Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation Title:	Evaluation of the Availability, Extent, and Utilisation of Agricultural Economic Databases
Evaluation Number:	521
Evaluation Completion Date:	29 February 2016
Period of Evaluation:	November 2015 - February 2016
Submitted:	27 September 2016 by Tracey Phillips
Approved:	27 September 2016 by Mike Leslie

Evaluation Details

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Period of Evaluation:	November 2015 - February 2016
Known Cost:	R 217 520.55
Known Cost Type:	Referenced
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Initiated By Internal:	Yes
Undertaken By:	Creative Consulting and Development Works
Undertaken By Internal:	No

Assessors

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Assessment Documents

Document Name:	Document Type:	Added By:	Added On:
2016 02 10 CCDW_WCDoA Evaluation Report Final (full format).pdf	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	11 August 2016
2016-Databases.pdf	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	11 August 2016
03 Annexure B 2015 TOR Database Evaluation (Final).docx	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation	Tracey Phillips	11 September 2016
05 A 2015 CCDW_WCDoA Technical Proposal_submitted.pdf	The proposal selected to conduct the evaluation	Tracey Phillips	11 September 2016
05 B 2015 Copy of CCDW_WCDoA Financial Proposal_submitted (2).xlsx	The proposal selected to conduct the evaluation	Tracey Phillips	11 September 2016
2015 11 27 CCDW DoA Evaluation Protocol.docx	An inception report	Tracey Phillips	11 September 2016
Databasis Evaluation 2016 MIP Document (Final as approved by B Matoti).docx	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Tracey Phillips	11 September 2016
Databases - concept note.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Tracey Phillips	11 September 2016
Assessment Report at Moderation.pdf	Assessment Report at Moderation	Mike Leslie	15 September 2016

Quality Assessment Summary

The evaluation planning and design phase scores an overall rating of 3.35. This phase was described as being underpinned by a structured and collaborative process, from which emerged a comprehensive and clear TOR. However, the type of evaluation requested and conducted refers more to an implementation evaluation than a diagnostic evaluation (as defined in the DPME Evaluation Guideline); and there appears to be some confusion regarding the type of evaluation required as well as a lack of clarity in terms of defining it. Despite this, the inception phase of the evaluation was used to good effect to achieve a solid level of agreement and a sound common understanding of the evaluation scope, objectives, methodology, and time frames. In addition, the appointed service provider was perceived to have the appropriate skills and relevant experience for the task, while the planned methodology and sample were appropriate to the questions being asked and to the focus and purpose of the evaluation. Reference was made to the programme logic, but this did not explicitly form part of any analytical framework nor did it directly inform the report structure.

Similarly, the implementation phase of the evaluation achieves a sound overall score of 3.63. Contributing to this is the observation of good practice evaluation ethical protocols and confirmation of a collaborative but free, independent and open evaluation process. The planned methodology and sample, which included direct beneficiaries of the programme under review, were adhered to; while the inclusion of a theory of change workshop with programme staff ensured that an element of capacity building was included in the evaluation process. A challenge in terms of implementation was that of the evaluation time frames. Primary data collection overlapped with the festive season, which impacted negatively on respondent availability and willingness to participate in the study - and hence on the amount of time available for data analysis and report writing.

The overall score obtained for reporting is 3.18. While the final report is comprehensive and written in a highly accessible style, it is also long and repetitive with a lack of coherence to the overall structure. There is limited synthesis of data as well as a lack of integration of data sources. However, study limitations are acknowledged, albeit with a focus on logistical constraints, and there is good evidence that the findings are derived from the gathered information and are well-aligned to the original evaluation purpose and questions. There is also an adequate level of recognition and articulation of alternative interpretations of the collected data.

An overall score of 3.53 is allocated for evaluation follow-up, use and learning. The recommendations emerging from the evaluation were reported as being useful and relevant - as confirmed by the inclusion of the majority thereof in the Programme Management Improvement Plan of Action. However, the evaluation process did not provide for structured and documented reflection, by members of programme staff and the evaluation team, on the strengthening of future evaluations.

