



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Impact Assessment of Learnerships and Apprenticeships

Date Evaluation was completed: 01 September 2008

Name of assessor: Tim Mosdell

Evaluation Number: 32

Date Assessment Completed: 28/2/2013

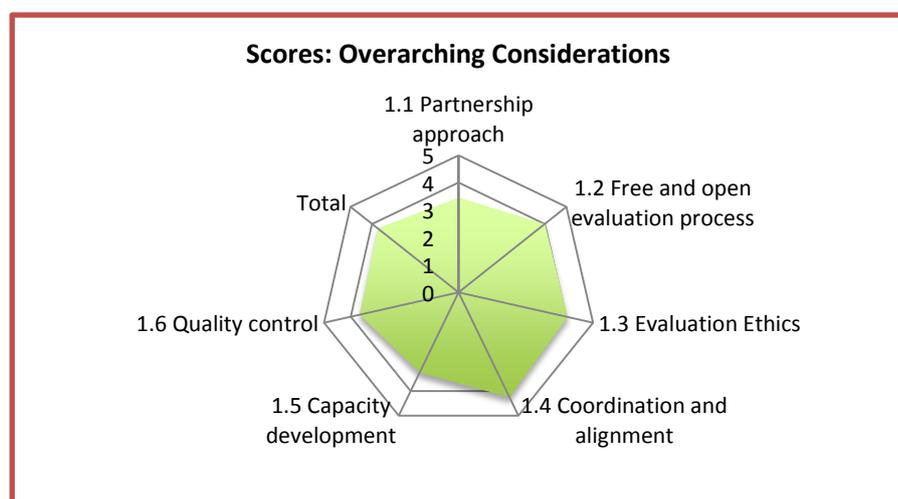
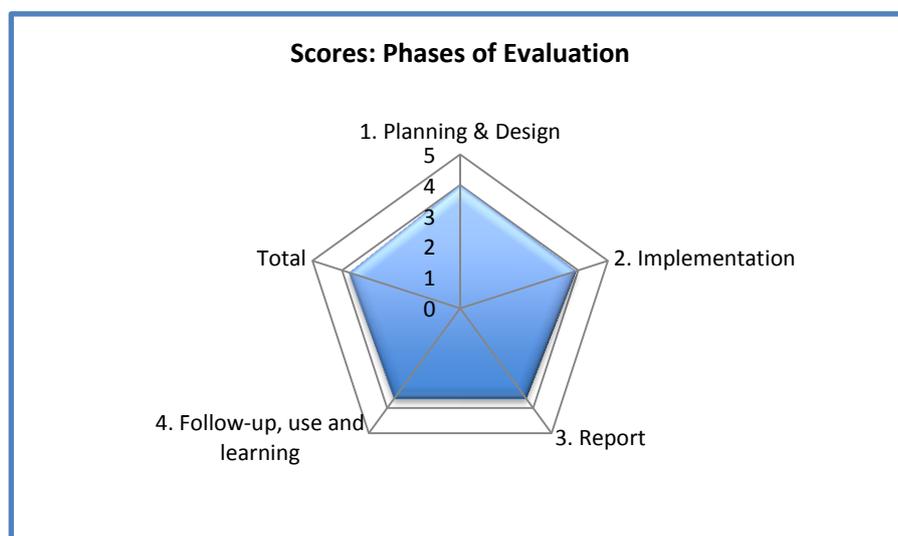
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Impact Assessment of Learnerships and Apprenticeships
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 September 2008
Name of Assessor	Tim Mosdell
Evaluation Number	32
Completion Date of Assessment	28/2/2013
Initiated by	MERSETA
Evaluation undertaken by	Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
Evaluation area / sector	Training, SETAs, FET, higher education
	<i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 5
	<i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Impact
	<i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Programme
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	2008
Known Cost of Evaluation	Unknown

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	4.00
Implementation	3.93
Report	3.61
Follow-up, use and learning	3.59
Total	3.74

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.45
Free and open evaluation process	4.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.06
Coordination and alignment	4.25
Capacity Development	3.25
Quality control	3.68



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 project was guided by a comprehensive TOR covering objectives, methodology, intended use, etc.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The purpose of the evaluation was reportedly clear and explicit in the TOR.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The key evaluation questions were stated in the TOR focusing on the effectiveness of the learnership and apprenticeship systems, and whether industry demands are being effectively met through these systems.

