOPMENT	HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE	HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION	PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS	THEMATIC EVALUATIONS
ENSURE THAT EVALUATIONS TAKE PLACE	Programme Coordinator (or Regional Representatives if no PC)	Head of Humanitarian Response Unit	Head of Humanitarian Mine Action Unit	International Directors	Senior Management
DRAFTING THE TOR AND HIRING CONSULTANTS	Implementing partners	Relevant Humanitarian Response Advisor	Humanitarian Mine Action Team	Programme Officer in Regional Office	Program Policy Unit team
WHO MUST BE CONSULTED ON THE TOR	Programme Officer in Regional Office	Program Policy Unit, Relief Officer at Regional Office	N/A	Program Policy Unit team	The Board
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FOLLOW-UP (SEE THE NEXT SECTION)	Programme Coordinator (or Regional Representatives if no PC)	Head of Humanitarian Response Unit	Humanitarian Mine Action Unit	Programme Officer in Regional Office	International Directors

Project evaluations

For evaluation of all projects under approved programmes, staff at DanChurchAid's (DCA) Regional Offices has the initiative and responsibility for ensuring that these evaluations are conducted. Funding for project evaluations must be included in the project budget when the project is negotiated and designed together with the partner(s). The funds allocated to project evaluation are transferred to the partner, to ensure the partner's complete ownership of the process. DCA staff should be consulted on the design of the evaluation exercise, the selection of the consultant, the scope of the evaluation and the discussion related to the implementation of the recommendations. In case of limited capacity, the partner can decide to let DCA facilitate and manage the budget and process for an external evaluation. The partner and DCA staff responsible for projects must ensure that evaluations are jointly planned and financed with other donors when relevant. Partners with similar projects can decide to undertake an evaluation jointly, possibly using the Partner Platform as the coordinating body.

Programme and thematic evaluations

To ensure independence and follow-up action on the evaluation recommendations, the decision-making related to all programme evaluations, both long-term development and humanitarian response, lies with the International Directors. This includes the approval of the TOR and DCA's response to the findings and recommendations of specific evaluations. The responsibility for the plan for thematic evaluations and response to the recommendations lie with the Senior Management team. Main findings, recommendations and planned follow-up action to programme evaluations are submitted to the Board for information through the annual report on Vision & Plan. Thematic evaluations are also submitted to the Board separately. The Board is consulted on topics for thematic evaluations.

The responsibility for planning, design and management of programme evaluations lies with the Regional Offices. The Regional Representative updates the evaluation plan annually in the Annual Programme Reports and they are filed in DCA's intranet.



FOLLOW-UP

Due to the huge number of project evaluations compared to programme and thematic evaluations, DanChurchAid (DCA) has different procedures for the follow-up process.

Project and programme evaluations

At the conclusion of a project or programme evaluation, a workshop or meeting must be held with partners and other involved and interested stakeholders at country level. Follow-up on recommendations and conclusions from project evaluations is, under normal circumstances, dealt with at country level. In the case of any particularly critical conclusions, the Regional Representative must also inform his/her superior in DCA headquarters.

Follow-up on conclusions and recommendations from programme evaluations is the responsibility of the Regional Representative. PPU is expected to invite all relevant stakeholders for a meeting in headquarters for learning purposes, for example Programme and Policy Unit, Global Funding Unit, ProLog, International Directors, Global Advocacy and Strategy Unit, International Finance Unit

In all the above-mentioned cases, a follow-up memo including

a DCA comment box will be prepared to record the decisions made in relation to findings, recommendations, actions and time frame.

