

Terms of Reference

Final evaluation of the multi-year funding for the Clermont International Development Hub (PCDI)

April – November 2026

1. Background

For several decades, the city of Clermont-Ferrand has been a centre of expertise in international development, thanks to the presence of several key players. This centre is of strategic importance for France's capacity for reflection and foresight on development issues.

By consolidating Clermont-Ferrand's centre of expertise, its appeal and its dynamism, the multi-year project of the Clermont-Ferrand International Development Hub (PCDI) aims to strengthen the influence and international reach of France and its regions in the field of development policy, with a clear focus on Africa. The hub, thus revitalised and expanded, supports the training of senior officials from the Global South and the development of high-quality, independent research in the economic and social sciences in these countries, particularly in Africa, to aid the formulation of their development policies.

Under the PCDI, the Foundation for Studies and Research on International Development (Ferdinand) and the Global Development Network (GDN) receive multi-year public funding (2021–2027) from the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, implemented by the French Development Agency, amounting to €20.25 million.

Two separate agreements govern this funding:

- One with Ferdinand, a think tank and foundation recognised as being of public utility, which produces and disseminates economic analyses based on research findings, public policy recommendations for development, and training programmes through its Institute for Advanced Studies in Sustainable Development (IHEDD).

This funding agreement provides a framework for the implementation of activities across two components of the PCDI: Research and Training. The objectives of these activities are to i) renew and strengthen the State's financial support for Ferdinand for the implementation of research and think tank activities in development economics, and to enable Ferdinand to achieve a critical mass closer to that of European and international think tanks of comparable influence, ii) to expand support for training activities aimed at senior officials from the Global South, by fostering synergies and developing complementary training activities.

- The other partnership is with the GDN, a public international organisation whose core mission is to support social science research geared towards public policy in the Global South, particularly in Francophone Africa. Based in India, the GDN has rethought its development plan and expansion strategy in order to extend its presence and networks in Europe. In this context, the organisation has chosen to establish its European base in Clermont-Ferrand, thereby enriching the Clermont-Ferrand hub.

This funding agreement provides the framework for the establishment of the GDN in Clermont-Ferrand and the implementation of activities under the PCDI Research Capacity Building component. This support aims to: i) give the GDN greater visibility and integration within European networks of donors and international development actors; ii) enable the GDN to continue

its flagship activities in Clermont-Ferrand and to develop them further in synergy with the cluster's partners, iii) strengthen the research capacities and ecosystem of partner countries in the Global South through the GDN's dedicated programmes, with a particular focus on Francophone Africa.

The cluster also includes CERDI (UMR UCA, CNRS and IRD) and the School of Economics at the University of Clermont Auvergne, academic institutions that contribute to research, training, attractiveness and resource-sharing within Clermont-Ferrand's international development ecosystem. The AFD has also opened an office in Clermont-Ferrand during the multi-year PCDI project.

2. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

This consultation aims to select a service provider (firm or consortium) to conduct the final evaluation of the PCDI and produce deliverables that can be used for:

- accountability (results, impacts, performance, use of resources);
- learning (success factors/limitations, unintended effects/coherence, improvement);
- support for strategic discussions. In

other words, the final evaluation must:

1. Report on the results of the implementation of the two funding agreements;
2. Provide evidence of the PCDI's contribution to the objectives identified in the project's monitoring and results framework, namely i) increasing France's influence and the reach of actors promoting a French approach to international development (coherence, visibility of French action, etc.), and ii) consolidate an internationally-oriented centre of expertise in the AURA region and strengthen the influence of the Clermont Auvergne metropolitan area.
3. Document and analyse the robustness and viability of the PCDI's organisational, scientific and economic model, in light of the measured outcomes (levels of results and contribution to the targeted objectives);
4. Formulate insights that can inform strategic discussions regarding the future of the PCDI, particularly based on a comparative analysis.

The results of the evaluation will be presented at the next PCDI Steering Committee meeting in December 2026.

