

Self-Evaluation of IMF Capacity Development Activities

49. This section addresses the mechanisms in place for self-evaluation of capacity development activities by the IMF.³¹ Capacity development encompasses the technical assistance (TA) and training that the IMF provides to member countries, and accounts for about one-quarter of the institution's administrative budget.³² The Board sets overall policy for capacity development but has devolved the responsibility for approving and overseeing individual projects and other activities to Management. The Institute for Capacity Development (ICD), created in May 2012 through a merger of the former IMF Institute and the Office of Technical Assistance Management (OTM), sets strategy and coordinates the delivery of TA and training activities. External donors fund about half of the direct costs of the program, but the IMF takes ownership for the delivery of TA and training.

50. Self-evaluations of capacity development activities were often required by donors and partners involved in the financing and/or execution of these activities and were largely conducted in line with broadly accepted practices and standards of evaluation. The quality and coverage of self-evaluation varied widely. Most assessments included an examination of inputs and outputs but only a few sought to assess outcomes and impact, which is difficult to do. Limited mechanisms were in place for dissemination and utilization of lessons. Some self-evaluations resulted in formal reports but these were not discussed by the Board. However, the Board guided the IMF's approach to capacity development through periodic strategic reviews, which to varying degrees included elements of self-evaluation.

51. In 2014, the IMF adopted a new statement on "IMF Policies and Practices on Capacity Development" (IMF, 2014c) that lays the basis for a unified approach to evaluation, including a results-based management framework, a common evaluation standard to facilitate comparison across technical assistance and training activities, and a periodic IMF-wide review of capacity development to be considered by the Board. While the IMF is now implementing this new approach, it will take some time to see its results and therefore this evaluation focuses on the framework in place up through 2013.

Self-Evaluation of Technical Assistance

52. IMF TA is carried out through a range of modalities, including headquarters-based short-term missions and resident long-term consultants. All TA projects are tracked via the web-based TA Information Management System (TAIMS) mainly intended as a monitoring tool to facilitate management of the projects. The TAIMS template calls for a basic self-evaluative statement of whether projects met their stated objectives. However, an IEO study (Selowsky and Tan, 2015) of TAIMS documentation for a sample of completed projects found wide variation in the extent to which this is done.³³ Also, there was no uniform approach to specifying objectives or assessing the quality of TA outputs or outcomes.

53. In addition to TAIMS tracking, most donor-financed and some IMF-financed TA undergo more intensive self-evaluation, whether as a result of donor

³¹This section draws on Selowsky and Tan (2015).

³²TA in this context follows the Fund's budgetary definition which excludes activities such as FSAPs and Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes. Training in this context refers to training of member country government officials, which the IMF classifies as external training. The IMF's training of its own Staff is not covered by this evaluation.

³³About two-thirds of the projects reviewed by the IEO described a reasonably clear sequence of activities, though specification of objectives and outcomes was not consistent across projects, even within departments. About three-fifths of the projects reviewed had received complete and reasonably candid final assessments at the point when project activities were closed.

requirements or departmental practices.³⁴ The focus of donor-mandated evaluations varied according to the type of activity examined; usually they aimed to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability (following OECD-Development Assistance Committee criteria). Evaluations undertaken by TA departments typically examined a particular topic in multiple countries or a long-lasting TA relationship in a single country. Some focused narrowly on the technical quality of advice (inputs), while others looked more fully at the results chain; sometimes—but very rarely—these evaluations assessed whether recipient agencies were able to utilize the knowledge and skills imparted (outcome) and the ultimate effect on agency performance (impact). IMF departments also use other evaluation tools, including contacts with country authorities and TA donors and surveys of stakeholders.

54. The IEO did not find any consistent practices for sharing or following up on lessons from self-evaluation. A May 2013 assessment of capacity development strategy by IMF staff described the dissemination and follow-up of evaluation findings and lessons as “irregular” (IMF, 2013). Similarly, the survey undertaken for this evaluation found that half of IMF staff respondents who had participated in capacity development activities did not believe that mechanisms were in place to follow up on lessons learned. Further, donor-mandated evaluations appeared primarily (or perhaps exclusively) to serve the purpose of reporting and accountability, both by the IMF to the donors and within donor countries.

³⁴More than 75 percent of the externally financed TA is covered by donor-mandated evaluations. A significant share of the remainder is evaluated by the IMF departments delivering the TA. [Annex 2](#) of Selowsky and Tan (2015) lists the 37 ex post/thematic reports issued during 2006–14, often covering many projects.

55. Still, there were examples of utilization of evaluation findings. In particular, the Committee on Capacity Building, chaired by Management, considered lessons on the relevance of TA in the allocation of resources. Periodic strategic reviews of TA prepared for the Board about every three years included elements of self-evaluation and typically distilled some lessons for TA delivery. Also, from 2003 through 2010, Staff prepared five reports for the Board summarizing lessons from self-evaluations of a sample of TA projects.

Self-Evaluation of Training

56. The relevance and quality of delivery of training activities (i.e., workshops, courses, and seminars) are assessed using client satisfaction questionnaires completed at the end of each course, a triennial survey of agencies that send their staff for IMF training, and periodic meetings of regional training directors. Recently ICD has started giving quizzes before and after some of its training courses, and an expanded program of follow-up surveys was introduced to assess the longer-term impact of training, but this is challenging.

57. Lessons from self-evaluation of training are taken into account in designing and delivering activities. Feedback for each training event is reported to departmental management, and evaluation results are shared with donors and partners. Some IMF staff reported that the results of triennial surveys are taken into account in planning future courses. However, greater efforts should be devoted to distill and disseminate lessons from follow-up surveys and regional training director meetings.