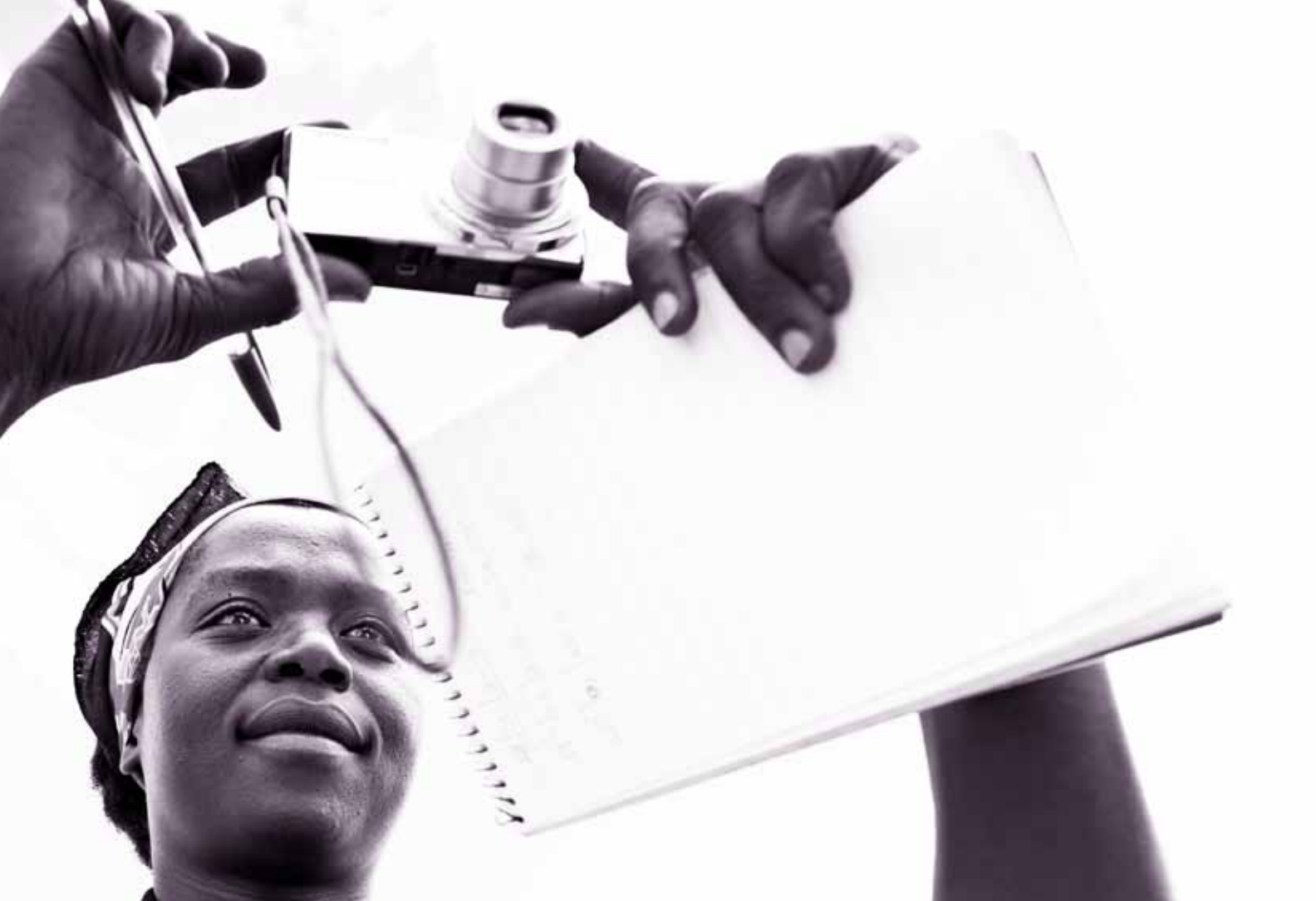
The Regional Representative is responsible for forwarding the follow-up memo including the DCA comment box in English and Danish the Programme and Policy Unit no later than one month after the external evaluation has been finalised.

Thematic evaluations

Follow-up on global thematic evaluations is the responsibility of Senior Management, but will normally be discussed in the Management Forum where they jointly identify the response to the recommendations and how to implement it.

Program Policy Unit is responsible for coordination of the “DCA comment box” from the Management of the International Department prior to publication.

The head of the responsible unit reports annually on the follow-up through the usual channels e.g. programme reports, reports to Danida, Global report etc.



BACKGROUND

This evaluation policy is the guidance and the structural framework for DanChurchAid's (DCA) project, programme and thematic evaluations at the different organisational levels of DCA. The purpose of this policy is to promote good practice in evaluations of DCA's international work.

This policy has been developed in the spirit of harmonization and alignment with other likeminded NGOs and reinforces best practice in the field, in particular ICCO, Christian Aid and ACT international.

DCA and partners have a long tradition of evaluating projects. Before 1988, project evaluations were carried out on a more or less ad hoc basis and did not provide sufficient knowledge, either for DCA or for partners. DCA's first evaluation guideline was approved in 1988 and internal assessments of DCA's evaluation practice in 1994, 1997, 2006 and 2011 have facilitated gradual improvements, including continued revisions of DCA's evaluation policy, guidelines and tools. A key finding in the 1997, 2006 and 2011 reviews was that **project evaluations were not in a format that facilitated sharing of lessons learned**, in particular regarding lessons applicable to others than project participants. The

most important changes in the current policy compared to earlier policies are the emphasis on 1:3:25 to facilitate cross-country learning as well as a separate section on attribution of impact to the intervention. Moreover, this policy is the first to include Humanitarian Response and Humanitarian Mine Action.

During the last decade DCA's international work has changed in several important areas, where the most significant change has been the decentralisation process that marks a shift from a project to a programme approach, increased partner participation and influence, and a growing number of staff in DCA Regional Offices. Furthermore, several organisational changes in DCA headquarters have been implemented to accommodate these changes such as internal coordination, financial and programme support functions, advocacy, as well as management of a growing financial turnover in DCA. Parallel to these internal changes, DCA is also involved in external changes such as the new ACT Alliance, certification of DCA's work to meet international standards, for example the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, and active involvement with back donors and public supporters regarding new reporting requirements.

annex 1

MANDATORY EVALUATIONS – WHICH PROJECTS?

