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Sida's Evaluation Handbook

Guidelines and Manual for Conducting Evaluations at Sida

Sida's Evaluation Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Sida's evaluation handbook aims to provide guidance to the Sida programme officer responsible for commissioning an evaluation. This external version of the handbook is primarily intended for Sida's cooperation partners, as well as for independent evaluators engaged in evaluating activities supported by Sida. It aims to serve as a source of information and inspiration as well as to provide insight into how evaluation at Sida is conducted.

The handbook consists of two main parts. The first part presents Sida's guidelines for evaluation, which includes Sida's approach to and principles and criteria for evaluation. The second part is a step-by-step guide on how Sida plans, prepares for and commissions evaluations. It includes sections on how to write a Terms of Reference for procuring evaluation services; how to manage an evaluation process from the inception phase to the dissemination phase; and how to prepare a management response to an evaluation.

Annexed to part two are three checklists that Sida uses for assessing Terms of Reference, inception reports and final reports, which build on OECD/DAC's quality standards for development evaluation.

Stockholm, April 2020

Sven Olander
Head of Sida's Evaluation Unit

PART ONE: SIDA'S EVALUATION GUIDELINES

- ◆ Sida's role in evaluation in Swedish development cooperation
- ◆ Evaluation at Sida
- ◆ Sida's approach to evaluation
- ◆ Evaluation, monitoring and audit

1. APPROACH TO AND PRINCIPLES FOR SIDA EVALUATIONS

1.1. Sida's role in evaluation in Swedish development cooperation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has adopted guidelines which sets out the role and responsibilities of the various government actors engaged in evaluation of Sweden's development cooperation. The two main actors are Sida and the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)¹, who both report to the Ministry. The Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) may at the request of the Swedish Government also carry out studies and evaluations of Swedish development cooperation. With regards to multilateral organisations, the evaluation functions of the respective organisation are responsible of evaluating their activities, regardless of who finances them.

The Government Ordinance for Sida² states that Sida shall:

- Make use of knowledge produced by internally initiated as well as external evaluations in its implementation of development cooperation.
- Assist actors that conduct monitoring and evaluation within Sida's area of activity.
- Ensure that all agreements with partners regulate monitoring, evaluation and audit.

IN SUM:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sets out the role and responsibilities of the various government actors engaged in evaluation of Sweden's development cooperation. The two main actors are Sida and the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA).
- The Government Ordinance for Sida states that Sida should make use of knowledge produced by internally initiated as well as external evaluations in its implementation of development cooperation.

1.2. Evaluation at Sida

Sida separates between four categories of evaluations; partner led, decentralised evaluations, central evaluations, and internal reviews:

- *Partner led evaluations* are commissioned and managed by Sida's cooperation partners. In fact, the responsibility for evaluation of Sida funded programmes rests primarily with its development partners. Partner led evaluations are part of the partner's monitoring and evaluation system, but may be funded by Sida via the agreement that regulates the partnership.
- Sida's *decentralised evaluations* are commissioned by foreign missions and Sida HQ units within their respective field of responsibility. Sida may commission an external evaluation for accountability purposes, to meet learning needs, or due to limited capacity by the partner.

¹ EBA is an independent committee appointed by the Swedish Government. It has the mandate to commission, compile, implement and communicate evaluations, analyses and studies on Swedish development cooperation.

² SFS 2010:10810 Förordning (2010:1080) med instruktion för Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete (Sida), active from 2010-08-16, latest revision SFS 2016:608.

- Every year Sida commissions *central evaluations* that are decided by the Director General based on their strategic importance for Sida overall. These can be commissioned and managed by Sida's Evaluation Unit or by appropriate Sida units and foreign missions in cooperation with Sida's evaluation unit, depending on their focus.
- *Internal reviews* map and analyse internal experiences and lessons relating to current topics, to contribute to enhanced learning within the agency. They are fast and normally conducted by Sida's Evaluation Unit.

Central evaluations are published in the series *Sida Evaluations*, and decentralised evaluations are published in the series *Sida Decentralised Evaluations*. Partner led evaluations are normally not published by Sida, but they are archived by Sida or foreign missions in accordance with the Swedish law on access to information.

Sida's Evaluation Unit coordinates evaluation at Sida. The unit is placed at the Department for Operational Support and has the ambition to create a culture of learning and evaluative thinking at Sida that contributes to Swedish development cooperation of highest quality. The core tasks of the Evaluation Unit are to:

- Annually propose a plan for central corporate evaluations for decision by Sida's Director General and coordinate its implementation, including management response and publication.
- Conduct internal reviews.
- Procure, manage and provide quality assurance of Sida's Framework Agreement for Evaluation Services.
- Provide advice to Sida units and foreign missions that commission decentralised evaluations, and facilitate their publication.
- Engage with Sida units and foreign missions on the role of evaluation in creating monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems that underpin development strategies decided by the Swedish government and that are implemented by Sida.
- Represent Sida in international evaluation fora in development cooperation, such as the evaluation network of OECD/DAC and the European Union.
- Collaborate with Sida units regarding projects that support evaluation capacity building and participate in fora to strengthen national capacities for evaluation in developing countries.
- Coordinate evaluation planning with EBA.

To ensure independence from operational and policy units and departments the Head of the Evaluation Unit formally reports to the Director General.

Sida has a system for management response to evaluations that aims to ensure that evaluation findings are used to develop Sida's organisational practises, to strengthen the effects of development cooperation and to contribute to transparency among stakeholders. A management response provides a management position and an implementation plan in response to an evaluation's conclusions and recommendations.

IN SUM:

- Sida separates between four categories of evaluations; partner led, decentralised, central evaluations, and internal reviews.
- Sida's Evaluation Unit coordinates evaluation at Sida.
- The Head of the Evaluation Unit formally reports to the Director General to ensure independence from operational and policy units and departments.
- Sida has a system for management response to evaluations.

1.2.1. Sida's principles and criteria for evaluations

Evaluation at Sida builds on the principles which have been developed by and agreed upon in the Evaluation network (EvalNet) of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in OECD. These are elaborated in the following documents:

- Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use
- Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance
- Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management
- Quality Standards for Development Evaluation
- Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility
- Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies
- Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations³

Sida financed evaluations shall normally apply the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance – relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. For evaluations of humanitarian assistance, the additional criteria connectedness, coverage, coherence and coordination shall normally be used. All criteria shall be considered for every evaluation, but Sida does not require that all evaluation criteria are included in each evaluation. Rather, it is advisable to focus on a few evaluation criteria, guided by the intended use of the evaluation.

Swedish development cooperation is expected to be imbued by the poor people's perspective and a human rights based approach. Environment, gender equality and conflict sensitivity shall be mainstreamed in each intervention. These policy perspectives need to be considered in the design of an evaluation and within the evaluation process. However, each evaluation does not need to include all perspectives; the emphasis for an evaluation depends on its intended use.

IN SUM:

- Evaluation at Sida builds on the principles which have been agreed upon in the Evaluation network (EvalNet) of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in OECD.
- Sida does not require that all OECD/DAC evaluation criteria are included in each evaluation. Rather, it is advisable to focus on a few criteria, guided by the intended use of the evaluation.
- Each evaluation does not need to include all of the policy perspectives in Swedish development cooperation; the emphasis for an evaluation depends on its intended use.

³ See www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation. At this website all strategic evaluations of the DAC members are published in the evaluation data base DEReC.

1.2.2. Evaluation and aid effectiveness

Contributions financed by Sida shall adhere to the principles of *aid effectiveness*, and shall rely on its partners' monitoring and evaluation systems to the greatest extent possible. Although the responsibility for evaluation of Sida funded programmes rests primarily with the development partner, Sida may commission an external evaluation for accountability purposes, to meet learning needs, or due to limited capacity by the partner. The appropriate division of roles depends primarily on the intended use of the evaluation.

