



planning, monitoring and evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation Title:

Synthesis evaluation of whether the provision of state subsidised housing addressed asset poverty for households and local municipalities

Evaluation Number:

511

Evaluation Completion Date:

26 October 2015

Period of Evaluation:

September 2013-October 2015

Submitted:

19 April 2016 by Mike Leslie

Approved:

19 April 2016 by Mike Leslie

Evaluation Details

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Evaluation Completion Date:	26 October 2015
Created:	11 November 2015 by Mike Leslie
Submitted:	19 April 2016 by Mike Leslie
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Period of Evaluation:	September 2013-October 2015
Known Cost:	R 495 204.60
Known Cost Type:	Referenced
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Initiated By Internal:	Yes
Undertaken By:	Centre for Development Support, University of the Free State
Undertaken By Internal:	No

Assessors

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Assessment Documents

Document Name:	Document Type:	Added By:	Added On:
15 10 26 State subsidised housing as assets - Final.docx	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	11 November 2015
15 10 26 State subsidised housing as assets - long version.docx	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Mike Leslie	11 November 2015
Asset Creation _April 2013_ final.pdf	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation	Mike Leslie	19 April 2016
UFS Presentation 4-12-2014.ppt	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Mike Leslie	19 April 2016
Proposal submitted by UFS 31 May 2013.docx	The proposal selected to conduct the evaluation	Mike Leslie	19 April 2016
Assessment Report at Moderation.pdf	Assessment Report at Moderation	Cara Hartley	19 April 2016
Conceptual overview - draft report - 20-12-20131.docx	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Mike Leslie	19 April 2016

Quality Assessment Summary

This is an evaluation synthesis of above adequate quality scoring 3.14 out of 5 using the quality assessment tool. The strengths of the process were concentrated in the thorough scan and review of the available literature related to housing subsidies and asset creation in South Africa which reflected in the reporting score of 3.46.

The Planning & Design phase was characterised by an overloaded Terms of Reference that listed too many evaluation questions and called for some primary data in conjunction with a more exhaustive review of existing evidence in literature and reporting. This design approach may have been pragmatic to ensure matters of municipal assets were considered in the absence of broader literature and evidence but from a quality and methodological perspective it is questionable. It is for this reason that the evaluation scores below adequate at 2.81 for this phase.

The evaluation synthesis was the first of its kind within the NEP and adopted a 'critical realist' approach which included a thorough review of all of the available literature and documentation related to housing subsidies and assets relevant to the South African context. After initial delays, the implementation process unfolded without any significant challenges and the ease with which the evaluation team was able to undertake the work contributed to an overall adequate rating of 3.01 during implementation.

The follow-up, use and learning phase scored 2.93, below adequate, on account of the time delays and significant under-budgeting for the project. In addition to this, the potential for utilisation of this work is quite significant but remains tied to a broader policy reform process which has potentially limited the sharing and dissemination of the results of this work through broader channels.

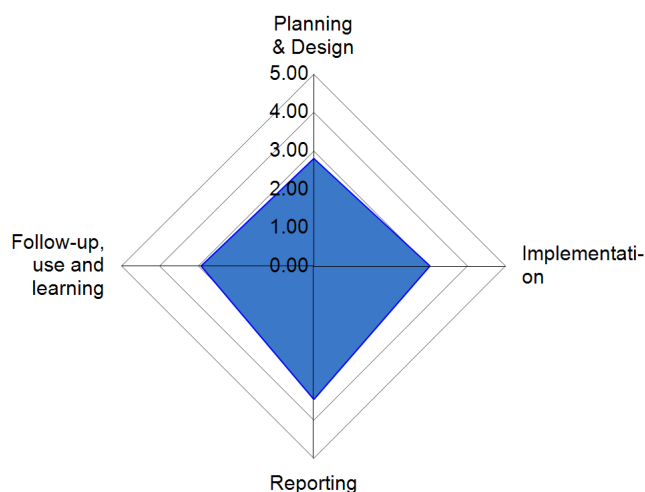
Lastly, capacity development stands out as a low point with a score of 2.0 because of the lack of a structured capacity building initiative. Although some young academics were involved in the team, an opportunity was missed to involve students or interns through a structured skills development programme, beyond simply evaluation team resources. However, it fares well in terms of alignment to the policy context and background literature as that is largely the focus of this assessment and therefore scores 3.8

