



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Ingwe Rail Project: Impact Assessment Report

Date Evaluation was completed: 31 May 2007

Name of assessor: Nazreen Kola

Evaluation Number: 41

Date Assessment Completed: 28 January 2013

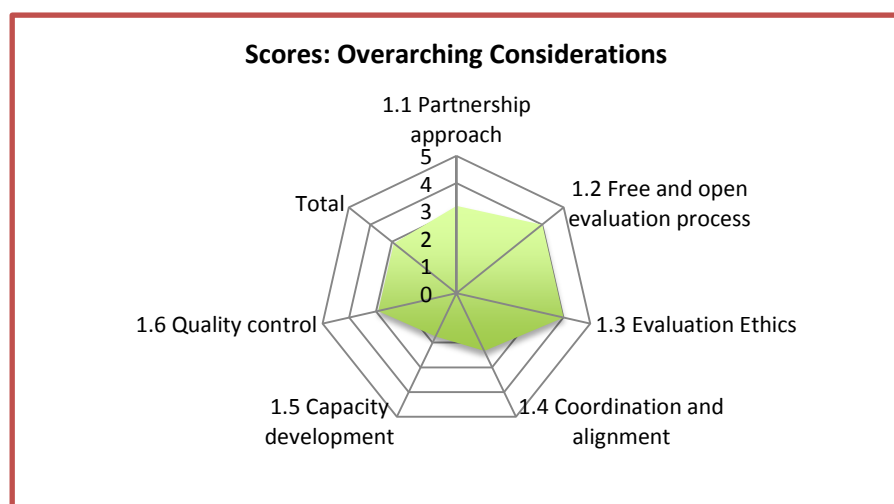
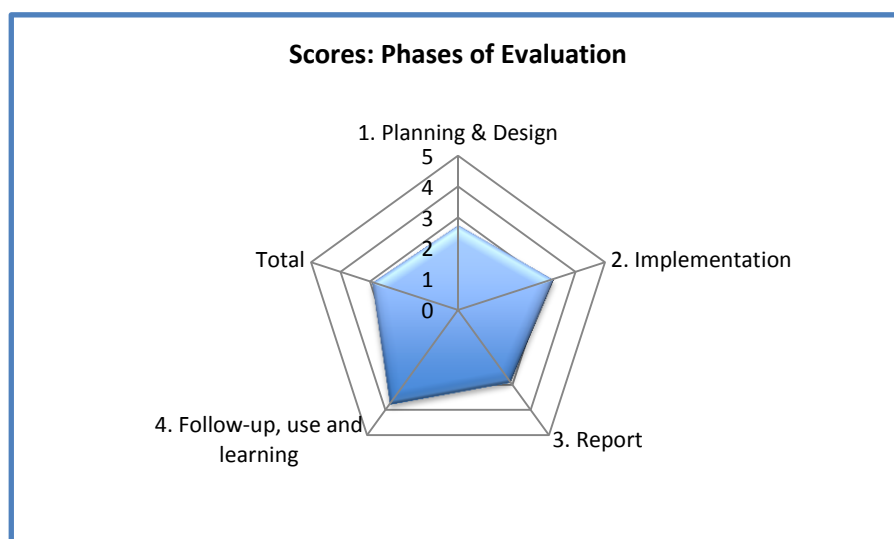
Evaluation Assessment Details

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of evaluation report | Ingwe Rail Project: Impact Assessment Report |
| Completion Date of Evaluation | 31 May 2007 |
| Name of Assessor | Nazreen Kola |
| Evaluation Number | 41 |
| Completion Date of Assessment | 28 January 2013 |
| Initiated by | Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Economic Development (DED) |
| Evaluation undertaken by | Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Economic Development (DED) |
| Evaluation area / sector | Local Economic Development |
| | Additional |
| National Outcome | Outcome 6 |
| | Additional |
| Type of Evaluation | Impact assessment |
| | Additional |
| What is being evaluated | Impact of LED projects funded by the KZN DED |
| | Additional |
| Geographic Scope | Provincial |
| Period of Evaluation | November 2006 to May 2007 |
| Known Cost of Evaluation | Unknown |

Quality Assessment Scores

| Phase of Evaluation | Score |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Planning & Design | 2.76 |
| Implementation | 3.24 |
| Report | 2.85 |
| Follow-up, use and learning | 3.73 |
| Total | 3.05 |

| Overarching Consideration | Score |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Partnership approach | 3.18 |
| Free and open evaluation process | 4.00 |
| Evaluation Ethics | 4.00 |
| Coordination and alignment | 2.33 |
| Capacity Development | 1.75 |
| Quality control | 2.93 |



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

While the ToR for this evaluation has not been seen, the interview held with a representative from the KZN DED: M&E Unit, confirmed that the evaluation was guided by a ToR. Given that the evaluation report provides a clear outline of the purpose, scope and methodology, it is inferred that these sections were explicit in the ToR. However, the quality of these sections could not be assessed.

