



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation of the impact of the policy and procedure on incapacity leave and ill-health retirement (PILIR) on sick leave trends in the public service

Date Evaluation was completed: March 2010

Name of assessor: Ray Basson

Evaluation Number: 228

Date Assessment Completed: 18 February 2013

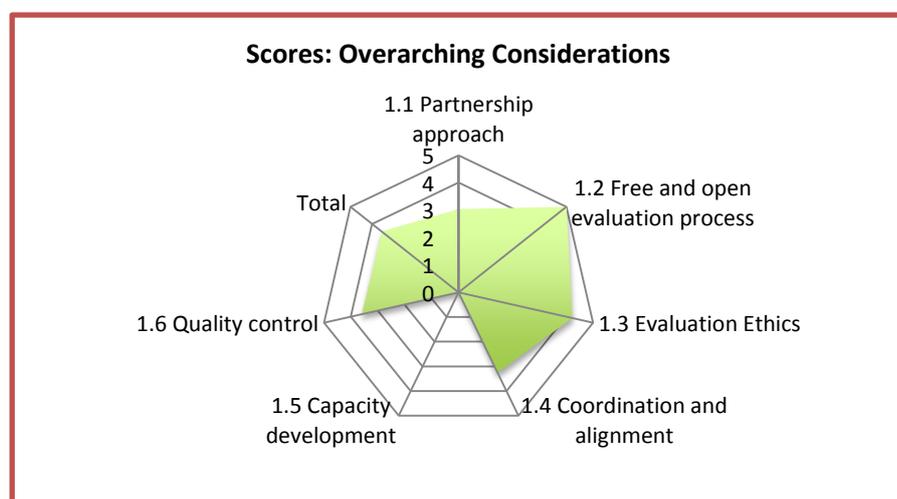
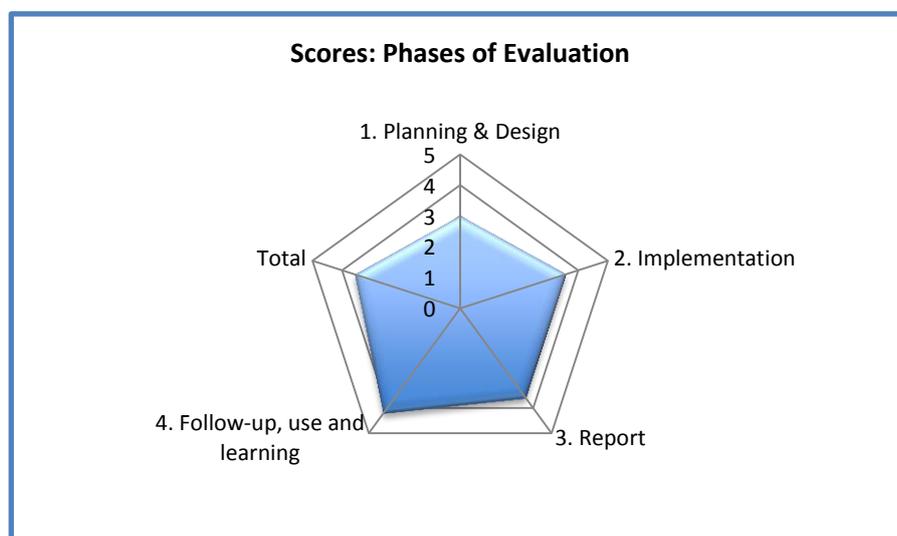
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Evaluation of the impact of the policy and procedure on incapacity leave and ill-health retirement (PILIR) on sick leave trends in the public service
Completion Date of Evaluation	March 2010
Name of Assessor	Ray Basson
Evaluation Number	228
Completion Date of Assessment	18 February 2013
Initiated by	Office of the Public Service Commission [OPSC]
Evaluation undertaken by	OPSC
Evaluation area / sector	Public service, governance, M&E
	<i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 12
	<i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Impact
	<i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Policy
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	January 2009- February 2010
Known Cost of Evaluation	R280,000-00

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.00
Implementation	3.58
Report	3.59
Follow-up, use and learning	4.19
Total	3.59