In line with the principle of *harmonisation*, Sida strives to co-ordinate evaluation efforts with other actors in development. Therefore, Sida shall systematically consider the possibility of carrying out evaluations jointly with other donors and development partners. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, with careful consideration of the value added, benefits and costs involved. OECD/DAC's *Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations* shall guide joint evaluation processes.

To stimulate the use of partners' monitoring and evaluation systems, Sida is committed to support *capacity development* of evaluation skills and processes in partner countries. This can be done through targeted institution building, through dialogue with partners, by conducting evaluations in a manner that strengthens the local capacity, and by using existing evaluation capacity in the partner country.

IN SUM:

- Evaluations financed by Sida shall adhere to the principles of aid effectiveness, and rely on its partners' monitoring and evaluation systems to the greatest extent possible.
- However, Sida may commission an external evaluation for accountability purposes, to meet learning needs, or due to limited capacity by the partner.

1.3. Sida's approach to evaluation

Evaluation – defined as a *systematic and objective approach of determining the merit, worth or value of something* – plays a central role in results-based management and organisational learning at Sida. It provides an understanding of how and why certain results were – or were not – achieved, and if they were relevant and sustainable. It may also investigate if a project or programme led to any unintended effects and if it was implemented in a cost-efficient manner. Hence, evaluations contribute to well-informed decision making in projects, programmes and cooperation strategies.

On a more general level evaluations at Sida can contribute to:

- Knowledge about what works for whom, under what circumstances and how, which contributes to learning at Sida and among other actors in development cooperation.
- Transparency in Swedish development cooperation, which contributes to accountability.

Sida may evaluate a broad variety of objects: projects, programmes, strategies, thematic areas, approaches, modalities, methods and policies. Evaluations can also take many forms. For example, in *joint evaluations* several donors and development partners commission and manage an evaluation together. A number of evaluations

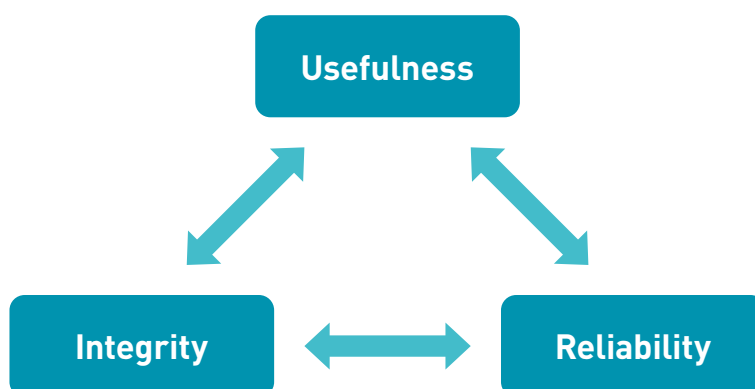
that are addressing similar topics, methods or questions can be synthesised in a *cluster evaluation* at the portfolio level of a strategy, or across strategies.

It is not mandatory to evaluate every intervention Sida finances – instead the goal is to have the right things evaluated at the right time and in the right way. To ensure this Sida’s approach to evaluation is *utilisation focused*⁴. In utilisation focused evaluation, emphasis is put on identifying who the *intended users* of a specific evaluation are, and being specific about their *intended use* of the evaluation. If it is unclear what the intended use of an evaluation is, or who the intended users are the evaluation shall not be carried out.

To increase the utility, evaluations commissioned by Sida shall be carried out in a spirit of partnership. This implies that intended users should normally be involved in defining purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation. The evaluation process shall be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users.

Sida regards the evaluation process itself as an opportunity for learning among those participating in, and commissioning, the evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation manager and the evaluator shall facilitate the evaluation with careful consideration of how the evaluation process shall increase learning. This approach requires collaboration between the evaluator and intended users, which puts high demand on the evaluator to maintain integrity and impartiality throughout the evaluation process.

Figure 1: The three pillars of evaluation at Sida



The interdependence between the three pillars that underpin evaluations at Sida – usefulness, integrity and reliability – are illustrated in Figure 1.

⁴ See Patton, M.Q., *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 4th edition (Los Angeles: Sage 2008).

IN SUM:

- Evaluation – defined as a systematic and objective approach of determining the merit, worth or value of something – plays a central role in results-based management and organisational learning at Sida.
- Sida’s approach to evaluation is utilisation focused. In utilisation focused evaluation, emphasis is put on identifying who the intended users of a specific evaluation are, and being specific about their intended use of the evaluation.
- To increase the utility, evaluations commissioned by Sida shall be carried out in a spirit of partnership.
- Sida regards the evaluation process itself as an opportunity for learning among those participating in an evaluation.
- It is not mandatory to evaluate every intervention – the goal is to have the right things evaluated at the right time and in the right way.
- Evaluations at Sida are underpinned by the principles of usefulness, integrity and reliability.

1.4. Evaluation, monitoring and audit

Sida regulates the conditions for monitoring, evaluation, and audit in the agreements on contributions that it enters with its partners. Broadly speaking, the three are complementary parts in a system for results based management, accountability and learning. Sida requires that its partners exercise results based management, but does not demand that a particular approach or method is used.

In a results based management system evaluation should be distinguished from monitoring, the continuous follow-up of activities and results in relation to pre-set targets and objectives. Sida regards evaluation as a complement to monitoring that should be used selectively to deal with problems that monitoring cannot adequately handle.

Evaluation and audits can both be used for the purpose of accountability. Evaluation can serve as a tool for accountability by providing information about performance and results. This means finding out if and to what extent an intervention has been relevant and has achieved the results that it was intended to achieve, if the results are sustainable and if they were delivered in a cost-efficient manner. It is less concerned with financial accountability, which is mainly the province for auditors.

PART TWO: SIDA'S MANUAL FOR MANAGING EVALUATIONS

- ◆ Planning and preparing evaluations
- ◆ Commissioning and procuring evaluation services
- ◆ Managing the evaluation during its implementation
- ◆ Preparing the management response to the evaluation



2. PLANNING AND PREPARING EVALUATIONS

2.1. Evaluation planning at Sida

2.1.1. Evaluation planning at a strategic level

When a Swedish development cooperation strategy is translated into an operational strategy plan it is advisable for the responsible strategy team to develop an evaluation plan for the strategy. This enables a strategic approach to evaluation where the team considers what information is needed during the implementation of the strategy. The evaluation plan shall focus on evaluation criteria and questions which are of strategic relevance for the implementation and follow up of the cooperation strategy. The evaluation plan for the strategy can subsequently be operationalised through annual evaluation plans.

It may be particularly appropriate to conduct an evaluation:

- For a project or programme with unknown or disputed outcomes.
- For large and expensive interventions.
- For pilot initiatives or innovative projects or programmes.
- Where Sida has a strategic interest.
- Where stakeholders are keen on an evaluation.

It is inappropriate to conduct an evaluation:

- When it is unlikely to add new knowledge.
- When security issues or lack of data would undermine its credibility.
- When it is unclear how the process or the results shall be used.
- When it is unclear who the intended users are, or if they are not interested in an evaluation.

It is important that evaluation planning at Sida takes into consideration the aid effectiveness principles of harmonisation and alignment. One way to do this is to systematically consider the option of a joint evaluation, conducted collaboratively by more than one donor and the partner. Joint evaluations address both questions of common interest to all partners and specific questions of interest to individual partners. To help improve co-ordination of evaluation in development cooperation and strengthen country systems, the evaluation process shall consider national and local evaluation plans, activities and policies.