General requirements

The figures below describe DCA minimum requirements, independent of funding source. Back donors or other stakeholders may have stricter requirements. Dispensation from the requirement below should be given in writing by the Development Director, the Humanitarian Director or the International Director. For projects with multiple phases, the duration is the total duration of all phases, as long as the activities taking place are similar in character.

Whenever an ACT agency carries out an evaluation of a DCA-funded project, the ACT evaluation is accepted as a DCA evaluation. For ACT Appeals, the decision on evaluation follows ACT policies and standards.

Evaluations are assessments of activities carried out by external evaluators, for example consultants.

14

For all development projects

DURATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET IN DKK	
	LESS THAN 500,000	MORE THAN 500,000
LESS THAN THREE YEARS	Not mandatory	Mandatory
THREE YEARS OR MORE	Mandatory	Mandatory

For development projects, a project completion report must be completed when no evaluation takes place.

For humanitarian response projects

DURATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET IN DKK		
	LESS THAN 3,000,000	3-5,000,000	MORE THAN 5,000,000
ONE YEAR OR LESS	Not mandatory	Not mandatory	Mandatory
ONE OR TWO YEARS	Not mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
THREE YEARS OR MORE	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

Apart from the evaluations mandated by the criteria, Humanitarian Response Unit will evaluate at least one project funded by Danida emergency response funds annually..

For humanitarian mine action projects

DURATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET IN DKK		
	LESS THAN 5,000,000	5,000,000 - 10,000,000	MORE THAN 10,000,000
ONE YEAR OR LESS	Not mandatory	Not mandatory	Mandatory
ONE OR TWO YEARS	Not mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
THREE YEARS OR MORE	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

STANDARD FORMAT FOR EVALUATION REPORTS

Making reports user-friendly: 1-3-25

A good evaluation report prepared for DCA should follow the standard format:

- start with one page of main messages
- follow that with a three-page executive summary
- present findings in no more than 25 pages of writing, in a language that a bright, educated, but not research-trained person would understand.

One page: Recommendations

On the first page of an evaluation report, you should present your report's recommendations for future action. Recommendations should have specific target audiences, e.g. some recommendations for future project managers, others for programme managers and yet others for policy makers. Don't confuse them with a summary of findings. You have to go one step further and tell your audience what you think the findings mean for them. The messages, per se, may not even appear in the text. They are what can be inferred from your report. This is your chance, based on your evaluation, to tell future project managers and decision-makers what implications your work has for theirs. How should you formulate them? Set aside your text and focus on expressing clear conclusions based on what you've learned. Consider your audience - who are they, and what do they need most to know about what you've learned? Say your evaluation shows that too little attention was given to gender equality. The target group was treated as homogenous, instead of taking into consideration the roles of women and men separately. That's the problem. The actual main message you write may be that baseline data should be disaggregated by gender. An evaluation showing that project procurement was too slow might recommend that procurement courses are held early on. Writing main messages can be difficult for evaluators to do, because they focus on success and failures in the project or programme under evaluation, but it has to be done if evaluation is to be of real use to future project implementers and decision makers. And remember - if you don't do it, you're leaving your work to be interpreted by someone else, who probably won't have your insight. Be as concrete as you can.

Three pages: Executive Summary

The next three pages are for your executive summary. These are your findings condensed to serve the needs of the busy project manager or decision maker, who wants to know quickly whether the report will be useful. Start by outlining what issues you were looking at, using language and examples a local project officer or donor will understand; sum up the answers you found. An executive summary is not a descriptive abstract; it's much more like a newspaper story, where the most interesting stuff goes at the top, followed by the background and context and less important information further down. This is not the place for more than a line or two about your approach, methods and other technical details. Concentrate on getting the essence of your evaluation across succinctly but not cryptically.

25 pages: The Report

A good evaluation uses maximum 25 pages for the complete report of your work. There might be another length you're more comfortable with, but remember that a consistent format will make it more likely that others will actually read your report. Don't hesitate to use anecdotes, quotes from rights-holders or stories to get your point across. To make sure your writing suits the busy project manager and regional representative, who is probably intelligent and interested, but also a practical person, consider their preferences. What do they find most useful and interesting? How do they find your language and style? As a guide, but not as a requirement, the following chapters can be included: introduction; background; findings and conclusions; recommendations; and annexes.

Needless to say, the numbers 1, 3 and 25 are maximums. Shorter sections are fine. The 1-3-25 is inspired by The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation's reporting format guideline.

DANCHURCH AID
NØRREGADE 15
1165 COPENHAGEN K
DENMARK

TELEPHONE +45 33 15 28 00

MAIL@DCA.DK

WWW.DANCHURCH AID.ORG