3. Scope of the evaluation

Timeframe

The evaluation will cover the period 2021–2026. It will take into account the different timelines of the three components and, where applicable, will explain how activities still ongoing at the time of the evaluation have been taken into account.

Thematic scope

The evaluation covers all components of the PCDI:

- Research;
- Training;
- Strengthening research capacity in partner countries in the Global South;

As well as its operational arrangements and cross-cutting issues:

- Governance and synergies between components;
- Strategy for outreach and influence;
- Ability to raise additional funds through the leverage effect of the PCDI (positioning, partnerships, initiatives undertaken);
- Monitoring, evaluation and efficiency (resources, implementation, coordination and funding management costs)

Geographical scope

- Activities carried out in Clermont-Ferrand (local roots, governance, ecosystem);
- Activities carried out internationally, particularly in the Global South (with the service provider undertaking field missions).

Institutional scope

The main focus of the evaluation is the PCDI in the strict sense, i.e. the activities funded under the two agreements concluded with Ferdi and the GDN.

However, for certain issues, the evaluation will analyse the interactions between Ferdi, the GDN and the wider Clermont-Ferrand cluster, including notably the CERDI, the UCA School of Economics and the AFD Group, where such interactions shed light on the project's added value, synergies, regional roots, attractiveness, training, research output and the cluster's sustainability.

For each evaluation question, the consultants will set out the scope selected and the rationale for it.

4. Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions are structured across several complementary levels:

- The strategic level of the PCDI
- The operational level of the project's three components (research, training, research capacity building)
- The level of institutional coordination between the main stakeholders of the PCDI and the wider cluster
- The level of territorial impact, reach, influence and sustainability of the model. The five main

evaluation questions are as follows:

1. Implementation and performance of activities: what has the PCDI achieved, and with what results?

To what extent have the activities carried out across the three strands (Research, Training, Strengthening research capacity in partner countries in the Global South) been relevant, coherent, effective and efficient in relation to the objectives pursued, and what factors explain any discrepancies? To what extent have the three strands of the project produced complementary or synergistic results? To what extent have these objectives been achieved?

2. Transformation, influence and embedding: what difference is the PCDI making in Clermont-Ferrand and beyond?

To what extent has support for the PCDI, between 2021 and 2026, contributed to enhancing the cluster's positioning, visibility and capacity for influence (both nationally and internationally), as well

its regional roots and the conditions for its sustainability? To what extent has the PCDI strengthened the region's scientific, academic and institutional appeal?

3. Governance and synergies: how does the “cluster” operate, and what does this multi-stakeholder model enable (or fail to enable)?

To what extent do interactions between Ferdi, the GDN, the AFD Group, academic stakeholders in Clermont-Ferrand and other stakeholders enable the creation of effective synergies and specific added value? Have the mechanisms for governance, monitoring and coordination fostered cooperation or created rigidities? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

4. Specific contribution to the French and European landscapes of research, training and expertise: what added value does the PCDI offer?

To what extent does the PCDI represent a specific, innovative or distinctive contribution to the French and European landscapes of research, training and expertise in international development? In what ways does the cluster complement, strengthen or transform the existing provision in France or Europe, and how do its positioning, activities or operational model differ from other national or European initiatives? To what extent does the PCDI contribute to the priorities of French development policy, to the coherence and visibility of French action, and to strengthening the capacity of French actors to intervene?

5. Economic, organisational and scientific model: how can the balance and sustainability of the PCDI be ensured?

To what extent is the PCDI's current model – including its financial and organisational aspects, as well as its scientific and academic production methods – balanced, coherent and viable in the medium term? What are its strengths, limitations and risks, and what development options could strengthen the PCDI's sustainability regardless of its added value?

Applicants must explain how these five questions relate to the ^{OECD-DAC} evaluation criteria¹ and propose an evaluation matrix (questions => evaluation criteria and indicators => sources/methods).

The evaluation questions are provided here for guidance only. If deemed useful, the consultants may propose to revise and refine them in consultation with the various project stakeholders during the scoping phase of the evaluation.

