



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation Title:	Implementation Evaluation of the Recapitalisation and Development Programme
Evaluation Number:	407
Evaluation Completion Date:	18 October 2013
Period of Evaluation:	21 November 2012 - 18 October 2013
Submitted:	06 December 2013 by Meagan Jooste
Approved:	06 December 2013 by Mike Leslie

Evaluation Details

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Undertaken By:	University of Pretoria
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Assessors

Meagan Jooste	meagan@pdg.co.za
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Assessment Documents

Document Name:	Document Type:	Added By:	Added On:
DPME Recap short final report 13 10 30.pdf	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	04 November 2013
RECAP Eval mgmt resp request 13 11 01.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Mike Leslie	04 November 2013
TOR LAND RECAP 12 04 10.pdf	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation	Meagan Jooste	03 December 2013
DPME RADP Evaluation_Inception Report Final.docx	An inception report	Meagan Jooste	03 December 2013
Assessment Report at Moderation.pdf	Assessment Report at Moderation	Mike Leslie	05 December 2013
RECAP draft final report 04June2013 FINAL(1).pdf	Evaluation report	Meagan Jooste	05 December 2013
Policy for the RADP of the DRDLR_23 July 2013.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Meagan Jooste	05 December 2013

Quality Assessment Summary

The overall score of this evaluation has been rated at 4.10 out of 5 on the likert scale applied to assess the quality of government evaluations. This rating implies that the evaluation is of a good quality and was afforded to the evaluation as the interviews conducted for this assessment revealed the thoroughness with which the evaluator completed the evaluation but also acknowledged the constraints faced in the completion thereof. These constraints related to a number of factors. Firstly, the accessibility of data was at times a challenge and had implications for the time-frame of the evaluation. As a result, in terms of the overarching considerations, the 'coordination and alignment' criterion was scored 3.87 (i.e. it was adequate but there were areas for improvement). Secondly, and correlating with this score, the timing of the evaluation in relation to other developments in the Department: Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) was a limitation. At the time of this external evaluation, the DRDLR were also completing an internal evaluation of the Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP). The evaluation is of a high quality and it comprehensive in its response to the delineated evaluation questions and utilizes the best available data resources for the analysis. The report could be improved slightly in terms of its readability but in general, it comprises an expanse of knowledge on the implementation of the RADP. In general, the majority of stakeholders engaged felt that the results of the study identified the key areas of improvement for the RADP and adds important value in collating data which fills an information gap in the DRDLR. Further, the evaluation garnered significant praise for its role in facilitating a transfer of knowledge from the evaluator's team to the DRDLR Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in particular, but also amongst the evaluator's team itself which comprised graduate students and staff. The assessment thus scored the 'capacity development' overarching consideration as very good (i.e. it was scored 4.58) and the 'partnership approach' overarching consideration as quite good (i.e. it was scored 4.33). This assessment supports the view held by the parties interviewed particularly in terms of the high quality of the report and its strength in capturing a breadth of information on the implementation of RADP to date.

Quality Assessment Scores

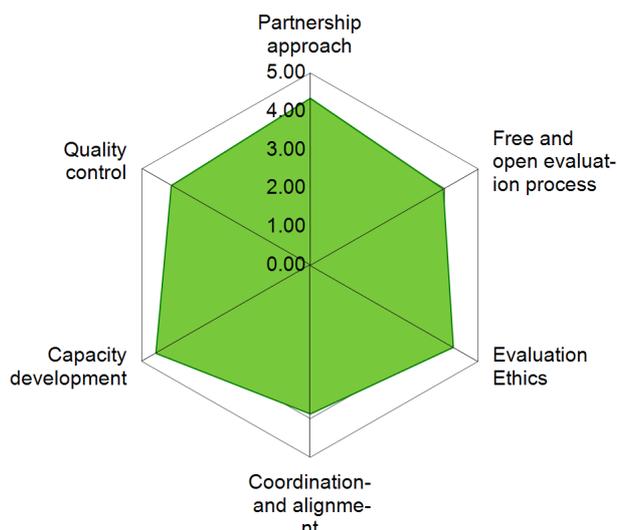
Phase of Evaluation	Score
1. Planning & Design	4.33
2. Implementation	4.60
3. Report	3.84
4. Follow-up, use and learning	3.90
Total	4.10

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	4.33
Free and open evaluation process	3.96
Evaluation Ethics	4.28
Coordination and alignment	3.87
Capacity development	4.58
Quality control	4.13
Total	4.10

