



## **Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**

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# **Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations**

## **Report on the Annual National Assessments of 2011**

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**Date Evaluation was completed:** 28th June 2011

**Name of assessor:** Stephen Rule

**Evaluation Number:** 4

**Date Assessment Completed:** 8th February 2013

## Evaluation Assessment Details

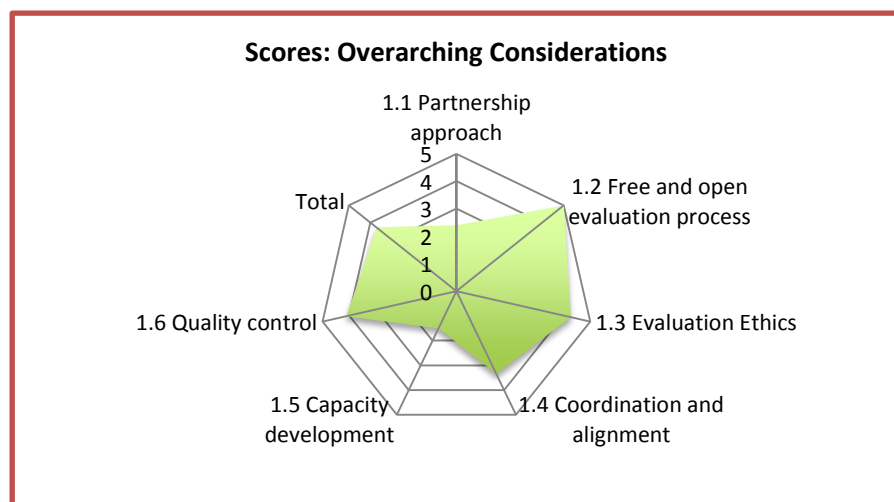
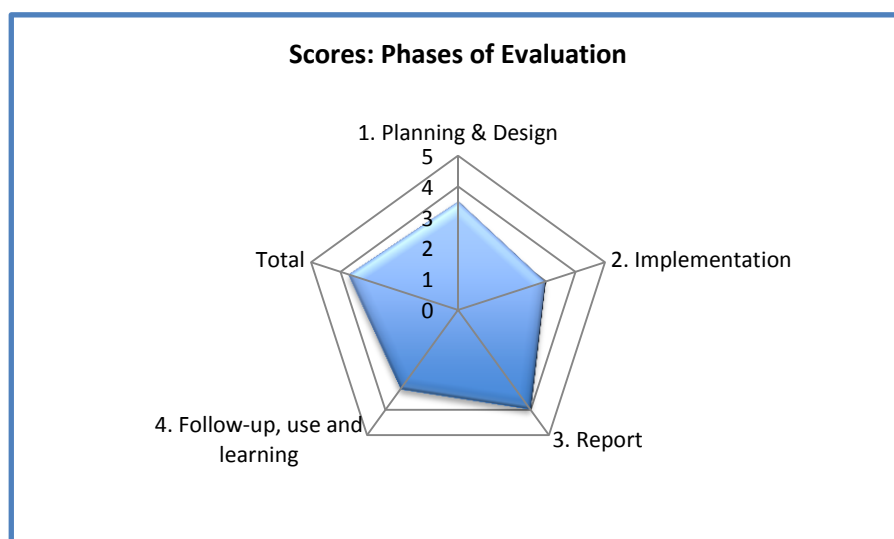
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Title of evaluation report	Report on the Annual National Assessments of 2011
Completion Date of Evaluation	28th June 2011
Name of Assessor	Stephen Rule
Evaluation Number	4
Completion Date of Assessment	8th February 2013
Initiated by	Department of Basic Education
Evaluation undertaken by	Department of Basic Education
Evaluation area / sector	Education
	Additional
National Outcome	Outcome 1
	Additional
Type of Evaluation	Diagnostic
	Additional
What is being evaluated	Policy
	Additional
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	March-June 2011
Known Cost of Evaluation	Not known

### Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.53
Implementation	2.96
Report	3.96
Follow-up, use and learning	3.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.54</b>

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	2.40
Free and open evaluation process	5.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.27
Coordination and alignment	3.33
Capacity Development	1.50
Quality control	4.11



## 1. Planning & Design

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### 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 report was internally researched and compiled by the DBE and the report's introduction specifies the purpose and scope, i.e. a description of the 2011 ANA purpose and process against the background of the education challenge in SA; the data limitations; an analysis of the 2011 ANA data; and suggestions for future ANAs.

**Rating** 4

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

#### Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

#### Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

**1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced**

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

***Comment and Analysis***

Not applicable.

***Rating*** N/A

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

***Comment and Analysis***

Not applicable.

***Rating*** N/A

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

***Comment and Analysis***

Not applicable.

***Rating*** N/A

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

**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

**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**

The report provided a concise overview of previous national assessments and the context of educational deficiencies in SA. Given that the report was internally written, this suggests that some relevant background research had been done.

**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**

There was minimal reference to international literature on the topic.

**Rating** 2

**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**

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

**Comment and Analysis**

The methodology entailing a description of the process and an analysis of the assessment results was appropriate.

**Rating** 4



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

**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable in this instance.

**Rating** N/A

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

**Comment and Analysis**

The DBE wrote the report precisely in order to guide future ANA processes in SA.

**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**

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

## 2. Implementation

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### 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**

Not applicable in this instance.

**Rating** N/A

### 2.2. Evaluator independence

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

**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

The report authors were internal officials who may or may not have been required to pitch the findings in a particular way, but this was not overtly evident.

