



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Big Five False Bay LED Strategy: Project Evaluation

Date Evaluation was completed: March 2008

Name of assessor: Mike Leslie

Evaluation Number: 112

Date Assessment Completed: 20 February 2013

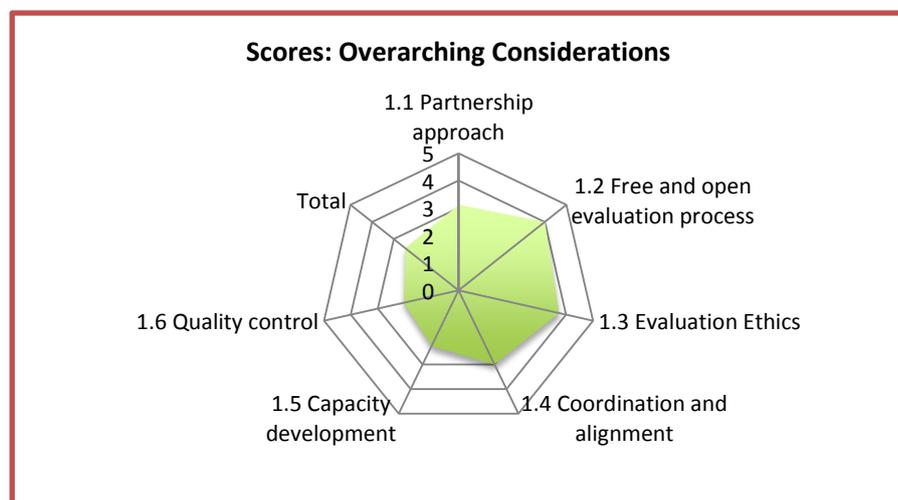
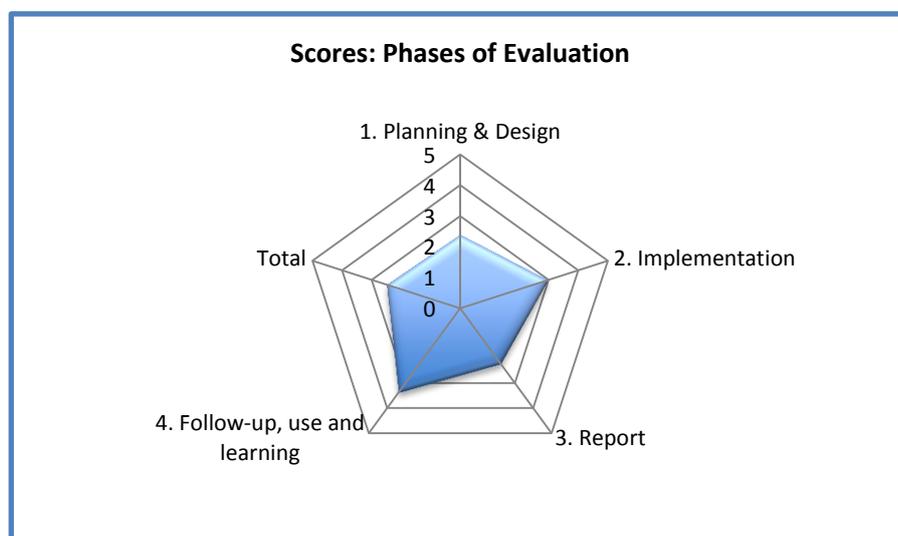
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Big Five False Bay LED Strategy: Project Evaluation
Completion Date of Evaluation	March 2008
Name of Assessor	Mike Leslie
Evaluation Number	112
Completion Date of Assessment	20 February 2013
Initiated by	Monitoring & Evaluation Unit of KZN Department of Economic Development
Evaluation undertaken by	Umhlaba Development Services
Evaluation area / sector	LED, SMEs & local development projects
	Economic planning and development <i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 5
	<i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Implementation
	Impact <i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Project
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	Local
Period of Evaluation	January 2008- March 2008
Known Cost of Evaluation	Under R100 000 (approximately)

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	2.38
Implementation	2.96
Report	2.21
Follow-up, use and learning	3.35
Total	2.57

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.12
Free and open evaluation process	4.00
Evaluation Ethics	3.73
Coordination and alignment	3.00
Capacity Development	2.25
Quality control	2.04



1. Planning & Design

1.1. Clarity of Purpose and Scope in TOR

STANDARD: *The evaluation was guided by a TOR with at least the following sections explicit: purpose, scope and objectives; expectations regarding design and methodology; resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; expectations regarding evaluation process and products..*

