

**SNAPSHOT UPDATE: HOW ARE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY
EFFORTS BEING EVALUATED?**

THE COVID-19 GLOBAL EVALUATION COALITION | DECEMBER 2022

The COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition is a network of the central and independent evaluation units of countries, UN organisations, and multilateral institutions that provides credible evidence to inform international co-operation responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

www.covid19-evaluation-coalition.org

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Summary of key findings

- The analysis identified 641 evaluative initiatives focusing (fully or partially) on COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery efforts in low- and middle-income countries.
- The uptick in real-time assessments seen in the early stages of the pandemic has waned somewhat and the vast majority of evaluations of this type are now complete.
- While most of the evaluations and reviews included in the analysis have been completed, an important number remain planned or ongoing across all institutions, reflecting the enduring nature of the pandemic and the availability of data required to evaluate responses. Consultations with Coalition participants suggest that exercises completed to date have mainly approached issues of relevance, coherence, and efficiency, and that there are unmet learning and accountability needs related to effectiveness and impact.
- In line with 2021 observations, the top three sectors or topics of focus include Country Programme Evaluations, Good Health and Well-Being, and Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and Private Sector, Decent Work and Economic Growth also emerge as topics of growing importance, with twice as many evaluations planned or ongoing now compared to 2021.
- As with the first landscape analysis, relatively few evaluations of national and local response efforts are on the Coalition's radar when compared to evaluations of international development co-operation and humanitarian support. This imbalance is all the more striking when contrasted with the scale of response, with national responses predominating in most contexts.
- In line with the 2021 analysis, evaluations and reviews are largely concentrated on efforts in Sub-Saharan and North Africa. In addition, a significant number of evaluations and reviews have been conducted or launched with a global scope.

Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

In late 2021, the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition published a [landscape analysis](#) of more than 250 national and international evaluations and reviews of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. The purpose of the paper was to support Coalition participants to understand the current landscape, target their individual work and resources, and co-ordinate evaluative efforts. One year later, this paper provides a snapshot update to the initial landscape, describing which institutions are undertaking evaluative work and where their efforts are focused. In line with the initial report, this update focuses on the evaluation activities of development and humanitarian organisations in low- and middle-income countries and establishes a global view of the current landscape.

This paper is based on the evaluation plans and reports submitted to the OECD Secretariat by participants of the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition (51 of 64 participants are included). This includes partner country representatives, and members of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet), the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). In addition, the analysis includes all relevant plans and reports in the Coalition's [COVID-19 Response Portal](#) (hosted by ALNAP), the OECD [DAC's Evaluation Resource Centre](#), and the [3iE Development Evidence Portal](#). The consolidated database includes the reports and plans of both Coalition participants and non-participant organisations.

The analysis covered 641 evaluative initiatives focusing (fully or partially) on COVID-19 out of a total universe of 1953 reports and plans identified. The 641 completed reports and evaluation plans included were classified according to relevant analysis dimensions, including status of completeness, focus on COVID-19 (total or partial), geographic focus (including case studies), evaluation type, and sectors or topics of focus. Evaluation documents were compiled between late August and early November 2022. The database generated is not exhaustive and is updated regularly to reflect new evaluation plans and reports as they emerge. The conclusions presented in this report are thus subject to change, though the typology described herein is durable.