Rating 3

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 0

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

One of the evaluation objectives was "to investigate the purpose and background for which the project was funded." As part of this, the report mentions that documents such as the KZN Tourism Development Strategy and the Sisonke Rail Tourism Development Plan were reviewed, and that the project was identified and funded as a catalytic project aimed at stimulating local economic development (LED) by developing infrastructure that complements the KZN tourism mix. The report, however, does not provide much information on the content of these documents or their use in the planning of the evaluation.

Rating 2

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

In the report mention is made to the key policy documents that are relevant to the project; however, there is no evidence of a literature review having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation.

Rating 1

1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project

STANDARD: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

There was no identification of the Theory of Change in the planning of the evaluation.

Rating 1

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 planned methodology involved the use of semi-structured interviews with selected key stakeholders; an analysis of documents that provided information on the project; and, a feedback session held with the Ingwe Municipality LED Manager. These methods when reviewed against the evaluation objectives and questions seem appropriate to provide the information needed for the evaluation. The gap, however, is the lack of involvement/ inclusion of the project beneficiaries i.e. the Ingwe community.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Overall, for the purpose and focus of the evaluation, the planned sampling was appropriate. A gap in the report is that there is no mention of any engagement with the project beneficiaries, i.e. the Ingwe community. While not reflected in the report, the interview with a representative from the KZN DED: M&E Unit revealed that some effort was made to have interviews with community members, i.e. people working with the initiative such as the tour guides as well as people from around the municipality. The purpose of these interviews was to understand the community perception as well as try and verify the information received from the project manager - this was a way of triangulating the information received from the project manager. In summary, the community was not engaged to a great extent but there was limited interaction through conversations with people around the municipality as well as casual labourers involved in the project.

Rating **3**

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation report identifies that in order to measure whether or not funded projects are achieving the purposes for which they were funded, the KZN DED commissioned select projects for evaluation. The findings will be used to inform the Department if the desired impacts i.e. stimulating and growing economic development at a local level is being achieved. This is clearly articulated in the Introduction to the evaluation report.

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

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

According to the Department's representative effort was made to work according to proper ethical principles. An M&E Framework that included principles and values was used. The M&E Unit tried to conduct the interviews within the parameters that were set, such as confidentiality. At the same time, they had to try to strike a balance with regard to ethics and gaining the kind of information and insight needed for the purpose of the evaluation; however, there were not many sensitive issues in this evaluation.

Rating 4

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***

This project was internally evaluated. Given this there is the assumption that an internal evaluation has a conflict of interest; however, since the KZN DED M&E Unit was not part of the project, the Department's representative confirmed that there was no conflict of interest. The project was in partnership between the KZN DED's LED Unit and the Ingwe Municipality. According to the Department's representative, the evaluators were independent.

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***

Interviews were held with selected key stakeholders and a feedback session was held with the Ingwe Municipality LED Manager. While not reflected in the evaluation report, the interview with the representative of the Department revealed that there was limited interaction with the Ingwe community to gain insight into their perceptions of the project.

Rating 3***STANDARD: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

There is no evidence of this provided in the report.

Rating 1

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation report is consistent and reflects that the methods employed in the evaluation were as planned. The interview with the Department's representative further confirms this.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

The research methods applied in the evaluation, i.e. stakeholder interviews and an analysis of documents relevant to the project, were appropriate for the type of evaluation undertaken. A gap in the report is that it does not reflect the interactions that took place with the project beneficiaries.

Rating 3

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

The approach used was to analyse the findings and observations in terms of project relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. Using these three areas as the lens or framework through which the project was analysed and assessed was appropriate in light of the purpose and objectives of the evaluation.

Rating 4***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology******Comment and Analysis***

Key stakeholders, with the exclusion of the project beneficiaries (the community), were well engaged. As mentioned above, the gap in the evaluation process was thorough consultation with communities.

Rating 3***STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information******Comment and Analysis***

The methodology as stated in the report does not mention the engagement of the project beneficiaries. However, the interview with the Department's representative reveals that there was some, albeit limited interaction with the project beneficiaries.

Rating 2

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 evaluation report does not have an Executive Summary.

Rating 1

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation provides a clear background and context in the section on the Project Description of the development intervention and the intended outcomes.

Rating 4

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

The report provides 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 evaluation report clearly outlines the scope and focus of the impact assessment.

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**

The report includes a section that briefly outlines the methodology, that is, the research methods that were used in evaluating the project. This section, however, does not provide the reader with a detailed description of the analysis and interpretation approaches that were used.

Rating 2

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 and located in the research method that informed the findings.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The report clearly and succinctly articulated the recommendations and conclusions derived at from the assessment. A critique of the recommendations and the conclusions is that they lacked some of the nuances from the findings and the analysis of the findings.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The report does not acknowledge limitations of the methodological approach used or the findings.