2.1.2. Evaluation planning in Sida funded projects and programmes

Sida regulates the conditions for monitoring, evaluation, and audit in the agreements on contributions that it enters with its partners. Broadly speaking, the three are complementary parts in a system for results based management, accountability and learning. Sida requires that its partners exercise results based management, but does not demand that a particular approach or method is used. Sida's *Framework Agreement for Results Based Management* can be used to assist partners to strengthen existing monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as designing new ones.

Evaluation and audits can both be used for the purpose of *accountability*. Evaluation can serve as a tool for accountability by providing information about performance and results. This means finding out if and to what extent an intervention has been relevant and has achieved the results that it was intended to achieve, if the results are sustainable and if they were delivered in a cost-efficient manner. It is less concerned with financial accountability, which is mainly the province for auditors.

Audits provide financial and other relevant management information, and is, moreover, one of several instruments used to counteract and detect irregularities and corruption. In addition to financial audits, an auditor can be called upon for additional assignments and reviews, including reviews of internal management and control, organisational assessments, procurement audits or efficiency audits.

In a results based management system evaluation should be distinguished from monitoring, the continuous follow-up of activities and results in relation to pre-set targets and objectives. The distinction is primarily one of analytical depth. Whereas monitoring may be nothing more than a simple recording of activities and results against plans and budgets, evaluation explores questions on why results were, or were not achieved, and if they are relevant and sustainable. Evaluations may also ask if the results were delivered in a cost-efficient manner and whether the evaluated intervention led to any positive or negative side-effects.

Sida regards evaluation as a complement to monitoring that should be used selectively to deal with problems that monitoring cannot adequately handle. For an evaluation to be feasible, however, monitoring data may be necessary. If an intervention has not been properly monitored from start, it may not be possible to evaluate it satisfactorily. Just as monitoring needs evaluation as its complement, evaluation requires support from monitoring.

With a focus on learning and utilisation, the boundary between monitoring and evaluation is not clear-cut. For example, so called developmental evaluations, ongoing evaluations and real-time evaluations are integrated into programme implementation. The purpose of such evaluation approaches is to provide implementers with data and analysis continuously to stimulate reflection, learning and results based management.⁵ This points to the importance of addressing monitoring and evaluation questions already in the programme design phase, so that a relevant and properly resourced monitoring and evaluation system is put into place from the start.

Even if you decide to commission more traditional evaluations it is important to plan well ahead. For example, it is quite common to undertake a mid-term evaluation of a project to inform decisions on how project implementation may be adjusted and improved. It is also common to commission an evaluation towards the end of a project to provide Sida and its partners with an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new phase of a project, or to serve as an input to the decision on whether a project shall receive continued funding or not.

It is advisable to include a paragraph of when an evaluation shall be undertaken in the agreement between Sida and the partner, where it also should be clarified who should commission and pay for the evaluation. Although the responsibility for evaluation of Sida funded programmes rests primarily with the development

⁵ Note that this manual will not explore how to design an evaluation of this type.

partner, Sida may commission an external evaluation for accountability purposes, to meet learning needs, or due to limited capacity by the partner. The appropriate division of roles depends primarily on the intended use of the evaluation.

IN SUM:

- Sida regulates the conditions for monitoring, evaluation, and audit in the agreements on contributions that it enters with its partners. The three are complementary parts in a system for results based management, accountability and learning.
- Sida requires that its partners exercise results based management, but does not demand that a particular approach or method is used.
- Sida's *Framework Agreement for Results Based Management* can be used to assist partners in strengthening existing monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as designing new ones.
- Address monitoring and evaluation questions already in the programme design phase.
- To ensure that an evaluation is useful and is used, it should be scheduled when its results can best contribute to key decision-making moments.
- Although the responsibility for evaluation of Sida funded programmes rests primarily with the development partner, Sida may commission an external evaluation for accountability purposes, to meet learning needs, or due to limited capacity of the partner.

2.2. Preparing for an evaluation

Preparing a useful evaluation takes time, so it is important to start preparations well ahead. When the decision to commission an evaluation is made, you (the evaluation manager) should first carry out a preliminary stakeholder analysis where you should carefully consider who the intended users (e.g. Sida, partner organisations and co-donors) of the evaluation are. The intended users shall be consulted and an agreement shall be made on how they should be involved in the evaluation process. As evaluations commissioned by Sida shall be carried out in a spirit of partnership, intended users should normally be involved in defining purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation. In practice, this means that you should plan ahead, to ensure that you have sufficient time for consultations before the evaluation is to be commissioned and delivered.

One way to organise interaction between intended users is to appoint a steering group for the evaluation that manages the evaluation by developing the Terms of Reference and reviewing reports. The steering group may consist of staff from Sida and representatives from other intended users (such as partners and other donors). Appointing a joint steering group builds ownership of the evaluation. As a complement or an alternative to a steering group, a reference group (or reference persons) may be appointed. A reference group is a group of people that can contribute with its expertise but that solely has an advisory role. Regardless of how the management of the evaluation is organised, it is very important to clarify the roles of the stakeholders, in particular about decision making in the evaluation process.

Apart from the intended users of the evaluation there may be other stakeholders that need to be informed about the evaluation process, as for example a function for aid coordination in the country or local authorities in a region or municipality where the evaluation is to be carried out.

How you organise the evaluation depends on the purpose and complexity of the evaluation. For complex evaluations OECD/DAC's *Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations* provides useful guidance. In project and programme evaluations the purpose of the evaluation shall guide your decisions on how it shall be organised. If, for example, the purpose of the evaluation is to help Sida and its partners to assess progress of an on-going project a participatory approach is advisable. However, if the purpose of the evaluation is to serve as an input to the decision on whether a project shall receive continued funding or not the partner should in most cases just be consulted, but not actively involved in shaping, the evaluation process.

Always consider if and if so how the evaluation process may contribute to strengthening the evaluation capacity of development partners by, for instance: improving evaluation knowledge and skills, strengthening evaluation management, stimulating demand for and use of evaluation findings, and supporting an environment of accountability and learning. Involving partners in the evaluation process is one way of strengthening evaluation capacity.

IN SUM:

- Preparing a useful evaluation takes time, so it is important to start preparations well ahead.
- Identify and involve intended users in each evaluation.
- Intended users shall normally be involved in defining purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation.
- You may formalise interaction between intended users by forming a steering group and/or a reference group for the evaluation.
- How you organise the evaluation depends on the nature and complexity of the evaluation. It is important that all roles are clear, in particular with regards to decision making in the evaluation process.

3. COMMISSIONING AND PROCURING EVALUATION SERVICES

As you proceed with the evaluation you must develop and decide on a Terms of Reference (ToR) for your evaluation. The ToR constitute the commissioner's main instrument in instructing evaluators how the assignment should be carried out. They also serve to document the main points of the agreement between Sida and its partners in the evaluation. The next step is to procure the evaluation services.

3.1. The Terms of Reference

The importance of investing sufficient resources in the preparatory steps of the evaluation, and documenting the results in the ToR, cannot be overemphasised. They are the basis for a contractual relationship between the commissioner and the evaluators. Hence, they are an important point of reference for everyone involved in the evaluation. As the basis for the tender process, they can be seen as a vital marketing tool to attract and attain the best possible evaluators for the assignment. Before drafting the ToR, all relevant stakeholders should be consulted to clarify the purpose of the evaluation and agree on which the evaluation questions are. The ToR should be shared and agreed by the intended users of the evaluation.

The ToR outline the purpose, objectives, scope and questions of the evaluation, which are to be elaborated in a tender document by tenderers and in an inception report of the evaluator which are awarded the contract. The ToR may look quite differently depending on whether you commission a mid-term evaluation of a project, a final evaluation or a developmental or on-going evaluation. However, in most cases the ToR contains a work plan and time schedule for the evaluation, the required competence and composition of the evaluation team, and the reports and other outputs that the evaluators should deliver under the contract. The ToR shall also describe the governance and management structures and quality control of the evaluation process.

