

7. Evaluation Team Selection and Contracting Process

Principles and Norms

IMPORTANCE OF CAREFUL SELECTION OF EVALUATION TEAM

7.1 “The credibility of evaluation depends on the expertise and independence of the evaluators and the degree of transparency of the evaluation process.” DAC Principle IV, para. 18

SELECTION CRITERIA

7.2 Evaluators must be competent.⁴¹ They must have the basic set of skills for conducting evaluation studies and managing evaluation team members. Based on UNEG Norm 9

7.3 Commissioners of evaluation should endeavor to ensure that evaluators selected are impartial and unbiased. Based on GEF Policy, section 3.3, para. 62b

Standards and Guidelines

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

7.4 “Evaluators should be selected on the basis of competence, and by means of a transparent process.” UNEG Standard 3.13, para. 27

7.5 Evaluators should accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge; they should decline to conduct evaluations that fall outside the limits of their professional training and competence. Based on UNEG Standard 2.1, para. 6

7.6 “Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to clients before embarking on an evaluation project and at any point where such conflict occurs.” UNEG Standard 2.1, para. 5

COMPETENCIES

7.7 Evaluators should have relevant educational background, qualifications, and training in evaluation, preferably an advanced university degree or equivalent background in the relevant disci- Based on UNEG Standard 2.2, para. 7

41. The U.S. Program Evaluation Standards and the African Evaluation Guidelines also stipulate that the persons conducting the evaluation should be trustworthy in order to ensure credibility and acceptance.

plines, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, and advanced statistical research.⁴²

UNEG Standard
2.3

7.8 “Evaluators should have professional work experience relevant to evaluations.”

Based on UNEG
standard 2.4

7.9 Evaluators need to be familiar with, and have specific technical knowledge of, the methodology or approach that will be needed for the evaluation.

METHOD OF SELECTION

Draws on DAC
*Guidance for
Managing Joint
Evaluations*, and
World Bank
procurement
guidelines and
practices

7.10 Selecting an evaluation team that is acceptable to all partners is a challenge in joint evaluations, or in evaluations commissioned by a governing body made up of donors with diverse policies and procedures. Commissioners of evaluation should follow rules on selection of consultants as stipulated (a) in their charter and/or evaluation policy, (b) in the rules and procedures of trustees or host organizations, and (c) in administration agreements with donors. Any conflict among these should be transparently discussed and resolved, with the results disclosed to all relevant parties.

7.11 Competitive methods of selection should be favored, with justification provided if a non-competitive selection method is adopted. Competitive bidding is better for transparency, value-for-money, and competition on substance. Competitive bidding processes differ, and many joint or GRPP evaluations have followed the European Union, United Nations, or World Bank rules and procedures. A prequalification exercise may be used to identify consultants, who are then invited to submit a full bid. Criteria to encourage participation of local experts may also be included in the selection criteria.

7.12 The method of selection and any justification required should be disclosed in the evaluation report. This may be in an annex that also describes other aspects of the evaluation process, such as the ways in which independence was ensured.

7.13 All bidders for an evaluation contract should be notified of results. Good practice is to post results publicly.

42. Various standards and guidelines of professional evaluation societies also include “competency” among their standards of ethics. For example, the Canadian Evaluation Society Guidelines for Ethical Conduct state: “Evaluators should apply systematic methods of inquiry appropriate to the evaluation; evaluators should possess or provide content knowledge appropriate for the evaluation; evaluators should continuously strive to improve their methodological and practice skills.” The American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for Evaluators also adds “cultural competency.”

TIME FRAME FOR SELECTION OF CONSULTANTS

7.14 As an approximate guide, a minimum of three to four months will be needed from the publication of an invitation to bid to the completion of the negotiations with the evaluation team, in order to allow for consensus to be reached among the partners.

Based on DAC
*Guidance for
Managing Joint
Evaluations*

AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

7.15 The selection process should ensure that all candidates disclose their prior involvement with the program and agree not to be involved in the implementation of the recommendations. But the pool of candidates from which to draw evaluators with the required technical skills, knowledge, and experience may be limited because of the unique aspects of GRPPs and their relative newness in international development. This increases the potential for conflicts of interest because qualified candidates may have had some manner of prior involvement with the program.

7.16 To avoid compromising the independence of the evaluation under such circumstances, an oversight committee or external panel could help the governing body select the evaluation team and ensure that there are always some professional and unbiased evaluators on the team. The governing body, oversight committee, or external panel should work out mutually acceptable ways of mitigating conflicts of interest when these arise. (See also paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 on institutional arrangements for independence.)