Scores: Phases of Evaluation



Scores: Overarching Considerations



Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
1. Planning & Design	1.1. Quality of the TOR	4.50
1. Planning & Design	1.2. Adequacy of resourcing	4.36
1. Planning & Design	1.3. Alignment to policy context and background literature	4.00
1. Planning & Design	1.4. Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology	4.06
1. Planning & Design	1.5. Project management (Planning phase)	5.00
2. Implementation	2.1. Evaluation ethics and independence	4.73
2. Implementation	2.2. Participation and M&E skills development	4.50
2. Implementation	2.3. Methodological integrity	4.60
2. Implementation	2.4. Project management (Implementation phase)	4.00
3. Report	3.1. Completeness of reporting structure	3.71
3. Report	3.2. Accessibility of content	4.00
3. Report	3.3. Robustness of findings	3.59
3. Report	3.4. Strength of conclusions	4.21
3. Report	3.5. Suitability of recommendations	4.00
3. Report	3.6. Consideration of reporting risks and ethical implications	3.77
3. Report	3.7. Project management (Reporting phase)	4.00
4. Follow-up, use and learning	4.1. Resource utilisation	4.00
4. Follow-up, use and learning	4.2. Evaluation use	3.87
Total	Total	4.10

1. Planning & Design

1.1. Quality of the TOR

Standard: 1.1.1. The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or a well-structured and complete internal evaluation proposal

Comment and Analysis: The evaluation was guided by a clear and complete Terms of Reference and the evaluator felt they had a clear understanding of how to proceed with the evaluation. The TOR clearly delineates the evaluation design in terms of the purpose and focus of the evaluation, key intended users and stakeholders of the programme and what relevance the programme may have to them as well as the structure, methodological grounding and components of the evaluation design. The latter specifically spells out the sampling technique and types of quantitative and qualitative data to employ for the evaluation. In addition, the TOR clearly articulates the project time-frame, budget, deliverables and management arrangements. This included a requirement that all datasets, metadata and survey documentation compiled by the evaluator be transferred to the DPME and DRDLR.

Rating: 5

Standard: 1.1.2. The purpose of the evaluation stated in the TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) was clear and explicit

Comment and Analysis: The purpose of the evaluation was outlined in the ToR as: "Provide strategic information on the implementation of the RADP since its inception in 2010, stakeholders' effectiveness during the implementation of the programme and compile lessons learned and recommendations. The evaluation will provide the Department and the intended beneficiaries of RADP with information and recommendations on how to improve the implementation of this programme in line with its targets and objectives.". While this provides a holistic understanding of the evaluation's intended use, further elaboration of the key elements of the evaluation could possibly have been elaborated upon further (for example, in terms of which stakeholders' effectiveness would require particular attention).

Rating: 4

Standard: 1.1.3. The evaluation questions in the TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) were clearly stated and appropriate for addressing the evaluation purpose

Comment and Analysis: The evaluation questions were succinctly outlined in the TOR and there was an overall feeling by the parties involved (Programme Manager, M+E advisor and evaluator) that these were appropriate for addressing the evaluation purpose.

Rating: 5

Standard: 1.1.4. The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal)

Comment and Analysis: All parties involved in the evaluation felt that the approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation as outlined in the TOR. It is however the case that, as the project proceeded, the evaluator proposed additional tasks be added to the scope of work. These tasks were completed by the evaluator without any additional budget or time allocation request.

Rating: 4

Standard: 1.1.5. The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs

Comment and Analysis: The intended users and stakeholders of the evaluation were explicitly outlined in the TOR. Further, key questions for the various forms of stakeholders were proposed in the TOR as well as an advance indication of the value these stakeholders would take from the evaluation results.

Rating: 5

Standard: 1.1.6. Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis: A Steering Committee comprising DPME, DRDLR, and other relevant stakeholders (academia, researchers, and others) was set up to help develop the TOR, manage and oversee the evaluation process as well reviewing the evaluation reports in its various drafts. There was however attrition in the Steering Committee which initially started out as a large group but over time became smaller. Further, acquiring the buy-in of some of the Programme Managers on the Steering Committee into the TOR was problematic as it had been designed by evaluators. It took time to get this buy-in and change perceptions particularly in terms of the need to improve the Recapitalization and Development Programme (RADP).

