

Operations Learning Loops Events

Concept Note

30 May 2024, SNDR

I. Introduction

The African Development Bank (AfDB) recognizes the pivotal role of continuous learning and adaptive engagement in achieving sustainable development in Africa. In line with this commitment, the Quality Assurance and Learning Division (SNDR.3) is organizing two forthcoming events focused on the theme of learning loops. A learning loop is a systematic process of gathering feedback, reflecting on outcomes, adjusting, and then implementing those adjustments to improve performance or outcomes over time.

These events aim to harness the power of iterative learning and feedback mechanisms to drive operational excellence, foster innovation, and maximize development effectiveness of Bank operations in its Regional Member Countries. The two events will comprise of:

- **Event 1:** Learning Loops Training Masterclass Workshop
- **Event 2:** High-level Knowledge Event

This purpose this concept note is to serve as a planning document for the successful organization of the above events.

II. Background

Improved learning is critical for better long-term development outcomes and more sustainable results. At the AfDB, efforts have been made to promote learning particularly through the documentation of lessons learned in Country Portfolio Performance Reviews, Project Completion Reports for sovereign operations and Extended Supervision Reports in the case of non-sovereign operations. In addition, learning events and materials have been developed in some areas including through the Quality Matters initiative and capitalization workshops organized by IDEV. However, there is scope to go further if the Bank is to become a learning organization, especially with respect to the application of lessons learned to new operations.

In addition, learning considerations are further overlooked because of a bias towards performance ratings and accountability requirements. Previous evaluations by IDEV and other self-evaluations such as those conducted by MOPAN have underscored this concern for both sovereign and non-sovereign operations. The Bank's Ten-Year Strategy (2024-2033) amongst others, also emphasizes the need of building a culture of learning by incorporating learning into its strategic planning and operations.

In this context, SNDR.3 recruited Dr. Moses Adoko, Chief Knowledge Officer at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and a renowned global expert in the field of learning loops to carry out a (i) diagnostic assessment of the Bank's learning architecture, processes and tools, and (ii) propose a framework and action plan anchored on international best practice to strengthen and improve the use of lessons learned extracted from self-evaluations and independent evaluations, tightening the feedback loops between Bank knowledge products and operations and ultimately improve the Bank's effectiveness and efficiency. As his diagnostic work concludes, he will visit Abidjan to share both his findings and his knowledge of global good practices on learning systems and learning organizations.

III. Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes from the learning events include:

- Dissemination of the Findings of the Consultant's Diagnostic Report: Share the key findings for the assessment of the Bank and the proposals to strengthen accountability and lessons learning in the AfDB. This work will feed into the Quality, Results and Learning Action Plan (2025 -2030) of the Bank.
- Increased Understanding of Learning Loops in AfDB: Bank staff/participants should gain a clear understanding of what learning loops are, how they function, and their importance in driving continuous improvement and innovation within organizations such as the AfDB.
- Fostering a Culture of Learning and Adaptation: Participants be exposed to strategies for deploying the practice of continuous learning, experimentation, and adaptation within their work in the Bank, where feedback is valued, and change is embraced.
- Increased Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness: Participants should be able to contribute to the Bank's implementation of learning loops with the goal to improve operational efficiency, effectiveness, and overall performance, leading to tangible business results.

The rest of this document describes the two events in turn. Panelists/chair briefs will also be available.

