



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation of employment Assistance Programmes in the Public Service

Date Evaluation was completed: ?

Name of assessor: Nana Gadegaard Davies

Evaluation Number: 222

Date Assessment Completed: 04 March 2013

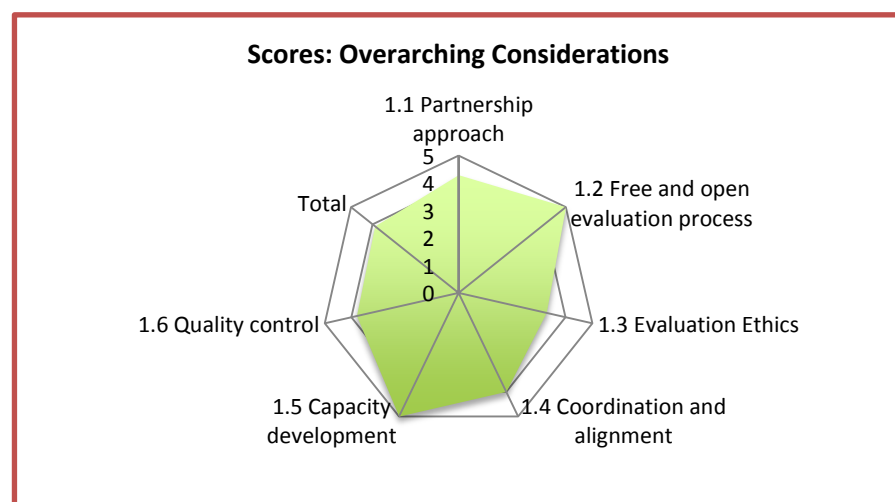
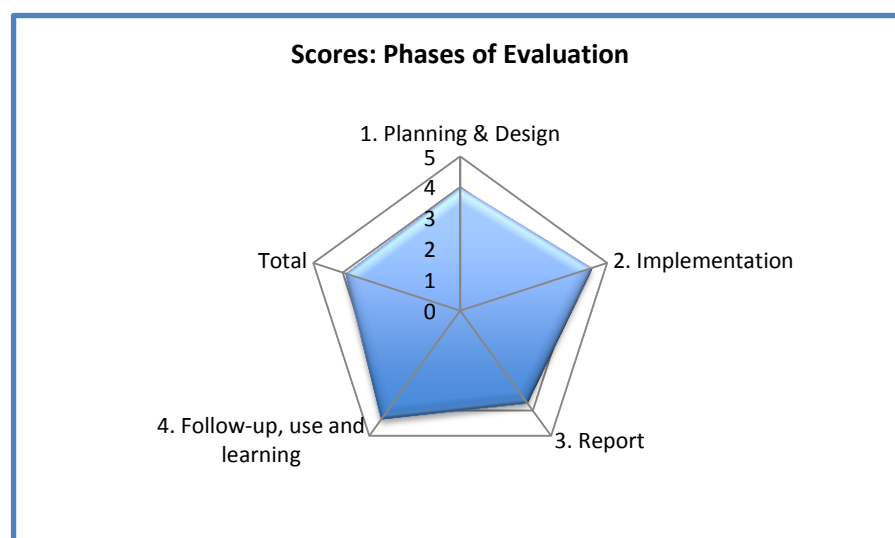
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Evaluation of employment Assistance Programmes in the Public Service
Completion Date of Evaluation	?
Name of Assessor	Nana Gadegaard Davies
Evaluation Number	222
Completion Date of Assessment	04 March 2013
Initiated by	Public Service Commision
Evaluation undertaken by	?
Evaluation area / sector	Public service, governance, M&E
	Health <i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 12
	<i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Implementation
	<i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Programme
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	2006
Known Cost of Evaluation	?