Rating: 4

1.2. Adequacy of resourcing

Standard: 1.2.1. The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated

Comment and Analysis: The evaluator felt that the amount of time allocated to the evaluation was limited and meant they were under quite a bit of time pressure throughout the project. This was particularly problematic towards the end of the evaluation when feedback from the Steering Committee or related stakeholders came back late. However, the evaluator felt that the DPME was quite flexible in their time provision to the evaluator, particularly when it seemed impossible to deliver on time.

Rating: 4

Standard: 1.2.2. The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget

Comment and Analysis: At the Inception Meeting a decision was taken to revise the initial budget downwards from R3 138 800 to R2 500 000. The DPME indicated that they subsequently made an effort to find the budget to ensure the best evaluation budget could be attained. The evaluator felt that they were able to deliver within budget and though they completed tasks outside the scope of the original work, they chose not to request additional budget.

Rating: 4

Standard: 1.2.3. The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Comment and Analysis: All parties involved in the evaluation felt that the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets. The DPME and DRDLR felt that the service provider (evaluator) was the best candidate for the work given their combined competencies as an evaluator and expert in Agricultural Economics and Rural Development. Further, the Inception Report evidences that additional man-power from the evaluator's team were added including another research assistant and an advisor.

Rating: 5

Standard: 1.2.4. Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluand

Comment and Analysis: In the TOR it was clearly specified that "The evaluator is expected to provide opportunities for participating departments to be involved in the activities where this will not prejudice the information received from respondents.". At the time, the DPME had limited staff and were unable to send a staff member to partake in the fieldwork. The DRDLR was however able to complement the evaluator's staff from their M+E division. These M+E staff accompanied the evaluator to each of the provinces visited in the completion of the fieldwork. Both the DRDLR M+E and evaluator felt that they gained tremendously from this partnership arrangement and were able to transfer knowledge across the teams to support future evaluations.

Rating: 5

1.3. Alignment to policy context and background literature

Standard: 1.3.1. There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in planning the research

Comment and Analysis: The TOR specifically stated that a systematic review of programme and project administrative records was necessary. Further, it was stated that the specific documents pertaining to this exercise were provided at the compulsory briefing session including the RADP memorandum, RADP policy, RADP guidelines, a list of RADP funded projects and Project Management Unit reports. Although the TOR mentioned that the RADP log frame would also be made available, the Inception Report revealed that this could not be availed and the evaluator was tasked with compiling it.

Rating: 4

Standard: 1.3.2. There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in planning the research

Comment and Analysis: It was not immediately apparent from the Inception Report that there was an appropriate degree of literature review in the planning of the research. However, based on the interviews conducted for this assessment, it was felt that the service provider had a large degree of knowledge and experience in the evaluation and rural development expertise which facilitated their ease of completion of the evaluation. Specifically, the evaluator's team are sector experts in Agricultural Economics and the DPME Programme Manager and DRDLR M+E respondent noted the evaluator's inherent knowledge capacity both in terms of evaluation competencies as well as familiarity with developments in the rural development and land reform sector.

Rating: 4

1.4. Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology

Standard:	1.4.1. 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:	The Inception Report mentions that, while the TOR for the work indicated that a log-frame for the RADP would be made available to the evaluator, this could subsequently not be made available to the evaluator. Rather, the evaluator was tasked with the reconstruction of the log-frame.
Rating:	3
Standard:	1.4.2. Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The Steering Committee played a vital role in screening the progression of activities undertaken by the evaluator. The design and methodology of the evaluation was agreed upon with this committee. It was not however apparent that this Steering Committee necessarily comprised all stakeholders key to the evaluation.
Rating:	4
Standard:	1.4.3. The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked
Comment and Analysis:	There was consensus by all parties interviewed, that the methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked.
Rating:	4
Standard:	1.4.4. Sampling was appropriate and adequate given focus and purpose of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The TOR states that the projects for review under the evaluation study were to be sampled from the list of projects provided by the DRDLR. It was communicated that the selected projects comprise a representative sample in respect of the various land reform programmes. The projects visited were meant to capture various farming commodities and to cover projects for which data could not be extracted from programme and project administrative records. The final selection of provinces to visit was then based on discussions had during the Inception Meeting. Overall, the sampling was appropriate for an implementation evaluation and for ensuring that the data collection process filled an implicit RADP project information gap.
Rating:	5
Standard:	1.4.5. There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	At the outset, the DPME offered to have an evaluation completed on the RADP. The DRDLR were supportive and were comfortable with this evaluation being completed externally. The apparent reason for completing the evaluation aligned with the purpose of the evaluation in that it would serve to provide recommendations on how to improve the implementation of the RADP in line with its targets and objectives. In effect, the evaluation was also intended to complement (and possibly shed light on other factors beyond the scope of) an internal evaluation of the RADP which the DRDLR were simultaneously completing.
Rating:	4