To conclude, the evaluation assessed here is of a good standard overall (3.38), particularly in terms of its participatory approach, evaluation ethics, and project management; as well as implementation and evaluation follow-up, use and learning. The primary detractor is the limited level of data analysis and synthesis and data triangulation, while the programme theory of change could possibly have been incorporated into the evaluation process in a more explicit and concrete way; for example, through the formulation of an evaluation framework based on the programme theory of change.

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.35
Implementation	3.63
Reporting	3.18
Follow-up, use and learning	3.53
Total	3.38

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.64
Free and open evaluation process	3.39
Evaluation Ethics	4.30
Alignment to policy context and background literature	3.47
Capacity development	2.60

Quality control	2.88
Project Management	3.71
Total	**3.38**

Scores: Phases of Evaluation
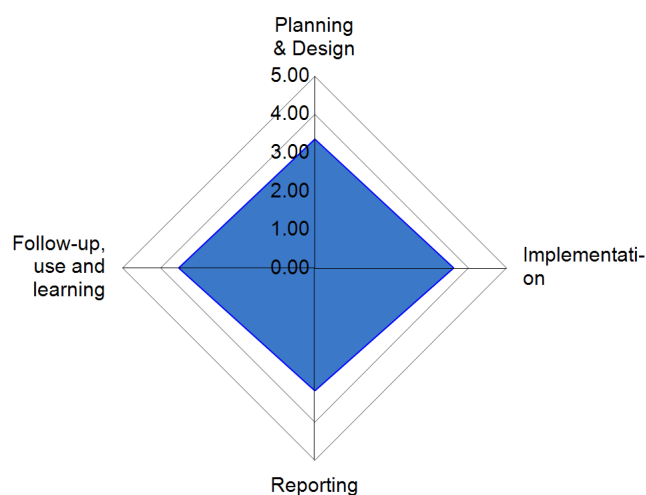
Scores: Overarching Considerations
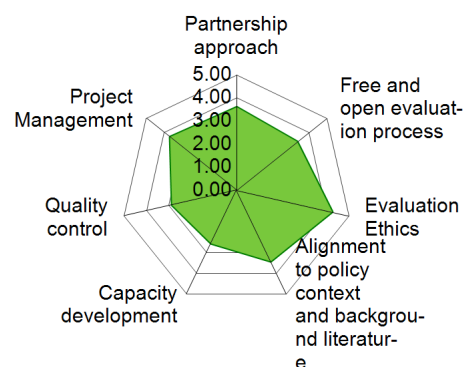
Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	Quality of the TOR	3.31
Planning & Design	Adequacy of resourcing	2.57
Planning & Design	Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology	3.73
Planning & Design	Project management (Planning phase)	4.00
Implementation	Evaluation ethics and independence	4.50
Implementation	Participation and M&E skills development	3.57
Implementation	Methodological integrity	3.21
Implementation	Project management (Implementation phase)	4.00
Reporting	Completeness of the evaluation report	3.50
Reporting	Accessibility of content	3.00
Reporting	Robustness of findings	2.80
Reporting	Strength of conclusions	3.33
Reporting	Suitability of recommendations	3.00
Reporting	Acknowledgement of ethical considerations	4.00
Follow-up, use and learning	Resource utilisation	4.00
Follow-up, use and learning	Evaluation use	3.42
Total	**Total**	**3.38**