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	4.00
Implementation	4.48
Report	3.69
Follow-up, use and learning	4.33
Total	4.02

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	4.29
Free and open evaluation process	5.00
Evaluation Ethics	3.29
Coordination and alignment	4.00
Capacity Development	5.00
Quality control	3.80



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

It was not possible to ascertain whether a TOR had been developed and had guided the evaluation.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

It was not possible to ascertain whether a TOR had been developed and hence it was unknown whether the purpose was clear and explicit in the TOR.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

It was not possible to ascertain whether a TOR had been developed and hence it was unknown whether the evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose.

Rating N/A

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

It was not possible to ascertain whether a TOR had been developed.

Rating N/A

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

It was not possible to ascertain whether a TOR had been developed and hence it was unknown whether intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR.

Rating N/A

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

It was not possible to ascertain whether a TOR had been developed and it was furthermore not possible to identify key stakeholders to interview. Hence it was unknown whether key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation.

Rating N/A

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no information in the report as to whether the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was limited to five provinces due to budgetary constraints. However, it seemed that the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of the original budget to be conducted in those five provinces.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

It was not possible to secure any interviewees for this assessment and hence it is unknown who conducted the evaluation. The methodology applied as well as the writing and presentation of the report showed that the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

It is uncertain whether the evaluation planned to incorporate capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluation as no interviews were secured for this assessment and as there was no TOR available. However, the participatory approach applied by the evaluators together with the feedback workshops conducted ensured that some capacity building did take place.

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

There was evidence that relevant policy and programme environment had been reviewed. The study sought to better allow departments to fulfil legislative obligations surrounding the well being of employees and their environments. In Chapter 3 an analysis of departmental policies on Employment Assistance Programmes (EAPs) was undertaken. However it was uncertain whether the policy and programme review had been used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators.

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

There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted. The study had looked at EAPs in other countries and at a situational analysis approach developed by the Population Reference Bureau for its methodology. Finally a literature review had also informed recommendations on how best to implement and deliver EAPs. However, it was uncertain whether the review of the literature had been used in 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 specific reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluation in the planning of the evaluation.

Rating 1

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

Comment and Analysis

It is not stated in the report whether key stakeholders were consulted in the planning of the design and methodology of the evaluation. It was not possible to secure any interviews with key personnel involved in the evaluation.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation questions sought to garner the effectiveness of the EAPs and the methodology applied consisted of the use of surveys, interviews and focus group. Hence the planned methodology was appropriate to the evaluation questions being asked.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

A total of 1 680 respondents provided their inputs in response to questionnaires that were distributed for the purposes of this study, while nearly 200 personal interviews and impact assessments were conducted. Furthermore, a total of 20 focus group discussions and a number of workshops were held in order to obtain detailed information about EAPs and their functioning within the Public Service. The planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of the evaluation

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Amongst others, the evaluation aimed at developing guidelines to encourage departments to establish EAPs where such did not exist. There seemed to have been a planned objective for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation. As part of the evaluation feedback workshops were conducted with senior managers and HIV and AIDS Coordinators, where findings were shared and input was given on the recommendations.

Rating 4

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

There was no mention of the inception phase in the report and since no interview was secured with the key stakeholders involved in the evaluation it was not possible to cast clarity of the inception phase.

Rating N/A

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

The evaluation did not seem to have required ethical clearance and the report does not mention that the research went through an ethics review board. However, since stigma and discrimination were focal points when conducting any study concerning employee problems and the roles of EAPs in the Public Service, it was imperative that public servants were able to voice their opinions anonymously. Questionnaires provided an effective and anonymous way for public servants to state how they felt, what they thought and the challenges they faced.

Rating 3

2.2. Evaluator independence

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

Comment and Analysis

It is not stated in the report whether the evaluator was able to work freely without significant interference. As no interview was secured it was not possible to clarify this point.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

It is not stated in the report whether the evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest.