Quality Assessment Scores

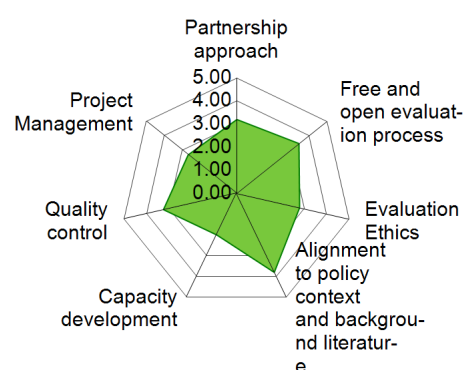
Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	2.81
Implementation	3.03
Reporting	3.46
Follow-up, use and learning	2.93
Total	3.14

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.19
Free and open evaluation process	3.44
Evaluation Ethics	2.80
Alignment to policy context and background literature	3.80
Capacity development	2.00
Quality control	3.25
Project Management	2.67
Total	3.14

Scores: Phases of Evaluation



Scores: Overarching Considerations



Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	Quality of the TOR	2.56
Planning & Design	Adequacy of resourcing	3.57
Planning & Design	Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology	2.64
Planning & Design	Project management (Planning phase)	3.00
Implementation	Evaluation ethics and independence	2.50
Implementation	Participation and M&E skills development	3.14
Implementation	Methodological integrity	3.47
Implementation	Project management (Implementation phase)	2.50
Reporting	Completeness of the evaluation report	3.00
Reporting	Accessibility of content	3.50
Reporting	Robustness of findings	3.65
Reporting	Strength of conclusions	4.00
Reporting	Suitability of recommendations	3.00
Reporting	Acknowledgement of ethical considerations	3.14
Follow-up, use and learning	Resource utilisation	2.00
Follow-up, use and learning	Evaluation use	3.17
Total	Total	3.14

Planning & Design

Quality of the TOR

Standard:	The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or a well-structured and complete internal evaluation proposal (e.g. Background, Purpose, Evaluation Questions, Design & Methodology, Deliverables & Timeframes, Resource requirements, Intended Audience & Utilisation, etc).
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR. It included an expansive introduction and Background section, which explained the intention of creating a viable asset for households as part of the Breaking New Ground (BNG) Strategy. The TOR includes a clear Purpose, an expansive set of Evaluation questions, as well as an indication of the Design & Methodology. It gives an indication of the Deliverables & Timeframes, and it provides some indication of the Resource requirements, which are then made clear in the Evaluation criteria. However, the TOR does not specify the Intended Audience and implies utilisation to inform revisions to policy as part of a broader policy review of the human settlements mandate. Given these information gaps, as well as the numerous Evaluation Questions and the adjoining methodological prescriptions of linking an evaluation synthesis with primary research, means that this TOR could be considered of an adequate standard only.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or internal evaluation proposal of an adequate standard
Standard:	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:	The type of evaluation was mostly appropriate for addressing the purpose "to determine if the provision of state subsidised housing has addressed asset poverty for households (are subsidised houses growing in value and are beneficiaries capturing and benefiting from this growth in value) and created assets for Municipalities?" However, it could be argued that including the question of assets for municipalities, in addition to households, may have stretched the scope of work too far given both the budget for the project and the existing evidence available, necessitating additional primary data collection to address the subset of evaluation questions for municipal assets. Overall, the evaluation typology was appropriate for the core purpose "to determine if the provision of state-subsidised housing has addressed asset poverty for households", but thereafter the purpose and scope of work were too ambitious for the approach and type of evaluation envisioned.
Rating:	2: The approach and type of the evaluation requested in the TOR was not appropriate given the purpose and scope of the evaluation
Standard:	The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs
Comment and Analysis:	The TOR did not identify the intended users of the evaluation or their information needs. However, it was implicit that this work would be used to provide policy advice to the National Department of Human Settlements, and related departments. Implicitly, it appears the evaluation was intended to discuss and make recommendations on how household asset creation within the current, and potentially reformed, BNG, could best support the developmental mandate of the National Department of Human Settlements.
Rating:	2: The TOR made only implicit or indirect mention of the users of the evaluation and their information needs

