

**EVALUATION LESSONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND  
FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FORMULATION,  
DISSEMINATION AND REPORTING:  
A GUIDANCE NOTE**



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Operations Evaluation Department

**ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK**

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## OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT - OED

### EVALUATION LESSONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FORMULATION, DISSEMINATION AND REPORTING: A GUIDANCE NOTE

The purpose of this guidance note is to provide background on the definition, formulation, dissemination and reporting of lessons learned, recommendations and follow-up actions applied by the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). Intended users of this Guidance Note are evaluation staff and country program/operations staff in charge of project design or sector, country strategy and operations policy and results.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the life cycle of a project / program, we learn lessons and discover opportunities for improvement. As IsDB strives to become a knowledge-based organization committed to continuous improvement, it is important to document, synthesize, and utilize lessons learned and recommendations emanating from its previous experiences. The OE Department endeavors to contribute to the improvement of the quality at entry of IsDB interventions during the implementation and at exit by providing evidence-based lessons and actionable recommendations that can feed into the IsDB's strategies and operations. Thus, the formulation of lessons learned is becoming of utmost importance for the OE Department as lessons learned from the OE evaluation products feed into the design of future programs and projects and lead to actionable recommendations that enhance the quality of the on-going IsDB interventions. The expectation is that the OE Department will contribute to this objective by continuously drawing lessons from the evaluations to enhance development effectiveness. In this regard, the OE Department intends to continue developing the staff capacity in drawing high quality lessons and in formulating recommendations to add value to IsDB's work. Evaluations are expected to generate useful lessons that can be applied to improve project design, country and sector strategy performance, outcome, or impact. Evaluations also serve accountability purposes by feeding these lessons into the decision-making process of IsDB management, including member countries and partners.

This Guidance Note is meant to ensure high quality lessons learned, recommendations, and follow up actions in all OED independent evaluations. Lessons learned will then be stored in an online knowledge repository and they can be retrieved for similar projects and contexts.

Recommendations and follow up action will be subsequently inserted in the Systematic Tracking of Execution of Evaluation Recommendations (STEER) platform to monitor the degree of their adoption and the progress of their implementation. The lessons learned, recommendations and follow-up actions are accessible to all IsDB staff on the OED website for the following three levels of operational work:

- i. future project design;
- ii. project implementation and completion; and
- iii. the design and implementation of country, sector, and thematic strategies.

These three levels are taken into consideration when formulating, capturing, disseminating, and reporting lessons learned, recommendations and recommendations that will be considered in project or country contexts, but also be generalized for broader use at strategy and policy levels.

Checklists are available to evaluation staff and consultants to guide them in formulating, capturing, disseminating, using, and reporting lessons learned, recommendations and follow-up actions when preparing reports, ensuring that lessons learned or emerging good practices are identified, recommendations and follow-up actions are made, and presented according to OE Evaluation Guidelines.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### Lessons learned

*Good Practice Standards for Evaluation of MDB Supported Public Sector Operations, ECG 2002:*

*According to the ECG-GPS, "Evaluations should draw concise, prescriptive lessons placed in context. They should relate the experience of evaluated operations to the pattern of past lessons in the country or sector, and focus on what the MDB might have done to obtain better results."*

*2002 OECD DAC – Glossary of evaluation and results based management terms and concepts:*

*Generalizations based on evaluation experiences, negative or positive, with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation (of project, intervention, strategy, or policy) that affect performance, outcome, and impact.*

A lesson learned is an observation from a project or country program's experience which can be translated into relevant, beneficial knowledge by establishing clear causal factors and effects. It focuses on a specific design, activity, process or practice that may provide either positive or negative insights on operational effectiveness and efficiency, impact on the achievement of outcomes, or sustainability.

A lesson learned may also help in identifying emerging good practices when it is worthwhile for replication and/or scaling up.

To identify lessons learned, one can simply ask these questions, “What would we do differently next time? And what would we do the same?”

### Recommendations

*2002 OECD DAC – Glossary of evaluation and results based management terms and concepts (adapted):*

*A recommendation is a proposal aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a development intervention, strategy, or policy; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. Recommendations should be linked to lessons, findings or conclusions.*

The recommendation is based on a prospective action that can improve a project, program, strategy or policy relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and effectiveness by applying sound corrective measures. Whilst lessons learned are largely retrospective, recommendations are more forward looking often to address potential risks to development effectiveness and sustainability. Recommendations should be derived from findings, lessons, or conclusions.

*Recommendations are about how a program can be improved, how the risk of program failure can be reduced or whether a program should continue. If recommendations are developed on the basis of the evaluation findings, processes which involve stakeholders in developing and/or reviewing them will contribute to the use of the evaluation findings. (Better Evaluation, 2013)*

### Follow-Up Actions

In order to make recommendations more actionable, follow up actions should focus on a specific design, process, or practice that may provide either positive or negative insights on operational effectiveness and efficiency, impact on the achievement of outcomes, or sustainability.

Follow-up actions need to translate recommendations into operational terms that can facilitate their implementation by the intended key stakeholders. They need to be discussed with the intended key stakeholders in order to facilitate their uptake and implementation and monitoring. Follow-Up actions should also indicate the operational measures or steps that need to be undertaken to:

- reducing or eliminating deficiencies; or

- building, duplicating, innovating, or scaling-up successful and sustainable practice and performance in the future.

### 3. KEY ELEMENTS OF A LESSON LEARNED

- ❖ A lesson learned can refer to a positive experience, in the case of successful results; or to a negative experience, in the case of malfunctioning processes, weaknesses, or undesirable effects.
- ❖ A lesson learned should specify the context from which it is derived, establish potential relevance beyond that context, and indicate where it could be applied and by whom.
- ❖ A lesson learned explains how or why something did or did not work by establishing clear causal factors and effects. Whether the lesson signals a practice or process to be replicated or avoided – the overall aim is to capture lessons that management can use in future contexts to improve projects and programs.