The ToR consists of three main sections with sub-headings:

1. General information
 - 1.1. Introduction
 - 1.2. Evaluation object: Intervention to be evaluated
 - 1.3. Evaluation rationale
2. The assignment
 - 2.1. Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users
 - 2.2. Evaluation scope
 - 2.3. Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions
 - 2.4. Evaluation approach and methods
 - 2.5. Organisation of evaluation management
 - 2.6. Evaluation quality
 - 2.7. Time schedule and deliverables
 - 2.8. Evaluation team qualifications
 - 2.9. Financial and human resources

3. Annexes

- 3.1. Annex A: List of key documentation
- 3.2. Annex B: Data sheet on evaluation object
- 3.3. Decentralised evaluation report template
- 3.4. Intervention documents

The ToR shall be brief and to the point (typically 5-10 pages), supplemented by necessary annexes. Sida has developed a checklist for assessing Terms of Reference for evaluations (see Annex 1) to help you quality assure your ToR. The checklist is based on OECD/DAC's quality standards for development evaluation.

IN SUM:

- The importance of investing sufficient resources in the preparatory steps of the evaluation, and documenting the results in the Terms of Reference, cannot be overemphasised.
- The Terms of Reference constitute the intended users' main instrument in instructing evaluators how the assignment should be carried out.
- Involve intended users in the process of writing the Terms of Reference.

Below we look at what a ToR needs to entail to serve as a useful instrument in guiding evaluators how the assignment is expected to be carried out. Note that the instruction applies for more conventional evaluations, but not for developmental evaluations, on-going evaluations or real-time evaluations.

3.1.1. Introduction

Briefly introduce the context and background for the evaluation assignment. The introduction can include, for example, description of the development problem in its context, how Sweden/Sida works in the area and what other and actors do, and relevant Swedish cooperation strategy.

3.1.2. Evaluation object: Intervention to be evaluated

The ToR must clearly state what the object of the evaluation is. In most cases the object is a project or programme.⁶ Include information on the time period, aid modality, funds spent, geographical area, stakeholders and beneficiaries, organisational set-up, implementation arrangements, how the intervention fits into the policy and institutional context described in the introduction. For projects and programmes it is recommended to include the project proposal as an annex to the ToR, as this provides important information about the scope of the intervention to be evaluated.

Oftentimes an evaluation needs to take its departure from the theory of change of an intervention. It is advisable to ask the evaluator to elaborate on the theory of change in the inception phase of the evaluation as this clarifies the evaluation object.

⁶ Sida may for example evaluate an approach to development, a development cooperation strategy in a country, a particular sector of the country programme, a thematic area within development cooperation or an aid modality. However, it is most common to evaluate a project or a programme which has received Sida financing.

3.1.3. Evaluation rationale

Describe why the evaluation is to be carried out at the chosen point in time, addressing why the evaluation is being undertaken at this point in time, why and for whom it is undertaken.

IN SUM:

- The ToR must clearly state what the object of the evaluation is.
- The first section of the ToR helps tenderers to understand the evaluation object and the setting in which it is placed, as well as why the evaluation is being undertaken at this point.

3.1.4. Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

When you have decided to do an evaluation you should first focus on determining its purpose, which goes hand in hand with identifying the intended use of the evaluation. The purpose or intended use of the evaluation is to be stated clearly, addressing why the evaluation is being undertaken at this point in time, why and for whom it is undertaken, and how the evaluation is to be used.

While defining the purpose or intended use you shall also establish who the intended users of the evaluation are. To increase the usefulness of the evaluation the intended users should be able to contribute to evaluation design, including identifying issues to be addressed and evaluation questions to be answered. The evaluation process shall be designed, conducted and reported to meet the intended use for the intended users.

Examples of evaluation purposes are:

- To help Sida and its partners to assess progress of an on-going project to inform decisions on how project implementation may be adjusted and improved.
- To provide Sida and its partners with an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new phase of a project.
- To serve as an input to the decision on whether a project shall receive continued funding or not.

Certain characteristics correspond to each evaluation purpose. For example, an accountability-oriented evaluation which serves as an input to the decision on whether a project shall receive continued funding or not is likely to place emphasis on objectivity and independence. For a mid-term evaluation aimed at assessing progress of an on-going project to inform decisions on how project implementation may be adjusted and improved this evaluation style may not be conducive to learning as learning needs a safe environment where it is acceptable to acknowledge difficulties and admit mistakes. Thus, a learning-oriented evaluation should usually be conducted in a more facilitative style, encouraging the intended users to participate and reflect.

IN SUM:

- The *purpose* and intended use of the evaluation are to be stated clearly in the ToR, addressing why the evaluation is being undertaken at this point in time, why and for whom it is undertaken, and how the evaluation is to be used.
- The evaluation process shall be designed, conducted and reported to meet the intended use for the intended users.

3.1.5. Evaluation scope

The evaluation scope defines what is to be covered by the evaluation, and sets the boundaries of the evaluation in time and space, and potentially other dimensions. It helps to focus the evaluation on the appropriate part of the evaluation object, determining if all of or only selected part of it should be included in the evaluation. You may address issues such as years, geographical reach, components, results areas, beneficiaries etc. and decide whether all or a selection should be included in the assignment. In complex programmes it is advisable to focus the evaluation on a limited number of components or aspects of the programme. Information on availability of data and evidence is also of importance to the tenderer, to form an opinion on the scope and complexity of the assignment. You could also consider to highlight any implementation challenges or other contextual issues important for the evaluators to be aware of.

IN SUM:

- The evaluation *scope* defines what dimensions of the evaluation object that should be covered by the evaluation, and addresses availability of data or other implementation challenges that may influence the complexity of the evaluation.

3.1.6. Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The specific objective of the evaluation clarifies what the evaluation aims to find out. Aim to formulate your objective in terms of the agreed OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance – *relevance*⁷, *coherence*⁸, *effectiveness*⁹, *efficiency*¹⁰, *impact*¹¹ and *sustainability*¹². For evaluations of humanitarian assistance there are additional OECD/DAC criteria – *connectedness*¹³, *coverage*¹⁴, *coherence*¹⁵ and *coordination*¹⁶.

Sida does not require that all evaluation criteria are included. Rather, it is advisable to focus on a few, given the status of implementation of the project/programme as well as the available time frame and budget. For a mid-term evaluation for example, it might be less useful to include impact and sustainability. Whilst too many criteria given the available time frame and budget can diminish the evaluation's analytical depth of each criteria.

7 The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institutions needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

8 The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

9 The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives its results, including any differential results across groups.

10 The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

11 The extent to which the intervention has generated, or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

12 The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.

13 The extent to which activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account. Replaces the sustainability criterion used in development evaluations.

14 The extent to which major population groups were reached.

15 Refers to policy coherence and the extent to which security, developmental, trade, and military policies as well as humanitarian policies, are consistent and take into account humanitarian and human rights considerations.

16 The extent to which the interventions of different actors are harmonised with each other, promote synergy, avoid gaps, duplication, and resource conflicts.

Examples of evaluation objectives are:

- Make a mid-term evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of a project.
- Evaluate the relevance, effectiveness and potential sustainability of a project and formulate recommendations as an input to upcoming discussions concerning the preparation of a new phase.
- Evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of a project as an input to the decision on whether the project shall receive continued funding or not.
- Evaluate the relevance and impact of support to civil society in a country to provide Sida with background information for developing an operationalisation plan for the new cooperation strategy.