Standard:	Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	A range of government stakeholders were involved in scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation. It went through multiple versions and was crafted initially with the input of the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) before involving the Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (DPME) in the steering committee. Additional government researchers working in the sector were also reportedly consulted prior to finalisation of the TOR.
Rating:	3: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation

Adequacy of resourcing

Standard:	The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time and budget allocated
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of the original timing, but it was not well-resourced in terms of the budget of R500,000 allocated for the project. Even considering that the service provider for the evaluation was a University, budgeting at a lower cost than from a private service provider, it is debatable whether this resourcing could be considered adequate. However, given that there were not significant changes to the scope, and that the proposal fell within the available budget, this is considered just adequate to fulfill the evaluation.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time and budget allocated

Standard:	The team conducting the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation team was very well resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets from the outset. The proposal included a Professor (Phd), and three researchers (Phd and two Masters) in relevant fields of Geography, Sociology and Development Studies, and an additional Masters level graduate was brought onto the team. Despite this exceptional skill set, the team did not incorporate any international expertise.
Rating:	4: The evaluation was well resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology

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:	The evaluation questions and proposal made explicit reference to addressing the Theory of Change of the evaluand in planning the evaluation. The first Evaluation Question listed, and to which the proposal responded, was "Is the theory of change that informs the housing programmes in responding to asset poverty valid and appropriate for the South African context?" However, beyond this reference in the TOR and proposal, there is not another reference or elaboration on how this question will be answered. In the absence of a copy of the Inception Report, this meets only an adequate standard.
Rating:	3: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the TOR or the Inception Report

Standard:	The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked
Comment and Analysis:	The planned methodology was not entirely appropriate for the questions being asked because it effectively sought to incorporate a kind of implementation evaluation design for the municipal assets related questions, while the core of the evaluation work was a synthesis of existing evidence and research outputs. This resulted in a significant imbalance in the kind of evidence considered for the synthesis and it was therefore not entirely appropriate.
Rating:	2: The planned methodology was not entirely appropriate for addressing all of the questions being asked

Standard:	The sampling planned was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	<p>The sampling for this evaluation occurred on two levels: sampling of related research which occurred as part of a five phase literature review; and sampling of municipal level respondents. The literature review involved amongst others things, distinguishing and categorizing literature by national and international literature origins, research type, ideological approach, methodological approach and a review of the policy discourse analysis. This provided for an exhaustive and systematic sampling of the relevant literature for the evaluation synthesis.</p> <p>With regards to the limited primary data collection provided for the evaluation, how the municipalities would be selected was unclear, although distinction was made between 6 metropolitan municipalities, 10 large urban (non-metro) municipalities, 5 small municipalities (urban) and 5 small municipalities (mainly rural). It is unclear what informed the number sampling planned. Further, it was later revised during implementation and this ambiguity detracts from what was otherwise a good sampling approach for the literature.</p>
Rating:	3: The sampling planned was appropriate and adequate given focus and purpose of evaluation

Project management (Planning phase)

Standard:	The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented
Comment and Analysis:	The inception phase was used by all parties involved to develop a common understanding of how the project would be implemented and to clear-up any remaining ambiguities over the process or expectations related to the sampling of literature and the approach employed. However, a prolonged inception period was experienced on account of delays related to formalisation of the contract with DHS and this was a limitation of the inception phase because it created so much delay between engagement with the evaluation team that it detracted from a shared point of departure for the project in general.
Rating:	3: The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented

Implementation

Evaluation ethics and independence

Standard:	Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, informed consent, assurances of confidentiality and appropriate clearance were achieved; e.g. through an ethics review board, in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance
Comment and Analysis:	The context of the evaluation synthesis meant that ethical sensitivity was low. However, good practice ethical considerations were reportedly observed with regards to the 6 group interviews and subsequent follow-up interviews with a number of municipalities. However, these ethical assurances were not well-documented as part of the evaluation, partially owing to the emphasis on the approach applied for the literature review. As such, it is unclear to what extent this was achieved in documented form and therefore accounts for the lower score.
Rating:	2: Although there were indications that ethical protocols were observed, (e.g. informed consent agreements and/or an ethics review) no documentary evidence was available to support this