Evaluating COVID-19 Response and Recovery Efforts

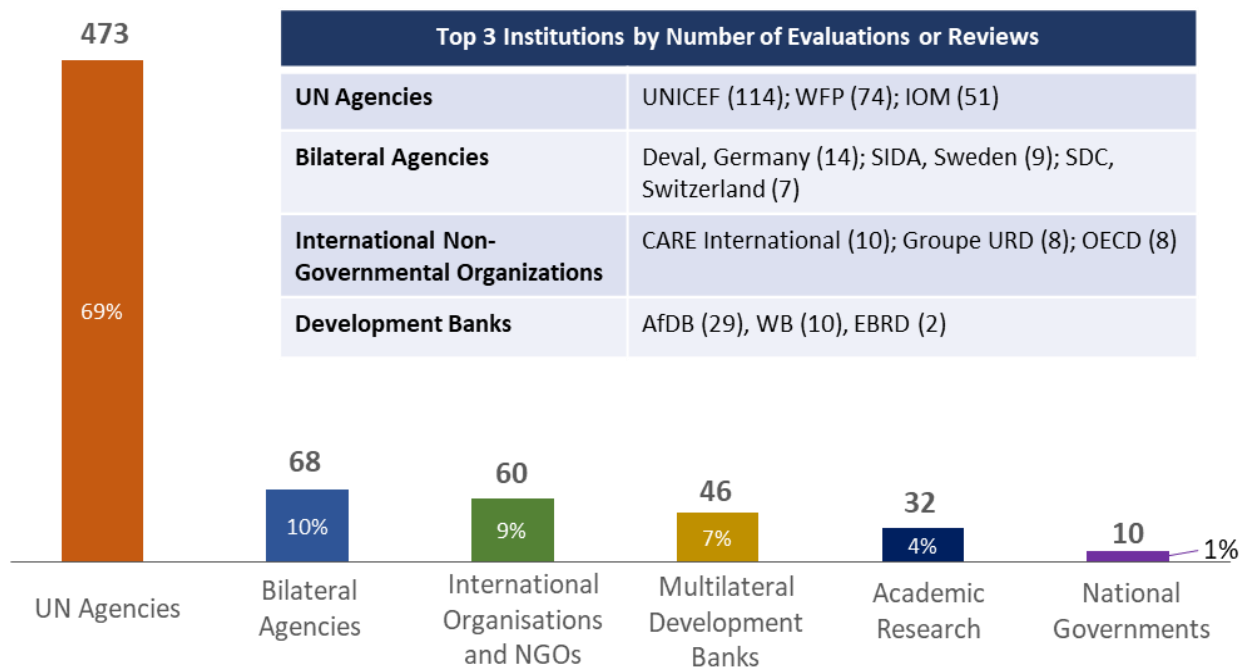
Organisations undertaking evaluative work

A wide range of national and international institutions are evaluating their COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery efforts in low- and middle-income countries. As of November 2022, the Secretariat had identified 641 evaluative exercises spanning 90 different organisations. This includes the work of national governments, development and humanitarian agencies, multilateral institutions, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGO), and academic research entities.

UN agencies collectively account for 69% of all evaluations and reviews identified, and bilateral development agencies account for 10%. International organisations, NGOs, and academics combined represent 13%, and multilateral development banks an additional 7%. The development co-operation agencies of [Belgium](#), the [European Commission](#), [Finland](#), and [Sweden](#) have each published evaluation reports of their respective responses, and Germany and Spain are among those currently undertaking similar exercises.

National governments, such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Gabon, Ghana, Malawi, and South Africa, are also evaluating their respective response efforts. While such evaluations account for only 1% of those included in the analysis, we suspect that additional evaluations have been commissioned by governments or are underway in these and other low- and middle- income countries. Though outside of the scope of this analysis, it is interesting to note that several OECD countries have undertaken similar exercises focused on their national responses to COVID-19, [Luxembourg](#) being a notable recent example. In early 2022, the OECD published a [synthesis](#) of evidence from 67 evaluations of government responses to COVID-19 in OECD countries during the first 15 months of the pandemic.

Number of COVID-19 evaluations or reviews (full or partial focus) by type of institution



Source: COVID-19 Coalition Secretariat Evaluation Plans and Reports Database, November 2022