Each of the following criteria should be considered, included, and adequately explained, to ensure that lessons learned are complete and useful. Specific instructions are provided for staff and consultants conducting evaluations for the IsDB and templates provided for this purpose must be filled in as a part of the evaluation submission (See Annex 1).

#### Some criteria for good Lessons Learned statements:

(Source: Rick Davies, 2009)

1. They are owned (by people who are ready to talk about them)
2. They are based on experience (which may be positive or negative)
3. They are verifiable (because the events involved are documented)
4. They are useful to others (who read or hear about them)
5. They make a difference (when acted upon)
6. They have wide applicability (wider than recommendations)
7. They are interesting, not boring (because of the above)
8. But they do not have universal applicability (like physical laws or moral truths)

The greater the number of supporting sources for a lesson learned, the more rigorous the supporting evidence, and the greater the triangulation of supporting sources, the more confidence one has in the significance and meaningfulness of a lesson learned.

Evaluation practitioners are encouraged to concentrate on the quality of lessons learned and present them in the report only if they can adhere to the quality criteria listed above.

**The key (up to 3) lesson learned identified in the report should be subject to a completed template to be filled by the Evaluator, annexed to the report. (See Annex-1)**

This template is then included in the lessons learned database, coded with additional metadata, and later re-used in synthesizing or analyzing the aggregated evaluation findings.

A high-quality lesson learned that can lead to an emerging good practice should demonstrate clear potential for substantiating a cause-and-effect relationship and may also show potential for replication and broader application (up-scaling). It can be derived from comparison and analysis of activities and practices across multiple contexts and policy sources or emerge from a simple, technically sound intervention.

Lessons learned and emerging good practices are entered into their respective modules in the lessons learned database by the relevant staff in OE Department. Lessons learned (and good practices) are searchable by intervention sector, themes, policy, country, region, etc. They can be clustered by theme and made available for use in validation and synthesis exercises undertaken by OE Staff or Sector and Policy staff.

There are several approaches to the dissemination of lessons learned from OE evaluations:

- ❖ Lessons learned are directly communicated to the relevant staff either through face-to-face discussion or report circulation and submission, stakeholder workshop, or by IsDB management during OCMs/HODs soon after the evaluation takes place<sup>1</sup>.
- ❖ Evaluation summaries containing lessons learned are posted on the public website of IsDB (OE Department Homepage), in addition to the full report.
- ❖ The lessons learned database produces reports listing the text of lessons learned identified in independent evaluations and searchable by country, sector or keyword criteria, and are exportable in the form of management reports.
- ❖ The Evaluation staff and Operations Policy staff are encouraged to disseminate evaluation summaries to relevant stakeholders through formal and informal meetings.
- ❖ The sector, technical or operational specialists in Headquarters and regional hubs should also try to disseminate relevant lessons learned to interested officials in member countries and partners.
- ❖ The OE Department also has the K - Series and Evaluation Syntheses or Flyers covering project, country, and sectoral evaluation highlights, posting noteworthy insights and lessons learned to the wide network of OE evaluation staff, potential users from IsDB entities at Headquarters and regional hubs and member countries and partners.

Knowledge dissemination may also take the form of conferences, symposiums, workshops, learning events, training sessions, or seminars and may be hosted by OE Department, the Operational Departments at IsDB and other stakeholders. For projects as well as macro-level strategy evaluations, the reports as well as specific follow-up actions on recommendations and lessons learned are presented to the IsDB Board as part of the Annual Evaluation Report (AER). The emerging good practices can also be made available to technical experts through communities of practice and other discussion groups for further validation through OE's Knowledge Sharing Platform.

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<sup>1</sup> Early valuable evidenced lessons learnt may be captured and possibly included in Evaluation Mission BTOR for early uptake by key users.

#### 4. KEY ELEMENTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Recommendations and follow up actions should:

- ❖ relate to a lesson, finding or a conclusion from which they are derived and indicate where they should be implemented and by whom.
- ❖ propose actions to correct deficiencies, avoid mistakes, duplicate, or scale-up in the future in the light of the experience gained from the intervention.
- ❖ propose actions that management can specifically address context constraints to improve projects, programs, strategies, or policies.
- ❖ establish how the proposed follow up actions will improve the relevance, design, practice, or process to achieve better results in meeting the need of the beneficiaries or targeted users.

The following criteria should be considered, included, and adequately explained, to ensure that recommendations and follow up actions are complete and useful. Specific instructions are provided to consultants conducting evaluations for the IsDB and templates provided for this purpose must be filled/completed as a part of the evaluation submission (see Annex 3).

**Some criteria for good recommendations and follow up actions:**

(Source: Better Evaluation, AsDB Manual)

1. They are discussed with key stakeholders to enhance their use and applicability.
2. They are based on evidence: findings, conclusions, and lessons from experience (which may be positive or negative).
3. They are targeted to those who will act upon them, monitor, and report back (possibly through a management action record).
4. They are useful to key stakeholders, actionable, monitorable, and possibly time bound.
5. They can make a difference when acted upon by improving the impact on operational processes, achievement of outcomes, or impact and sustainability, avoiding mistakes in the future.
6. They are prospective and innovative.

Evaluation staff are encouraged to concentrate on the quality of recommendations and follow-up actions and present them in the report only if they can adhere to the quality criteria listed above.