Standard:	Where external, the evaluation team was able to work without significant interference and given access to existing data and information sources
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation team was able to work freely without interference and reported receiving support from some members of the steering committee. There were not any issues reported relating to interference or withholding of existing data and information sources. Access was reportedly given to relevant documentation and stakeholders as requested. However, delays and long periods of feedback lag were considered as potentially hindering the evaluation process.
Rating:	3: The evaluation team was able to work without significant interference and was given access to existing data and information sources

Participation and M&E skills development

Standard:	Key stakeholders were involved in the evaluation through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement
Comment and Analysis:	A project steering committee comprising a range of stakeholders from DHS and DPME were involved in the evaluation and provided feedback throughout the course of the evaluation.
Rating:	4: Key stakeholders were regularly, actively involved in the evaluation and contributed through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement (e.g. a steering committee or reference group)

Standard:	Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand and evaluators was incorporated into the evaluation process
Comment and Analysis:	Involving researchers at the University of the Free State, including young, black and female researchers in core project roles, advanced broader skills development objectives on the side of the evaluators through substantial and meaningful evaluation project experience. However, there was not any evidence of structured capacity building of partners (DHS or DPME) beyond periodic project presentations, thereby diminishing the potential capacity building value of this evaluation synthesis in terms of a structured capacity building outcome.
Rating:	2: There was some evidence of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand or evaluators but this was either unstructured or incomplete

Methodological integrity

Standard:	A literature review was developed which informed the analytical framework and findings of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The nature of the evaluation synthesis placed an emphasis on the literature review and it was clear that even preliminary literature was used during the proposal stage to inform the analytical framework and distinguish between the theoretical approaches that would be applied. Even given the nature of the evaluation type, this was an exceptional literature review by all accounts.
Rating:	5: An excellent literature review was developed covering international and national literature, a diversity of view points, which informed the analytical framework and interpretation of issues relevant to the findings
Standard:	The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented adequately
Comment and Analysis:	The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were mostly consistent with those planned. The main deviation was with regards to the interviews related to municipal officials where the variety of perspectives sought was significantly changed from the proposal and participation was lower than expected. Despite this change, this was a comparatively minor shift in methodology given the core of the evaluation work undertaken.
Rating:	3: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented adequately
Standard:	A pilot of basic data collection instrumentation occurred prior to undertaking data collection and it was used to inform the research process
Comment and Analysis:	Generally, a pilot of data collection instrumentation would not be appropriate in this instance given the nature of the evaluation type. However, it was supplemented by primary qualitative data collection focused on municipalities. This involved an interview guideline and it does not appear that this interview instrument was piloted beyond discussion and review with the Technical Working Group.
Rating:	2: A pilot of data collection instrumentation occurred but not in a way that could meaningfully test or improve upon instrumentation
Standard:	Data was collected from key stakeholders (e.g. implementers, governance structures, indirectly affected stakeholders) as data sources
Comment and Analysis:	The literature review was exhaustive in terms of the critical realist approach applied and took some care to ensure that housing assets were considered on three levels: housing subsidies create assets which alleviate poverty; a range of mechanisms and outcomes of housing assets in five categories; and all available material from existing databases provided by DHS. Thus, when considered, in conjunction with the perspectives sought during the municipal review (e.g. property specialists; municipal finance specialists; municipal engineers; municipal planners; representatives of Social Housing Institutions; and planning and housing NGOs) this was considered well-represented in terms of stakeholders and perspectives. This may well have been excellent if there was more clarity around why specific interviews were selected and how.
Rating:	4: Data was collected from the intended key stakeholder groupings in line with the envisioned range and type of stakeholders (approx. 80-89% of intended)
Standard:	The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information
Comment and Analysis:	This standard was not applicable given the evaluation design.
Rating:	: N/A

Project management (Implementation phase)