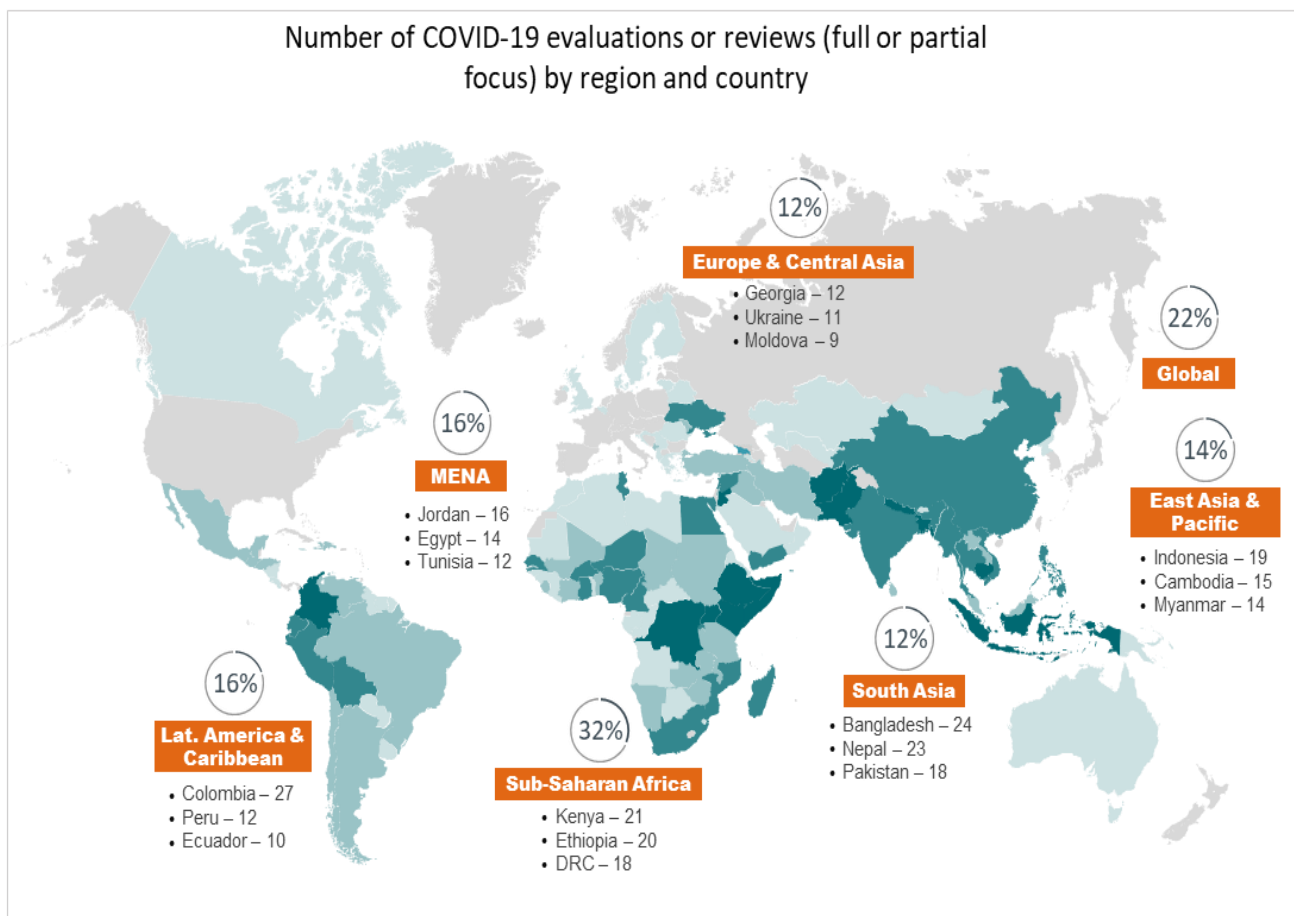
Note: Percentages refer to the share of total evaluations conducted by each institution type. Since some evaluations were conducted jointly across two or more organisations, the total number of evaluations or reviews included in the above chart total more than the 641 evaluative exercises included in the analysis.

Box 1: South Africa’s COVID-19 Country Report

The Government of South Africa’s Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation published in June 2021 a comprehensive COVID-19 [country report](#) to document, almost in real-time, how the government and its partners responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report provides a storyline and records the measures and interventions adopted to manage the pandemic and its many negative effects, especially on vulnerable groups. The intention is for the report to serve as a reference point and provide lessons for handling significant disasters in the future. A second edition is currently underway to document interventions implemented by selected sectors and different spheres of government during the 2021-22 financial year to manage, respond to and combat the spread and negative socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Geographic focus of evaluative exercises

As highlighted in the previous landscape paper, evaluations and reviews have predominately focused on efforts in Africa, with 32% of evaluation exercises covering Sub-Saharan Africa, and 16% covering the Middle East & North Africa. Exercises also focus on Latin America & the Caribbean (16%), East Asia & the Pacific (14%), South Asia (12%), and Europe & Central Asia (12%). A substantial number of evaluations have also been undertaken with a global scope, with 22% of pandemic-related exercises opting for this approach. The countries with the highest number of evaluations are Colombia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya, and Ethiopia.



Source: COVID-19 Coalition Secretariat Evaluation Plans and Reports Database, November 2022

Note: Percentages refer to the share of total evaluations studying specific regions (as a whole or countries within regions). Since evaluations may study multiple countries and regions concurrently, percentages add to more than 100% of the total number of evaluations. The analysis includes identified geographic areas of focus and case study countries from broader evaluations.