**Key recommendations and proposed follow up actions included in the report should be attached to a completed template, annexed to the report.** (See Annex-3)

This template is then included in the recommendations database, coded with additional metadata, and later re-used in synthesizing or writing the annual evaluation report (AER) and in aggregated evaluation findings.

A high-quality recommendation and follow-up action can increase the number of good practices and promote replication and broader application (up-scaling).



Recommendations and follow-up actions are entered into the recommendations platform (STEER) by the relevant staff in OE Department. STEER database is searchable by intervention sector, theme, policy, country, region, etc. It can also be searched for the recommendations that are acted upon and the level of implementation of follow-up actions. Recommendations and follow up actions data can be clustered by topic (process, practice, policy, strategy) and made available for use in validation and synthesis exercises undertaken by OE Evaluation staff or Sector and Policy staff.

There are several approaches to discuss the recommendations and follow-up actions from OE evaluations:

- ❖ Draft recommendations and follow-up actions are directly communicated to the relevant operational staff either through face-to-face discussion or report circulation and submission, stakeholder workshop, or by IsDB management during OCMs/HODs soon after the evaluation takes place<sup>2</sup>.
- ❖ The STEER database produces reports listing the text of recommendations and follow up actions identified in independent evaluations and searchable by country, sector or keyword criteria, and are exportable in the form of management reports.
- ❖ The Evaluation staff and Operations Policy staff are encouraged to discuss recommendations and proposed follow-up actions with relevant key stakeholders through formal and informal meetings.
- ❖ Evaluation summaries containing recommendations and proposed follow up actions are posted on the public website of IsDB (OE Department Homepage), with the full report.
- ❖ The sector, technical or operational specialists in Headquarters and regional hubs should try to operationalize, act upon and monitor the recommendations and proposed follow up actions and to share the relevant recommendations and follow-up actions to interested officials in member countries and partners.
- ❖ The OE Department also has the K - Series and Evaluation Syntheses or Flyers covering project, country, and sectoral evaluation highlights, posting noteworthy insights, recommendations and follow up actions to the wide network of evaluation staff, potential users from IsDB entities at Headquarters and regional hubs and member countries and partners.

## 5. DRAFTING, DISCUSSING AND PRESENTING, LESSONS LEARNED RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Lessons, recommendations and follow-up actions should be limited to those that are specific to the project and program, or applicable to the strategic and or policy areas of the Bank. Recommendations and follow up actions should be actionable and capable of being

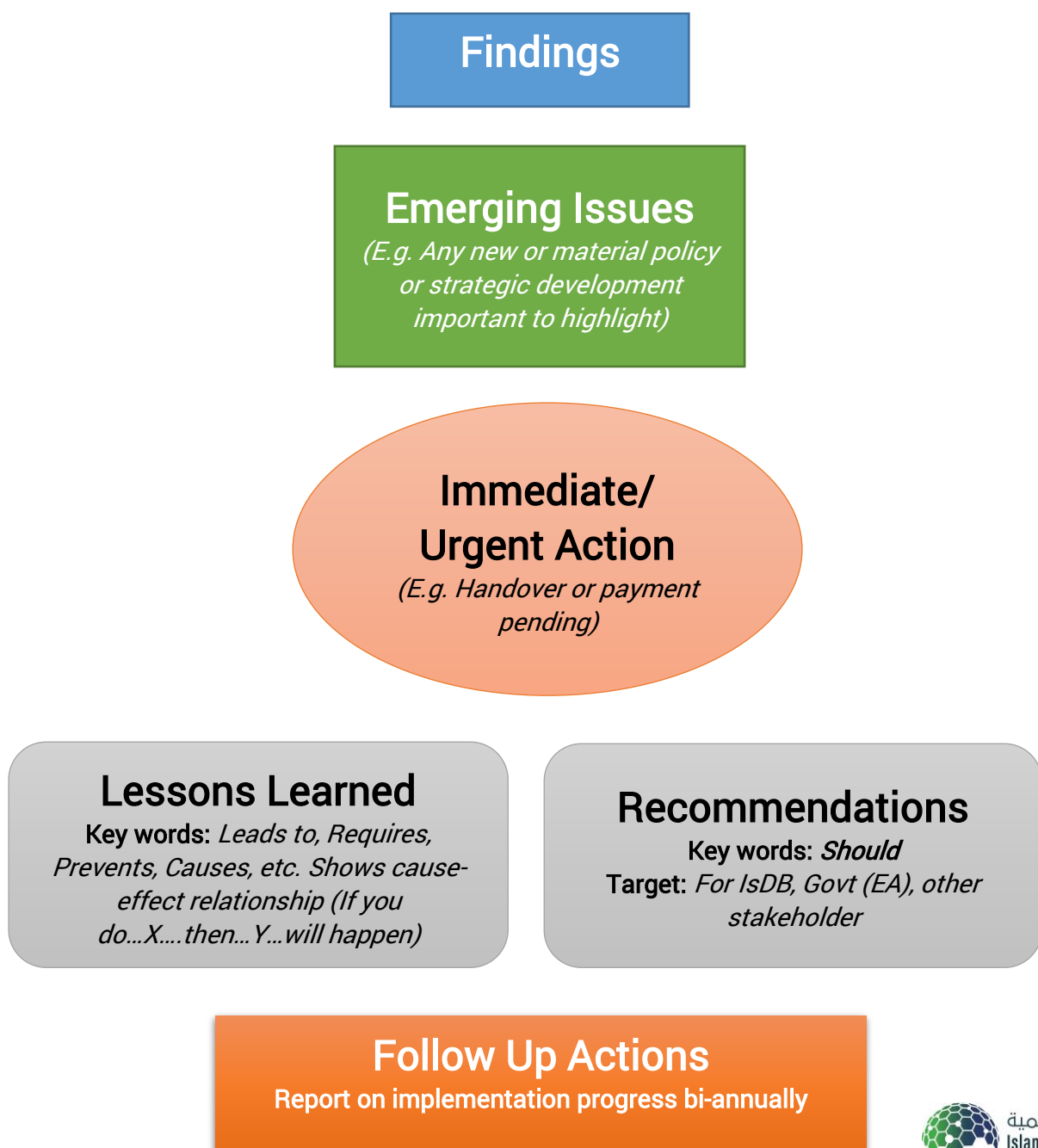
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<sup>2</sup> Early valuable evidenced recommendations and follow up actions may be captured and possibly included in Evaluation Mission BTOR for early uptake by key users.

implemented and monitored. Each lesson learned, and recommendation should be referenced by the relevant paragraph numbers in the report.