Comment and Analysis

There was a ToR for the group of evaluations commissioned and according to the evaluators and a representative of the Department it was sufficiently explicit for the purpose of this evaluation.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *The purpose of the evaluation was clear and explicit in the TOR*

Comment and Analysis

According to the the Project Manager of the evaluation team, the ToR was explicit with regards to the purpose of the evaluation.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose*

Comment and Analysis

It was indicated that the evaluation questions were clear in the form of objectives. However, providing general questions for such a diversity of 8 projects was not entirely appropriate given the varying nature of each project and their differing stages of implementation.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR

Comment and Analysis

An implementation evaluation with elements of an impact evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation as set in the ToR according to a member of the evaluation team.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR

Comment and Analysis

It was reported that KZN DED was a clear user of the information in the ToR, but there was not much more consideration given to the different stakeholders.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

According to interviews, this was not indicated to be the case.

Rating 2

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated

Comment and Analysis

In terms of planning for time, it would seem that the turn of the year is a difficult time and subsequent delays in data collection bare out that the original time allocations were not entirely sufficient.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget

Comment and Analysis

Considering the number of different evaluations that were commissioned as part of one evaluation contract, planning and budget resourcing was not differentiated and in this respect too general for the evaluation parameters set out for each evaluation.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Comment and Analysis

Interviewees indicated that the staffing complement for the evaluations was adequate.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluand

Comment and Analysis

There did not appear to be any clear planning to incorporate capacity building in the process of the evaluation although comments suggested that the process itself was implicitly orientated towards learning both within the Department and at Big Five False Bay Local Municipality.

Rating 2

1.3. Alignment to Policy Context and Background Literature

STANDARD: There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

It was unclear to what extent the relevant policy and programme environments were reviewed by the evaluators during the planning of the evaluation.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

It was unclear to what extent appropriate literature was reviewed during the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators.

Rating N/A

1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project

STANDARD: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

There was no reference to an intervention logic or the theory of change in the planning of the evaluation by the Department or the evaluators themselves.

Rating 1

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

There was no reference to the process of consultation in the design and methodology selected for the evaluation but appeared to form part of a more general design and methodology applied to all projects as set out by the M&E Unit.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked

Comment and Analysis

The planned methodology was not entirely appropriate for the stated objectives of the evaluation. There was an over-reliance on qualitative methods without providing for sufficient quantitative data collection to address evaluation objectives related to efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

Rating 2

STANDARD: *Planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation*

Comment and Analysis

The informants sampled for the purpose of interviews appeared to be well-placed but comprised mostly programme implementers and stakeholders rather than beneficiaries, despite evaluation objectives of determining effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Rating 2

STANDARD: *There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation*

Comment and Analysis

It was unclear how the evaluation findings were expected to be used. Not enough information available.

Rating N/A

1.5. Inception phase

STANDARD: *The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented*

Comment and Analysis

It was reported that the inception phase was used by KZN DED to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented, including the projects that made up the broader scope of commissioned evaluations.

Rating 3

2. Implementation

2.1. Ethical Review and Considerations

STANDARD: *Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was obtained through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants*

Comment and Analysis

Ethical sensitivity was not high and no additional ethical clearance was required. A representative of the commissioning Department indicated that consideration was given to the ethical implications of the work and that no serious risks were noted in the identification of informants.

Rating 3

2.2. Evaluator independence

STANDARD: *Where external, evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference*

Comment and Analysis

All indications suggest the evaluation team was able to work freely without interference as an external service provider.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest**Comment and Analysis**

There was no evidence of a conflict of interest between the evaluation team and DED and the service provider reported an ability to work freely and impartially.

Rating 4

2.3. Key stakeholder involvement**STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation****Comment and Analysis**

A Project Steering Committee for the project was engaged as part of the evaluation and key stakeholders were included in the persons interviewed.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation**Comment and Analysis**

There was no explicit element of capacity building of partners incorporated into the evaluation process but the approach taken to interview project managers implicitly elicited some reflection that could be said contain an element of capacity building.

