

3b Evaluation Procedures

Short summary of characteristics

Evaluation is a time bound exercise that attempts to assess the relevance, performance and success of ongoing and completed programs, projects and processes using a systematic and objective procedure. Evaluation is an essential contribution to learning and managing knowledge and is important for the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness. Evaluation can be classified as different types:

- Internal – External; depending on the position of the evaluator,
- Ex-ante – Accompanying – Ex-post; depending on when the evaluation takes place,
- Performance oriented – Process oriented,
- Summative – Formative; depending on the learning objective of the evaluation,
- Quantitative – Qualitative; depending on the methodology.

No matter which type of evaluation chosen, an essential component is preparing a sound evaluation plan beforehand, considering the following task list:

- A brief identification of the **evaluation context** and an overview of the organisational plan,
- The **purpose** of the evaluation have to be clearly described,
- Relevant primary and secondary **target groups** of the evaluation have to be identified,
- The **methods** to be used in the evaluation have to be thoroughly described,
- The **evaluation instruments and tools** to be used have to be described and a rationale for their use should be provided,
- A communication and information scheme for the evaluation period should be established,
- A reasonable **schedule** for implementation of the report should be planned, including adequate time for analysis and report preparation.

In the case of external evaluations, these aspects must figure clearly in the evaluators terms of reference.

Evaluation tools support the task of generating information by various different means. Tools are available for all steps of an evaluation. Some examples for tools are: Evaluation Plan Template, Evaluation matrix, Evaluation Status Report, Interviews, Questionnaires and Focus Groups, Checklists, SWOT analysis, Peer Groups, Supported Group Discussions, etc.

Output from the tool

There is no defined output of an evaluation. The use of different tools at different stages of a project provides different forms of outputs. Possible products could be a report, a checklist or a matrix.

Experience of use

Evaluation and its effect are sometimes underestimated, sometimes dreaded. In practice, evaluation is mostly done at the end of a project and carried out by external persons. Evaluation may produce a very positive effect on the project/programme/process and help to improve personal skills, if a sound evaluation plan is designed beforehand. This plan should be oriented at the principles of transparency, clear goals and tasks, communication and implementation of consequences. The tools mostly used in evaluation do not ask for special skills – that is why so-called participatory self evaluation approaches may be extremely successful.