IsDB departments and executing or implementing agencies responsible for taking actions and monitoring them should be identified and notified. Recommendations for the beneficiary or executing agency must be discussed in the field, and explicitly referred to in the cover letter when draft reports are sent for comments. Examples of recommendations and follow-up actions are provided in Annex 6. After comments on the draft report have been considered, a meeting may be convened between the relevant OED staff and Operational Departments to discuss the recommendations and to develop commitments in addressing and acting on recommendations and proposed follow-up actions.

A graphical presentation of the linkages between findings, lessons learned, recommendations and follow up actions is presented below.



## 6. USE OF LESSONS LEARNED, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Evaluation reports are stored in a systematic manner and the knowledge generated by lessons learned, recommendations, and follow-up actions are made available as data sub-sets in a searchable format through the lessons learned database in the Intranet: <http://idbgnet/EN/PRE/GOE/Pages/home.aspx>

A primary source of use of lessons learned, recommendations, and follow-up actions is to provide input when drafting new project proposals and appraisals and new country strategies or policies. The project appraisal or MCPS processes include a step that requires the completion of a section on lessons learned and **stipulates that all new project proposals and country strategies review the evaluation database for relevant evaluations and incorporate and cite appropriate lessons learned into new project designs or country strategy.**

All IsDB and entities staff have access to the database and can easily search evaluations, locating specific findings in the lessons learned, recommendations, and follow-up actions. A matrix that pulls together findings, lessons learned, recommendations, and follow-up actions should be attached as an annex to every evaluation report (see Annex 5).

Additionally, the OE Department has put in place a process by which it oversees the use, implementation, and follow up of lessons learned and recommendations resulting from project as well as macro-level evaluations. Its objective is to promote institutional follow-up of independent evaluation findings and accepted recommendations and to provide pertinent information and advice to IsDB Management and the Board on progress made.

**All operations managers in IsDB entities are accountable for ensuring proper use of relevant evaluation findings, lessons learned, and recommendations.** The resulting process focuses on encouraging and promoting lessons that are screened and validated through the evaluation process. This provides IsDB Management with information and knowledge to effectively support organizational objectives by ensuring successful outcomes and avoiding unsatisfactory processes and practices.

### Annexes:

1. Lessons Learned Template
2. Lessons Learned Quality Assessment/Peer Reviewer Assessment Check-list
3. Recommendations and Follow-Up actions Template

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4. Recommendations and Follow-Up actions Quality Assessment/Peer Review Check-list
5. Findings, Lessons, Recommendations, and Follow-Up actions Matrix
6. Examples of Lessons Learned, Recommendations, and Follow-up actions Templates

### Annex-1 Lessons Learned Template

Lesson Learned Element	Text: Brief description of the lesson learned (link to a specific action or task) by answering the following questions: What was planned /expected (from inputs, outputs to intended/unintended outcomes and impact)? What and how did it happen and why? Be specific and prescriptive.	Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?
Context and related preconditions	Explain the context from which the lesson has been derived (e.g. economic, social, political). What were the underlying assumptions or preconditions for these expectations to happen?	
Challenges	Cite any difficulties, problems, or obstacles encountered / solutions found - Positive and negative aspects of the finding should be described.	
Contribution to Project Goals	Point out any contribution to the broader goals or impact of the project, if relevant.	
Causal factors	Present evidence for "how" or "why" on what did or did not work? Specifically, what are the main factors of success or failure?	
Lesson Learned Implications	What aspects of IsDB's work and activities does the lesson have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.	
Keywords	Write the keywords relevant to the lesson learned.	

Annex-2: Lessons Learned Quality Assessment / Peer Reviewer Assessment Check-list

Check List	Yes	No	Peer reviewer comments
<p><b>1. Brief description of the Lesson Learned</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the lesson learned formulation readily understandable by the intended audience(s)?</li> <li>• Is it appropriately formulated given its purpose and potential use?</li> <li>• Is it specific and prescriptive?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>2. Clarity and representativeness of the Context and related preconditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the lesson formulation reflect clearly any specific features related to operational policy context, country development context, including socio-economic, political and cultural factors, institutional context, or features related to the type of IsDB intervention?</li> <li>• Does the lesson formulation state any preconditions, including underlying assumptions?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>3. Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the lesson learned capture any difficulties, problems or obstacles encountered, and solutions found?</li> <li>• Does it describe the positive and/or negative aspects of the evaluation finding?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>4. Contribution to Project Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the lesson learned formulation specify any contribution that it may have to the broader goals or impact of the project to enhance its development effectiveness?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>5. Causal factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are success or failure factors clearly evidenced (triangulated) and appropriate evaluation methods used?</li> <li>• Are answers on “What did or did not work” and “how” or “why” are clearly provided and evidenced?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>6. Lessons Learned Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are implications of the lesson learned concisely presented particularly the aspects of IsDB work and activities that this lesson is affecting: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) IsDB policies and strategies?</li> <li>• Does the lesson learned highlight any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities?</li> </ul>			