Standard:	The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together adequately to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together adequately to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation. Where there were some challenges were related to the administration of the project and contracting. Otherwise, the feedback and engagement on the part of DPME and the UFS were noted by respondents as particularly constructive, while the kind of engagement from DHS could have been stronger.
Rating:	3: The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together adequately to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation
Standard:	Support provided by the evaluation secretariat (e.g. the administrators responsible for the evaluation) facilitated achievement of the objectives of the evaluation (eg turnaround times, addressing problems, preparation for meetings etc)
Comment and Analysis:	In particular, turnaround times and delays in communication for extended periods of time undermined the work of the evaluation secretariat and negatively impacted upon the timely completion of the evaluation overall.
Rating:	2: The support provided by the evaluation secretariat was inadequate with some challenges to the achievement of the objectives of the evaluation

Reporting

Completeness of the evaluation report

Standard:	The first draft evaluation report was of a sufficient quality to go to stakeholders and did not require major changes
Comment and Analysis:	The first draft of the evaluation report did require some revisions but perspectives on how substantial these revisions were varied between the perspectives of the evaluation team and government staff. The evaluation team viewed these revisions as minor, indicating that they often waited extended periods of time before receiving comments, including on the draft report. On the side of the commissioning partners (DHS and DPME), the revisions required were considered more significant but did not appear to be an impediment to circulate the draft of the report for comment amongst a broader set of stakeholders.
Rating:	3: A first draft of the evaluation report was of a sufficient quality to go to stakeholders and did not require major changes prior to sharing
Standard:	The final evaluation report is well-structured and complete in terms of the following: executive summary; context of the development evaluation; evaluation purpose, questions and scope; methodology; findings and analysis; conclusions and recommendations
Comment and Analysis:	The final evaluation report is an extensive document structured according to six sections: A general introduction; Conceptual lenses; Economic/physical assets; Psycho-social assets; Municipal assets; Concluding remarks. Given the nature of the evaluation, there is considerable emphasis on the theoretical grounding that informed the analysis of the literature across each of the respective sections, as well as a fairly comprehensive unpacking of the different types of assets. However, the methodological approach and background to the evaluation is condensed within the general introduction which given the length and breadth of the report, could have been addressed more substantively in the main report to provide further justification for some of the decisions taken in terms of the approach and methodology. All of the key sections of an evaluation report are addressed, but some more evenly and extensively than others. It is also accompanied by a 1-5-25 summary report.
Rating:	3: The final evaluation report is complete, follows a clear structure and addresses at minimum: executive summary; background/context of the evaluation; evaluation purpose, questions and scope; methodology; findings and analysis; conclusions and recommendations

Accessibility of content

Standard:	The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and adequate for publication (e.g. adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions; levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc.)
Comment and Analysis:	The final evaluation report is a dense document at 336 pages (excluding the Bibliography and Annexures). It is fairly exhaustive in content, but the academic standard of writing and output is not particularly accessible. There are not any clear grammatical or typographical errors, and the literature included is well referenced and consistent. The document is certainly adequate for sharing but the scope and sheer volume of it is a serious impediment to accessing and understanding the results. The summary reports are more user-friendly and accessible and are therefore understood to offset the limitations of the substantial final evaluation report.
Rating:	3: The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and adequate for sharing (e.g. some spelling, grammar or formatting mistakes but these do not seriously detract from the report)

Standard:	Figures, tables and 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.) and are readily discernible to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions
Comment and Analysis:	Tables and figures are used extensively throughout the synthesis report and do a good job of concisely summarising the different theoretical approaches, key findings and their implications. Tables in particular tend to be used to good effect for summarising the literature and documentation considered for the synthesis. Figures are also used regularly, in particular to provide a trend analysis overtime in relation to economic/financial assets and municipal assets. General descriptive statistics conventions are observed in this regard and assist in making all of the data presented readily discernible to the general reader.
Rating:	4: Figures, tables and conventions are well used for a variety of types of data presentations and supporting explanations make them accessible to readers