1.5. Project management (Planning phase)

Standard:	1.5.1. The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented
Comment and Analysis:	An Inception Meeting was held on 21 November 2012, where the Steering Committee and evaluator agreed upon the refined budget, scope of work and time-frame of the project. Further, details regarding the involvement of the client (specifically DRDLR) in the fieldwork component of the evaluation, were outlined in a fashion which would not compromise the outcome of the evaluation. Overall, the inception phase was important in refining the scope of work the evaluator was tasked to undertake and in acquiring the Steering Committee's input to the structure of the project.
Rating:	5

2. Implementation

2.1. Evaluation ethics and independence

Standard: 2.1.1. Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was achieved 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 DPME Programme Manager indicated that the evaluator pursued the correct channels and maintained ethical processes throughout the evaluation. In addition, the evaluator reaffirmed this by indicating that as a function of being based in an accredited academic institution, it is mandatory to ensure compliance with ethical standards. In the report, stakeholders engaged in the evaluation were also classified into various categories (farm management, focus groups, strategic partners, project officers, provincial leadership and national leadership) which provided implicit anonymity to the parties engaged.

Rating: 5

Standard: 2.1.2. Where external, the evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference

Comment and Analysis: The evaluator and national government (DPME and DRDLR) communicated that there was absolute independence of the evaluator throughout the evaluation. There were notable occasions where certain parties in national government tried to sway the sampled RECAP projects in a certain direction and proposed the revision of the recommendations of the report. The evaluator was however praised for standing their ground and maintaining their impartiality.

Rating: 4

Standard: 2.1.3. The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest

Comment and Analysis: It was evident from the interviews that the evaluation team were impartial and, given their positioning outside of national government and in disjuncture from the RECAP implementation, were not subject to a conflict of interest.

Rating: 5

2.2. Participation and M&E skills development

Standard: 2.2.1. Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement

Comment and Analysis: The Steering Committee comprising DPME, DRDLR and other stakeholders, were consistently engaged with throughout the evaluation. This Committee played a vital role in ensuring that the evaluation was implemented according to the TOR which they developed as well as in response to revisions which were made during the Inception Phase. The Committee also provided feedback and input on the various iterations of the evaluation report. It was not however apparent that this committee included all relevant key stakeholders.

Rating: 4

Standard:	2.2.2. Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation process
Comment and Analysis:	Capacity building was built into the evaluation from the outset and was clearly delineated in the TOR. The DRDLR M+E team specifically, participated in the fieldwork. To avoid any possible bias in the evaluation, the DRDLR RECAP Programme staff did not participate in the fieldwork as it was felt this could potentially affect the manner in which respondents engaged with the evaluation team.
Rating:	5
Standard:	2.2.3. Where appropriate, the evaluation team incorporated an element of skills development amongst the evaluators (e.g. students, interns, recent graduates, etc)
Comment and Analysis:	Skills development for the evaluators was a particularly important component of the evaluation. The evaluator's team comprised a number of graduate (PhD and Masters) students from the University of Pretoria whom were actively part of the fieldwork visits in the various provinces surveyed.
Rating:	5
Standard:	2.2.4. Peer review of the agreed evaluation design and methodology occurred prior to undertaking data collection
Comment and Analysis:	It is not evident that a peer review of the agreed evaluation design and methodology occurred prior to undertaking data collection. The evaluation design and methodology was however reviewed by a Steering Committee comprising parties from the DPME, DRDLR as well as non-governmental stakeholders (such as academics and consultants).
Rating:	4

2.3. Methodological integrity

Standard:	2.3.1. 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. In particular, in line with the TOR the evaluator selected a sample of RADP projects to evaluate based on a project list supplied by the DRDLR. Further, in order to ensure that a representative sample of projects (i.e. projects from various land reform programmes as well as those which comprise various types of farming activities) were selected for analysis, the evaluator selected projects using a stratified sampling technique. This technique implied the selection of projects on the basis of various criteria such as (i) geographic distribution, (ii) type of enterprise, (iii) size of project, (iv) stage of project, (v) project performance, (vi) strategic initiative, (vii) number of RECAP projects per province, (viii) type of land reform programme, and, (ix) type of strategic partner/mentor. In general, these form of sampling ensured the selection of projects for analysis corresponded to those set out in the TOR. Conversations with the DRDLR M+E advisor also indicated that the evaluator actively involved the DRDLR in the development of the questionnaires and checklists employed in the interview process.
Rating:	5