Rating 2

2.4. Methodology

STANDARD: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned

Comment and Analysis

Based on what was reportedly in the ToR, the methods employed reflected those planned.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions

Comment and Analysis

There appeared to be no field-work level problems or difficulties collecting data.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Forms of data gathering were limited to interviews and some documentary evidence review. These data collection methods were insufficient for addressing the evaluation parameters set out in the evaluation report. Interviews with four individuals, none of whom were beneficiaries of this process, will not provide reliable indications of efficacy, impact or sustainability. The methodology is inappropriate in part because the evaluation design and purpose was too generic, rather than project specific.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The data analysis approach and methods were not acknowledged and do not appear appropriate or sufficient given the evaluation parameters set for the project evaluation.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology

Comment and Analysis

Key stakeholders from DED and Big Five False Bay Municipality were all consulted as part of the methodology. These interviews were the basis of primary data collected to produce the evaluation report findings.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information

Comment and Analysis

The ultimate beneficiaries of the LED Strategy were not included as a source of data. In fact, no parties that were not directly involved in the project were engaged as a key source of data and information. Only the LED staff member (who could be considered a secondary beneficiary through the capacity building component) was engaged as part of the methodology.

Rating 2

2.5. Project management

STANDARD: The evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes

Comment and Analysis

There appeared to be no significant shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes in conducting the evaluation.

Rating 3

3. Report

3.1. Report was well-structured and presentation was clear and complete in each of these areas

STANDARD: Executive summary captured key components of the report appropriately

Comment and Analysis

There was no executive summary for the evaluation of this project.

Rating 1

STANDARD: The context of the development intervention was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The context of the municipality, as well as the some broader policy context was explicitly acknowledged in the evaluation report and presented as relevant to the intervention assessed.

Rating 3

STANDARD: There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions**Comment and Analysis**

There was no clear rationale as to why a range of implicit evaluation questions, spanning the spectrum from diagnostic-design-implementation-impact were selected for this study. The evaluation report was not sufficiently focused and no rationale was provided as to what was being asked and why.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The scope or focus of the evaluation was apparent in the report**Comment and Analysis**

The scope of the evaluation could have been more clearly stated in the evaluation report. An assessment of the LED project planning and implementation, as well as for medium-long term results would entail a larger scope than the four individuals interviewed that formed the basis of data collection for this assessment. Various aspects of the scope were never made explicit and were not sufficiently explicit.

Rating 2

STANDARD: A detailed methodology was outlined in the relevant section of a report (full report or 1/3/25) to the point that a reader could understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation**Comment and Analysis**

A few brief paragraphs on methodology were provided and no methodological information was provided with regards to analysis and interpretation approaches.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Key findings were presented in a clear way; they were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data was not presented in the body of the report

Comment and Analysis

Key findings were presented clearly, but they were included amongst speculative findings. For instance, stating that "project funds could have been more efficiently applied through accessing hands on support over a longer period. For example, a consultant could have been employed for six months on a full time contact basis for this purpose..." is speculative.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinct, but they were also prescriptive and inappropriately extrapolated beyond the scope of this project. For instance, it was stated that "A period of not less than six months should be allocated for LED capacity building support for municipalities that are struggling with LED issues, noting that the promotion of LED is a legislative imperative for local government." Going from the experience of one project to make a generic recommendation for all municipalities with LED issues was inappropriate.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings were clearly and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

There was no acknowledgement of the limitations of the methodology or the findings of the evaluation or interrogation of their validity and reliability based on the methods employed and the individuals interviewed as the basis of data collection.

Rating 1

3.2. Writing and presentation

STANDARD: *Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc)*

Comment and Analysis

Quality of writing and presentation was appropriate for publication.

Rating **3**

STANDARD: *Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)*

Comment and Analysis

No quantitative data was presented in the evaluation report nor were any direct quotes used to substantiate a finding. Inductive generalisations without the basis of statistical legitimacy were made. For instance, generalisations are made to the whole municipality based on this project and the qualitative interviews of only two administrators from the municipality.

Rating **2**

3.3. Presentation of findings

STANDARD: *The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables was readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions*

Comment and Analysis

No figures and tables were presented in the report. Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed**Comment and Analysis**

It is unclear as to how data analysis was executed as this was never explained nor were any quotes attributed to provide empirical evidence of findings.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence**Comment and Analysis**

Not all findings could be supported by available evidence and no direct quotations from the qualitative data were provided to support the findings.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument

Comment and Analysis

The evidence gathered does appear to be analysed to support the argument but it is unclear how this analysis took place and whether it was methodologically robust.

Rating 2

STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Comment and Analysis

There was no recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations at any point.

