



Communiqué from the First High Level Evaluation Advisory Committee (HLEAC) Meeting

Meeting date: 7-8 May 2024. *The full agenda can be found [here](#).*

Participants. All five [HLEAC members](#) and the NDB Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) team participated throughout the two days. Mr. Duncan Pieterse, Chair of the NDB Board of Directors and Director for South Africa delivered a statement virtually; members of the NDB Inter-Departmental Working Group on Evaluation joined for one session; and the committee visited the faculty and students at the Asia-Pacific Development Institute (AFDI) based in Shanghai. The HLEAC also interacted informally with various Consul Generals of NDB Member Countries based in Shanghai to learn about their priorities and perspectives for evaluations at the country level.

Objectives. The objectives of the meeting were: (i) for IEO to hear and take aboard advice, criticism and suggestions from the HLEAC and, in so doing, refine and improve its evaluation work going forward; and (ii) for HLEAC members to further their understanding and learning about issues related to evaluation at NDB and, in return, provide suggestions and advice.

Key takeaways. This was the first ever in-person meeting of the HLEAC, with members convening at NDB HQ in Shanghai. Over two days the HLEAC engaged with staff from IEO and the wider organisation in a two-way dialogue on evaluation matters at the NDB.



The agenda aimed to promote debate at both the conceptual level, but also immersed in detail. In an open discussion on strategic direction and priorities of IEO, members offered some reflections on the evaluation function at NDB, for example: its position vis-à-vis the self-evaluation undertaken by the wider institution, the nature of evaluating projects and corporate issues in a relatively young institution (especially given the challenging and evolving external context in which the Bank has worked since its inception); and how to advance and embed good evaluation practice and lessons across the Bank.

Three evaluation products were discussed: members offered their opinions and constructive insights on the strengths and weaknesses of both the *Corporate-level evaluation on NDB's financial architecture* and the first edition of the *Evaluation Manual* – both of which will soon be presented to the Board for consideration. The IEO team will reflect their inputs in the final versions of these documents as soon as possible. Members also gave their inputs on how to better conceptualise and shape the upcoming evaluation on NDB's first 10 years which will begin later this year and delivered in 2025.

The committee also wanted to find out the views of the wider organisation on independent evaluation. They heard from the Chair of the Board of Directors, Mr. Duncan Pieterse, on how independent evaluations improve the understanding and decision-making of the Board; and met with the Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Vladimir Kazbekov, in a bilateral session.

They also interacted with the internal Inter-Departmental Working Group on Evaluation — which features staff from across the Bank eager to learn more about evaluation methods and processes – and had a fruitful session answering questions on, amongst other things, what makes evaluation successful, and how evaluators should convey their findings (especially those of a critical nature) in a constructive manner.

To cap the two days off, committee members visited the faculty and students at the AFDI campus in Shanghai and engaged in a dialogue with them on how evaluation can promote sustainable financing in multilateral development banks.

The two-day meeting was rich in insight, detail and perspective, giving much for the IEO team to reflect in its evaluation work over the coming months.



NDB Independent Evaluation Office, Shanghai, 15 May 2024.