Standard:	2.3.2. A pilot of data collection instrumentation occurred prior to undertaking data collection
Comment and Analysis:	A pilot survey was completed for one of the RECAP projects. This pilot was completed by the evaluator and attended by the DRDLR M+E respondent. The DRDLR M+E respondent found this to be a particularly valuable exercise and is already employing the use of 'pilot' assessments in other evaluations in her department.
Rating:	5
Standard:	2.3.3. Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions
Comment and Analysis:	The quality and completeness of available data was a challenge to the evaluators particularly in terms of acquiring data from government officials in the surveyed provinces. At times, accessing project sites was also a barrier to their engagements with beneficiaries. However, the evaluating team's experience worked in their favour as they were able to overcome these barriers and ensure that data collection was not compromised.
Rating:	4
Standard:	2.3.4. Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	All parties interviewed agreed that the data gathering techniques employed for this evaluation were suitable to the kind of evaluation as well as the agreed upon scope.
Rating:	4
Standard:	2.3.5. The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	All parties interviewed agreed that the data analysis approach and methods employed for this evaluation were suitable and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation. It was felt that the best available data resources were employed for the analysis.
Rating:	4
Standard:	2.3.6. Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology
Comment and Analysis:	A core component of the evaluation methodology was extensive fieldwork engagements with key informants including the beneficiaries of the RECAP, RECAP programme managers and other parties involved in the implementation of the programme. These interviews were vital in collating the qualitative and quantitative data employed for the evaluation.
Rating:	5

Standard:	2.3.7. The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information
Comment and Analysis:	The fieldwork component of the evaluation involved engaging with parties across the farm management, project manager, strategic partner, project officer and provincial and national leadership spheres. These interviews were key to the collection of the quantitative and qualitative data which informed the analysis component of the evaluation. Interviews were completed in the form of direct interviews with key informants as well as focus group discussions.
Rating:	5

2.4. Project management (Implementation phase)

Standard:	2.4.1. The evaluation was conducted without significant shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was subject to some shifts due to delays in accessing certain data resources. While these delays did not affect the delivery of agreed upon deliverables it did mean that there were delays in finalizing the report as the evaluators had to wait for outstanding feedback on the draft report. The report also had to be finalized without the inclusion of data from one province.
Rating:	4

3. Report

3.1. Completeness of reporting structure

Standard:	3.1.1. Executive summary captures key components of the report appropriately
Comment and Analysis:	The executive summary provides information on the background to the evaluation, its main findings as well as the resulting policy recommendations. It is clearly and succinctly delivered in a readable manner.
Rating:	5
Standard:	3.1.2. The context of the development intervention is explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The report provides a clear background on the RECAP programme in terms of its objectives and focus, operation and implementation. This background is then subsequently reflected upon in relation to the purpose and scope of the implementation evaluation at hand.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.1.3. There is a clear rationale for the evaluation questions
Comment and Analysis:	The rationale underlying the evaluation questions is broadly described in relation to the aims and objectives of the evaluation which are said to be about "...providing the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) and the intended beneficiaries of RECAP with information and recommendations on how to improve the implementation of RECAP in line with its targets and objectives." The specific rationale for the questions is however not elaborated upon.
Rating:	3
Standard:	3.1.4. The scope or focus of the evaluation is apparent in the report
Comment and Analysis:	The scope of the evaluation is outlined in relation to its nature as a mid-term evaluation and its focus can be understood to indirectly relate to the aim and objective of the evaluation as well as the methodology though the latter it is not explicitly outlined in dedicated component of the report.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.1.5. A detailed methodology is outlined in the relevant section of the report to the point that a reader can understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation approaches used
Comment and Analysis:	The methodology underlying the evaluation is succinctly outlined in the 'Methods and procedures' component of the evaluation report (as well as being reflected upon in the Executive Summary). The report indicates the sample covered as well as the nature of engaging with the sampled land reform beneficiaries, government officials, and strategic partners. It would perhaps have had added value had the checklist and questionnaire employed for the stakeholder engagement, been attached as a separate addendum to the report.
Rating:	4

Standard: 3.1.6. Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings are clearly and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis: The report does not explicitly outline the limitations in regards to the methodology and findings. For example, the problems regarding data collection or access to project sites, were not mentioned in the actual evaluation but were expressed verbally in discussions with the evaluation parties.