Annex-3 Recommendations and Proposed Follow-Up Actions Template

Recommendation Element	Text: Specific action or task by to be undertaken by the key stakeholder to address any deficiencies observed from the evaluation of the intervention which will have substantial improvement impact on operational processes, achievement of outcomes, or impact and sustainability, in particular: What should IsDB do differently, How would IsDB do differently? Why would IsDB do it differently?	Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?
Recommendation's Implications	What aspects of IsDB work and activities this recommendation have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.	
Targeted Stakeholders	Cite potential Targeted key stakeholders affected by the recommendation. Who in IsDB should have the responsibility for putting the recommendation and follow up action into practice?	
Replication and Up-Scaling	Describe any potential for replication and Up-scaling that the recommendation will lead to.	
Keywords	Write the keywords relevant to the recommendation.	

Annex-4: Recommendation and Proposed Follow-Up Actions Quality Assessment/  
Peer Review Assessment Check-list

Check List	Yes	No	Peer reviewer comments
<p><b>1. Brief description of the Recommendation and Proposed Follow-Up Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the recommendation formulation readily understandable by the intended key stakeholder (s)?</li> <li>- Are proposed follow-up actions appropriately formulated given the purpose and potential improvement impact of the recommendation?</li> <li>- Are the recommendation and follow up actions specific?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>2. Recommendation's Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are implications of the recommendation concisely presented particularly the aspects of IsDB work and activities that this recommendation is affecting: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) IsDB policies and strategies?</li> <li>- Does the recommendation highlight any relevance to design, practice, or process to achieve better results in meeting the need of the beneficiaries or targeted users?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>3. Targeted Key Stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are key stakeholders, actors, and/or beneficiaries of the recommendation clearly identified?</li> <li>- Are the IsDB responsible entities or management units who should take the responsibility for putting the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions into practice identified?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>4. Potential replication and Up-Scaling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will the recommendation and proposed follow up actions that will improve future interventions ease replication, innovation and scaling up?</li> </ul>			

Annex-5: Lessons, Recommendations, and Proposed Follow-Up Actions Matrix

Major Findings/ Conclusions	Lessons Learned	Recommendations and Proposed Follow-Up Actions	Responsible Unit(s)



Annex 6: Examples

1. Lessons Learned

a) Mauritania: The Guelb li Mine Expansion And Railway Modernization Project (OED, IsDB, PPER, 2019):

Lesson Learned Element	Text: Brief description of the lesson learned (link to a specific action or task) by answering the following questions: What was planned /expected (from inputs, outputs to intended/unintended outcomes and impact)? What and how did it happen and why? Be specific and prescriptive  <b>Unrealistic targets and schedules may lead to avoidable financial constraints that threaten the sustainability of the project:</b> More realistic schedules and targets need to be set based on the experience of previous projects, past performance of the company, and benchmarks relevant to the unique context of the project.	Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?
Context and related preconditions	Explain the context from which the lesson has been derived (e.g. economic, social, political). What were the underlying assumptions or preconditions for these expectations to happen?  It took 17 years for the first beneficiation plant (Guelb I) to reach peak capacity of production while the Guelb II beneficiation plant was expected to start producing at full capacity - 4 million tons of iron ore high-grade magnetic concentrate within 2 years.	
Challenges	Cite any difficulties, problems, or obstacles encountered / solutions found - Positive and negative aspects of the finding should be described:  The main factors that intensified the challenges were related to inability to comply with the financial covenant. This also resulted in the ending of the contractual guarantee period with the suppliers of the different lots before the completion of their assembly. Consequently, the lots were received outside of the warranty period of the respective suppliers. Final acceptance of the batches was achieved outside the warranty period and sometimes at an additional cost.	
Contribution to Project Goals	Point out to any contribution to the broader goals or impact of the project, if relevant.  <b>Mining and Industry Projects</b>  The project and SNIM's operations in general have an extraordinary social and economic impact on Mauritania's macro-economic stability. As the principal industry and the biggest employer apart from the State in Mauritania, SNIM contributes up to 8% of the country's GDP and 32% of the country's total exporting earnings in 2017 <sup>3</sup> . In addition, SNIM plays a substantial role in social	

<sup>3</sup> In previous years, SNIM accounted for more than 50% of total exports of the country. The smaller share of exports in recent years is attributable to the drop in iron ore prices on the international rather than to diversification of the country's exports.

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	responsibility in the northern region of Mauritania where its mines are located by providing utilities, education, and medical facilities to the surrounding population along a 730 km corridor of its rail lines connecting Zouérate <sup>4</sup> and Nouadhibou <sup>5</sup> .	
Causal factors	<p>Present evidence for “how” or “why” on what did or did not work? Specifically, what are the main factors of success or failure?</p> <p>As at the time of the evaluation, production was reported at 1.5 million tons (37 percent of target) and expected to reach 1.7 million tons by the end of 2018. A few technical problems contributed to a lower volume of production and the magnetic separator did not conform to the declared performance characteristics of the equipment. Furthermore, the roller press currently produces 35% of fine material compared to a design rate of 50% resulting in a feed rate of 900 tons per hour against an expected rate of 1,300 tons per hour. There was no stock of iron ore and If crushers stop running, the entire plant shuts down. The utilization ratio of the plant was hovering around 60% in 2018. A modification in the beneficiation plant was also necessitated by the need to reach less than 5% level of silica in the dry concentrate to optimally run one of the sectors.</p>	
Lesson Learned Implications	<p>What aspects of IsDB work and activities this lesson have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.</p> <p><b>Project Design and Implementation</b></p>	
Keywords	<p>Write the keywords relevant to the lesson learned.</p> <p><b>Mining, Railway, Design, and Implementation</b></p>	

<sup>4</sup> Location of iron Ore mines.