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.04
Free and open evaluation process	5.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.22
Coordination and alignment	3.25
Capacity Development	Not Applicable
Quality control	3.60



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 interviewee said they had a clear ToR which was also appropriate to the evaluation.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

In the Report, the reason for the evaluation was clear: to assess how effective the implementation of PILIR has been in addressing challenges and to contribute to an improvement in the management of sick leave in the Public Service.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation objectives, or questions, were stated clearly in the report. [i] to assess sick leave trends and reasons thereof [in 4 national and 2 provincial departments] in all 9 provinces. [ii] do comparative analysis per financial year, pre- and post the implementation of PILIR. [iii] identify success factors to the effective implementation of PILIR. [iv] identify barriers of the same. [v] generate recommendations.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was called an impact evaluation, which is appropriate here as its purpose was to find out trends in leave taking pre- and post- the implementation of PILIR. But it is not a Randomised Controlled Trial.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no explicit ToR for this evaluation.

Rating 1

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

Comment and Analysis

The PSC, AG DPSA were stakeholders in the evaluation, and influenced the design of the evaluation.

Rating 4

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

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

Comment and Analysis

12 months were allocated to the evaluation. Due to delays in start-up, an additional 2 months were requested and granted to complete it.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

As internal evaluation, the original budget was adequate for the evaluation.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation appears to be adequately resourced in terms of staffing. A lead evaluator, a person with oversight of the evaluation, 9 provincial personnel officers and a Director, brought their skills to the evaluation.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

This information is not known.

Rating N/A

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 a brief review of the new policy environment--PILIR--had been conducted and was used in planning the evaluation.

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

Literature on sick leave, AG detection of abuse of sick leave policies, and the like, were briefly reviewed and used in the planning of the evaluation.

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

This information is not known.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

Key stakeholders appear to have been involved in designing the evaluation and selecting methods.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The planned evaluation methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked. Methods included: a desktop review of sick leave, PERSAL reports on sick leave, statistical data on sick leave, structured interviews, and documents [leave policies to assess compliance].

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

The planned sampling procedure was not stated in planning the evaluation.

Rating 1

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

Comment and Analysis

No planned process for using the findings of the report was made explicit prior to the evaluation. However, the report identifies users: PSC to improve the quality of service given by public servants through its evaluations, the DPSA to refine PILIR forms within 12 months, and Human Resource Managers.

Rating 3

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 were delays in getting approval for the evaluation, which led in the end to an application for additional time to complete it. But no changes were made to the planned design before implementation.

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

No reference is made to ethical procedures followed in the evaluation. The interviewee made the point that confidentiality was not needed in the study as much of the data needed was already in the public domain [desktop search, on data bases]. Nevertheless, no names of individual participants were used, but names of institutions, like the AG, were.

Rating 4

2.2. Evaluator independence

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

Comment and Analysis

It appears to be an internal evaluation. Not applicable.

Rating N/A

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

The evaluation team appears to have been impartial and there is no evidence of a conflict of interest.

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**

Several key stakeholders were consulted, and a formal mechanism was in place which made consultation possible.

Rating 3

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

This information is not known.

Rating N/A

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

Methods employed to gather data in the evaluation appear consistent with those planned.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

On the whole, this seems to be the case. Other than a delay in the beginning, there did not appear to be fieldwork problems or diversions from original intentions.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Forms of data gathering appear to be appropriate to an impact evaluation of this kind, and scope.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Data analysis proceeded, in the main, inductively to find trends, and appeared sufficient for the purpose of the study.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Stakeholder databases were trawled for data, and thus formed part of the methodology of the study.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Provincial personnel officers, as beneficiaries, were engaged as a key source of data and information.

Rating 4

2.5. Project management

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

Comment and Analysis

Start-up delays caused the evaluation to get off to a late start, and thus the 12 month deadline had to be extended to complete it.

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

A very extensive Executive Summary appears in the report. It captures key components of the evaluation report.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

PILIR as a legislative framework on sick leave, a context of abuse of sick leave applications in national and provincial department, and the intentions of PILIR are briefly discussed, and give the context of the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

Other than stating that the overall objective of the evaluation was to establish the effectiveness of the implementation of PILIR, there was no clear rationale for the evaluation questions.