The evaluation objective is translated into evaluation questions. You may add specific questions under each criteria but try to limit the number of questions so they can be addressed with sufficient depth given your timeframe and budget. One of the most common weaknesses of a ToR is that it tries to cover too much. Think through what you need to know and avoid questions on issues that would be good to know.

Below are some examples of evaluation questions:

Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?

- To what extent has the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and have they continued to do so if/when circumstances have changed?
- To what extent has lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust project/programme implementation?

Coherence: How well does the project/program fit?

- How compatible has the project or programme been with other interventions in the country, sector or organisation where it is was being implemented?

Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

- To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?
- Have the M&E system delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning?

Efficiency: How well are resources being used?

- To what extent has the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?

Impact: What difference does the intervention make?

- To what extent has the project or programme generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, high-level effects?

Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

- To what extent will the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue?

If the evaluation is of humanitarian assistance, the criteria below could also be considered. We recommend that you use one or a few (but rarely all) of the four questions.

Connectedness (this criterion replaces the sustainability criterion above)

- To which extent has the humanitarian assistance been carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account?

Coverage

- To what extent were major population groups reached by the humanitarian assistance?

Coherence

- To what extent have policies of different actors been mutually consistent?
- Were human rights consistently respected?

Coordination

- To what extent have the interventions of different actors been harmonised?

One may consider including specific evaluation questions that address the goal of poverty reduction (if not included above) and the perspectives that are to permeate all Sida funded interventions, namely the poor people's perspective and a human rights based approach, conflict sensitivity, gender equality and environmental considerations. For example:

- Has the project contributed to poverty reduction? Who (*de facto*) has benefited from the project in the short- and in the long-run, directly or indirectly? Were the beneficiaries living in poverty at the start of the project implementation – are they living in poverty now? Which dimensions of poverty¹⁷ were addressed by the project?
- Has the project been implemented in accordance with the poor people's perspective and a human rights based approach? Have target groups been participating in project planning, implementation and follow up? Has anyone been discriminated by the project through its implementation? Has the project been implemented in a transparent fashion? Are there accountability mechanisms in the project?
- Has the project been designed and implemented in a conflict sensitive manner?
- Has the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?

¹⁷ Sida considers poverty to be multidimensional and describes poverty in terms of lack of resources, power and voice, opportunities and choice, and human security. According to Sida, a person living in poverty is resource poor and poor in one or several other dimensions.

- Has the project had any positive or negative effects on the environment? Could environment considerations have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?

Remember to think through whether the formulated questions are answerable. Consider if it is practically possible for an evaluation team to obtain the information needed. Also, consider your resource envelope. Is it possible to obtain the information and make the necessary analyses with the resources and time available?

The evaluation questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further developed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

IN SUM:

- The specific *objective* of the evaluation clarifies what the evaluation aims to find out. Aim to formulate your objective in terms of the agreed OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance.
- You may add specific questions under each criteria, but try to limit the number of questions so they can be addressed with sufficient depth given your timeframe and budget.
- One may consider including evaluation questions that address the perspective of the poor and a human rights based approach, as well as to what extent conflict sensitivity, gender equality, and environmental considerations have been mainstreamed in the project or programme.

3.1.7. Evaluation approach and methods

It is advisable to let the evaluator propose an appropriate methodology to answer the evaluation questions in the tender. However, as the evaluator will not have an opportunity to discuss the methodology with the intended users during this phase, it is important to plan for an inception phase where the evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be further developed. The final evaluation approach shall be documented in the inception report.

Sida's approach to evaluation is utilisation-focused which means the evaluator should facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present: i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

Evaluators should take into consideration appropriate measures for collecting data in cases where sensitive or confidential issues are addressed, and avoid presenting information that may be harmful to some stakeholder groups. Such ethical questions should ideally be discussed with the evaluator during the inception phase.

IN SUM:

- It is advisable to let the evaluator propose an appropriate methodology to answer the evaluation questions in the tender and elaborate on this during the inception phase of the evaluation.
- Sida's approach to evaluation is utilisation-focused which means the evaluator should facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation.

3.1.8. Organisation of evaluation management

The evaluation shall be organised in a way that contributes to the purpose or intended use of the evaluation. If, for example, the purpose of the evaluation is to help Sida and its partners to assess progress of on-going project a participatory approach is advisable. However, if the purpose of the evaluation is to serve as an input to the decision on whether a project shall receive continued funding or not the partner should in most cases just be consulted, but not actively involved in shaping the evaluation process. In any case, as evaluations commissioned by Sida shall be carried out in a spirit of partnership, intended users should normally at a minimum be involved in defining purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation.

One way to organise interaction between intended users is to appoint a steering group for the evaluation that manages the evaluation by developing the Terms of Reference and reviewing reports. The steering group may consist of staff from Sida and representatives from other intended users (such as partners and other donors). Appointing a joint steering group builds ownership of the evaluation. As a complement or an alternative to a steering group, a reference group (or reference persons) can be appointed. A reference group is a group of people that can contribute with its expertise but that solely has an advisory role regarding for example content or methodological issues.

In the ToR you shall describe the organisation and management structure of the evaluation. Specify who will take decisions in relation to the evaluation process; an individual or a steering group? If you have a steering group, clarify who is represented in that group and why. If you have a reference group, clarify its role in the evaluation process.

IN SUM:

- The evaluation shall be organised in a way that contributes to the intended use of the evaluation.
- As evaluations commissioned by Sida shall be carried out in a spirit of partnership, intended users should normally be involved in defining purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation.
- One way to organise interaction between intended users is to appoint a steering group for the evaluation, that manages the evaluation by developing the ToR and reviewing reports.

3.1.9. Evaluation quality

All Sida evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's *Quality Standards for Development Evaluation*. Therefore, you should state in the ToR that the evaluators shall use the *OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation* and that the evaluators shall specify how quality assurance, in accordance with DAC's quality standards, shall be handled by them during the evaluation process.

For evaluations of humanitarian assistance, the evaluation shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and use the *OECD Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies*. In settings of conflict and fragility it is useful to read and refer to OECD's *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility* (OECD 2012).¹⁸

IN SUM:

- All Sida evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's *Quality Standards for Development Evaluation* and apply the *OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation*.
- For evaluations of humanitarian assistance, the evaluation shall use the *OECD Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies*.

3.1.10. Time schedule and deliverables

Time schedule, key deliverables and milestones for the inception phase, data collection and analysis as well as the reporting phases need to be specified in the ToR. It is important to build in sufficient calendar time for the evaluation process, as this allows for good preparations and better analysis. The evaluators need time for a proper inception phase, where they can consult with intended users and read and analyse important documents such as a project proposal and progress reports. The evaluators also need time for practical preparatory work such as reserving tickets and hotels and booking times for interviews and workshops. This is especially important in evaluations of humanitarian work and in conflict and post-conflict settings where the evaluators need to make security arrangements. Further, you need to ensure that there is sufficient time for consultation, debriefings and turn-around time for drafts to be read, commented on and revised.

The ToR shall be specific about requirements concerning time schedule and deliverables. As in the case of evaluation methodology, the ToR often request that details are to be elaborated in the tender and in an inception report. Therefore, you need to indicate whether or not an inception phase and inception report is foreseen. In most cases, it is strongly advisable to include an inception phase in the evaluation process as it provides time and space for the evaluator and the intended users to define the assignment.

The ToR shall indicate when the assignment is to be carried out and any other key milestones along the way such as dates for the reports and dissemination activities such as seminars and workshops. Request an overall time and work plan in the consultant's tender including preparatory work, field visits and dissemination activities.

¹⁸ See www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation.