Robustness of findings

Standard:	Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard
Comment and Analysis:	The level and quality of analysis for a report of this nature is excellent. The content is exhaustive in terms of addressing the different theoretical and conceptual elements and analysis is thorough, supported by a strong theoretical grounding for the literature review. Other primary and secondary data from municipalities appears to have been well analysed but in the absence of a fuller description of the methodology it is unclear exactly how this occurred.
Rating:	4: Data analysis appears to have been well executed for all datasets
Standard:	Findings are supported by evidence which is sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument, integrating sources of data
Comment and Analysis:	The synthesis report takes special care to ensure that each possible conceptual element is thoroughly discussed and analysed at some depth in relation to the Outcomes; Context; Institutional Embeddedness; and Conclusion. Each sub-section concludes with reference to the Theory of Change and presents a synthesized set of findings based on the available evidence in relation to each conceptual element.
Rating:	4: The evidence gathered is well analysed, integrated and supports the argument in key sections of the report, without presenting data which are not used in the argument
Standard:	There is appropriate recognition and exploration of the possibility of alternative interpretations
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation synthesis is framed between four distinct conceptual lenses that are useful for interpreting and analysing findings in relation to state-subsidised housing assets: critical theory; neo-liberalism; state welfare theory; and development theory. How each theoretical tradition can motivate for housing as an intervention, its conceptual foundations, how it defines tenure and how it finds expression within South African policy are all discussed and taken forward in the respective analyses. For each of the sections on economic/financial, psycho-social and municipal assets an overview of the concept, including a discussions of the lenses and literature that informs it. These are discussed before arriving at some findings about the outcomes, causal mechanisms, institutional embeddedness and implications for the Theory of Change. As such, there is more or less an exhaustive recognition and exploration of the different lenses and possible interpretations of these asset interventions within the limitations of the available literature and research available. An excellent example for an evaluation synthesis.
Rating:	5: Alternative interpretations of data are presented and their validity is convincingly dispelled through critical analysis

Standard:	The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws
Comment and Analysis:	The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws. On one hand it appears robust and thorough in terms of the literature review and methods followed. However, it does not go into the detail of explaining or justifying the inclusion of primary and secondary data from municipalities and stakeholders that has not had the benefit of peer review or scrutiny. These appear well and appropriately analysed, but they are incongruous with the weight of evidence presented for the other forms of housing assets.
Rating:	3: The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws
Standard:	Limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings are clearly articulated (e.g. limitations of scope or evaluation design, recommendation for additional research, data collection challenges, etc)
Comment and Analysis:	There are no explicit limitations of the methodology and findings provided within the final evaluation report. The application of multiple theoretical lenses and the exhaustive review of the existing literature, applying different conceptual lenses implicitly acknowledges the limitations of any singular approach. However, it would have been useful within the evaluation report to discuss the limitations of the methodology and provide a thorough justification of why different types of evidence was treated equally, or at least acknowledged what the potential risks associated with combining these data sources together.
Rating:	2: There is some acknowledgment of the limitations of the methodology and findings but these are not clear or exhaustive

Strength of conclusions

Standard:	Conclusions are derived from evidence
Comment and Analysis:	Conclusions are derived from an exhaustive review of the available evidence for synthesis, as well as the collection of additional data where other research and evaluations had not been undertaken. Data is well analysed, triangulated and synthesised taking into account the multiple asset types and providing distinct theoretical lenses from which to understand them. The conclusions of the evaluation synthesis are the product of a thorough analysis in line with the overarching questions of the project. This would be considered excellent if there was greater motivation and explanation of the primary and secondary data in relation to the literature base that was the core evidence for this synthesis.
Rating:	4: Conclusions are derived from evidence and well supported by multiple sources of data that has been well analysed
Standard:	Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions revisit all 15 of the original evaluation questions/sub-questions. Conclusions are presented in relation to each of the original evaluation questions and provide a concise, synthesised answer based on the extensive asset discussion, findings and analysis that preceded it. The conclusions are therefore well formulated in that they address the original evaluation questions and provides an indication as to whether "the provision of state-subsidised housing has addressed asset poverty for households and created assets for municipalities?"
Rating:	4: Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions well

Standard:	Conclusions are drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change
Comment and Analysis:	Conclusions make explicit reference to the programme theory which is addressed in response to the first evaluation question. The conclusions indicate the key evidence and present a rating of that evidence against both the envisaged outcomes and the assumed mechanisms. It clearly concludes that the existing programme theory is mostly neo-liberal in character and not appropriate to the majority of households at this time, and needs to be seen within a broader historical lens that takes into account the appropriateness of some aspects of the programme theory at different times. It makes a clear judgment that has implications for the recommendations and subsequent utilisation of these findings and is therefore of a good quality.
Rating:	4: Conclusions are drawn with an explicit reference to, and provide a clear judgement on, the intervention logic or theory of change