<sup>5</sup> Main port for shipping of iron ore.

b) Suriname Member Country Partnership Strategy Evaluation, (OED, IsDB, 2019):

Lesson Learned Element	<p>Text: Brief description of the lesson learned (link to a specific action or task) by answering the following questions: What was planned /expected (from inputs, outputs to intended/unintended outcomes and impact)? What and how did it happen and why? Be specific and prescriptive</p> <p><b>Project cancellation is avoidable if sufficient time and resources are committed to project preparation:</b> Cancellation of projects that have been declared effective is not only counter-productive, but costly as well in terms of time and resources. In the case of the Health System Strengthening Project for instance, it was expected that implementation would proceed as planned. However, the project was canceled in February 2018 due to a number of reasons, including; absence of a feasibility study, non-procurement of a consultant in accordance with IsDB guidelines and significant scope reduction resulting in the very low disbursement. This calls for prudent planning of future projects focusing more on project design and cost.</p>	Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?
Context and related preconditions	<p>Explain the context from which the lesson has been derived (e.g. economic, social, political). What were the underlying assumptions or preconditions for these expectations to happen?</p> <p><b>Suriname is a small country and the capacity of the line ministries in project preparation is limited. Downsizing the scope of the TVET project from construction/rehabilitation of 98 workshops to 39 during project implementation because of significant cost under-estimation during project preparation could have been avoided had there been adequate project preparation support by IsDB.</b></p>	
Challenges	<p>Cite any difficulties, problems, or obstacles encountered / solutions found - Positive and negative aspects of the finding should be described:</p> <p><b>Low IsDB engagement during the implementation phase was identified as a constraint. This results from the fact that IsDB does not have any physical presence in the country.</b></p>	
Contribution to Project Goals	<p>Point out any contribution to the broader goals or impact of the project, if relevant.</p> <p><b>Overall, IsDB Group’s engagements in Suriname during the Interim MCPS period contributed towards healthcare, through vocational training and capacity development core priorities of the country’s National Development Plan.</b></p>	
Causal factors	<p>Present evidence for “how” or “why” on what did or did not work? Specifically, what are the main factors of success or failure?</p> <p><b>Many of the issues that came up during implementation, could have been easily addressed through direct and closer collaboration and communication between IsDB and the executing agencies. Until the regional hub is operational, IsDB needs to consider ways to deepen its engagement during project implementation through alternative ways. One good example is the use of Video</b></p>	

**EVALUATION LESSONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FORMULATION, DISSEMINATION AND REPORTING**

	<p>Conferencing, which ITFC has started on a bi-weekly basis. Feedback from the ground shows that such methods have significantly improved the engagement of ITFC in project implementation and quick trouble shooting.</p>	
Lesson Learned Implications	<p>What aspects of IsDB work and activities this lesson have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.</p> <p><b>MCPS preparation process (preparation, mid-term review, and completion) enhances country strategy relevance and strategic alignment and positioning.</b></p>	
Keywords	<p>Write the keywords relevant to the lesson learned.</p> <p><b>Design and Implementation, Member Country Partnership Strategy.</b></p>	

c) Al-Aqsa Fund in the State of Palestine (OED, IsDB, 2019)

Lesson Learned Element	<p>Text: Brief description of the lesson learned (link to a specific action or task) by answering the following questions: What was planned /expected (from inputs, outputs to intended/unintended outcomes and impact)? What and how did it happen and why? Be specific and prescriptive.</p> <p><b>Effective implementation of rural development initiatives requires careful alignment and coherence between design and objectives:</b> The agriculture development projects aimed at promoting self-sufficiency in agricultural products and creating employment opportunities for the Palestinian farmers. Since most of these projects were plagued by a lack of coherence between design and objectives (e.g., water dam projects), they fell short of achieving their intended outcomes.</p>	Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?
Context and related preconditions	<p>Explain the context from which the lesson has been derived (e.g. economic, social, political). What were the underlying assumptions or preconditions for these expectations to happen?</p> <p>The context of local development through agriculture projects requires not only careful analysis of local conditions and needs with the active participation of local communities, but also the ability to respond to these needs through a well-coordinated and multi-sectoral approach that integrates elements of strong planning and effective design.</p>	
Challenges	<p>Cite any difficulties, problems, or obstacles encountered / solutions found - Positive and negative aspects of the finding should be described:</p> <p><b>While the objectives of all agriculture development projects were found to be relevant to beneficiaries needs, the fitness of the project design for the intended purposes was a key weakness in most water harvesting and rural development projects. For example, several water collection schemes implemented with IsDB support within the framework of Marj Sanour Development Project were flooded and could not be used by beneficiaries due to the lack of detailed planning and feasibility analysis. Similarly, the Bani Naim dam has not been used for irrigation due to insufficient volume of water (due to low rainfall levels in the area) and high cost of water pumping. Design weaknesses seem to also exist in land development projects, where a holistic approach to agricultural development seems to be needed to ensure greater responsiveness to beneficiaries needs.</b></p>	
Contribution to Project Goals	<p>Point out any contribution to the broader goals or impact of the project, if relevant.</p> <p><b>Development effectiveness of IsDB intervention in fragile settings in general and in the State of Palestine in particular.</b></p>	