Rating: 1

Standard: 3.1.7. Key findings are presented in a clear way; they are made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data is not presented in the body of the report

Comment and Analysis: The report neatly and coherently outlines the key findings such that it corresponds directly to the initial evaluation questions. This makes it easy to translate the analytical outcomes of the quantitative and qualitative analysis into a consolidated perspective on the RECAP programme.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.1.8. Conclusions and recommendations are clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis: The conclusions of the evaluation are reflected upon in terms of the key findings with respect to each of the evaluation questions. The recommendations are then very succinctly displayed in relation to both the structure of the RECAP programme and its related components (such as personnel allocation, project selection criteria, etc.).

Rating: 5

3.2. Accessibility of content

Standard: 3.2.1. The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and its content follows a clear logic

Comment and Analysis: The evaluation report is quite accessible and contains a wealth of information regarding the experience various parties have had with the RECAP, to date. It would however have been quite useful if each section could have had a closing 'summary' component to draw out the key components (perhaps even at a province by province level) and lead the reader's train of thought into the next section. There is an extensive breadth of information but for the reader it can be challenging to pick out the vital points therefrom.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.2.2. Quality of writing and presentation is 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 evaluation report is of a good quality with adequate layout and consistent formatting and no noticeable errors. Some of the table's included were however not referenced and though the reader could assume that these results are the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process, a caption to specify this would affirm this.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.2.3. Appropriate conventions are 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 report makes use of appropriate conventions in the presentation of the data. Some statements could have been further substantiated such as for example, the point on page 9 of the final summary report regarding the increase in expenditure per project being "...particularly significant between 2011/12 and 2012/13". The inclusion of perhaps a percent change estimate in such expenditure between those years could have further substantiated this valuable point.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.2.4. The use of figures and tables is such that it supports communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables are readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions

Comment and Analysis: The use of figures and tables is such that it supports the communication and comprehension of results. The data is reported in a very accessible format and it usefully contrasted across the various case study provinces.

Rating: 4

3.3. Robustness of findings

Standard: 3.3.1. Data analysis appears to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis: Based on the report itself as well as engagements with the DPME and DRDLR, the data analysis was well executed and the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process are usefully summarized according to the various stakeholder groupings.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.3.2. Findings are supported by available evidence
Comment and Analysis: Based on the references provided in the evaluation report, it is evident that an effort was made to employ the best available information for the analysis component of this evaluation. Further, on engagement with the DPME and DRDLR, it was communicated that they facilitated the evaluator's access to the necessary data resources to support the evaluator's analysis.
Rating: 4

Standard: 3.3.3. The evidence gathered is sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument
Comment and Analysis: The evaluation report outlines the evidence gathered through the stakeholder engagement in a very clear fashion and directly correlates these with the evaluation findings and recommendations. It would perhaps have added additional value had the key areas of variability in implementation experiences across the provinces been summarised in a dedicated section at the end of the report.
Rating: 4

Standard: 3.3.4. There is appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations
Comment and Analysis: There is good recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations. In particular, there is acknowledgement in the report that perspectives on the RECAP programme tend to vary by province and sometimes even within provinces.
Rating: 4

Standard: 3.3.5. The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws
Comment and Analysis: The report appears free of significant methodological and analytical flaws. The DPME and DRDLR both confirmed that they were satisfied with the quality of methodology employed in the evaluation.
Rating: 4

Standard: 3.3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation are noted
Comment and Analysis: The evaluation does not explicitly outline its limitations. Engagements with the DPME and DRDLR as well as the service provider revealed that there were some data limitations (in terms of accessing key data resources on time), but this is not mentioned in the report itself.
Rating: 1

3.4. Strength of conclusions

Standard: 3.4.1. Conclusions are derived from evidence
Comment and Analysis: The conclusions outlined in the report correlate directly and clearly with the evidence derived from the data (both quantitative and qualitative) compiled for the evaluation.
Rating: 4