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 comprehensive and clear TOR, which included sections on the purpose and focus of the evaluation, intended users and utilisation, scope of work, methodology, deliverables, and time frames. In terms of reporting requirements, the TOR notes that the evaluation report must be presented in a 1/3/25 format. No other guidelines or requirements for the evaluation report are included.
Rating:	4: The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or internal evaluation proposal of a good 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 concept note indicates that a design, implementation and impact evaluation are required, while the TOR requests a diagnostic and design evaluation. However, if one looks at the DPME Evaluation Guideline 2.2.16: How to develop a Departmental Evaluation Plan (revised 13 July 2015), the type of evaluation requested (and conducted) aligns more with the definitions provided for implementation and design evaluations. The service provider also refers to a diagnostic evaluation in the proposal document, but justifies this through the utilisation of an alternative definition for this evaluation type to that proposed by the DPME. There appears to be some confusion regarding the type of evaluation required and also how to define the evaluation.
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 indicates that the information provided by the evaluation will be used by the "Department", but there are no references to specific stakeholders. Information needs are communicated via the background and evaluation purpose sections of the TOR as well as the list of evaluation questions. This list is detailed, but has some repetition / overlaps.
Rating:	3: The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended 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:	While there is no indication of the level of participatory process in the scoping of the TOR and selection of the evaluation purpose in the documentation reviewed, feedback obtained during interviews with the project leader for the evaluation and with a stakeholder from the Provincial-wide M&E Directorate indicates that a structured and collaborative approach was used during the evaluation planning and design process. This included a workshop with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA) programme managers, which was guided by an evaluation consultant who works closely and on a regular basis with the Department.
Rating:	4: A wider range of stakeholders (i.e. beyond government stakeholders) were meaningfully 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 time frame for the evaluation (over the festive season) presented challenges, particularly for data collection and recruitment of the relevant respondents. This led to delays with primary data collection, which impacted negatively on the amount of time available for data analysis and report writing. This was noted during interviews with both the project leader and the evaluation team manager, who indicated that the financial year and approval process time frames impacted negatively on the evaluation. The evaluation team considered the budget adequate in that limited travel was required and much of the primary data collection was done telephonically and online.
Rating:	2: The evaluation was resourced with tight timeframes and budget which were challenging from the outset

Standard:	The team conducting the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets
Comment and Analysis:	The proposal notes that the three member evaluation team have 5-8 years' experience in programme evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative research skills - as required for this particular task. The proposal also notes that the service provider has prior experience in conducting research in respect of databases. Although the evaluation team did not have prior experience in the agricultural sector, this was not perceived as a constraint in terms of their ability to undertake the evaluation as the study focused on the WCDoA database programme - and not on agriculture as such. It was noted during the interview process that the evaluation team was seen as fulfilling the evaluation competency requirements outlined in the TOR.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was adequately 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 TOR outlines the programme logic in the background section, while the Inception Report / Evaluation Protocol notes that the programme theory will be documented and reviewed through the data collection process, following which it will be tested and refined. No further details are offered in the TOR or Inception Report / Evaluation Protocol regarding the programme theory of change. However, it is discussed in some detail in the evaluation report.
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 TOR proposes the use of mixed methods, including quantitative and qualitative primary data collection coupled with a literature and document review. This was suitable for the purpose and scope of the evaluation - and appropriate to the questions being asked.
Rating:	4: The planned methodology was well suited to the questions being asked and considered the data available

Standard:	The sampling planned was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The necessary stakeholders were included in the sample. These included the programme manager, programme staff, database information providers, and clients utilising the WCDoA databases.
Rating:	4: The sampling planned was good given the focus, purpose and context of the 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:	Interview respondents noted that the inception phase of the evaluation was well-utilised to develop a common understanding and consensus regarding the evaluation aims and objectives as well as relevant key concepts, evaluation methods and time frames.
	In addition, the final report notes that an inception meeting was held with the WCDoA Statistics Manager to determine his evaluation needs, while a working group session was held with programme staff to gather programme information to inform the drafting of a theory of change.
	During the interviews, it was also noted that a planning meeting was held to clarify and confirm the evaluation's scope, objectives, methodology and time frames.
Rating:	4: The inception phase was used to good effect to achieve a common agreement and understanding of 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 bureacratic clearance
Comment and Analysis:	Participation in the evaluation was voluntary. Participants were also informed of the study's aims and objectives and how their input would be utilised. All participants were required to sign a form, which is included as Annexure K to the final, full report, indicating their consent to participate in the study as well as to the recording of their interview. In the case of telephonic interviews, verbal consent was obtained and recorded. Data was treated confidentially and quotes included in the report are anonymous. Ethical clearance was not required for this study.
Rating:	5: There was clear evidence that best practice ethical protocols in the sector were observed in all data collection instances including: informed consent agreements; confidentiality; documenting and storing data notes, recordings or transcripts; and ethics review board approvals