## EVALUATION LESSONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FORMULATION, DISSEMINATION AND REPORTING

Causal factors	<p>Present evidence for “how” or “why” on what did or did not work? Specifically, what are the main factors of success or failure?</p> <p>Lack of a systemic project cycle management approach to guide the design and implementation of Al-Aqsa Fund supported projects weakened quality-at-entry and implementation performance. For instance, the absence and/or poor quality of project appraisal and detailed design documents did not help to ensure that project designs are consistent with stated objectives, particularly for agriculture project, thus missing opportunities to strengthen projects coherence and maximize their effectiveness and impact.. Additionally, the lack of a comprehensive, country-level strategic framework to guide Al-Aqsa Fund support to the State of Palestine constrains coherence and strategic alignment, causes divergence among stakeholders in project selection and allocations, leads to less impact, and makes results measurement and performance evaluation difficult:</p>	
Lesson Learned Implications	<p>What aspects of IsDB work and activities this lesson have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.</p> <p><b>Design and Implementation Policies and Strategies</b></p>	
Keywords	<p>Write the keywords relevant to the lesson learned.</p> <p><b>Trust Fund, Agriculture, Palestine</b></p>	

2. Recommendations and Follow Up Actions

a) Mauritania: The Guelb II Mine Expansion & Railway Modernization Project (OED, PPER, 2019):

<p>Recommendation Element</p>	<p>Text: Specific action or task by to be undertaken by the key stakeholder to address any deficiencies observed from the evaluation of the intervention which will have substantial improvement impact on operational processes, achievement of outcomes, or impact and sustainability: What should IsDB do differently, How would IsDB do differently? Why would IsDB do it differently?</p> <p>Considering that a well-developed iron ore mining sector can represent a source of comparative advantage for the country, it is recommended that the next MCPS for Mauritania focuses on enhancing the competitiveness and efficiencies of the entire iron value chain (both upstream and downstream) and fostering the steel and steel-related industries to improve the product value-added.</p>	<p>Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?</p>
<p>Recommendation's Implications</p>	<p>What aspects of IsDB work and activities this recommendation have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.</p> <p><b>Policies and Country Strategies:</b> This would optimize the contribution of iron ore to Mauritania's economy beyond the export of raw materials only.</p>	
<p>Targeted Key Stakeholders</p>	<p>Cite potential Targeted key stakeholders affected by the recommendation. Who in IsDB should have the responsibility for putting the recommendation and follow up action into practice?</p> <p><b>Country Strategy and Market Integration, Strategy and Transformation, and Economic and Social Infrastructure departments.</b></p>	
<p>Replication and Up-Scaling</p>	<p>Describe any potential for replication and Up-scaling that the recommendation will lead to:</p> <p><b>This will demonstrate the potential of the value chain programming approach adopted by the Bank.</b></p>	
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>Write the keywords relevant to the recommendation. <b>Mining, Value Chain, Value Addition.</b></p>	

b) Suriname Member Country Partnership Strategy Evaluation, OED, IsDB, 2019

<p>Recommendation Element</p>	<p>Text: Specific action or task by to be undertaken by the key stakeholder to address any deficiencies observed from the evaluation of the intervention which will have substantial improvement impact on operational processes, achievement of outcomes, or impact and sustainability: What should IsDB do differently, How would IsDB do differently? Why would IsDB do it differently?</p> <p><b>Expedite operationalizing Suriname Regional Hub, and until then explore other conduits to engage more with the EAs during project implementation.</b></p>	<p>Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?</p>
<p>Recommendation 's Implications</p>	<p>What aspects of IsDB work and activities this recommendation have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.</p> <p><b>Design and Implementation:</b> Monitoring and Supervision.</p>	
<p>Targeted Key Stakeholders</p>	<p>Cite potential Targeted key stakeholders affected by the recommendation. Who in IsDB should have the responsibility for putting the recommendation and follow up action into practice?</p> <p><b>Decentralization Facilitation</b></p>	
<p>Replication and Up-Scaling</p>	<p>Describe any potential for replication and Up-scaling that the recommendation will lead to:</p> <p><b>This recommendation could be applicable in instances where there is limited IsDB presence or a yet to be fully operationalized regional Hub.</b></p>	
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>Write the keywords relevant to the recommendation.</p> <p><b>Capacity Strengthening</b></p>	



c) Al-Aqsa Fund in the State of Palestine (OED, IsDB, 2019):

<p>Recommendation Element</p>	<p>Text: Specific action or task to be undertaken by the key stakeholder to address any deficiencies observed from the evaluation of the intervention which will have substantial improvement impact on operational processes, achievement of outcomes, or impact and sustainability: What should IsDB do differently, How would IsDB do differently? Why would IsDB do it differently?</p> <p>IsDB should underpin its support to Palestine by using international best practices in project delivery and strive for constantly strengthening the design and implementation of its development interventions. This requires developing context-specific operational procedures for fragile states that would promote more accountability, transparency, and development effectiveness, yet offer a degree of flexibility and delegation of authority to the Trust Fund Department. At a basic level, this should mirror the IsDB standard procedures for project preparation (including the development of comprehensive project design/appraisal documents and monitoring and evaluation frameworks) and should apply to all IsDB-financed projects. IsDB should also work with the implementing partners to develop operational manuals to cover aspects of, inter alia, targeting, beneficiary selection, monitoring and evaluation, and audit.</p>	<p>Is it an Exemplary/ Good Practice?</p>
<p>Recommendation's Implications</p>	<p>What aspects of IsDB work and activities this recommendation have implications: (i) design and implementation (appraisal, due diligence, design, structuring, monitoring and evaluation,) or (ii) policies and strategies. If possible, point out any relevance to the broader IsDB mandate or broader operational, sector, or country activities.</p> <p><b>Launch of a toolbox and a set of guidelines that would provide a systemic approach to the design and implementation of projects in fragile contexts</b></p>	
<p>Targeted Key Stakeholders</p>	<p>Cite potential Targeted key stakeholders affected by the recommendation. Who in IsDB should have the responsibility for putting the recommendation and follow up action into practice?</p> <p><b>Trust Fund Department in collaboration with Procurement Division and Budget and Performance Management Department,</b></p>	
<p>Replication and Up-Scaling</p>	<p>Describe any potential for replication and Up-scaling that the recommendation will lead to:</p> <p><b>This recommendation could be relevant to Fael Khair Programs and other funds operating in fragile and emergency settings.</b></p>	
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>Write the keywords relevant to the recommendation.</p> <p><b>Trust Fund, Fael Khair, Fragility,</b></p>	