Rating 1

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

Overall, the report is clearly presented and of a good quality that can be published.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)*

Comment and Analysis

Appropriate conventions were used in the presentation of 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

Not applicable. The report does not provide any data reported in figures or tables. Instead it is a qualitative assessment of impact.

Rating N/A

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

While the analysis of the qualitative information gathered appears to have been adequately executed, closer scrutiny reveals that the evaluation questions have not been fully responded to and the findings and the analysis lacks depth and nuanced information.

Rating 3

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

The findings were supported by documented evidence as well as information received through the stakeholder interviews. A gap, however, is that there was little engagement with project beneficiaries.

Rating 3

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

The findings and analysis (the arguments made) were supported by sufficient and appropriately analysed evidence.

Rating 4

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

The report does not provide for or mention the possibility of alternative interpretations.

Rating 1

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

Other than the gap in documenting the interaction with the intended project beneficiaries, the report does not reflect any significant methodological or analytical flaws.

Rating 3

3.4. Conclusions

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

While the conclusion appears to have been derived from evidence obtained through the research and analysis processes, it is somewhat 'thin' and could have been expanded/elaborated on and linked to the evaluation questions.

Rating 3

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

The conclusion is not explicit in its relevance to empirical and/or analytical work from related research studies and evaluations. The assumption is that these were used to inform the conclusion given that the evaluation included a documentary analysis. The report, however, does not provide references of all the documents that were reviewed and analysed in this.

Rating 2

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

The conclusion is not well linked to the evaluation purpose and questions, and only briefly addresses these.

Rating 2

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

The conclusion does not make explicit reference to the logic of a development intervention logic. Further, there has been no evidence of ToR for this evaluation and it is unclear whether or not this standard was applicable (based on the ToR).

Rating **N/A**

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

The evaluation report notes that a feedback session was held with the Ingwe Municipality LED Manager; however, it is unclear if this session was a consultative engagement on the recommendations. There is no other evidence in the report of a consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts.

Rating **2**

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

There is no evidence of this provided in the report.

Rating **1**

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

One of the recommendations made was relevant to the project funding process undertaken by the KZN DED.

Rating 3

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

The recommendations were clearly targetted at a specific audience i.e. the KZN DED. They were specific in what improvements need to be made.

Rating 3

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

The limitation of not having an in-depth engagement with the project beneficiaries was noted.

Rating 3

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

There were no risks to participants in sharing the report with the wider public through a public website.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

There were no unfair risks to institutions in sharing the report with the wider public 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

A feedback session was held with the Ingwe Municipality LED Manager. The report does not mention any presentation further than this.

Rating 2

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 is available to the public on the KZN DED website.

Rating 4

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

Based on the interview with the Department's representative, a reflective process was undertaken following the evaluation. Some areas that were identified to improve future evaluations included: (1) Participatory approaches are important. (2) Monitoring information is critical. (3) Objectivity must be managed particularly as there is a tendency to want to hide information. The triangulation of information is important for this. (4) The M&E Unit must be prepared to be un-famous but they must maintain their integrity. "When one stands their ground and abides by national and international standards and principles, it helps to change practice and becomes part of (and

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

According to the Department's representative the evaluation report became a tool for receiving further donor funding for the projects. The evaluation brought awareness about the projects and enabled capacity building. A further impact was that the evaluation process required in-depth reflection and encouraged stakeholders to consider, for example, how can a Theory of Change be implemented. They had to look at the strengths and weaknesses in each phase of the project and identify ways to respond to achieve outcomes. He noted that stakeholders found the evaluation to be an empowering process.

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 report provides insight into what has happened in the Ingwe Rail Project and the recommendations speak to improving practice as well as shaping LED policy/strategy.

Rating 4

4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations

STANDARD: There was clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent

Comment and Analysis

In this project, the evaluation findings and recommendations have been used by both the Department and Ingwe Municipality. On the basis of this evaluation and other similar evaluations that were undertaken at around the same time, the Department's LED Strategy was reviewed and made a number of recommendations relevant to municipalities. These have been taken forward by Municipal Councils, including that of Ingwe Municipality. The Ingwe Municipality has also taken up the recommendations and used them to access additional resources.

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

Based on the interview with the Department's representative there appears to be clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence and impact. In terms of the KZN DED, this evaluation (along with others undertaken at around the same time) brought practical insight into evaluations as a practice in terms of the need to conduct evaluations. The Department has since developed a M&E Framework and an Evaluation Strategy. M&E has been more institutionalised and become an integral part of the Department where its benefits are seen, specifically, in relation to improving service delivery.

Rating 4

References

Department of Economic Development, Kwazulu-Natal. May 2007. Ingwe Rail Project: Impact Assessment Report.

List of Interviewees

Bheki Nowele. KwaZulu Natal Department of Economic Development. Telephonic Interview, 18/2/2013