Standard:	3.4.2. Conclusions take into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions draw from the analytical work undertaken in this evaluation but make little reference to related research studies and evaluations. However, the evaluation was based on significant engagement with material collated from the DRDLR and is grounded in this. The limited reference to other studies could also be a function of the limited availability of comparable studies or evaluations of such programmes.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.4.3. Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions directly respond to each of the original evaluation questions and purpose.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.4.4. Conclusions are drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report explicitly mentions the need to review "... the proposed RECAP theory of change for future use." The recommendation further explains that this "... should ideally be accomplished through a workshop with those who developed the theory of change".
Rating:	5

3.5. Suitability of recommendations

Standard:	3.5.1. Recommendations are made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts
Comment and Analysis:	The recommendations resulting from the evaluation were presented to the Steering Committee which comprised representatives from DPME, DRDLR and other relevant stakeholders (including academics and other researchers). A discussion then followed to inform the finalisation of the report and its related recommendations.
Rating:	5
Standard:	3.5.2. Recommendations are shaped following discussions with relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	The recommendations of the report were presented to the Steering Committee. At first these were not well-received for a number of reasons (partially because there was some dislike of the findings and a lack of ownership of the results of the evaluation). However, a consensus was reached to publish the results as is as they were founded on credible fieldwork and related analysis.
Rating:	4

Standard: 3.5.3. Recommendations are relevant to the current policy context

Comment and Analysis: In general, engagements with the DPME and DRDLR revealed agreement that the recommendations emerging from the evaluation had important relevance to the current policy context. However, it was felt that the Implementation Review could have garnered even greater value had it been complemented with an Impact Analysis to provide greater substance to the impact which RECAP is having. This would have filled an information gap which the DRDLR are currently faced with in understanding the true extent to which the RECAP is having its intended effect. A further challenge was that, at the time that this evaluation was completed, the DRDLR was already completing its own internal review of the evaluation. The timing of this evaluation was thus a challenge but parties interviewed felt that this evaluation provided vital outputs to particularly inform the guidelines being developed for the RADP.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.5.4. Recommendations are targeted at a specific audience sufficiently - are specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable

Comment and Analysis: The recommendations made by the evaluation are targeted towards the DRDLR as the implementer of RECAP. The recommendations are quite specific and feasible. In terms of the affordability of the recommendations, these are not outlined as such and in regards to the acceptability of the recommendations, this was a particular challenge. Specifically acquiring the buy-in of the Steering Committee to the recommendations was a particular challenge. This was reasoned to be a function of a lack of ownership of the results. The interview engagements revealed that there is an evident need to change the culture of acknowledgement and acceptance of the results revealed through evaluations.

Rating: 3

3.6. Consideration of reporting risks and ethical implications

Standard: 3.6.1. Peer review of the draft evaluation report occurred prior to finalisation of the evaluation report

Comment and Analysis: It is not evident that a peer review of the draft evaluation report occurred prior to finalisation of the evaluation report. The draft evaluation report was however reviewed by a Steering Committee comprising parties from the DPME, DRDLR as well as non-governmental stakeholders (such as academics and consultants). The Steering Committee particularly provided inputs on how to make the report more accessible.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.6.2. The full report documents procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where necessary (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)

Comment and Analysis: The evaluation report does not document procedures intended to ensure the confidentiality of respondents. However, the results of engagements with respondents are categorized by the various groupings of respondents and not reported for specific individuals. This implicitly ensured the anonymity of the results.

Rating: 3

Standard: 3.6.3. There are no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis: There are no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website as results are reported in an anonymous fashion.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.6.4. There are no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis: There are no apparent unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website. It may however be argued that the results cast light on particular challenges in specific provinces. This is however the purpose of the evaluation report - to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the RECAP - and thus should not pose a significant risk to institutions.

Rating: 4

3.7. Project management (Reporting phase)

Standard: 3.7.1. A project closure meeting that reflected on the challenges and strengths of the evaluation process occurred

Comment and Analysis: While engagements with stakeholders did not reveal that a close-out meeting was held, it was felt that the continuous engagement with the Steering Committee throughout the evaluation, allowed important lessons to be drawn. An example of this was that the DRDLR M+E unit have begun instituting pilot surveys as a part of their evaluations - an experience learned from this evaluation. The evaluator also felt that by reflecting on the RECAP, they have recognised their own gain in translating their (predominantly) academic practices into applicable and practically founded research.

