

PARTICIPATION AND TRANSPARENCY IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESSES

4. Participation and Inclusion

Principles and Norms

BUILDING PARTICIPATION INTO THE EVALUATION PROCESS

4.1 Participation in a program-level evaluation involves a continuum that ranges from consultation at key points of decision making to full collaboration at all stages. Planning for a sufficient level of participation and consultation in the evaluation process should take place at the programming stage, since this materially affects the time frame and budget for the evaluation.

4.2 Participation in the evaluation process should also be considered as part of the program's monitoring and evaluation policy, since program-level evaluations are not conducted in isolation, but often build on earlier ones and set expectations for future ones.

CONSULTATION OF STAKEHOLDERS ESSENTIAL

4.3 The M&E policy should establish a minimum standard for participation and inclusion in program-level evaluations. At a minimum, consultation with an identified set of stakeholders is essential at key stages of the evaluation process – planning, design, conduct, and follow-up – in order to improve credibility, to enhance programmatic learning, and to sharpen the quality of program results.

Draws on UNEG
Norm 10

4.4 Indicators to assess (a) participation levels, (b) quality of participation, and (c) effectiveness of participation in enhancing program results should be built into the M&E frameworks of GRPPs.

PURPOSE OF PARTICIPATION IN EVALUATION

4.4 Participatory evaluation is a learning process (in and of itself) that can increase programmatic learning and ownership of the program. Participation *adds value* – the more participatory the process, the more value can potentially be added to the program, as learning is extended to the program, its implementers, and its beneficiaries during the evaluation process. Ultimately, participation in evaluation facilitates consensus-building and ownership of evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Elaborates on DAC Principle VI, para. 25, and GEF Policy, section 3.3

4.5 Developing participatory monitoring systems can *enable* participatory evaluation. Participation in programmatic monitoring builds the capacity of implementers and beneficiaries, which helps to sustain programmatic results after program financing ceases.

4.6 Having stakeholders participate in M&E — particularly program participants from developing countries — can provide an opportunity for learning by doing and can strengthen skills and capacities in beneficiary groups. Such opportunities for participation and capacity strengthening should be identified at the time that the M&E framework is first established, and again when individual evaluations are planned.³⁰

IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

4.7 For the purposes of this Sourcebook, the term *stakeholders* refers to the parties who are interested in or affected, either positively or negatively, by the program. The term *partners* refers to stakeholders who are involved in the governance or financing of the program (including the members of the governing, executive, and advisory bodies), while the term *participant* refers to those involved in the implementation of the program (including the final beneficiaries). Both partners and participants are subsets of stakeholders. Stakeholders are often referred to as “principal” and “other,” or “direct” and “indirect.”³¹

Draws on UNEG Standard 3.11, para. 23, U.S. Program Evaluation Standards, and African Evaluation Guidelines

4.8 The program’s governing body and management unit should assist evaluators with the identification of a core group of representative stakeholders, paying attention to avoid capture by special interests, or individual groups. The program should also help evaluators to identify “excluded” stakeholder groups, where these exist. The complete list of stakeholders, or “stakeholder map,” should also point out the agreed-upon or perceived roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders identified. This mapping exercise should be a routine programmatic function, updated regularly, and reproduced transparently in the evaluation TOR.³²

30. The need for beneficiaries to play a leading role in monitoring traditional development assistance is central to the Paris Declaration on Aid Harmonization, March 2, 2005.

31. While other or indirect stakeholders — such as taxpayers in both donor and beneficiary countries, visitors to a beneficiary country, and other indirect beneficiaries — may have interests as well, these are not ordinarily considered in evaluations unless a principal stakeholder acts as their proxy.

32. This UNEG standard has been elevated to a principle. The U.S. Program Evaluation Standards and the African Evaluation Association Guidelines cite among “utility standards” the importance of “stakeholder identification” in

4.9 While evaluators have the right to engage in wider consultations than those specified in the TOR, the process concerning who has been consulted or included in the evaluation process and how they have been chosen should be transparent.

CAREFUL CONSIDERATION NEEDED TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE EVALUATION

4.10 “While not all evaluations can be participatory to the same degree, it is important that consideration be given to participation of stakeholders, as such participation is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in the subsequent use of findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons. Also, including certain groups of stakeholders may be necessary for a complete and fair assessment.”³³

UNEG Standard
4.10, para. 17

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE M&E PROCESS

4.11 Broader participation of stakeholders further enhances the quality and credibility of M&E and the likelihood of appropriate follow-up action. Whenever possible, both partners and participants should be involved in the evaluation process. Participation of implementers and beneficiaries is particularly important since they are responsible for sustainability of program outcomes after the program’s involvement ceases. Where there are countries with more developed M&E cultures involved in the implementation of GRPP activities, and where M&E has been institutionalized within relevant government ministries, GRPP evaluations should support these systems by considering inclusion of specialist representation from these countries in the evaluation process.

Elaborates on
and applies DAC
Principle VI,
para. 2.3, to
GRPPs

4.12 The participation of, or at least consultation with, other program participants is also important, so that their perspective as contributors, users, and beneficiaries may be incorporated in the analysis and findings. Such participants may include organizations (governmental, nongovernmental, or private), households, or individuals. The nature of their participation in M&E depends on their role in the activities funded. Participatory approaches to M&E are particularly important in activities which affect the incomes and livelihoods of local groups, especially disadvantaged populations in and around activity sites (such as indigenous communities, women, and poor households).

Elaborates on
GEF Policy,
section 2.8,
para. 47

order to assess their needs, include them in the evaluation process, and increase the likelihood of stakeholder ownership of the evaluation findings.