Rating 1

STANDARD: The report appeared free of significant methodological and analytic flaws

Comment and Analysis

There were significant methodological flaws with regards to the amount of data collected for this evaluation and the kind of data. Furthermore, there was no acknowledgement of the potential bias of the informants.

Rating 2

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

Not all conclusions were derived from evidence, particularly with regards to claim that inadequate planning, consultation and communication was responsible for reducing the project's overall efficiency.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Conclusions took into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations

Comment and Analysis

No additional empirical and/or analytic work from related studies and evaluations was acknowledged or consulted in the conclusions.

Rating 1

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions did address the original aspects of project planning and implementation, as well as the evaluation parameters set out in the evaluation report.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions were drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change**Comment and Analysis**

There was no intervention logic or theory of change stated. Not applicable.

Rating N/A

3.5. Recommendations**STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts****Comment and Analysis**

No reference to consultation with sectoral partners or experts was made. For instance, reference to support the recommendation that "a period not less than six months should be allocated for LED capacity building support for municipalities that are struggling with LED issues" would have been desirable.

Rating 1

STANDARD: Recommendations were shaped following input or review by relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders**Comment and Analysis**

As the commissioning Department KZN DED was involved throughout the evaluation process and was given the opportunity to provide input on the recommendations.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Recommendations were relevant to the policy context**Comment and Analysis**

Recommendations did appear relevant to the policy context, particularly with regards to intergovernmental relations and the roles and responsibilities of the local and provincial government spheres.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Recommendations were targetted to a specific audience sufficiently - were specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable**Comment and Analysis**

Recommendations appeared targetted at the Department and municipality, with some clear suggestions regarding partnership and buy-in from other stakeholders.

Rating 3

3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation have been noted**STANDARD: Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted****Comment and Analysis**

No limitations were noted in the conclusion and recommendations of the evaluation.

Rating 1

3.7 Protection of participants and risk considerations

STANDARD: *The full report documented procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where this was needed (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)*

Comment and Analysis

The report did not document any procedures to ensure confidentiality and no reference was given to informed consent for members of the public or representatives of organisations. However, given the nature of the project the ethical considerations made earlier during planning, this was not necessarily appropriate.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: *There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website*

Comment and Analysis

There appeared to be no risks to disseminating the original report on a public website and it was made public.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website*

Comment and Analysis

There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website.

Rating 4

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

A representative of the Department indicated that all reports were presented to the relevant stakeholders and that feedback received was positive.

Rating 4

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

All evidence provided indicates that the evaluation was completed with the planned timeframes.

Rating 3

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

It was reported that the evaluation was completed within the agreed budget.

Rating 3

4.3. Transparency

STANDARD: The report was publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns

Comment and Analysis

The report was publicly available online prior to undertaking this assessment.

Rating 4

4.4. Lessons learnt

STANDARD: After completion of the evaluation, a reflective process was undertaken by staff responsible for the evaluand to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations

Comment and Analysis

Although a planned reflected process does not appear to have occurred, the representative of the Department indicated that evaluation did provide an opportunity for reflection and was a learning experience for the municipality and stakeholders.

Rating N/A

4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

STANDARD: The evaluation study was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (eg raised its profile)

Comment and Analysis

According to the representative of the Department, the evaluation conducted was reported as having a symbolic value within the municipality and amongst stakeholders as it represented an opportunity to acknowledge and address challenges in the planning and implementation process.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *The evaluation study was of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice*

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was of conceptual value in terms of highlighting the importance of consultation and communication between roleplayers clearly as part of the planning process. The evaluation process was said to help project staff to better understand monitoring and evaluation conceptually.

Rating 3

4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations

STANDARD: *There was clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent*

Comment and Analysis

Use of findings and recommendations for implementation were not supported by specific examples but were said to be of a general utility that contributed to developing broader frameworks and strategies for monitoring and evaluation while raising consciousness at the municipal level.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *There was clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term*

Comment and Analysis

The medium to long term influence of this evaluation on the intervention was not known or stated during the relevant interviews.

Rating N/A

References

Umhlaba Development Services, 2008. KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Ezimbuzini Economic Development Node: Phase 1 Project Evaluation.

List of Interviewees

Danny Das, Project Manager: Umhlaba Development Services, Telephonic Interview, 28 January 2013.

Bheki Nowele, Senior Manager: Monitoring and Evaluation. KZN Department of Economic Development. Electronic self-administered questionnaire, 18 February 2013.