Suitability of recommendations

Standard:	Recommendations are made in consultation with relevant government officials, stakeholders and sectoral experts
Comment and Analysis:	Recommendations were made and informed with the input of a broader technical working group and expanded reference group that included government officials, sectoral experts and civil society representatives with a stake in the process. This reflects across the 4 improvement areas and 11 recommendations as adequate.
Rating:	3: Recommendations are made in consultation with relevant government officials, stakeholders and sectoral experts
Standard:	Recommendations are useful- they are relevant, specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable
Comment and Analysis:	There are 11 recommendations across 4 improvement areas. Each recommendation is certainly relevant although they are fairly broad and raise some questions over what is feasible and whether there is sufficient detail to ensure they are actioned by the stakeholders. Generally, stakeholders indicated the recommendations were adequate.
Rating:	3: Recommendations are useful- they are relevant, specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable to an extent

Acknowledgement of ethical considerations

Standard:	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:	As an evaluation synthesis this is not generally necessary. However, some interviews were conducted for the purpose of this assessment and no mention or acknowledgment is made of confidentiality or informed consent within the report.
Rating:	2: The full report does not acknowledge whether confidentiality was ensured or informed consent secured but there is some evidence that this is the case

Standard:	There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the evaluation report on a public website
Comment and Analysis:	There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the evaluation report on a public website. Although this is not stated outright, the type of evaluation, methodology and analysis does not present a risk to any participants or individuals unfairly or inappropriately and is therefore of a good standard.
Rating:	4: There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the original full evaluation report on a public website

Follow-up, use and learning

Resource utilisation

Standard:	The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes and budget
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was completed with significant delays due to Supply Chain Management, finalisation of contracting and payment arrangements, as well as serious delays and lags in feedback from the commissioning organisation to the evaluation team. The budget of R500,000.00 was really limited for the amount of work undertaken and it cost the evaluation team more than the available budget to complete this assignment.
Rating:	2: The evaluation was completed outside of the planned timeframes and over budget, but with approval of the commissioning organisation

Evaluation use

Standard:	Results of the evaluation have been presented to relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	The results of the evaluation have been presented to relevant stakeholders within the Steering Committee's Extended Reference Group. However, these results have much broader implications beyond this and these findings have not yet been taken to all of the relevant and affected stakeholders.
Rating:	3: Results of the evaluation have been presented to relevant stakeholders in government

Standard:	A reflective process has been undertaken by the steering committee with the service provider (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:	There was a close-out meeting at the end of the project that allowed for some reflection but it was not handled as a structured or managed reflective process to distil lessons learnt from the first evaluation synthesis to be commissioned as part of the National Evaluation Plan. An opportunity was missed for broader institutional learning in this regard.
Rating:	2: The steering committee undertook a meeting in which some form of reflection occurred, but not in a clear, reflective process

Standard:	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:	There is certainly symbolic value associated with undertaking an evaluation synthesis of the Housing Subsidy Programme as it relates to asset formation and this was not lost on any of the participants. However, the extent to which this raised the profile or awareness of imminent policy reform was not entirely clear. The evaluation is part of a suite of evaluations work addressing a variety of human settlements interventions and policies and so this was but one of multiple pieces of work with policy reform implications.
Rating:	3: The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as being of symbolic value to the policy or programme

Standard:	The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping future policy and practice
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation study is of significant conceptual value and has already reportedly contributed to draft policy in the form of the Green Paper on Human Settlements. While stakeholders held different views on how well this particular document would influence policy reform within the human settlements environment, there are reportedly plans to further distill the policy implications of all of the recent evaluative work commissioned jointly by DPME and DHS and this report will undoubtedly find prominence in on-going policy review and reform.
Rating:	4: The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and some interviewed stakeholders indicated the likelihood of it constructively shaping policy and practice

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List of Interviewees

Professor Lochner Marais, University of the Free State, Evaluation Team. Telephonic interview- 3 February 2016.

Nomfundo Nozigqwaba, Department of Human Settlements. Project Manager. Telephonic interview- 8 March 2016.

Matodzi Amisi, Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation. Evaluations Manager. Telephonic interview- 3 February 2016.