

The Executive Board and Self-Evaluation in the IMF

58. This chapter discusses the Board's role in self-evaluation at the IMF. The IEO found that the Board utilized self-evaluation results in reviewing and deciding on policies and operations. However, Staff was largely unaware of this utilization and more generally it did not perceive the Board as a champion for self-evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation concluded that the Board did not make sufficiently clear the importance of self-evaluation as a tool for learning and accountability. The evaluation also found that the Board engaged in few self-evaluative activities to examine its own performance.

The Role of the Board in IMF-Wide Self-Evaluation

59. The Board played a key role in the governance of self-evaluation activities undertaken by Management and Staff. The self-evaluation tools discussed earlier in this report, including EPAs, EPEs, and policy and other thematic reviews were established and have continued to be refined as a result of Board-mandated decisions. The Board also considered lessons and conclusions arising from self-evaluation in order to inform its approval, revision, and oversight of IMF policies and programs. Indeed, in interviews conducted by the IEO, Directors stressed the importance of applying lessons from EPAs and EPEs in the design and implementation of subsequent programs.

60. However, IMF staff had mixed views about the Board's engagement on issues raised by self-evaluations. Two-thirds of IMF staff respondents to the evaluation survey agreed that the Board was interested in reports that documented what worked and what did not, but fewer than half agreed that the Board took up the issues raised by self-evaluations and contributed to drawing lessons for the institution. This perception of a lack of

follow-up of self-evaluation was corroborated by IEO interviews in which some Staff expressed disappointment with the quality of Board discussions of EPAs and EPEs.

61. Several Directors interviewed by IEO offered a more expansive view on the Board's role in IMF self-evaluation. They emphasized their role as conduits for authorities' feedback and alternative perspectives about IMF policies and operations, as well as advocates for learning and change from within the institution. Directors believed that they contributed to self-evaluation of the institution not just by considering documents presented by Staff and Management but also by conveying the broader view of their authorities on the IMF's work.

Executive Board Self-Assessment

62. Self-evaluation by the Board of its own work and activities is important to strengthen its effectiveness in carrying out its critical governance role. The IEO evaluation of *Governance of the IMF* (IEO, 2008) found that there was no formal procedure in the IMF for Board self-evaluation and recommended that the Board establish a regular process of self-assessment as a learning tool, including gathering feedback from authorities, Management, and Staff.³⁵

63. While no self-evaluation system has been established since the 2008 IEO report, steps have been taken to monitor and assess changes in Board work practices. In 2012, the Secretary's Department prepared a report on the implementation of Board efficiency reforms that

³⁵In follow-up Board discussions, Directors agreed that the Working Group on the Framework of the Managing Director's Performance Evaluation should expand its work program to consider this recommendation.

were agreed in 2010. That report included an analysis of monitoring indicators, as well as a survey of IMF staff and Offices of Executive Directors on implementation.³⁶ In IEO interviews, Directors expressed skepticism about formal Board self-assessments. Many Directors believed that any such assessment should be narrowly constructed and carried out by the Agenda and Procedures Committee.³⁷ Some questioned the need for self-evaluation by the Board—and whether it is appropriate—given that Directors are accountable to country authorities. Nonetheless, they expressed interest in practices at other IFIs.

³⁶Directors also discussed Board operations in several informal settings, including at retreats that were meant to provide an opportunity for self-assessment. However, Directors interviewed for this evaluation explained that discussions during retreats did not focus on the effectiveness of Board performance or lessons from experience.

³⁷The Committee's terms of reference include, inter alia, "[supporting] the development and orderly implementation of an effective management-guided work program and agenda of the Executive Board."

What Else Could Be Done: Practices at Other IFIs

64. Despite the significant differences in the mandates of IFIs and the roles of their respective Boards, self-evaluation practices at these organizations could provide examples of arrangements that could be useful at the IMF. For instance, the World Bank Executive Board has carried out annual self-assessments since 2012. Under this exercise, Executive Directors and Alternate Executive Directors complete a questionnaire covering issues such as the effectiveness of the Board and its committees, the balance between strategic and micro-level objectives on their agenda, ethics, and standards of integrity for Board members, and Board relations with Management. A summary report of the results and follow-up actions are discussed by the Board. At the African Development Bank, the Executive Board has conducted annual effectiveness reviews; these have been discussed at Board meetings and Board retreats, and their results have been used to develop an agenda to improve effectiveness. In 2014, the European Investment Bank Board of Directors carried out a self-assessment.