5. Guidance on the methodological approach

The points below are intended to guide the consultants in developing their methodological proposal. Consultants are invited to propose a rigorous, triangulated approach commensurate with the challenges involved, specifying sampling choices, the data collection and analysis strategy, limitations and quality assurance measures. The methodological proposal must explain how the evaluation will address the various levels of analysis within the project: the strategic level of the cluster, the level of the three operational components, the level of institutional linkages, the territorial level, as well as the level of outreach and influence.

Literature review and analysis of monitoring data

¹ The OECD-DAC criteria as applied through the PCDI framework are: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and added value of the PCDI.

- Critical analysis of reference documents (agreements, strategy, annual reports, monitoring framework, etc.);
- Use of available indicators and assessment of their robustness (gaps, consistency, applications).

Conducting interviews

The consultants will conduct **several dozen interviews** (estimated at around thirty).

As a guide, the interviews should cover at least Ferdi, the GDN, the AFD Group, the DG Trésor, the MEAE, the UCA/CERDI/School of Economics, local authorities, as well as a sample of PCDI activity partners, beneficiaries and other qualified individuals.

Conducting field missions

The consultants will propose the conduct of field missions (2–3 countries as a guide – the number and countries to be confirmed during the scoping phase by the reference group) and will specify the methodologies to be employed during these missions. These missions will enable them to meet institutional partners, implementing partners of PCDI-funded activities, and beneficiaries of these activities. The number of field missions must be strictly justified in terms of their demonstrative value, budgetary constraints and alternatives that can be implemented remotely.

Case studies and influence

The consultants will propose a methodology to provide analytical insights into the contribution to influence.

Benchmarking / comparative analysis

The consultants will include in the evaluation a comparative analysis aimed at assessing the positioning of the PCDI and its stakeholders, as well as the choices of model (governance, funding, services, influence) in relation to comparable institutions or similar organisations. This comparative analysis will focus primarily on comparable institutions in France and Europe. The contractor will propose a framework for this benchmark, set out the selection criteria for the cases chosen and a methodology for comparison.

6. Expected deliverables

The evaluation will be conducted in both French and English, with data collection, interviews, tools and key deliverables available in both languages, in order to cover the entire portfolio and stakeholders of the PCDI.

Deliverable 1: Inception report / Evaluation framework document

During the preparatory phase, the consultants will be required to:

- Gather and review all information and documents relating to the project under evaluation and to understanding its context;
- Identify all project stakeholders;
- Conduct interviews with key individuals involved or who have been involved in the design, management and supervision of the project;
- Reconstruct the project's intervention logic/theory of change (objectives, operating procedures, stakeholders, implementation, etc.);

- Produce an evaluation framework that takes each evaluation question as a starting point to i) break them down into assessment criteria or hypotheses, and ii) specify the sources of information needed to document these criteria, hypotheses or indicators.

This deliverable must demonstrate the consultants' understanding of all aspects of the project and its challenges. The terms of reference will specify the structure of the evaluation framework, distinguishing the levels of analysis selected (cluster, components, governance/institutional coordination, territory, impact/sustainability) and explaining how these relate to the OECD DAC criteria. The scoping note will also include a quality control matrix for the deliverables, shared with the reference group, setting out the criteria for assessing the reports (clarity of scope, robustness of sources, triangulation, clarification of limitations, traceability between findings, conclusions and recommendations, editorial quality, operational nature of the recommendations).

This framework document will be discussed within the evaluation reference group (see section 7 below). Its approval is a prerequisite for the evaluation to proceed.

Deliverable 2: Interim report

During the data collection phase, and in order to address the evaluation questions, an interim report will be required. This report will enable the consultants to demonstrate their ability to draw on a variety of sources, cross-check them against one another and critically assess their reliability.

Deliverable 2 will include initial findings and conclusions based on the data collected, areas requiring further investigation and any necessary methodological adjustments. It will be presented at a meeting with the operational teams (AFD, Ferdi, GDN).