Box 2: Evaluative efforts in Burkina Faso

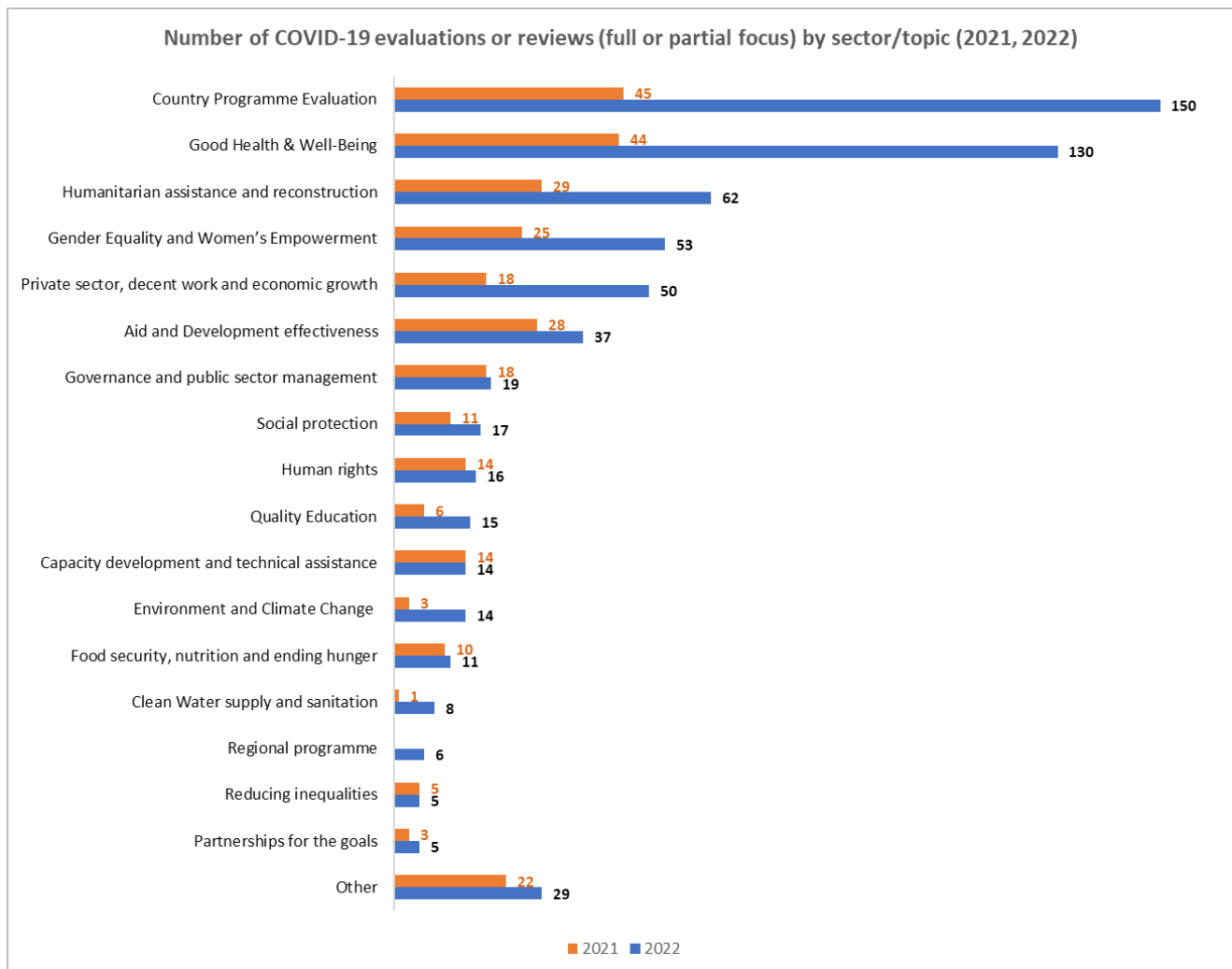
Several evaluations and reviews have examined COVID-19 response efforts in Burkina Faso, including the African Development Bank's [COVID-19 Response Evaluation](#), which focused on issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Moreover, the national response of Burkina Faso was featured in a [review of national responses](#), which leveraged academic literature review and individual interview methodologies. In this study, the authors concluded that the government played a critical role in designing and implementing the response, but that it might have benefited from closer dialogue with civil society.