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:	It was noted during the interviews that - despite the collaborative nature of the evaluation process - the evaluation team was able to work freely and without any form of inference. The evaluation draft report was submitted to the relevant WCDoA stakeholders for review and comment. The comments received were incorporated into the final report, but this did not influence the independence of the evaluators nor the evaluation findings in any way. The Macroeconomic Support Services sub-programme databases - and all other programme documentation - were provided to the evaluation team. The evaluation team manager confirmed that the team had full access to all required information.
Rating:	4: The evaluation team was able to work freely without interference and was given access to all sought 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:	The TOR indicates in section 6.2 that the service provider will be required to work closely with the Department through a liaison person and to provide regular, monthly updates on the evaluation process. This arrangement was confirmed during the interviews; for example, it was noted that the evaluation project leader in the WCDoA was consulted throughout the evaluation process and regular communication took place between himself and the the evaluation team manager - both telephonically and via email. In addition, the evaluation team consulted with programme staff as well as beneficiaries of the programme as part 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:	Section 3.3 of the proposal notes that the service provider will employ measures to ensure that skills are transferred to relevant WCDoA staff. This was confirmed during the interviews when it was noted that a ToC workshop was hosted with the programme's staff. However, no other forms of structured capacity building were noted during the interviews or in the documentation provided.
Rating:	3: An element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand and evaluators was incorporated into the evaluation process

Methodological integrity

Standard:	A literature review was developed which informed the analytical framework and findings of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The final, full-length report includes a literature review. Areas covered in the review include the importance of data in the South African agricultural sector; considerations when evaluating client satisfaction, and a review of two international online databases to provide insight into how international organisations provide data - and to highlight any best practice examples. The literature review is of good quality, but the discussion of methodological considerations should possibly have been included in the section that dealt specifically with the evaluation methodology - and not in the literature review regarding data and databases.
Rating:	3: An adequate literature review was developed in terms of coverage and analysis which informed the analytical framework and findings of the evaluation

Standard:	The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented adequately
Comment and Analysis:	As indicated in the final, full-length report, the Service Provider adhered to the methodology as noted in the Inception Report / Evaluation Protocol.
Rating:	4: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented well (in terms of time, coverage, and content)

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:	The proposal notes that all of the evaluation instruments would be piloted to inform the process of reviewing and finalising the data collection tools. However, there is no indication in the final, full-length report nor the 1/5/25 summary that such a pilot took place.
Rating:	1: No pilot of any data collection instrumentation took place prior to data collection

Standard:	Data was collected from key stakeholders (e.g. implementers, governance structures, indirectly affected stakeholders) as data sources
Comment and Analysis:	Data was collected from programme staff, clients and database information providers. A number of challenges prevented the evaluation team from achieving their intended sample. These included the timing of the evaluation (as previously noted, data collection took place over the festive season), outdated contact details, and a lack of willingness amongst some of the key informants to participate in both the online survey and an interview (which had to take place simultaneously due to the limited time available for primary data collection).
Rating:	3: Data was collected from key stakeholders (e.g. Implementers, governance structures, indirectly affected stakeholders) as data sources

Standard:	The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information
Comment and Analysis:	Direct beneficiaries / clients of the programme were included in primary data collection in two ways - a) through an online survey and b) via telephonic key informant interviews. Beneficiaries were well-represented in the final sample achieved as can be seen in section 5.1.3 of the final, full-length report.
Rating:	5: Beneficiaries were thoroughly and representatively included as the primary source of data amongst multiple sources of data and information (or if based on secondary data, includes data from beneficiaries and beneficaries consulted on emerging findings and provide meaningful input to recommendations)