3. Findings, Lessons, Recommendations and Follow Up Actions Matrix

- a) Mauritania: The Guelb II Mine Expansion & Railway Modernization Project (OED, PPER, 2019):

Major Findings/ Conclusions	Lessons Learned	Recommendations and Proposed Follow-Up Actions	Responsible Unit(s)
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<p>Overall, all the major outputs of the project were achieved except for three out of the eight Sectors of the beneficiation plant. The main output of the program was the installation of a new beneficiation plant to produce 4 million tons of iron ore high-grade magnetic concentrate annually by 2016. As at the time of the evaluation, this was yet to be achieved as production was reported at 1.5 million tons and expected to reach 1.7 million tons by the end of 2018. With the technical challenges and delays encountered in the project from the beginning, the target of 4 million tons of iron ore is expected to be reached by 2020 - 2021. The wider impact of SNIM activities is the provision of utilities such as water and electricity, access to health facilities for the cities of Zouérate and Nouadhibou. SNIM's activities have connected nomadic populations to major cities in seven villages along its 730 rail lines and also provided them with potable drinking water.</p>	<p><i>Unrealistic targets and schedules lead to delays in achieving optimal production capacity: More realistic schedules and targets need to be set based on the experience of previous projects, past performance of the company, and benchmarks relevant to the unique context of the project.</i></p>	<p>Considering that a well-developed iron ore mining sector can represent a source of comparative advantage for the country, it is recommended that the next MCPS for Mauritania focuses on enhancing the competitiveness and efficiencies of the entire iron value chain (both upstream and downstream) and fostering the steel and steel-related industries to improve the product value-added.</p>	<p>Country Strategy and Market Integration, Strategy and Transformation, and Economic and Social Infrastructure departments.</p>
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## b) Suriname Member Country Partnership Strategy Evaluation (OED, IsDB, 2019):

Major Findings/ Conclusions	Lessons Learned	Recommendations and Proposed Follow-Up Actions	Responsible Unit(s)
<p>Despite the large scale of approval during and post MCPS period, the implementation has been slow. The largest approved project, which was in the health sector for USD 69.55 million, was canceled. There are currently three disbursing operations, worth USD 52.3 million, with only USD 3.5 million disbursed (6.7%) as of December 2018. Long implementation delays were observed between project effectiveness and first disbursement - the average duration between project effectiveness and first disbursement was found to be 11 months.</p>	<p><b><i>Project cancellation is avoidable if sufficient time and resources are committed to project preparation:</i></b>  <i>Cancellation of projects that have been declared effective is not only counter-productive, but costly as well in terms of time and resources. In the case of the Health System Strengthening Project for instance, it was expected that implementation would proceed as planned. However, the project was canceled in February 2018 due to a few reasons, including; absence of a feasibility study, non-procurement of a consultant in accordance with IsDB guidelines and significant scope reduction resulting in the very low disbursement. This calls for prudent planning of future projects focusing more on project design and cost.</i></p>	<p>Expedite operationalizing Suriname Regional Hub, and until then explore other conduits to engage more with the EAs during project implementation.</p>	<p>Decentralization Facilitation, Country Strategy and Market Integration</p>

c) Al-Aqsa Fund in the State of Palestine (OED, IsDB, 2019):

Major Findings/ Conclusions	Lessons Learned	Recommendations and Proposed Follow-Up Actions	Responsible Unit(s)
<p>The Al-Aqsa Fund-financed restoration and agriculture development projects were found to be relevant to the Al-Aqsa Fund's objectives of strengthening the resilience of the Palestinian people and preserving the cultural and Islamic identity of Al-Quds. Nevertheless, some weaknesses are noted, specifically the lack of a strategic framework to guide the Al-Aqsa Fund program in Palestine, as well as weaknesses in the fitness of the design of some projects to their intended purpose, particularly in agriculture.</p>	<p><i>Effective implementation of rural development initiatives requires careful alignment and coherence between design and objectives: The agriculture development projects aimed at promoting self-sufficiency in agricultural products and creating employment opportunities for the Palestinian farmers. Since most of these projects were plagued by a lack of coherence between design and objectives (e.g., water dam projects), they fell short of achieving their intended outcomes. The poor consistency between project design and objective was the result of absence of a systemic project cycle management approach to guide the design and implementation of projects in the context of the country.</i></p>	<p>IsDB should underpin its support to Palestine by using international best practices in project delivery and strive for constantly strengthening the design and implementation of its development interventions. This requires developing context-specific operational procedures for fragile states that would promote more accountability, transparency, and development effectiveness, yet offer a degree of flexibility and delegation of authority to the Trust Fund Department. At a basic level, this should mirror the IsDB standard procedures for project preparation (including the development of comprehensive project design/appraisal documents and monitoring and evaluation frameworks) and should apply to all IsDB-financed projects. IsDB should also work with the implementing partners to develop operational manuals to cover aspects of, inter alia, targeting, beneficiary selection, monitoring and evaluation, and audit.</p>	<p>Trust Fund</p>