The Government of Burkina Faso is currently conducting its own evaluation of the country's national response plan, supported by the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) and the OECD, as part of the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition's support for country-led evaluations of national responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluation topics covered

Consistent with findings from the initial landscape analysis, country programmes, good health and well-being, and humanitarian assistance and reconstruction remain the top three sectors or topics addressed by evaluations, with the total numbers of each doubling since the last analysis. The past year has also seen a relative increase in the number of evaluations focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the private sector, decent work, and economic growth.

Gaps identified in the social sectors in the 2021 analysis remain relatively under-evaluated, including the pandemic’s effects on quality education, climate change, clean water supply and sanitation, and efforts to reduce inequalities. While increases can be observed in the number of evaluative exercises addressing nearly all sectors or topics, relatively few evaluations have been conducted with a focus on secondary impacts when compared to those focused on direct health responses.



Source: COVID-19 Coalition Secretariat Evaluation Plans and Reports Database, November 2022

Note: Figures from 2021 amount to 641 whereas figures from 2022 amount to 296, reflecting the number of planned and ongoing evaluations and reviews included in each respective analysis. Regional programmes was not identified as a sector or topic of focus in 2021, and the sectors/topics included in the ‘other’ category differ slightly by year.

Box 3: Equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines

Equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines is considered a matter of global solidarity and a priority solution to ending the pandemic. A number of significant evaluations have been completed or are underway with a focus on equitable access to vaccines and vaccination roll-outs. These include:

- The multistage evaluation of the COVAX Facility and COVAX AMC (with an [Evaluability Assessment](#) and Evaluation Design Study complete in 2022).
- The Evaluation of GAVI's Initial Response to COVID-19 (complete).
- CEPI's [Lessons](#) for R&D and Manufacturing Investment for Equitable COVID-19 and Pandemic Response; the Equitable Access [Review](#) of CEPI's COVID-19 Vaccine Development Agreements; and the combined [mid-term review and COVID-19 response review](#).
- WHO's [External Evaluation](#) of the Access To COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A).
- [Regional real-time assessments](#) of UNICEF's support to the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and immunization programme strengthening.
- The Evaluation of the COVID-19 Spanish Cooperation Joint Response Strategy and Universal Access Plan to Vaccines (ongoing).
- The Strategic Joint Evaluation of the Collective International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Response to COVID-19, which includes a thematic focus on equitable access to vaccinations (ongoing).

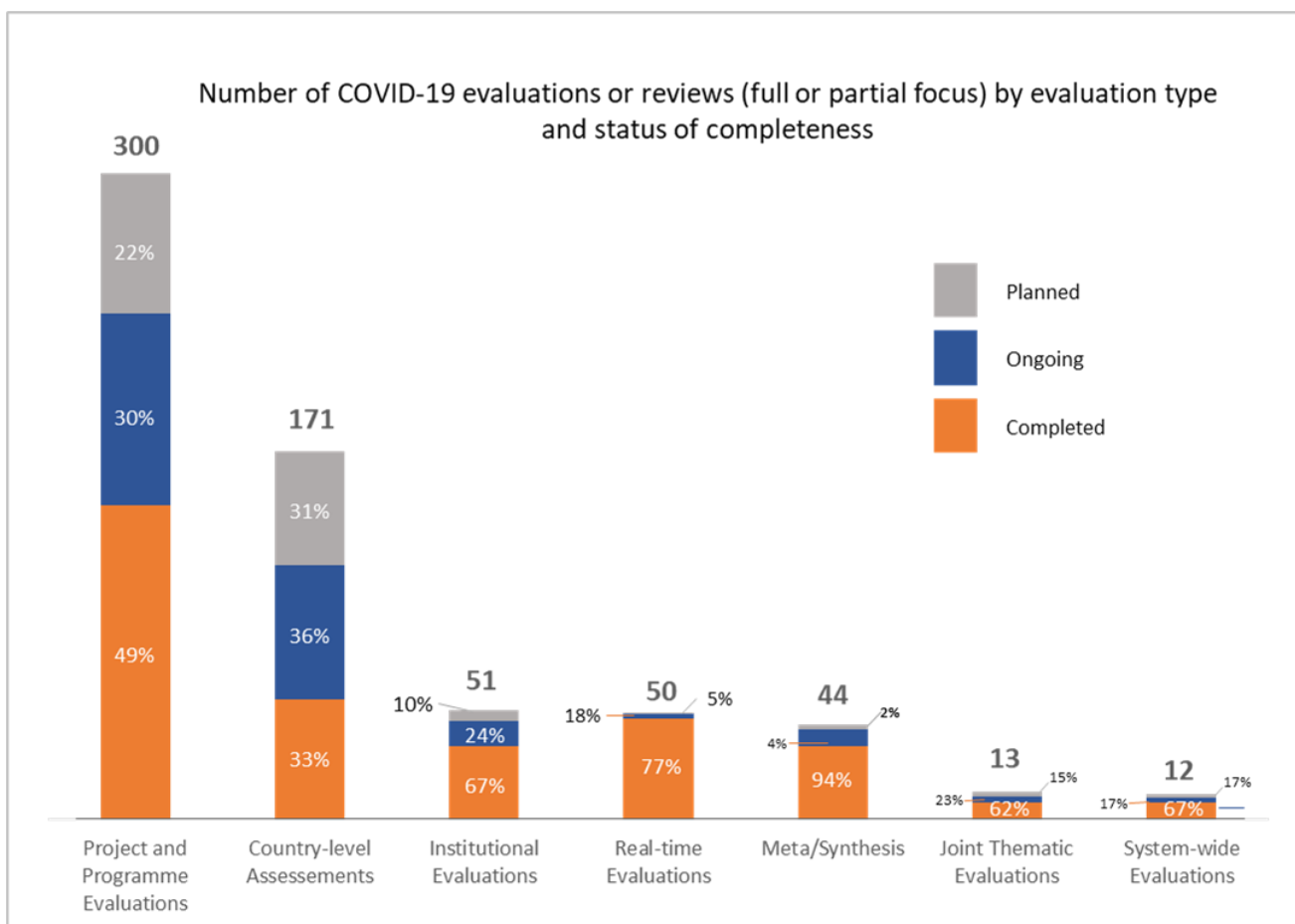
Types and status of evaluative exercises