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:	All three interview respondents indicated that the evaluation process was a collaborative and positive one. This contributed towards the achievement of the evaluation objectives, despite the challenges noted above.
Rating:	4: The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together in a flexible and constructive manner facilitating 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:	It was noted during the interview with the programme manager that the support provided to the Department was of a high quality. In addition, an 'in-house' evaluator has been appointed to the Department. This consultant helped to build capacity through workshops and training, plus was available to review and comment on all evaluation deliverables.
Rating:	4: Good support was provided by the evaluation secretariat and facilitates timely and constructive 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:	Input obtained during the interviews indicates that the first draft evaluation report was of good quality, requiring only minor changes.
Rating:	4: A first draft of the evaluation report was of a good quality and required only minor changes prior to finalisation

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, full-length evaluation report includes an executive summary, the purpose and scope of the evaluation, a literature review, programme description and methodology. Findings, conclusions and recommendations are also included. However, the structure of the report is somewhat confusing; for example, the evaluation methodology section is followed by a discussion of the programme's theory of change and findings derived from the analysis of other provincial databases, which is then followed by a discussion of evaluation limitations. Following this discussion of limitations, the report then continues with evaluation results once more.
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 report is well-written with minor grammatical and punctuation errors, plus the numbering on the contents page is not aligned to the numbering of sections in the body of the report. The language is accessible, plus references are included and are consistent with those noted in the reference list. The report is, however, long and repetitive.
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:	In total, there are seven tables and 56 figures in the final, full-length report. These tables and figures communicate the results well and are easy to read. Included in the figures are screenshots of websites relevant to the study. Most of the tables are labelled, while all of the figures have headings. Percentages are used in reporting on qualitative data; for example, input obtained from client groups via use of key informant interviews. The frequent use of numbers when reporting on qualitative data can create perceptions of greater generality for conclusions than is justified. Therefore, it may have been more appropriate to refer to the number of respondents (of the total sample) who offered a particular response and/or to use terms such as 'the majority' of the respondents.
Rating:	3: Figures, tables and appropriate conventions are used in presentation of data and are readily discernible to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions

Robustness of findings

Standard:	Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard
Comment and Analysis:	Data analysis is generally of a good standard. However, a higher level of data analysis and synthesis would have enabled a less descriptive (and lengthy) report.
Rating:	3: Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard for most 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 findings appear to be well-grounded in the evidence. Data sources are not well integrated, but are reported on separately within each of the evaluation's focus areas. This contributes to the length of the report and the high level of repetition noted above.
Rating:	2: The evidence gathered has been analysed to support the argument to an extent but this is not enitrely sufficient or appropriate, and different data sources may be presented separately rather than integrated

Standard:	There is appropriate recognition and exploration of the possibility of alternative interpretations
Comment and Analysis:	Alternative interpretations and explanations of findings are included in some of the sections included under findings in the final, full-length report.
Rating:	3: There is appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Standard:	The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws
Comment and Analysis:	The final, full-length report includes a section on the evaluation methods utilised (see section 4) as well as some input regarding analysis methods and processes in section 5.2 (data analysis plan). However, as previously noted, data analysis and data source integration could be strengthened.
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:	Limitations are discussed but relate primarily to fieldwork logistical issues (e.g. respondent availability or willingness to participate, timing of the evaluation, access to beneficiaries, etc.). One limitation is noted with regard to the formulation of the key informant interview instrument developed for interviews with members of the client groups.
Rating:	3: Limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings are articulated

Strength of conclusions

Standard:	Conclusions are derived from evidence
Comment and Analysis:	Overall, the conclusions appear to be well-founded and based on the evaluation findings. More explicit triangulation between data sources would, however, have further strengthened this aspect of the report.
Rating:	3: Conclusions are derived from evidence

