

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation of International Assistance Programming in Middle-Income Countries – 2014-15 to 2020-21



ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Global Affairs Canada’s Evaluation Division conducted an evaluation of Canadian international assistance programming in 10 middle-income countries across 4 geographic branches for the period 2014-15 to 2020-21. The evaluation aimed to support the operationalization of departmental policy guidance and determine key enabling factors of effective programming for transition in middle-income countries.



KEY FINDINGS

- International assistance programs achieved important results in the sectors of economic growth and inclusive governance, with cross-cutting gender impacts.
- Policy guidance supported programming in middle-income countries in transition, however, programs were limited in their ability to operationalize them.
- Long-term, flexible and joined-up planning occurred at the regional and bilateral levels, though corporate processes did not fully support it.
- International assistance and diplomatic streams shared complementary audiences, activities and sectors. Trade activity data were less comparable to the other streams.
- The department successfully used, but has not yet fully maximized, key mechanisms of support to transition in middle-income countries including innovative finance, technical assistance and programming through the trade and development nexus.
- Strategic and joined-up engagement in middle-income countries presents Canada with the opportunity for greater regional impact, support to global public goods such as climate change, and resilience to external shocks to protect assistance gains.
- The department’s strong relationships and contributions in assistance, and a strong partner demand for Canadian expertise and models of governance and public service, provide a solid basis for continued support and further opportunities for Canada in middle-income countries.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adapt and implement joint development, trade, and diplomacy planning tools and processes at both the country and regional level in ways that are flexible and specific to middle-income country needs and operating contexts.
2. Clarify how the department’s policy guidance and strategies across development and trade streams are meant to complement each other and how they should be applied to advance harmonized objectives in middle-income countries.
3. Support the incremental use of innovative finance mechanisms in middle-income countries that allows for the time, resources and development of capacity needed for country programs to integrate them into their work.

