



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Economic Development Composite Report on Project Evaluations

Date Evaluation was completed: 01 March 2008

Name of assessor: Robin Richards

Evaluation Number: 20

Date Assessment Completed: 17 January 2013

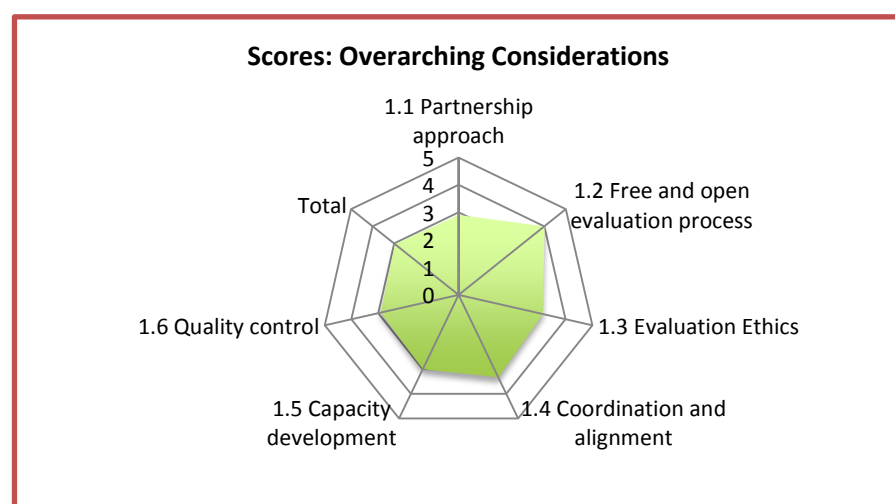
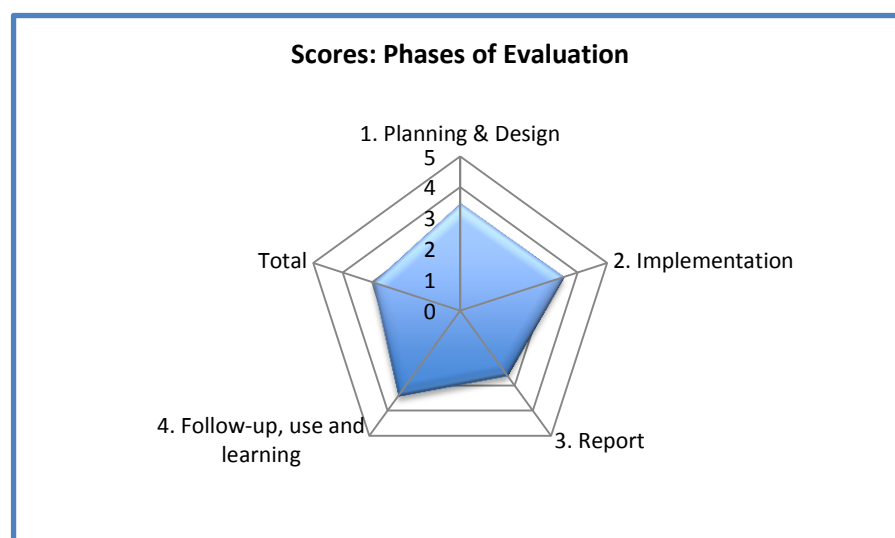
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Economic Development Composite Report on Project Evaluations
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 March 2008
Name of Assessor	Robin Richards
Evaluation Number	20
Completion Date of Assessment	17 January 2013
Initiated by	Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, KZN Department of Economic Development
Evaluation undertaken by	Umhlaba Development Services
Evaluation area / sector	Economic planning and development
	Additional
National Outcome	Outcome 4
	Additional
Type of Evaluation	Implementation
	Additional
What is being evaluated	Project
	Additional
Geographic Scope	Provincial
Period of Evaluation	November 2007-March 2008
Known Cost of Evaluation	Estimated R500 000

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.48
Implementation	3.52
Report	2.59
Follow-up, use and learning	3.41
Total	3.04

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	2.91
Free and open evaluation process	4.00
Evaluation Ethics	3.14
Coordination and alignment	3.33
Capacity Development	3.00
Quality control	2.92



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

The ToR are of a high quality and very detailed with most of the elements in the Standard. The service provider indicated that the ToR were developed by an official who is an M&E practitioner.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The project TOR clearly indicated the objectives 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

A set of detailed evaluation questions were listed in the TOR and these were appropriate to the overall evaluation objective.