Rating N/A

2.3. Key stakeholder involvement

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Key stakeholders were consulted through personal interviews, participating in focus groups, and through filling in questionnaires. Furthermore, the evaluation team conducted feedback workshops with relevant stakeholders. These workshops served many functions: Firstly they enabled the researchers to share their findings with departmental HIV and AIDS co-ordinators as well as with a large number of senior managers within the Public Service. They also served as a source of relevant and valuable information due to the fact that the attendees raised their views, opinions and experiences with regard to the findings being presented. They also provided the researchers with an opportunity to test and refine certain recommendations that arose during the primary research.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation applied a Participatory Action Research Approach. It was characterised by a 'bottom-up' approach that relied on participation and collaboration between public servants and the research team and focussed on empowering public servants at the most basic level. This was especially important since the results of the research and the concomitant action taken would impact on the working environment of public servants. This approach also ensured that public servants experienced 'ownership' of the research and the results.

Rating 5

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

It appeared from the evaluation report that the methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned. However, it was not confirmed through interviews.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

It was not stated in the evaluation report whether data collection had been compromised by field-work level problems or unplanned diversions from the original intentions. It appeared that the evaluation would have liked to have covered all provinces and all EAPs but due to budgetary constraints had to limit the scope and use a sample of provinces and EAPs.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation applied personal interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and workshops as forms of data gathering. These were considered appropriate given the scope of evaluation.

Rating 5

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

The quantitative data obtained by means of questionnaires, interviews and impact assessments were coded, back-checks were completed and such data were captured onto data files. These were subsequently converted to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) format and analysed by conducting the following analyses by means of SPSS: Frequency analyses; Descriptive analyses obtaining means and standard deviations; and cross-tabulations coupled with inferential analyses such as chi-square and correlation analyses to test for significant differences. In addition to the analyses conducted by SPSS, gap analyses were performed to determine the sizes of gaps between the desired and perceived levels of service. The qualitative data (ie focus group and in-depth interview data) were captured onto MS-Word files and were analysed by making use of qualitative data analysis techniques. The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation.

Rating 5***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology******Comment and Analysis***

Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology through the use of interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and feedback workshops.

Rating 5***STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information******Comment and Analysis***

The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information through the use of questionnaires and focus groups.

Rating 5

2.5. Project management

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

Comment and Analysis

It is not stated in the report whether the evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and time frames.

Rating N/A

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

The executive summary captured all key components of the report appropriately, namely introduction and rationale, purpose, methodology, findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

The context of EAPs was described in Chapter 2 on Overview of EAPs. It was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

The rationale given was that few comprehensive studies have been conducted into the functioning and efficacy of EAPs in addressing the problems of workers in Public Service workplaces. In the light of the growing number of employees needing assistance due to organisational transformation, increased work stresses, as well as the impact of HIV and AIDS in the workplace, it was imperative to ensure the optimal functioning of EAPs in the Public Service. It was the aim of this evaluation to investigate EAPs within the Public Service to determine their functioning, efficacy as well as the drivers of their effectiveness within the Public Service.

Rating **4**

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

The scope of the evaluation was apparent in the report, namely: To establish the nature and functioning of EAPs within the Public Service; to investigate the effectiveness of EAPs in the Public Service and to establish best practices with regard to their functioning; to develop guidelines to encourage departments to establish EAPs where they do not exist; to monitor and evaluate the level at which EAPs are involved in the implementation of the policy framework on HIV and AIDS in the Public Service; to determine the ability of EAPs to absorb the mounting impact of HIV and AIDS and the availability of EAP measures to address the implications thereof; to determine and

Rating **5**

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 detailed methodology was outlined in Chapter 1 under 'Research Methodology' and divided into sub headings. This included the theoretical framework, approach, sampling, research instruments and data collection, data coding, analysis and interpretation and limitations.

Rating **5**

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 in a clear way and were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings. For the quantitative data key findings were usually extracted from evidence presented in a table. Unused data was not presented in the body of the report.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

Chapter Six contained a summary of main findings and served as a conclusion chapter. A separate chapter on recommendations was found in the end of the report which also includes concluding remarks. Conclusions and recommendations were made clear and succinctly articulated.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

There was acknowledgements of limitations as the report outlined the fact that only five provinces were selected due to budgetary constraints, that not all EAPs were focused on within the national and provincial departments and the study was not longitudinal. There was no mention of limitations in relation to fieldwork carried out.