IN SUM:

- It is important to build in sufficient calendar time for the evaluation process.
- The ToR shall be specific about requirements concerning time schedule and deliverables.
- The ToR shall indicate when the assignment is to be carried out and any other key milestones along the way.

3.1.12. Evaluation team qualifications

Sida uses a framework agreement for evaluation services where several competencies of the evaluation team are already pre-defined and screened. The framework agreement stipulates that a ‘core team member’ (i.e. a senior consultant with high level of evaluation competence) shall lead the evaluation team, and the following mandatory qualifications are already specified for each level of consultants in the agreement: Academic background, number of years of working experience and English language skills.

Additional qualifications may vary depending on the assignment, but might include for example local knowledge, subject matter expertise or language skills. It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local consultants are included in the team. While specifying team qualifications it is advisable to not include very specific criteria, as it might be difficult for tenderers to find consultants fulfilling such criteria.

The evaluators shall normally be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.¹⁹ The framework agreement for evaluation services stipulates that the bidding firms shall make the commissioner aware of any potential problems in this regard.

IN SUM:

- Sida uses a framework agreement for evaluation services where a number of competencies of the evaluation team are already pre-defined and screened.
- The evaluators shall normally be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

3.1.13. Financial and human resources

The ToR shall provide an indication of available resources for the evaluation, expressed in terms of a budget ceiling. You can make an estimate of the necessary budget by making a rough assessment of the number of working hours required for the assignment and multiply it with expected fee levels. Include expected reimbursable costs (hotel, travel, per diem etc.). Avoid specifying the number of working days or working hours in the ToR to allow evaluators to suggest a work plan suitable to the proposed evaluation approach.

¹⁹ In mid-term evaluations or developmental evaluations there might be reasons to use an evaluator who is quite familiar with the project. Sometimes one may also want to encourage participatory evaluation, where the implementers take an active role in evaluating their own work. These evaluation approaches shall be guided by the intended use of the evaluation.

When you estimate the number of working hours the evaluation team will need to carry out the evaluation you need to consider time for:

- Reading of relevant documents such as a project proposal and progress reports.
- Practical arrangements such as booking tickets, hotels, interviews and workshops and travel time to the country, and on field trips in the country.
- Conducting research (such as interviews, observations and surveys).
- Writing of reports and re-writing based on comments from intended users.
- Dissemination activities such as seminars, workshops and evaluation briefs.

A common challenge is that time for conducting the evaluation is underestimated by the commissioner, which tends to result in an evaluation of low quality and limited usefulness.

IN SUM:

- The ToR shall provide an indication of available resources for the evaluation, expressed in terms of a budget ceiling.
- A common challenge is that time for conducting the evaluation is underestimated by the commissioner, which tends to result in an evaluation of low quality and limited usefulness.

4. MANAGING THE EVALUATION DURING ITS IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. The inception phase

Once you have assigned an evaluation team that will conduct the work, the next step for you is to supervise the inception phase. In the tender document, the evaluators present their proposal for carrying out the evaluation. However, when preparing the tender document, evaluators are usually not able to formulate a fully operational plan. It is therefore advisable to include an inception phase which shall result in an inception report. The evaluation manager and the evaluation team can use the inception report as a basis for negotiating the final scope of the evaluation. The combined ToR and inception report define what is to be evaluated and why, and how it is going to be evaluated.

The scope and focus of the inception report vary from case to case, but typically include elaboration on the scope of the evaluation, evaluability issues, evaluation questions, application of evaluation criteria, approach, methodology for data collection and analysis (including an analysis of the limitations of the chosen methodology) and the evaluation work plan. Oftentimes an evaluation needs to take its departure from the theory of change of an intervention. It is advisable to ask the evaluator to elaborate on the theory of change in the inception phase of the evaluation as this clarifies the evaluation object.

During the inception phase, it is further advisable to clarify what is expected from the evaluation manager, the partner and other intended users and the evaluation team as the evaluation is carried out. Intended users will be expected to communicate with and support the evaluation team, e.g. by providing background documents and letters of introduction, arranging site visits, booking interviews etc.

Note that provision for an inception report should be made in the evaluation ToR. The size of the inception work can vary, comprising a few days' work that results in a short report or perhaps simply a fine-tuning meeting between the evaluation team, the partner and the evaluation manager or the intended users of the evaluation. If you have required an inception report, Sida has developed a checklist for assessing inception reports (see Annex 2) that you may find helpful. The checklist is based on OECD/DAC's quality standards for development evaluation.

IN SUM:

- It is advisable to request an inception phase where the evaluators elaborate on the intended use of the evaluation and involvement of intended users in the evaluation process.
- The scope and focus of the inception report vary from case to case, but typically include elaboration on the scope of the evaluation, evaluation questions, methodology for data collection and the evaluation work plan.
- Ensure that the partner and other intended users and the evaluation team have a clear understanding of what is expected from all parties as the evaluation is carried out.

4.2. The research phase

During the research phase the evaluation team collects data through document analysis, interviews, field visits, workshops and other methods. Usually the evaluators are responsible for organising most of the practicalities, but often they do need assistance from the programme officer and, in particular the implementing organisation of the evaluated project or programme. If you and your partner have prepared well, by compiling documents and preparing interviews, site visits etc., the evaluators can focus on collecting and analysing data.

During this phase of the evaluation it is important to involve the intended users of the evaluation in a fruitful way. As mentioned previously Sida's approach to evaluation is utilisation-focused which implies that the evaluator should facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. During the research phase, it is possible to stimulate *process use* by designing the methodology and methods for data collection in ways that facilitate reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation. For example:

- Group interviews may create good opportunities for stakeholders in a project and programme to reflect on progress in a way that they normally do not do.
- Peer-to-peer site visits can stimulate discussions and change among stakeholders in a programme.
- Workshops where various stakeholders participate in drawing conclusions based on findings or working on recommendations based on conclusions creates ownership of the evaluation and stimulates learning and use.

It is sometimes argued that methods of this type undermine the independence of an evaluation. Sida's position is that the involvement of stakeholders should be tailored to the intended use of the evaluation. Hence, if an evaluation shall be used as an input to a Sida decision on funding it is not advisable to encourage a participatory process where stakeholders are involved in formulating conclusions and recommendations. However, if the intended use of the evaluation is to stimulate learning or improve performance during the implementation phase of a project or programme a participatory process is likely to enhance the utility of the evaluation.

During the research phase evaluators should take into consideration appropriate measures for collecting data in cases where sensitive or confidential issues are addressed, and avoid presenting information that may be harmful to some stakeholder groups.

IN SUM:

- If you and your partner have prepared well, by compiling documents and preparing for interviews, site visits etc., the evaluators can focus on collecting data.
- During the research phase, it is possible to stimulate the so called process use by designing the methodology and methods for data collection in ways that facilitate reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.
- Process use is advisable when the intended use of the evaluation is to stimulate learning or improve performance during the implementation phase of a project or programme.

4.3. The reporting and dissemination phase

4.3.1. Commenting on evaluation reports

It is important that the participatory perspective is not lost when the research phase is over. Persons who contribute to an evaluation in which they have a stake naturally want assurances that they have not been misinterpreted. For practical reasons, it is often not possible to consult each and every person who has participated in the evaluation. Yet, the evaluation manager must ensure that intended users and other potential key stakeholders are given the opportunity to comment on findings, conclusions and recommendations, which are normally included in the draft evaluation report. In some cases, one may choose to report the evaluation in another format, such as a workshop, a presentation, a theatre or a film. Also in these cases, intended users must be able to give their comments on findings, conclusions and recommendations. As this task is rather challenging it is advisable to arrange a meeting between the intended users and the evaluators to discuss the evaluation before it is finalised.