33. This UNEG standard has been raised to a principle because of the additional logistical complexity of facilitating the participation of stakeholders in GRPPs that are operating at multiple levels – global, regional, national, and local.

SEEKING VIEWS OF BENEFICIARIES IN ASSESSING PROGRAM RESULTS

Draws on DAC
Principle VI

4.13 When considering methodologies, evaluators should always find ways to seek the views of representatives of beneficiary groups in evaluating the *effectiveness and reach* of programs; in assessing the quality of services to their constituents; and, if practical, in interpreting the analytical results and in reviewing the findings. (See also Chapter 10, Effectiveness.) Input from actual beneficiaries concerning the goods and services delivered by the program always enhances the credibility and quality of an evaluation, even if sought only on a sample basis.

SEEKING AND INCORPORATING STAKEHOLDERS' COMMENTS

Based on DAC
Standard 8.1

4.14 Key stakeholders should be given the opportunity to comment on findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned.³⁴ Stakeholder comments should be sought, should be disclosed, and should be reflected appropriately in the final evaluation.

Standards and Guidelines

PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING OF THE M&E FRAMEWORK

Draws on and
applies DAC
Standard 4.3
and UNEG
Standard 3.11 to
GRPPs

4.15 Both partners and participants should be given the opportunity to provide early input into the M&E framework and processes, and into the programming of specific evaluations. Depending on the size and nature of the GRPP, participation and inclusion processes may add to the cost of programmatic M&E because of the multiple levels, diverse activities, broad geographical scope, and large number of beneficiaries that are characteristic of many GRPPs.

4.16 While involving stakeholders in evaluations of GRPPs may be perceived as costly, moderated e-discussions could be used throughout various stages of an evaluation process to seek inputs and views from beneficiaries in the concerned regions who have access to the appropriate technologies. For those without such access, it may be necessary to use more direct means, such as local contact points, and to consult with them and keep them informed at key stages (such as design, mid-point, and draft recommendations).

34. This DAC Standard has been elevated to a principle, since this "right to comment" should be stated in the program's M&E policy. The identification of *key* stakeholders — usually all those on the governing bodies, and sometimes the implementing partners — is left to the discretion of the governing body.

IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

4.17 It is the obligation of the program’s governing body and management units to provide the evaluation team with a clear “stakeholder map,” including the roles and responsibilities of those identified. In particular, the program should clearly articulate how it differentiates its program partners (those who convened and govern the program) from the program’s wider participant base, according to their respective roles in the governance and implementation of the program. GRPP management should also be prepared to identify other beneficiaries in their stakeholder base, particularly as the GRPP evolves and seeks to measure their welfare outcomes.

4.18 Evaluators should be aware that many programs view the meaning of the term *partner* as broader than the members of the governing, executive, and advisory bodies, and also including some of the following:

- Institutional partners with whom the program conducts joint or parallel activities at the global/regional level
- Financial partners not involved in governance
- Participants at the annual forum or general meeting who may or may not have voting rights, but are otherwise not regularly involved in governance
- Beneficiary countries
- Implementing partners of all types, including other international organizations, government agencies, the private sector, and international and local NGOs.

4.19 Because of the variation in the use of these terms, the evaluation TOR should identify the various categories of stakeholders. If this identification is absent from the TOR, evaluators should aim to clarify this before undertaking the evaluation.

4.20 In regional partnership programs, sovereign countries are often the principal *partners* represented on the governing body, since the success of regional programs hinges to a greater extent (than in global programs) on beneficiary country ownership, capacity for collective decision making, and cooperative implementation of program activities. But if beneficiary countries are not represented on the governing, executive, or advisory bodies, it is particularly important that evaluators find ways to include beneficiary country representatives in the evaluation process.

Draws on IEG’s forthcoming review of regional programs

STAKEHOLDER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

4.21 “The evaluation approach must consider learning and participation opportunities (e.g., workshops, learning groups, debrief-

UNEG Standard 3.11, para. 23

ings, participation in the field visits) to ensure that key stakeholders are fully integrated into the evaluation learning process.”

UNEG Standard
3.11, para. 24

4.22 “When feasible, a core learning group or steering group composed of representatives of the various stakeholders in the evaluation may be created. This group’s role would be to act as a sounding board, and to facilitate and review the work of the evaluation. In addition, this group may be tasked with facilitating the dissemination and application of the results and other follow-up action, particularly with their own constituents.”

REPORTING ON PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

Elaborates on
DAC Standard
4.3, UNEG Norm
11, para. 11.2,
and UNEG
Standard 4.18

4.23 The rationale for the degree of participation chosen for the evaluation should be included in the evaluation report, possibly in the preface prepared by the commissioners of the evaluation. The list of people interviewed or the characteristics of those surveyed should always be included in the evaluation report. In addition, the criteria for determining those consulted should be presented. This would include the choice of countries and locations for site visits or case studies, sampling methodology if applicable, and criteria for choosing those interviewed. Those interviewed should be given a chance to review any quotations attributed to them.

Draws on DAC
Standard 8.1
and UNEG
Norm 8,
para. 8.2

4.24 At the time of the issuance of the final report, any substantial differences of view that remain should be transparently presented. In disputes about facts that can be verified, the evaluators should investigate and change the draft where necessary. A separate section of the report, or an annex, may be set aside for views of particular stakeholders, if needed. In the case of differing opinions or interpretation, care should be taken that the reporting of stakeholders’ comments does not conflict with the rights and welfare of evaluation informants.