Rating 3

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 quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication. In fact, the report was published by the Public Service Commission. There was adequate layout and consistent formatting, complete sentences and no wide spread grammatical errors. There was consistency of style and writing conventions.

Rating 4

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

Appropriate conventions were used in the presentation of data. Quantitative data was presented in tables and qualitative data was presented as separate themes.

Rating 4

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

A total of 14 tables were presented in the report. The use of tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in the tables was readily discernible and useful in deciphering the levels of satisfaction amongst the respondents.

Rating 3

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

A heuristic model of EAPs in the public service is presented as Table 4, with four different levels of EAPs but without any analysis of how many of the assessed EAPs were in the various levels. The report could have benefitted from this analysis. Otherwise, data analysis appeared to have been well executed.

Rating 3

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

While the findings deriving from the quantitative analysis were supported by available evidence, there seemed to be gaps in terms of supporting the qualitative findings with presented evidence. This chapter seemed more like a conclusion of the qualitative findings than a presentation of findings with evidence.

Rating 3

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

The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately quantitatively analysed to support the argument, while this was less so for the qualitative analysis.

Rating 3

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

There was little recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations in the report.

Rating 2

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

Besides not providing enough evidence for the qualitative analysis, the report appeared free of significant methodological and analytical flaws.

Rating 4

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions were derived from the evidence that had been collected.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions focused mainly on the information that had been gathered from the departments and did not take into account relevant empirical or analytical work from related research studies and evaluations.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions, namely the functioning of EAPs within the Public Service with a special emphasis on their effectiveness and best practices with regard to their functioning.

Rating 4

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

There was no reference to the intervention logic or theory of change in the conclusions.

Rating 1

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

It is not known if recommendations were made in consultation with the appropriate experts. However, as part of the methodology the evaluation team applied feedback workshop with departmental HIV and AIDS coordinators as well as with a large number of senior managers within the public service where input to the recommendations were made.

Rating 4

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

The recommendations were shaped following input by relevant government officials through the feedback workshops.

Rating 5

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

Recommendations were highly relevant to the policy context and guidelines for the involvement of EAPs in dealing with HIV and AIDS in the workplace were provided.

Rating 4

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

Recommendations were targetted at the management as well as those implementing the EAPs.

Rating 4

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

Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted including that the study was not longitudinal in nature and did not look at all provinces or all EAPs.

Rating 4

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 full report did not document the procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consents where it was needed. The report however mentioned that the application of survey questionnaire meant that respondents stayed anonymous.

Rating 2

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

Comment and Analysis

There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website as no names were mentioned and data presentation assured anonymity (data was in demographic groups).

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

Results were presented in a feedback workshop to departmental HIV and AIDS co-ordinators as well as to a large number of senior managers within the Public Service.

Rating 4

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: *The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes*

Comment and Analysis

There is no data in the evaluation report as to whether the evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: *The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget*

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was limited to five provinces due to budgetary constraints. However, it seemed as if the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of the original budget to be conducted in those five provinces.

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 is available on the Public Service Commission website.

Rating 5

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

It is not stated in the report whether a reflective process was undertaken after the completion of the evaluation.

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 information in the report whether the evaluation was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme nor was it possible secure interviews with stakeholders to elucidate this point.

Rating N/A

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 understanding what had happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice. A significant contribution by the evaluation was components for EAP policy, guidelines for the involvement of EAPs in dealing with HIV and AIDS in the workplace and a four steps approach on how to implement the recommendations.

Rating **4**

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

In the report there was no clear evidence of instrumental use that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent. It was furthermore not possible to secure interviews with stakeholders to elucidate this point.

Rating **N/A**

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 in the report that the research has had a positive influence on the evaluators and its stakeholders. It was furthermore not possible to secure interviews with stakeholders to elucidate this point.

Rating **N/A**

References

The Public Service Commission (2006) "Evaluation of Employee Assistance Programmes in the Public Service". Published by the Public Service Commission.

List of Interviewees