Asking intended users to assess the findings, conclusions and recommendations is not only an ethical requirement, it also ensures that the evaluation will be as accurate and useful as possible. Sida has developed a checklist, which is based on OECD/DAC's quality standards for development evaluations, for assessing evaluation reports to help you in the process of collecting comments from intended users and communicating the comments to the evaluators (see Annex 3). Some of the most important aspects to pay attention to are that the evaluation report:

- can readily be understood by the intended users of the evaluation and contains an executive summary.
- answers all the questions detailed in the ToR of the evaluation. Where this is not possible, explanations shall be provided.
- describes and explains the evaluation methodology and acknowledges any constraints encountered and how these have affected the evaluation.
- presents findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned separately and with a clear logical distinction between them.

The final evaluation dissemination products (i.e., in most cases the final report) shall reflect the comments of the intended users and acknowledge any substantive disagreements. In disputes about facts that can be verified, the evaluators investigate and change the draft where necessary. In case of difference of opinion or interpretation between the evaluator and the intended users, comments may be reproduced verbatim, in an annex or footnote to the report.

IN SUM:

- The evaluation manager must ensure that intended users are given the opportunity to comment on findings, conclusions and recommendations (normally included in a draft report). It is advisable to arrange a meeting to discuss the draft report.
- Sida's checklist for assessing evaluation reports can support you and other intended users in reviewing and providing comments on the draft report.

4.3.2. Disseminating evaluation results

As described in previous sections the intended use and the intended users of the evaluation shall be defined already when preparing the evaluation. In practice, this means that the evaluation manager already at the planning stage shall discuss with intended users when and how the results of the evaluation should be communicated.

Different communication or dissemination techniques need to be used depending on the intended use and intended users. Some intended users may require information specifically targeted for decision-making with regard to the evaluated intervention. In these cases, workshops where intended users participate in drawing conclusions based on findings or working on recommendations based on conclusions may be the most important dissemination activities in the evaluation process. In other cases, one may seek users who can apply the lessons learned from the evaluation to other interventions and circumstances. Still, others merely have an overall policy interest in the study. In these cases, the evaluation report, evaluation briefs, seminars and webinars may be useful communication techniques.

As evaluations are important for transparency and accountability in development cooperation, evaluation briefs, webinars, film and even theatre may be used for dissemination to the general public and media in both Sweden and partner countries.

IN SUM:

- The evaluation manager should already at the planning stage discuss with intended users when and how the results of the evaluation should be communicated.
- Different communication or dissemination techniques need to be used depending on the intended use and intended users.

5. PREPARING THE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

To facilitate that evaluations are used by Sida, foreign missions and partners, and that their position towards the evaluation is documented, Sida has developed a system for management response. The management response system aims to ensure that evaluation findings are used to develop Sida's organisational practises, to strengthen the effects of development cooperation and to contribute to transparency among stakeholders.

The management response provides an official response to an evaluation. It provides an assessment of the quality of the evaluation report, a management position and statement in response to the evaluator's conclusions and recommendations, as well as an implementation plan. An implementation plan specifies what is to be done, by whom, when and how the plan is to be followed up. A management response also enables an organisation to state if they do not agree with the evaluator on the recommendations. As conclusions and recommendations oftentimes address all intended users of an evaluation it is advisable to prepare a management response in coordination with the other users.

A management response for an evaluation is mandatory for Sida to document when:

- Sida and foreign missions have commissioned an evaluation or when Sida is one of the parties to a joint evaluation, and when
- a partner or another donor has commissioned an evaluation of a Sida financed contribution.

For evaluations of Sida financed contributions, Sida should always ensure that the partner prepares a management response. In Sida's documentation of the management response, Sida should respond to any conclusions and recommendations that require a response from Sida as well as to account for how Sida intends to follow up the partner's management response as part of our contribution management and make a quality assessment of the evaluation.

IN SUM:

- Sida's management response system aims to ensure that evaluation findings are used to develop Sida's organisational practises, to strengthen the effects of development cooperation and to contribute to transparency among stakeholders.
- The mandatory management response is Sida's official response to an evaluation. It provides an assessment of the quality of the evaluation report, and a management position and statement in response to the evaluator's conclusions and recommendations, as well as an implementation plan.
- Ideally, Sida's management response is prepared in coordination with other intended users of the evaluation.

ANNEX 1: CHECKLIST FOR SIDA'S ASSESSMENT OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for an evaluation should outline the purpose, objectives, scope and questions of an evaluation, which are to be elaborated in a tender document by tenderers and/or in an inception report of the consultant which are awarded the contract. It contains a work plan and time schedule for the evaluation, the required competence and composition of the evaluation team, and the reports and other outputs that the evaluators should deliver under the contract. The Terms of Reference shall also include a setup for governance and management structures and quality control of the evaluation process.

This checklist is based on paragraphs in OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. A reference to the number of the paragraph in the standards is provided in each heading where applicable. Use the checklist for assessing the ToR. It can help in the process of collecting comments from intended users and communicating the comments to the evaluators.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS	OBSERVATIONS
<p>2.6 Systematically consider joint evaluation</p> <p>To contribute to harmonisation, alignment and an efficient division of labour, one should always systematically consider the option of a joint evaluation, conducted collaboratively by more than one agency and/or partner country. Joint evaluations address both questions of common interest to all partners and specific questions of interest to individual partners.</p>	
<p>1.5 Co-ordinate and align</p> <p>To help improve co-ordination of development evaluation and strengthen country systems, the evaluation process shall take into account national and local evaluation plans, activities and policies.</p>	

PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS	OBSERVATIONS
<p>1.4 Adopt a partnership approach</p> <p>In order to increase ownership of development and build mutual accountability for results, a partnership approach to development evaluation is to be adopted. The concept of partnership connotes an inclusive process, involving different stakeholders such as government, parliament, civil society, intended beneficiaries and international partners. Potential partnerships are systematically considered early in the process to maximise opportunities for an active role and increase ownership of the evaluation process.</p>	
<p>1.5 Adopt a utilization focused approach</p> <p>All Sida financed evaluations and reviews are to be utilisation focused. Therefore intended users should be identified and involved early on in the evaluation process. They should be able to contribute to evaluations design, including by identifying issues to be addressed and evaluation questions to be answered. The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users.</p>	
<p>1.6 Contribute to capacity development</p> <p>The evaluation process shall contribute to strengthening the evaluation capacity of development partners by, for instance: improving evaluation knowledge and skills, strengthening evaluation management, stimulating demand for and use of evaluation findings, and supporting an environment of accountability and learning.</p>	
<p>1.7 Quality control</p> <p>Quality control is exercised throughout the evaluation process. Depending on the evaluation's scope and complexity, quality control is carried out through an internal and/or external mechanism, such as peer review, advisory panel, or reference group.</p>	

PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, OBJECT, SCOPE AND QUESTIONS	OBSERVATIONS
<p>2.1 The rationale and purpose of the evaluation</p> <p>The rationale, purpose and intended use of the evaluation are to be stated clearly, addressing: why the evaluation is being undertaken at this point in time, why and for whom it is undertaken, and how the evaluation is to be used for learning and/or accountability functions.</p>	
<p>2.2 Specific objectives of the evaluation</p> <p>The specific objectives of the evaluation clarify what the evaluation aims to find out. For example to: ascertain results (output, outcome, impact) and assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability of a specific development intervention; provide findings, conclusions and recommendations with respect to a specific development intervention, strategy or policy in order to draw lessons for future design and implementation.</p>	
<p>2.3 The evaluation object</p> <p>The development intervention being evaluated (the evaluation object) is to be clearly defined in the Terms of Reference. A description of the intervention logic or theory could either be outlined in the Terms of Reference or part of the assignment for the evaluation inception report.</p>	
<p>2.3 The scope of the evaluation</p> <p>The evaluation scope defines the time period, funds spent, geographical area, target groups, organisational set-up, implementation arrangements, policy and institutional context and other dimensions to be covered by the evaluation. The scope should be outlined in the Terms of Reference, but could be further elaborated in the inception report.</p>	
<p>2.7 Evaluation questions</p> <p>The evaluation objectives are translated into relevant and specific evaluation questions. Evaluations questions are decided early on in the process and inform the development of the methodology.</p>	