**Rating** 3

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

The report was internal and other stakeholders appear not to have played a role in determining its contents.

**Rating** 2

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

No capacity development was evident.

**Rating** 1

## 2.4. Methodology

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

**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

**Comment and Analysis**

The ANA Verification dataset was the subject of the analysis, it was unnecessary to collect new data.

**Rating** 4

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

**Comment and Analysis**

The database resulting from the ANA was the primary source of information for 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 statistical analysis was appropriate and well-conducted.

**Rating** 5

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

**Comment and Analysis**

There was no evidence of involvement of key stakeholders apart from those in the DBE.

**Rating** 1

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

**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

## 2.5. Project management

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

### Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

**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 provided an overview of the report. The focus was on the ANA process and recommendations arising therefrom, without highlighting much of the variation in performance between learners across the nine provinces.

**Rating** 3

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

### Comment and Analysis

The context of the ANA was included as a relevant background to the study.

**Rating** 4

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

The evaluation questions pertaining to the ANA process and outcome, had a clear rationale.

**Rating** 4

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

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

**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 method of data analysis was clearly explained.

**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**

The key findings were clearly presented.

**Rating** 5

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

**Comment and Analysis**

The conclusions and recommendations emerged directly from the foregoing analysis.

**Rating** 5

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

**Comment and Analysis**

The limitations of the ANA data were outlined in explicit detail, inclusive of test translations, decentralised administration of testing, marking of tests by teachers, and the sample-based statistical analysis.

**Rating** 5



### 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 writing and presentation in the report was good.

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

The data were presented clearly and the relevant margins of error and provincial comparability statistics were explained carefully.

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 report included 14 tables and 14 figures, which added value to the explanations in the text.

**Rating** 4

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

The data analysis was well executed.

**Rating** 4

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

The findings emerged from the analytical evidence.

**Rating** 4

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

**Comment and Analysis**

The evidence gathered was sufficient and appropriately analysed to support the arguments made.

**Rating** 4

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

**Comment and Analysis**

There were some hints at the possibility of alternative explanations in some instances.

**Rating** 2

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

**Comment and Analysis**

No methodological or analytical flaws were discernible.

**Rating** 4

### 3.4. Conclusions

***STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence*****Comment and Analysis**

The conclusions were derived from the evidence.

**Rating** 4

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

There was some reference to previous tests and international comparisons.

**Rating** 3

***STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions*****Comment and Analysis**

The original evaluation purpose and questions were adequately addressed in this report.

**Rating** 4

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

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

The recommendations emerged from the analysis which was done internally by the DBE.

**Rating** 2

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

Input from stakeholders outside of the DBE was not evident.

**Rating** 1

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

Recommendations factored in the policy context.

**Rating** 4

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

The recommendations were targetted at the DBE and appeared to be specific, feasible and affordable.

**Rating** 4

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

The limitations of the evaluation, especially in respect of the data, were clearly described.

**Rating** 5

### 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

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

#### Comment and Analysis

No learners or teachers who participated in the ANA were named in the report; all data were anonymous and provincially aggregated, thus there were no risks to participants by the public dissemination of the report.

**Rating** 5

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

#### Comment and Analysis

No participating institutions (i.e. schools) were named and therefore no unfair risks were incurred.

**Rating** 5

## 4. Follow-up, use and learning

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### 4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

**STANDARD:** *Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders*

#### Comment and Analysis

The results were publicly available and were not explicitly presented to all relevant stakeholders.

**Rating** 3

### 4.2. Resource utilisation

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

#### Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A

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

#### Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

**Rating** N/A



#### 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 freely available at the website address as follows:

<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=1U5igeVjiqq%3D&tabid=358&mid=1325>

**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 could not be determined whether there was a DBE reflective process on the potential strengthening of future evaluations of this nature, but the recommendations suggest that this was the intention.

**Rating** N/A

#### 4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

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

##### Comment and Analysis

Stakeholders were not given the go-ahead to be interviewed.

**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 study was clearly of conceptual value in understanding the ANA outcome and in shaping policy.

**Rating** 5

**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 substantial improvements in ANA results in 2012 received severe criticism from educationists and other academics, suggesting that the methodology utilised in 2012 did not implement the recommendations made in the 2011 report.

**Rating** 2

**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**

While the report was comprehensive and substantial, the education sector struggles to achieve improvement and to counter external critique meaningfully. This suggested the need for ongoing evaluation and appropriate policy change that would facilitate better results, to a greater extent than was the outcome of the 2011 evaluation report.

**Rating** 2

## References

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Department of Basic Education, 2011. Report on the Annual National Assessments of 2011, Department of Basic Education.

Mrs Angie Motshekga, 2012. Statement on the release of Annual National Assessments results for 2012 by Minister of Basic Education, 3/12/2012, [www.info.gov.za/speech/Dynamic Action?padeid=461&sic=32853&tid=92811](http://www.info.gov.za/speech/Dynamic%20Action?padeid=461&sic=32853&tid=92811)

Department of Basic Education, 2012. Report on the Annual National Assessments 2012: Grade 1 to 6 & 9, Department of Basic Education.

Victoria John, 2012. Improved annual national assessment results impossible, say academics, Mail & Guardian, 7/12/2012.

## List of Interviewees

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Dr Qetelo Moloi, Department of Basic Education, (0123573834) emails & brief telephonic discussions, 16/1 & 18/1 & 4/2/2013