Rating 4

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

The approach combined elements of implementation and impact evaluating the projects. The project TORS specified the need to identify factors contributing to desired project results and to identify lessons for the development of guidelines for LED project planning.

Rating 4***STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR*****Comment and Analysis**

The KZN Department of Economic Development was identified. However no other users were explicitly identified or their information needs. "Users" of the report are referred to generally.

Rating 3***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation*****Comment and Analysis**

Stakeholders were involved, however a gap may have been the seeming non-inclusion of project beneficiaries in this process.

Rating 3

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

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

Comment and Analysis

The Department and Service provider indicated that these were adequate.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The Department and Service provider indicated that these were adequate.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The service provider never mentioned this as a limitation.

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

The appointment of emerging researchers to assist with the evaluation as well as the utilisation of a focus group for stakeholders were evidence of this.

Rating 3

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

Although there was no direct evidence of this in the planning of the evaluation, the report contained succinct overviews of all of the projects in this evaluation as well as a detailed literature scan of the broader policy environment.

Rating 3

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

Although there was no direct evidence in the planning of the evaluation, the report contained succinct overviews of all of the projects in this evaluation as well as a detailed literature scan of the broader policy environment.

Rating 3

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 specific mention of the intervention logic or theory of change but the service provider indicated that this was not a requirement in the ToR.

Rating **2**

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

Comment and Analysis

The department has noted that support in the development of the TOR was received from DED management.

Rating **3**

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

Comment and Analysis

The methodology was thorough, involving a desktop review of relevant documents relating to each project; an environment scan, face-to-face interviews and focus groups.

Rating **4**

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

This was a qualitative study but all stakeholders, including beneficiaries were included in the interviews.

Rating 4

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

There was no evidence of this in the report and the service provider noted that their involvement ended with the submission of the report.

Rating 2

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***

The service provider noted that the actual projects that were to be evaluated changed in this phase.

Rating 4

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

This was not applicable to this study.

Rating N/A

2.2. Evaluator independence

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

Comment and Analysis

The service provider indicated that there was no interference.

Rating 4

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

This appeared to be the case from comments provided by the service provider and the department.

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***

The service provider indicated that there was a project steering committee made up of internal and external stakeholders.

Rating 3

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

Emerging researchers accompanied senior researchers to project sites and focus groups reportedly served as 'informal' teaching opportunities for sharing of information and skills transfer to occur.

Rating 3

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

The Terms of Reference indicated the types of data collection methods and other research processes and the research report indicates that these methods were used.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

In the report section on 'Limitations', the evaluators noted some difficulties such as accessing documents and previous beneficiaries although they reported this did not compromise the findings of the report.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Data gathering methods were thorough and included actual site visits to projects as well as face-to-face interviews and focus groups.

Rating 4

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

Data analysis was thorough and included summaries of key findings per project. A scoring system was also developed that evaluated each project on the basis of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Scores were then reported on and analysed for each project.

Rating 4***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology******Comment and Analysis***

This was difficult to assess because there was no breakdown of the numbers of key stakeholders interviewed in the main report, although the main stakeholder groups appear to have been covered.

Rating 3***STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information******Comment and Analysis***

This was difficult to assess because there was no breakdown of the numbers of key stakeholders interviewed in the main report, although the main stakeholder groups appear to have been covered in the fieldwork phase.

Rating 3

2.5. Project management

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

Comment and Analysis

This may have been a problem because under the section on Limitations in the report, the evaluators note that access difficulties to project documents and beneficiaries together with long lead-times necessary for the setting up of interviews. These issues were confirmed in an interview with the service provider.

Rating 2

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

Key questions as well as some background information were provided on the projects. Key findings were also summarised in clearly articulated bullet points.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Some effort was made to provide a context to the development interventions by focussing on relevant policy documents such as national strategies and programmes to assist development projects.

Rating 4

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

This was clearly stated in the Introduction.

Rating 4

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

This was articulated in the background section of the report.

Rating 4

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**

The methodology was thorough, involving a desktop review of relevant documents relating to each project; an environment scan. Face-to-face interviews and focus groups were also used. Although the approach to analysis and interpretation of findings was explained further into the report, the method section of the report could have been improved through the inclusion of this. In addition, there needed to be an explanation of how scoring for the key indicators was done.