Standard:	Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions are noted as per the five focus areas of the evaluation set out in the TOR and Evaluation Protocol.
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:	Reference to the intervention logic is evident in the evaluation conclusions, particularly with regard to short and medium term outcomes. In addition, recommendations for revisions of the programme theory of change are discussed in this section of the report.
Rating:	3: Conclusions are drawn with explicit reference to 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 drafted and presented to relevant members of the WCDoA as well as the in-house evaluation consultant. Feedback and comments obtained from these stakeholders were then included in the final report. It is not clear if there were any additional comments received from other stakeholders.
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:	The Programme Management Improvement Plan notes the 15 recommendations emerging from the evaluation, of which 13 are agreed to and only two disputed / not agreed to (one due to capacity constraints in the programme and the other as a disagreement with the recommendation itself). The recommendations in the final, full-length report are classified according to short-, medium- and long-term. However, there is no specific differentiation by user - other than referring to the 'Department' or the 'division'.
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:	An overview of ethical considerations relevant to the study is included as Annexure J to the final, full-length report, while an example of the participant consent form is included as Annexure K.
Rating:	4: The full report documents all procedures to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent and provides some examples in appendices

Standard:	There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the evaluation report on a public website
Comment and Analysis:	There is no indication that evaluation participants were formally informed that the findings of the study would be disseminated on a public website. However, there are no apparent risks to participants should such dissemination take place.
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 within the planned time frames and budget, with the exception of the client satisfaction survey where an extension for final date of all submissions was requested and granted. The provincial database comparison was perceived as being of added value. Other than this, the results of the evaluation were in keeping with programme staff's own observations regarding the availability, extent, and utilisation of the databases.
Rating:	4: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes and budget and allowed for additional value to be achieved

Evaluation use

Standard:	Results of the evaluation have been presented to relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	The results of the evaluation were presented to members of programme staff following the service provider's submission of the draft report. There is no indication that additional stakeholders, outside of government, were included in the feedback workshop, other than the in-house evaluation consultant. The Programme Management Improvement Plan (Section 3: Communication Plan) notes that the evaluation results will be shared with other department members, internal decision-makers, stakeholder clients, other departments, members of the general public, and academia.
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:	The feedback workshop referred to above would have enabled a level of reflection on evaluation strengths and challenges by both the evaluation management team and the service provider. Furthermore, the evaluation team noted that they had conducted an in-house reflection session on this and other evaluations / consultancy tasks following completion of this evaluation. However, there is no indication that the evaluation team and the WCDoA utilised the feedback workshop as a specific opportunity to reflect upon - and document - ways to strengthen future evaluations.
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:	Input obtained during the interviews indicates that the evaluation has added significant value in terms of raising the programme's profile in that it has demonstrated good governance and that the programme's database service is far better than that offered by other provincial departments. It was also noted that the evaluation findings would assist with/support funding requests to address capacity constraints within the programme.
Rating:	4: The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as being of substantial symbolic value to the policy or programme and has noticeably raised its profile amongst stakeholders

Standard:	The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping future policy and practice
Comment and Analysis:	While input obtained during the interviews indicates that the evaluation findings confirmed much of what the programme staff had already discerned regarding the databases and affiliated services, the evaluation findings and recommendations were considered of value by the programme manager. This is evident in the acceptance and inclusion of the majority of the recommendations in the programme management improvement action plan.

In addition, the evaluation offered sound recommendations regarding the programme's theory of change, anticipated outcomes and target groups; plus a highly useful comparative analysis of the programme's level (and type) of service provision in relation to other provincial agriculture departments. This can be used to reinforce/ build upon identified good programme practice as well as inform future programme adjustments. |
| 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 |

References

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List of Interviewees

Rowina Wynford: Department of the Premier Chief Directorate: Strategic Management Information Directorate: Provincial-wide Monitoring and Evaluation. Face-to-face interview: 30 August 2016.

Riaan Nowers: Programme Manager: Macro-economic Support Services; WCDoA. Telephonic interview: 31 August 2016.

Susannah Clarke: Research and Evaluation Manager: Creative Consulting and Development Works. Telephonic interview: 01 September 2016.