Rating: 4

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Resource utilisation

Standard:	4.1.1. The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes
Comment and Analysis:	To accommodate amendments to the scope of work in the evaluation, as well as the availability of data and access to RECAP project sites, the timeframe of the evaluation underwent revisions. The evaluation was however completed within a timeframe approved by the DPME.
Rating:	4

Standard:	4.1.2. The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget.
Rating:	4

4.2. Evaluation use

Standard:	4.2.1. Results of the evaluation have been presented to all relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	The results of the evaluation have been presented to the Steering Committee as well as to the provinces engaged with as part of the evaluation. As the evaluation was only recently completed, there is however a possibility for further circulation and presentation of the report.
Rating:	4

Standard:	4.2.2. A reflective process has been undertaken by the steering committee (if no steering committee exists then by the evaluation management team or the involved department officials) to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations
Comment and Analysis:	Although a reflective process was not consciously undertaken by the Steering Committee, their involvement throughout the evaluation allowed important lessons to be drawn for future evaluations. The DRDLR M+E unit have begun instituting pilot surveys as a part of their evaluations - an experience learned from this evaluation. Further to this, the knowledge transfer from the evaluator to the DRDLR M+E team was invaluable and will support their future evaluations.
Rating:	5

Standard:	4.2.3. The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (e.g. raised its profile)
Comment and Analysis:	In general, parties interviewed for this assessment feel that, despite the fact that this evaluation was completed in tandem with an internal evaluation of RECAP by the DRDLR, it identified issues beyond those raised in the internal evaluation.
Rating:	4

Standard:	4.2.4. The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and in possibly shaping policy and practice. The DRDLR are currently developing new RECAP guidelines and communicated their desire to incorporate the outcomes of this evaluation into those revised guidelines. There was however a counterargument to this as it was felt that the evaluation should have made an attempt to incorporate the outcomes of the internal DRDLR evaluation and ensure coherency in the issues raised. There is particular concern about the evaluation's recommended 'best solution' which entails the overhaul of RECAP.
Rating:	3
Standard:	4.2.5. Development of a draft improvement plan has been started, but not completed, based on the findings and recommendations set out in the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation report has recently been circulated within the DRDLR. The DRDLR are currently developing new RECAP guidelines and communicated their desire to incorporate the outcomes of this evaluation into those revised guidelines. The extent to which this will occur will rest in the hands of senior departmental staff. As the report was only recently completed, a formal draft improvement plan is yet to be developed. At the time of this assessment there were discussions underway within the DRDLR regarding one of the main recommendations emerging from this evaluation. Specifically, in terms of the proposal to redesign and overhaul of all public agricultural support programmes and doing away with existing silos of funding agricultural support services, including post-settlement support. The Programme Manager of RECAP compiled a proposal in regards to the recommendation in terms of the possible mechanics of such a redesign of RECAP but this was still being discussed and circulated within the DRDLR. Ultimately, for this recommendation to be enacted it would require a political mandate and parliamentary guidance.
Rating:	4
Standard:	4.2.6. The report is publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns *Note: only apply if sufficient time has elapsed since completion of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Insufficient time has elapsed since the completion of the evaluation.
Rating:	N/A
Standard:	4.2.7. There is clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent *Note: only apply if sufficient time has elapsed since completion of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Insufficient time has elapsed since the completion of the evaluation.
Rating:	N/A
Standard:	4.2.8. There is clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term *Note: only apply if sufficient time has elapsed since completion of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Insufficient time has elapsed since the completion of the evaluation.
Rating:	N/A

References

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Business Enterprises: University of Pretoria. 2013. 'Policy Summary, Executive Summary & Outline: Implementation Evaluation of the Recapitalisation and Development Programme (from its inception in 2010 to June 2012)'. Date: 18 October 2013.

Business Enterprises: University of Pretoria. 2013. 'Mid-term review of the Recapitalisation and Development Programme: Draft Final Report'. Submitted to Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation. Date: 3 June 2013.

List of Interviewees

Mr Edwin Moshabele (DRDLR Director: Recapitalization and Development). Telephonic interview conducted on 3 December 2013.

Ms Christel Jacobs (DPME Director: Evaluation & Research). Telephonic interview conducted on 22 November 2013.

Ms Babalwa Magoda (DRDLR Chief Director: Recapitalisation & Development). Telephonic interview conducted on 28 November 2013.

Ms Thokozile Masangu (DRDLR Director: Evaluation and Research). Telephonic interview conducted on 2 December 2013.

Mr Charles Machethe (University of Pretoria: Professor in School of Agriculture & Rural Development). Telephonic interview conducted on 29 November 2013.