EVENT 1: TRAINING WORKSHOP

Workshop Title:	Masterclass Workshop on the Systems Approach to Learning											
Date:	Tuesday, 11 th June 2024											
Time:	09:00 am – 13:00 pm											
Duration:	4 hours											
Venue:	Hybrid: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ CCIA▪ Zoom connection parameters											
Objective:	<p>The Learning Loops Masterclass is designed to provide knowledge and practical guidance to AfDB staff about learning loops which they can apply to their work.</p> <p>This interactive workshop will cover topics such as systems approach to learning, designing effective learning loops, collecting and analyzing feedback data, and leveraging insights for decision-making and continuous improvement. It will also share international best practices in learning loops from globally reputable institutions.</p> <p>Through a combination of presentations, discussions, case studies, and group exercises, participants will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to apply learning loops effectively in their work.</p>											
Resource Person:	Dr. Moses Adoko, NASA and MakAstro Tech & Services Consultant											
Participants:	<p>SNDR, IDEV, SNSP, ECCE and staff interviewed by Moses for Diagnostic report</p> <p>Estimated number of physical participants: 20 Online participants: 10</p>											
Format:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Technical training▪ English/French interpretation will be provided▪ Lunch will be provided for registered in-person participants.											
Draft Workshop Agenda:	<table><tr><td>9:00 – 9:15</td><td>Opening Remarks – Penny Jackson, SNDR.3</td></tr><tr><td>9:15 – 9.30</td><td>Introductions Housekeeping rules</td></tr><tr><td>9:30 – 10:15</td><td>The Systems Approach to Learning Presentation by Dr. Moses T. Adoko</td></tr><tr><td>10:15 – 10:45</td><td>Discussions</td></tr><tr><td>10:45- 11:00</td><td>Pause-café/ Health break</td></tr></table>		9:00 – 9:15	Opening Remarks – Penny Jackson, SNDR.3	9:15 – 9.30	Introductions Housekeeping rules	9:30 – 10:15	The Systems Approach to Learning Presentation by Dr. Moses T. Adoko	10:15 – 10:45	Discussions	10:45- 11:00	Pause-café/ Health break
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	11:00 – 11:30	Case Studies: Real-world Examples of Successful Learning Loop Implementation Interactive Session Guided by Dr. Moses T. Adoko				
	11:30 – 12:30	Group reflection exercise Mainstreaming a Systems Approach to Learning in AfDB Facilitated by Ms. Jayne Musumba, IDEV				
	12:30 – 13:00	Key takeaways and Closing remarks - Olivier Shingiro, SNDR. 2				
	Insert hyperlink to full agenda					
Follow-up Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Moses’s PowerPoint presentation- Case-studies- Guided group reflection exercise					
Other Roles and responsibilities	<table><tr><td>Mariam YINUSA</td><td>Producer – ensure smooth flow of event, have backup of PPT, monitor and promote engagement on the online zoom chat</td></tr><tr><td>Nina ZADI</td><td>Logistics support</td></tr></table>		Mariam YINUSA	Producer – ensure smooth flow of event, have backup of PPT, monitor and promote engagement on the online zoom chat	Nina ZADI	Logistics support
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Learning Loops Training Masterclass Workshop

EVENT 2: BANKWIDE KNOWLEDGE EVENT

Event Title:	Are we really learning? A Knowledge Event on Learning Loops														
Date:	Friday, 14 th June 2024														
Time:	10:00 am – 12:00 pm														
Duration:	2 hours														
Venue:	Hybrid: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ CCIA▪ Zoom connection parameters														
Objective:	This knowledge event aims to introduce Bank staff to the concept of learning loops within operational frameworks and equip them with practical strategies to implement and optimize learning loops in their work. Participants will gain insights into how learning loops can drive continuous improvement, enhance decision-making processes, and foster a culture of learning and adaptation.														
Format:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Panel discussion with keynote speaker▪ English/French interpretation will be provided▪ Pause-café for in-person attendees														
Speakers:	<table><tr><td>Dr. Moses Adoko Chief Knowledge Officer, NASA and CEO MakAstro Tech & Services</td><td>Keynote speaker</td></tr><tr><td>Ms. Nomfundo Xenia Ngwenya Executive Director, AfDB</td><td>Chairperson</td></tr><tr><td>Ms. Karen Rot- Munstermann, Evaluator General, IDEV, AfDB</td><td>Panelist</td></tr><tr><td>Dr. Eric Ogunleye Senior Director, African Development Institute, AfDB</td><td>Panelist</td></tr><tr><td>Osward Mulenga Chanda Director, AHWS, AfDB</td><td>Panelist</td></tr><tr><td>Ms. Penelope Jackson, Division Manager, SNDR.3</td><td>Moderator</td></tr></table>			Dr. Moses Adoko Chief Knowledge Officer, NASA and CEO MakAstro Tech & Services	Keynote speaker	Ms. Nomfundo Xenia Ngwenya Executive Director, AfDB	Chairperson	Ms. Karen Rot- Munstermann, Evaluator General, IDEV, AfDB	Panelist	Dr. Eric Ogunleye Senior Director, African Development Institute, AfDB	Panelist	Osward Mulenga Chanda Director, AHWS, AfDB	Panelist	Ms. Penelope Jackson, Division Manager, SNDR.3	Moderator
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Participants:	Open to all interested Bank staff														