Since the onset of the pandemic, more than 300 completed evaluations and reviews (52%) have been published. In addition, a significant number remain ongoing (28%) or have been identified in evaluation plans (20%). Studies included in the analysis were grouped into two broad categories: evaluations specifically focused on COVID-19 (48%), and those incorporating aspects of the pandemic into evaluation questions (52%). While institutions have framed and organised their evaluative exercises differently, they all, to some extent, aim to answer questions about the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, or sustainability of COVID-19 response or recovery efforts.

The evaluative work undertaken to date has involved project and programme evaluations (47%), country-level assessments (27%), institutional evaluations (8%), real-time assessments (8%), meta-evaluations and synthesis reviews (7%), joint thematic evaluations (2%), and system-wide evaluations (1%). The analysis highlighted that of the 50 real-time assessments included in the analysis, 77% have already been completed. This highlights the utility of real-time assessments, particularly in emergency and crisis situations, and demonstrates a reliance on such exercises to inform decision-making in real-time.

Joint and system-wide evaluations were highlighted in the initial 2021 landscape paper as an integral part of the evaluative effort. The number of these studies has remained stable over time. Notable examples of evaluations in these categories include the [System-Wide Evaluation of the UNDS Socio-economic Response to COVID-19](#), the [Joint Evaluation of the Protection of the Rights of Refugees during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), and the ongoing *Strategic Joint Evaluation of the Collective International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Response to COVID-19*.

At a June 2022 workshop, Coalition participants highlighted a gap in evaluative evidence in the areas of effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. This gap was attributed to a lack of available data and insufficient time horizons for assessing such issues. There was a consensus that addressing this gap moving forward will be important for both accountability and learning purposes.



Source: COVID-19 Coalition Secretariat Evaluation Plans and Reports Database, November 2022

Conclusion

Moving forward, the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition will continue to play an instrumental role in generating and sharing credible evidence to inform ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery efforts in low- and middle- income countries. Evaluative evidence related to such responses will be invaluable to development co-operation’s ability to prepare for future crises and do better next time. The findings from this analysis demonstrate that the key initiatives of the Coalition planned for 2022-2023 are relevant and respond to gaps in evaluative evidence.

Notably, the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) and the OECD-DAC EvalNet Secretariat have partnered with the central evaluation units of Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Malawi to support them in designing evaluations to answer priority policy questions and fill evaluation gaps they have identified. The OECD plans to develop a template terms of reference to support other national governments in designing and conducting evaluations of their respective response efforts.

This analysis also shows that the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition’s ‘Strategic Joint Evaluation of the Collective International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Response to COVID-19’ will fill a gap in understanding the collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including overall outcomes.