Deliverables 3 and 4: Interim evaluation report followed by final evaluation report (including executive summary and presentation materials)

Following the data collection phase and based on the findings arising from the analysis of the information and data gathered, the consultants will draft the interim evaluation report (Deliverable 3) and formulate the evaluation conclusions. The consultants will distinguish between specific conclusions whose validity is limited to the project under evaluation and conclusions of a more general nature, and will highlight the limitations (bias, data availability).

The draft evaluation report must present the full analysis and the logical link between the findings and conclusions. It must include lessons learnt and recommendations. The consultants will facilitate a discussion focused on lessons learnt and recommendations with the project's main stakeholders (Ferd, GDN, AFD), with a view to co-construction. The interim report will then be presented to and discussed with the evaluation reference group.

The final evaluation report (Deliverable 4) will incorporate the comments of the evaluation reference group and take into account the collective output of the workshop. Deliverable 4 must contain the final conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. It will include an executive summary and be accompanied by a presentation document (reusable for the Copil feedback session in December 2026). The final report may be subject to an 'extended' feedback session to disseminate the lessons learnt and recommendations, the scope of which will be defined with the evaluation's sponsors.

7. Timetable, management and budget

Timetable

As a guide, and subject to the contract being signed, the evaluation will begin in early May 2026. It must conclude with a presentation by 30 November 2026 at the latest.

The evaluation will therefore follow the indicative timetable below:

- Kick-off meeting: second half of April or early May 2026
- Submission of the terms of reference: one month after the kick-off meeting (indicative: early June 2026)
- Submission of the interim report: 4 months after commencement (indicative: early September 2026)
- Submission of the provisional report: 5.5 months after commencement (indicative: mid-October 2026)
- Submission of the final report: 6.5 months after commencement (indicative: mid-November 2026)
- Debriefing meeting: 7 months after commencement (no later than the end of November 2026)

Steering

The governance of the evaluation will be jointly managed by Ferdi and the GDN (joint steering committee, shared validation of tools, co-signing of strategic deliverables). Ferdi will enter into a contract with the consultants.

A reference group comprising representatives from Ferdi, the GDN and the AFD Group, as well as representatives from the UCA, Cerdi, the School of Economics, the Treasury Directorate-General, local authorities, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and qualified experts, will oversee the final evaluation process of the PCDI, in particular by providing feedback on interim deliverables and contributing to key stages (interim and final reports). The reference group will ensure, in particular, that the various institutional dimensions of the PCDI and the wider Clermont hub are properly taken into account, in order to inform analyses relating to synergies, governance and the sustainability of the model.

The contractor will work in regular consultation with Ferdi, the GDN, the AFD, and the reference group (kick-off meeting, progress updates, interim workshop, validation of the draft/final report).

Budget

The budget allocated to this service is capped at €120,000 including VAT.

8. Required qualifications and expertise

The skills required to carry out this evaluation are those of a team of experts covering the following areas:

- Knowledge and professional experience in the evaluation of projects, programmes or public policy – minimum 10 years' experience;
- Experience in development cooperation, working with various types of stakeholders (international institutions, universities, think tanks, civil society), and in the monitoring and evaluation of regional policies and/or higher education and research (ESR) projects;
- Knowledge and expertise in the implementation of capacity-building projects, as well as in social science research (production, dissemination, and key stakeholders);
- Very good knowledge of sub-Saharan African countries, particularly French-speaking ones, and the challenges these countries face in terms of development policies;
- Excellent command of French and English is essential, both spoken and written;
- Experience in facilitating participatory discussions and in impact assessment would be highly appreciated.

9. Application and selection procedure

Consultants wishing to apply for this position must submit:

1. **A technical proposal**, including their understanding of the assignment, examples of past evaluations, their methodological approach, the proposed detailed timetable, and the team composition (with CVs).
2. **A financial proposal**, including a detailed budget (with cost breakdown by profile and by evaluation stage).

Proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria and weightings:

- Quality of the technical proposal and methodology (40%): understanding of the issues at stake, rigour and feasibility, ability to address influence and carry out a comparative analysis/benchmark.
- Team experience and skills / references (35%): relevant references, complementary profiles, experience with comparable subjects (research/training/capacities, multi-stakeholder), knowledge of contexts (particularly French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa).
- Financial proposal / value for money (25%): consistency of costs with the level of effort and deliverables; transparency of the budget.

Applications should be sent to Audrey-Anne de Ubeda, Programme Coordination Manager – Ferdi, at the following address: candidatures.ferdi@ferdi.fr , by 12 April 2026 at the latest.

Objectifs globaux

- Nombre d'actions menées conjointement par les partenaires du pôle (dispositifs, programmes, conférence, publications...) (*cible à définir dans le cadre du Copil*)
- Nombre de participants à la conférence bisannuelle du développement portée par le GDN à Clermont-Ferrand (*NB : aucune cible ne sera définie pour cet indicateur*)
- Nombre de cadres formés par le PCDI/ nombre de cadres africains formés par le PCDI (*NB : aucune cible ne sera définie pour cet indicateur*)

Composante 1 - Recherche

- Augmentation³ de la production du think tank et de sa valorisation : nombre de publications scientifiques et grand public, nombre d'événements, d'ateliers de valorisation ;
- Augmentation⁴ des travaux menés en coproduction avec des acteurs du Sud : collaborations et projets conjoints, co-publications d'ouvrages, co-signatures d'articles scientifiques, co-organisation d'événements, co-interventions académiques.

Composante 2 - Formation

- Nombre d'apprenants (dont femmes) au sein du réseau de formation clermontois, dont :
 - Nombre d'apprenants africains et d'apprenantes africaines ;
 - Nombre de boursiers et de boursières ;
 - Nombre de certifiés et de certifiées ;
 - Nombre de diplômés et de diplômées ;
 - Nombre de bénéficiaires des outils d'appui à la formation doctorale (allocations de thèse, bourses de mobilité, *summer schools*...).
- Nombre et taux de satisfaction des partenariats universitaires noués au Sud
 - Nombre de formation courtes co-construites ;
 - *Taux de satisfaction obtenu sur les formation courtes co-construites ;*
 - Nombre de formations longues diplômantes co-construites ;
 - *Taux de satisfaction obtenu sur les formation longues co-construites ;*
 - Nombre de partenariats portant sur des formations doctorales ;
 - *Taux de satisfaction obtenu sur des formations doctorales.*
- Nombre des formations EAD déployées (y compris sous forme de modules)
 - Nombre de connexions à la plateforme digitale de l'IHEDD ;
 - Nombre de formation à distance finalisées ;
 - *Taux de satisfaction.*
- Nombre d'événements des alumni organisés
 - Nombre de participants à ces évènements.

Indicateurs agrégables

- Nombre de bénéficiaires totaux du projet (indicateur ex-ante)
- Nombre total d'apprenants, dont femmes

Overall objectives of the Clermont project

- Number of activities jointly implemented by the Clermont partners, including facilities, programs, conferences and publications
- Number of participants to the annual Global Development Conference, including number of panelists and attendees from developing countries
- Number of executives trained by the Clermont pole, including number of African executives trained by the Clermont pole

Indicators for the research capacity-building component

- Human resources employed by Global Development Network in the context of the Clermont pole, including GDN staff positions.
- Number of activities and events organized by GDN in Clermont-Ferrand, including newly-launched activities
- Annual and monthly number of blogposts and publications on the GlobalDev blog
- Number of research capacity-building grants implemented by GDN from its Clermont base, including research capacity-building programs implemented in Africa
- Number of direct beneficiaries of the research capacity-building grants, including beneficiaries from Africa
- Satisfaction expressed by the stakeholders and recipients of the GDN research capacity-building programs

Aggregated indicators

- Total ex-ante number of beneficiaries of the Clermont project
- Total number of trainees, including female trainees