7.17 If a potential conflict of interest arises during the course of the evaluation, the managers of the evaluation should identify and implement ways of diminishing its implications for independence and impartiality. They should also disclose the initial conflict and the actions taken to the governing body and to program management.

7.18 As a general rule, all conflicts of interest, and any actions taken to mitigate them, should be disclosed in the final evaluation report. This includes the disclosure by evaluators who had prior involvement in the program.

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

7.19 The number of evaluators in a given team depends on the budget and scope of the evaluation and the degree to which a multidisciplinary team is required.

Based on UNEG
Standard 3.13,
para. 26

7.20 Evaluation teams should possess a mix of evaluation skills and technical or sectoral/thematic knowledge relevant to the particular evaluation. At least one member of the team evaluating a GRPP

Elaborates on
DAC Standard
4.5 and UNEG
Standard 2.1,
para. 2

should have knowledge or experience with multidonor programs, including the governance and financing issues associated with them.⁴³

7.21 The lead evaluator or team leader should ensure the overall integrity of the team's performance. He or she should possess core evaluation competencies – that is, the qualifications, skills, experience, and attributes generally expected of evaluation professionals – and the ability to manage potential conflicts of interests that arise when the technical/sector experts on the team have had prior involvement with the program.

Based on DAC
Guidance for
Managing Joint
Evaluations

7.22 There has sometimes been a suggestion to include staff from partner agencies in a GRPP or joint evaluation. This can facilitate communications and strengthen ownership of the findings, but may lead to conflicts of interest that undermine the neutrality and credibility of the evaluation. Possible ways of increasing participation while minimizing conflicts of interest are (a) to accord observer status only; (b) to include nationals who are not employees of the agency being evaluated; or (c) to include staff of the independent evaluation office of the agency being evaluated, if there is such an office, and its degree of independence can be verified.⁴⁴

Based on DAC
Standard 4.5;
UNEG Standard
3.14; and GEF
Policy, section
3.3, para. 62g

7.23 To the degree possible, the composition of evaluation teams should be gender balanced and geographically diverse, and include professionals from the countries or regions concerned. In particular, the evaluation of activities in beneficiary countries should make the best possible use of local expertise, both technical and evaluative.

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

Based on DAC
*Guidance for
Managing Joint
Evaluations*, and
UNEG Standard
3.10, para. 21

7.24 The responsibilities of the parties who agree to conduct an evaluation should be set forth in a written agreement. The agreement obligates the contracting parties to fulfill all the agreed upon conditions or to renegotiate the contract. Such an agreement reduces the likelihood that misunderstandings will arise between the contracting parties and makes it easier to resolve them if they do arise. The

43. "Consultants often join together within a consortium when bidding for a large joint evaluation. This can be useful in bringing together team members with varied knowledge and expertise." OECD/DAC, *Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations*, 2006.

44. While (c) is preferable, a combination of (a) and (c) is also possible. However, the staff of an independent evaluation office who participate in the evaluation of a GRPP should not subsequently participate in reviews or meta-evaluations of this particular evaluation.

agreement should specify what is to be done (by both parties), by whom and when, and any details on how it is to be done.⁴⁵

7.25 The agreement will generally refer to the TOR, which will provide details, at least in the following areas: financing, time frame, persons involved, reports to be produced, content, methodology, and procedures to be followed. (See Chapter 16, Terms of Reference.)

7.26 The written agreement and/or TOR generally provide for various stages in the process of the evaluation, along with a timeline. Including a stage where evaluators produce an inception report to be reviewed by the commissioners of the evaluation can provide an opportunity (a) to tap the expertise of the evaluators in refining methodologies in response to new information; (b) to allow consideration of more participatory methods; and (c) to clarify expectations on consultation of stakeholders and reporting of progress; and (d) to resolve any other issues that have come up.

Elaborates on
UNEG standard
3.10, para. 21

7.27 The relationships between the evaluation team and the commissioner(s) of an evaluation must be characterized by mutual respect and trust from the outset. Commissioners of the evaluation and the evaluation team should aim to clarify early in the evaluation process any matters such as confidentiality, privacy, communications, ownership of findings and reports, and referrals on matters of misconduct discovered, which may not be covered completely in written agreements.

Elaborates on
UNEG Standard
3.10, para. 22

45. One issue that frequently comes up is whether to use *lump sum* agreements or *negotiated* contracts. There is also the issue of whether each of these options should include allowance for reimbursable expenses. Another legal question that often arises is whether to allow termination in the case of poor performance through a *cancellation* clause or an *option* clause that requires the commissioner to explicitly request the continuation of the work at certain points in the process.