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	OBSERVATIONS
<p>2.8 Selection and application of evaluation criteria</p> <p>The evaluation shall normally apply the agreed DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The application of these and any additional criteria, such as coverage, co-ordination and coherence, depends on the evaluation questions and the objectives of the evaluation. All criteria should be considered initially, but Sida does not require that all evaluation criteria are included. Rather, it is advisable to focus on a few, given your timeframe and budget.</p>	
<p>2.9 Select approach and methodology</p> <p>The purpose, scope and evaluation questions determine the most appropriate approach and methodology for each evaluation. The methodology includes specification and justification of the design of the evaluation and the techniques for data collection and analysis. The selected methodology answers the evaluation questions using credible evidence. The Terms of Reference may include a suggested methodology, but it is recommended to leave the task of elaborating a suitable methodology to the tenderer, either in the tender itself or in the inception report.</p>	

RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION	OBSERVATIONS
<p>Time Plan</p> <p>The time plan shall be realistic given the magnitude of the evaluation, the suggested evaluation approach and the intended use.</p>	
<p>Budget frame</p> <p>The budget and time allocated for the evaluation shall be adequate and realistic considering the evaluation assignment.</p>	
<p>Evaluator competence</p> <p>The competence and capacity of the evaluation team shall be clearly defined and appropriate to the evaluation assignment.</p>	
<p>Organisation</p> <p>The organisation of the evaluation, including the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders shall be clearly described.</p>	

ANNEX 2: CHECKLIST FOR SIDA'S ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATION INCEPTION REPORTS

The scope and focus of the inception report vary from case to case, but typically include elaboration on the scope of the evaluation, evaluability issues, evaluation questions, application of evaluation criteria, approach, methodology for data collection and analysis and the evaluation work plan.

This checklist is based on paragraphs in OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. A reference to the number of the paragraph in the standards is provided in each heading. Use the checklist for assessing evaluation inception reports. It can help in the process of collecting comments from intended users and communicating the comments to the evaluators.

ASPECT	OBSERVATIONS
<p>2.3 The scope of the evaluation</p> <p>The evaluation scope defines the time period, funds spent, geographical area, target groups, organisational set-up, implementation arrangements, policy and institutional context and other dimensions to be covered by the evaluation. The scope should be outlined in the Terms of Reference and tender document, but could be further elaborated in the inception report.</p>	
<p>2.5 & 2.7 Evaluation questions and evaluability issues</p> <p>The evaluation questions shall be outlined in the Terms of Reference, but could be operationalized in an inception report. The inception report can also elaborate on whether evaluation is the best way to answer questions posed, and/or whether some questions need to be reformulated.</p>	
<p>2.8 Selection and application of evaluation criteria</p> <p>The evaluation shall normally apply all or some of the agreed DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The application of these and any additional criteria, such as coverage, co-ordination and coherence, depends on the evaluation questions and the objectives of the evaluation. In the inception report the evaluator may suggest to not apply a particular criterion and/or propose additional criteria. The inception report is also an opportunity to outline whether some criteria should be given more attention than others.</p> <p>Note that Sida does not require that all evaluation criteria are included in every evaluation. Rather, it is advisable to focus on a few, given your timeframe and budget.</p>	

ANNEX 3: CHECKLIST FOR SIDA'S ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATION REPORTS

This checklist is based on paragraphs in OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. A reference to the number of the paragraph in the standards are provided in each heading. Use the checklist for assessing evaluation reports. It can help in the process of collecting comments from intended users and communicating the comments to the evaluators.

PROCESS	OBSERVATIONS
<p>3.3 Stakeholders are consulted and protected</p> <p>The full range of stakeholders, including both partners and donors, have been consulted during the evaluation process and given the opportunity to contribute. The criteria for identifying and selecting stakeholders are specified.</p>	
<p>3.15 Incorporation of stakeholders' comments</p> <p>Relevant stakeholders are given the opportunity to comment on the draft report. The final evaluation report reflects these comments and acknowledges any substantive disagreements. In disputes about facts that can be verified, the evaluators investigate and change the draft where necessary. In case of difference of opinion or interpretation, stakeholders' comments are reproduced verbatim, in an annex or footnote, to the extent that this does not conflict with the rights and welfare of participants.</p>	
LANGUAGE AND FORM	OBSERVATIONS
<p>3.5 Evaluation report</p> <p>The evaluation report can readily be understood by the intended audience(s) and the form of the report is appropriate given the purpose(s) of the evaluation.</p>	
<p>3.6 Clarity and representativeness of the summary</p> <p>The written evaluation report contains an executive summary. The summary provides an overview of the report, highlighting the main findings, conclusions, recommendations and any overall lessons.</p>	

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	OBSERVATIONS
<p>3.7 The context of the development intervention</p> <p>The evaluation report describes the context of the evaluation object, including: policy context (development agency and partner policies, objectives and strategies); development context (including socio-economic, political and cultural factors); and institutional context and stakeholder involvement. The evaluation identifies and assesses the influence of the context on the performance of the development intervention.</p>	
<p>3.8 Intervention logic</p> <p>The evaluation report describes and assesses the intervention logic or theory, including underlying assumptions and factors affecting the success of the intervention.</p>	
<p>3.12 Evaluation questions answered</p> <p>The evaluation report answers all the questions detailed in the TOR of the evaluation. Where this is not possible, explanations are provided. The original questions, as well as any revisions to these questions, are documented in the report for readers to be able to assess whether the evaluation team has sufficiently addressed the questions, including those related to cross-cutting issues.</p>	

METHODOLOGY	OBSERVATIONS
<p>3.10 Explanation of methodology used</p> <p>The evaluation report describes and explains the evaluation methodology and its application. In assessing outcomes and impacts, attribution and/or contribution to results are explained. The report acknowledges any constraints encountered and how these have affected the evaluation, including the independence and impartiality of the evaluation. It details the techniques used for data analysis. The choices are justified and limitations and shortcomings are explained.</p>	
<p>3.9 Sources of information</p> <p>The evaluation report describes the sources of information used (documents, respondents, administrative data, literature, etc.) in sufficient detail so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.</p>	
<p>3.9 Representativeness</p> <p>The evaluation report explains the selection of case studies or any samples. Limitations of the representativeness of the samples are identified.</p>	
<p>3.9 Validity and reliability of data</p> <p>The evaluation cross-validates the information sources and critically assesses the validity and reliability of data.</p>	
<p>3.9 Transparency</p> <p>Complete lists of interviewees and other information sources consulted are included in the report, to the extent that this does not conflict with the privacy and confidentiality of participants.</p>	

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS	OBSERVATIONS
<p>3.11 Clarity of analysis</p> <p>The evaluation report presents findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons separately and with a clear logical distinction between them. Findings flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions are substantiated by findings and analysis. Recommendations and any lessons follow logically from the conclusions. Any assumptions underlying the analysis are made explicit.</p>	
<p>4.1 Timeliness, relevance and use of the evaluation</p> <p>The evaluation is designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons are clear, relevant, targeted and actionable so that the evaluation can be used to achieve its intended learning and accountability objectives. The evaluation is delivered in time to ensure optimal use of the results.</p>	

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