Rating 2

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

The national and provincial scope of the evaluation was apparent in the report.

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**

The Methodology section of the report states clearly the 5 field methods which were used, and are readily understood by the reader. Sampling is omitted, and little if anything is said of data analysis and how this was accomplished.

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 are presented clearly, both for the statistical overview of trends as well as the qualitative analysis on the implementation of PILIR. Findings are data driven and clearly distinct from speculative findings. Unused data was not included in the report.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated*

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions and Recommendations were stated clearly. They might have been more succinctly stated.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Limitations appear not to be stated explicitly in the evaluation report. However, one embedded in the text acknowledges a limitation in the data on leave taken. As these records are not sufficiently well managed, it is argued that this finding cannot at this stage be used as an indicator.

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 is very good, as is the layout of the report. Formatting is consistent too. There doesn't appear to be widespread grammatical, spelling and other errors in the report. Graphs present data clearly. Referencing appears consistent.

Rating **5**

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

The usual conventions were used in the presentation of data. Statistical language is used where appropriate, so the discussion is easily followed. Quantitative and qualitative language are used appropriately in the report.

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

Tables were clear, well introduced and discussed. Data reported in Figures and Tables were readily discernable, and useful in the main, even to a reader not readily familiar with data presentation conventions.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis

Data appears to be inductively analysed and not to follow any specific convention.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis

Findings were supported by available evidence from desktop and other secondary sources as well as data from interviews.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Data analysis procedures were not disclosed in the report. But, data appears sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Data in the report could have been further interrogated, to suggest alternative interpretations.

Rating 1

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

Comment and Analysis

As far as can be seen, the report seems free of significant methodological and analytic errors.

Rating 5

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions are derived from evidence.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions took into account relevant work from other related studies [from the AG for example].

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions [called Objectives in the report].

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions were drawn by the evaluators, but not explicitly with reference to the intervention logic of the programme.

Rating 1

3.5. Recommendations

STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts

Comment and Analysis

Recommendations were made by the evaluation team, but it is not clear if these were made in consultation with sectoral partners or experts.

Rating 1

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

Comment and Analysis

It was not clear from the report if Recommendations were made following inputs by relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders.

Rating 1

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

Recommendations were relevant to the policy context on sick leave in the Public Service [ie. to PILIR and other policies].

Rating 3

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

Recommendations targetted managers in all departments to ensure proper implementation and managing of sick leave. Human Resource Managers particularly are also targetted to be more accountable. Recommendations seem both affordable and feasible.

Rating 4

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

No limitations of the evaluation were noted in the report.

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 interviewee made the point that confidentiality was not needed in the study. Confidentiality was present, as names of individuals are not mentioned, but names of institutions were.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Besides the usual risks to participants when going public, there appear to be no, or limited, risks to them, in disseminating this report. It is already on the PSC website and published in printed form.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

Besides the usual risks to institutions [such as, the national and provincial departments] which were selected for study in the evaluation, no unfair risks to institutions appear to be had in disseminating the report widely, such as through 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 published in hardcopy [book] and e-copy, and made available free of charge. It is reasonable to assume that the results were made available to all stakeholders.

Rating 5

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

An extension of 2 months was applied for and granted, to complete the evaluation.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed within the original budget.

Rating 4

4.3. Transparency

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

Comment and Analysis

This report was made publicly available in hard copy, and free of charge.

Rating 5

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

This information is not known.

Rating 4

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

It appears that the evaluation of PILIR carried significant symbolic significance, as public service employees take their leave applications more seriously now according to the interviewee.

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 study was of value in understanding what has happened to PILIR in the selected national and provincial departments, and possibly in shaping practice on sick leave particularly.

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

Sick leave forms were revised as recommended by the evaluation. It also changed public servants sick leave behaviour, it is now believed that money spent on sick leave is better spent.

Rating 4

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

This information is not known.

Rating N/A

References

Public Service Commission (2012). Evaluation of the Impact of the Policy and Proceedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-Health Retirement [PILIR] on Sick Leave Trends in the Public Service.

List of Interviewees

A. Kelengeshe. Evaluator, PSC. Telephonic Interview, 18 February 2013.