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Guidance Note for Panel Discussion on Promoting Lesson Learning in the Bank

Friday, 14th June 2024

Panel Discussion

The African Development Bank (AfDB) recognizes the pivotal role of continuous learning and adaptive engagement in achieving sustainable development in Africa. In line with this commitment, the Quality Assurance and Learning Division (SNDR.3) is organizing a high-level learning knowledge event titled “**Are We Really Learning?**” This event aims to harness the power of iterative learning and feedback mechanisms to drive operational excellence, foster innovation, and maximize development effectiveness of Bank operations in its Regional Member Countries. Based on their professional background and experience, the panelists are requested to share their views on lessons learning practices in Bank Operations.

Please review the concept note for more information regarding the theme, including the event’s concept note and program.

The chair will introduce the panelists and ask each one to react to the keynote and to share his/her own perspectives on the theme in approx. 3-4 minutes. Thereafter, the moderator/chair will field questions to panelists, yourself included, drawing on the guiding questions below as well as follow-up questions based on the individual and collective responses of the session panelists. After a round of questions from the moderator, the discussion will be opened-up to the wider audience. The chair or moderator will drive the question-and-answer time during which the audience will engage in a conversation with the panelists.

We recommend that panelists focus their initial intervention on no more than 3 key points in approx. 3-5 minutes. The discussion questions that will be asked of you by the moderator may include:

- To what extent is the Bank successfully capturing lessons from operations?
- How effective is the Bank in applying lessons from one operation to the next, or from operations to policies and strategies? Any specific examples from your own experience in the Bank?
- What are some of the constraints and opportunities for promoting operations lessons learning in the AfDB context?
- Do accountability and learning mutually support each other or can one overshadow the other?
- How can the Bank institutionalise learning or become a learning organisation?

General Guidelines

Before Session

- Please send us your brief bio and a photo of yourself as soon as possible.

- The knowledge event will be a hybrid of face-to-face (CCIA) and online (Zoom). Panelists should be present in the CCIA room. If you are not familiar with the use of the zoom platform, please let us know as soon as possible to assist you.

At the Webinar Session

- Please log-on at least 15 minutes before the event begins by clicking on the link that shall be sent to you, so that final session-related issues can be sorted out. Or arrive in the room 15 minutes before.
- To participate as a panelist for the Zoom session, please be informed about the following general points:
 - You are requested to turn “On” your video during your presentation and during the Q&A discussion session. Apart from these two moments, please leave your video turned “Off”;
 - Your microphone is muted by default, but you can unmute yourself when needed. To minimize interference in the connection, we request you to unmute your microphone only when taking the floor, and to re-mute your microphone when you have finished speaking. Please note that participants in the audience cannot unmute themselves. The moderator shall be the one to unmute and re-mute the participants.
 - French/English interpretation is available, so we invite you to speak in the language of your choice. To listen to the interpretation, click on the “*small world*” icon on the Zoom toolbar located along the bottom of your screen and select your preferred language; .
 - A team behind the scenes will be monitoring participants’ questions entered into the chatbox and the Q&A box and will pass these on to the moderator, who will in turn field the questions to you.
- Please ensure that you speak in the time allotted to you. The session moderator may interrupt you if you run over your time.
- The whole session will be recorded and posted on SNDR3’s Quality Matters website after the event.

Note that refreshments will be served in the room.