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 was suited to the scope and purpose outlined in the TOR.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The intended users were clear in the TOR, namely the MERSETA and its members.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

MERSETA was involved in scoping the TOR.

Rating 3

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocation.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

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

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

The evaluation planned to include capacity building of an HSRC Doctoral Intern.

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 planning took into account the policy and programme environments.

Rating 4

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 that planning involved a review of appropriate literature.

Rating 4

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

At the heart of the evaluation planning was an approach aimed to improving the effectiveness of the learnership and apprenticeship models.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

MERSETA was involved in the design and methodology of the evaluation.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The planned sampling, both for the quantitative and qualitative elements was 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

There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation - prior to the project.

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

An inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented.

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

The project was taken through the HSRC Ethics Committee for clearance. Confidentiality was offered to participants and informed consent was secured.

Rating 5

2.2. Evaluator independence

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference.

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 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

MERSETA was consulted through the course of the evaluation.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The approach involved the capacity development of an HSRC Doctoral Intern.

Rating 3

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

The methods employed in the evaluation were consistent with those planned.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Data collection was not compromised by problems in the field.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The data analysis and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purpose of the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

MERSETA was engaged as part of the methodology. Other stakeholders were also interviewed as part of the process.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The methodology involved interviewing a sample of learnership and apprenticeship participants.

Rating 5

2.5. Project management

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation took place without shifts to milestones and timeframes.

Rating 4

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

An executive summary captured the key components of the study.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The context of the project was explicit in the Report, with two sections dedicated to contextualising the study in policy and literature.

Rating 4

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

There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions.

Rating 4

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

The scope of the evaluation was clear in 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**

A detailed section of the report set out the used methodology in detail.

Rating 4

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, although the report was somewhat bulky and much of the data could have been better presented in the appendices of the report.

Rating **3**

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions and recommendations were clearly articulated.

Rating **4**

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

Comment and Analysis

Acknowledgement of the limitations of the methodology was not explicit.

Rating **2**

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 the report was adequate from a writing and presentation point of view, although the report was long and could have been more focused with some of the information being presented in the appendices.

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

Appropriate conventions were used in the presentation of the data - particularly in the presentation of statistical information.

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

The use of figures and tables supported communication, although some of the figures did not translate well into black and white.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis

The data analysis appears to have been well executed.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis

Findings were supported by available evidence.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The evidence gathered was appropriately analysed to support the project arguments.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no explicit recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations.

Rating 2

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

Comment and Analysis

The report appeared to be free of significant methodological and analytic flaws.

Rating 4

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions were 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 other work and studies.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions were consistent with the intervention logic underpinning the evaluation.

Rating 4

3.5. Recommendations

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

Comment and Analysis

MERSETA saw a draft version of the report containing the findings before the final report was delivered.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

MERSETA saw a draft version of the report containing the findings before the final report was delivered.

Rating 3

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

Recommendations were relevant to the policy context.

Rating 4

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

Recommendations were targetted to MERSETA and its members and were aimed at facilitating practical improvements and changes.

Rating 5

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

Limitations of the evaluation were not explicitly noted.

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

The report, in the appendices, sets out the questionnaire instrument used. In this instrument, confidentiality and informed consent is explicit.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

There are no apparent risks to participants in publishing the report.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

There are no apparent risks to institutions in publishing the report.

Rating 4

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

The results were presented to MERSETA, its various chambers, its members, and other stakeholders.

Rating 4

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed within planned timeframes.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed on 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

The report was available via MERSETA's website.

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

The study team did reflect on the evaluation process in order to refine the methodology for similar work.

Rating 3

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

The evaluation served to raise the profile of Learnerships and Apprenticeships.

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 evaluation added conceptual value and contributed to a deepening of the discourse around learnerships and apprenticeships.

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

The evaluation has been used by MERSETA in refining sector skills plans.

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

It is understood that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, but at this stage, there is no direct evidence of this.

Rating 3

References

Human Sciences Research Council, 2008. Impact Assessment of Learnerships and Apprenticeships - Prepared by the HSRC for the MERSETA - September 2008.

List of Interviewees

MM Visser, Project Team Member - HSRC. Interviewed on 28 February 2013.