

INTRODUCTION

1. Definitions, Purposes, and Minimum Expectations for Credibility and Usefulness

Principles and Norms

STAKEHOLDERS' INTEREST IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1.1 All principal stakeholders — partners, donors, management, employees, and direct beneficiaries — have an interest in M&E, both for accountability to political authorities and the general public and for learning from experience in order to improve the use of development resources.⁶

Based on DAC Principle I, para. 2

DEFINITIONS

1.2 Monitoring, the responsibility of the management and operational staff, is the continuous assessment of progress achieved during program implementation in order to track compliance with the plan, to identify reasons for noncompliance, and to take necessary actions to improve performance.

Based on DAC principle V, UNEG Norm 1, and GEF Policy, section 1.3

1.3 An evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed policy, program, or project, its design, implementation, and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and achievement of its objectives, and its developmental effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.⁷

Based on DAC Principle I, para. 5, and UNEG Norm 1

TYPES OF EVALUATION

1.4 Evaluations may be internally or externally led, and may adopt a formative or summative approach.⁸ They may be aimed at a

Based on UNEG Norm 1, para. 1.6

6. Stakeholders are often referred to as “principal” and “other,” or “direct” and “indirect.” 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.

7. Some evaluations also assess value-for-money, target group satisfaction, and additionality or value added. Descriptors that are sometimes used to distinguish evaluations from other types of reviews and assessments include: objective, credible, reliable, and drawing on evidence-based information.

8. A *formative evaluation* is “intended to improve performance [and is] most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs.” A *summative evaluation* is a “study conducted at the end of an in-

single program, to determine its contribution to one or more development objectives, or they may be *cluster evaluations*⁹ to assess several programs operating in the same sector or country, or to evaluate collaborative efforts. An evaluation can be conducted at any time during the life of a program, at mid-point, at end-phase, or at end-point. If desirable for accountability or for learning lessons applicable to other development efforts, an impact evaluation of selected program activities may be conducted either during or after the closing of a program. (See also Chapter 15, Impact Evaluation.)

GENERAL PURPOSES OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Based on GEF Policy, section 1.3, para. 18

1.5 *Monitoring* provides initial information on progress toward achieving intended objectives, outcomes, and impacts – including productivity and other efficiency targets – and gives signals and information for proactive and reactive decision making by management. A good monitoring system for a GRPP combines information at all levels – the program, portfolio, and activity levels – to provide a comprehensive picture of performance to management and to facilitate decision making and learning.

Based on DAC Principle II, paras. 6 and 10, and UNEG Norm 13, para.13.1

1.6 The general purposes of *evaluation* of GRPPs are to improve the performance of the program in meeting its objectives and to provide a basis for accountability to donors, stakeholders, and the general public. Specifically, evaluation aims to improve the relevance of the program, to enhance achievement of results, to optimize resource use, and to address issues of target group satisfaction. With appropriate stakeholder participation, an evaluation can promote dialogue and improve cooperation between partners and participants, with the side-benefits of increasing beneficiary ownership of policy reforms or new types of interventions. With appropriate dissemination it can also contribute to organizational learning and knowledge building that may also benefit other programs and development efforts.

intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. A summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the program.” See OECD/DAC, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based management*, 2002.

9. In this Sourcebook the term *cluster evaluation* refers to the simultaneous evaluation of more than one GRPP operating in the same sector, or operating collaboratively. The term refers to the multiple subjects of the evaluation, rather than the collaboration of the evaluators. The term *joint evaluation* refers to evaluations that are conducted collaboratively by more than one partner – the same way in which the OECD/DAC uses the term. There is potential overlap between the two concepts: more than one agency may collaborate in evaluating either a single GRPP or a cluster of several GRPPs.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN EVALUATION AND AUDIT

1.7 While evaluation contributes to ensuring accountability, its focus on relevance, results, and efficiency distinguishes it from ensuring accountability for the use of public funds in the accounting and legal senses, which generally requires in-depth examination by audit agencies. Optimum levels of oversight to assure accountability require both periodic evaluation and audits.

Based on DAC Principle II, para. 8, and UNEG Norm 1, para. 1.4f

INTENTIONALITY TO USE RESULTS OF EVALUATION

1.8 To achieve their purposes, evaluations must be used.¹⁰ They should be timely, and accepted as relevant and useful for decision making on important matters. Feedback and dissemination to management, partners, and operational staff are essential in order to facilitate decision making and learning. Dissemination to other stakeholders in a clear and concise form is also desirable for transparency. Evaluation always requires an explicit response by the commissioners of the evaluation and the management of the program. After each evaluation is completed and for the benefit of future evaluations, the commissioners of the evaluation may also wish to review the results of the evaluation process and consider, among other things, if more funding or a different focus might have enhanced its usefulness.

Based on DAC Principles I, V, and X, UNEG Norm 12, and GEF Policy, section 3.3

Standards and Guidelines

MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR CREDIBLE AND QUALITY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1.9 Good quality monitoring systems use SMART indicators – “specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound” – to track the use of inputs, the progress of activities, the outputs associated with key activities, and outcomes. For GRPPs, some indicators will be defined at the program level, some at the portfolio level (such as aggregate summary statistics), and some at the activity level. While objective data on inputs and results are always preferable, some data may also reflect subjective or summary assessments. Data collection is timely, of adequate periodicity to facilitate problem solving and support decision making, and is controlled by a quality-assurance system. Accountability for data collection and quality assurance is clear, and incentives are appropriate to ensure an acceptable level of quality. Monitoring reports to management and governing bodies are clear, accessible, and easy to understand, and include definitions and parameters.

Elaborates on and applies to GRPPs, DAC Standard 4.2, and GEF Policy, section 3.2, para. 56, and section 1.3, para. 17

10. The U.S. Program Evaluation Standards for professional evaluators include a set of seven “utility standards” to help ensure that evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users. The African Evaluation Association has adapted these standards to the African context.

Elaborates on and applies DAC Principle IV, para. 18, and UNEG Norm 8, to GRPPs

1.10 The credibility and quality of *evaluation* of GRPPs depends on (a) the degree of independence of the evaluation process; (b) the degree of transparency of the evaluation process; (c) appropriate participation and consultation with relevant stakeholders; (d) the expertise and experience of the evaluators; (e) appropriately defined scope and methodology; and (f) clearly defined criteria for assessment. In addition, the budget must be sufficient for the chosen scope and methodology in order to avoid compromising the credibility or quality of the evaluation.