Rating 3

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 well by tabulation and illustrated through graphs. However this could have been strengthened further by indicating how scoring for the key indicators was done.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

Only recommendations were provided, but these were presented reasonably clearly in sub-headings and bulleted sub-points. This section could have been strengthened with a conclusion which would have provided an overall assessment on whether DED is achieving its objectives through the projects and whether it is conducting its business in an efficient, effective and cost effective way. These were the two key research questions which guided the evaluation.

Rating 2

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

Comment and Analysis

These were clearly articulated in a separate section of the report.

Rating 4

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

The report presentation and quality of the writing was of a good standard.

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

Individual projects were rated on the basis of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, Impact and sustainability. This data was tabulated. However, the methodology for scoring across each of these indicators was not indicated either in the methodology or below the tables.

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

Data and tables presented did facilitate communication and comprehension of results. However this could have been improved with an explanation of the scoring system against each of the indicators used to evaluate projects.

Rating 3

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

The composite report did not provide an explanation on how the data analysis was undertaken and the scoring system for each of the indicators.

Rating 2

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

The composite report provided no substantive evidence to support the scoring across each of the indicators for the individual projects.

Rating 2

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

The composite report provided no details on the scoring method and there was no substantive evidence provided in this report to support the scoring across each of the indicators.

Rating 2

STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations**Comment and Analysis**

This was not discussed in the report.

Rating 2

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

Although the report appeared free of methodological flaws, it was difficult to assess whether it was free of analytic flaws because of the summative nature of the report and there was no evidence presented from individual project evaluations to support the findings.

Rating 2

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

Recommendations seemed to be derived from evidence, though presented in a summative manner in this report, with the exception of the indicator scoring for each of the projects

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no evidence of this in the report. Although the recommendations were made on the basis of information collected from project managers and other key stakeholders.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

No conclusions were presented and the Recommendations section did not reflect on the original evaluation questions directly.

Rating 2

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

The service provider noted that this was not included in the ToR as a deliverable.

Rating NA

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

There was no evidence of this in the report. Although the recommendations were made on the basis of information collected from project managers and other key stakeholders.

Rating 2

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

There was no evidence of this in the report although the department indicated that stakeholders were engaged to provide inputs on the evaluation report.

Rating 2

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

Recommendations were useful in the current policy context because they related to practical aspects of how projects should be implemented and the alignment of project implementation and planning with other key departmental documents such as the Annual Performance Plans.

Rating 4**STANDARD: Recommendations were targetted to a specific audience sufficiently - were specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable****Comment and Analysis**

Recommendations were sufficiently specific, feasible and affordable and were targetted at both the DED and Project Managers. This could have been strengthened with short explanations for targetting specific recommendations at specific stakeholders. This would have improved the readers understanding of recommendations.

Rating 3**3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation have been noted****STANDARD: Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted****Comment and Analysis**

These were not noted in the recommendations.

Rating 2

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

No specific procedures in the report were documented.

Rating 2

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

Comment and Analysis

None were evident.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

None were evident.

Rating N/A

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

This was unknown. The service provider indicated that their involvement ended on submission of the report. The department has indicated that there was a feedback workshop to key stakeholders.

Rating 4

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

Although the report, noted delays in accessing respondents as well as documents for review, this did not result in the project exceeding the timeframes.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

It appeared to be, from comments provided by the service provider.

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 has been published and is accessible electronically and in hard copy.

Rating 4

4.4. Lessons learnt

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no evidence of this and the Department did not indicate that in the interview.

Rating 2

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

There was no evidence of that from interviews.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The study was of conceptual value to some extent because the study does illuminate in a summative way what the implementation problems are and how these can be improved to achieve better outcomes. These provide lessons to current and future projects.

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

The recommendations reportedly resulted in changes to the way projects are managed and supported.

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

There was no clear evidence of this although the department has indicated the evaluation resulted in changes to the ways projects are supported.

Rating 3

References

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Programme Terms of Reference.

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, 2008. Composite Report of Project Evaluations.

List of Interviewees

Bheki Nowele, Senior Manager Monitoring and Evaluation. Department of Economic Development KZN. Electronic self-administered questionnaire and Telephonic follow-up interview, 18/1/2013.

Danny Das, Project Leader, Umhlaba Development Services. Electronic self-administered questionnaire and follow-up telephonic interview, 18/1/2013.