



planning, monitoring & evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation Title:	Evaluation of Operation Clean Audit: Eastern Cape
Evaluation Number:	524
Start Date:	02 February 2015
Completion Date:	26 May 2015
Period of Evaluation:	2010-2014
Submitted:	20 February 2017 by Mike Leslie
Approved:	

Evaluation Details

Evaluation Title:	Evaluation of Operation Clean Audit: Eastern Cape
Evaluation Number:	524
Evaluation Completion Date:	26 May 2015
Created:	14 September 2016 by Mike Leslie
Submitted:	20 February 2017 by Mike Leslie
Approved:	
Period of Evaluation:	2010-2014
Known Cost:	R 343 000.00
Known Cost Type:	Estimate
Initiated By:	GIZ: Governance Support Programme
Initiated By Internal:	No
Undertaken By:	Impact Economix
Undertaken By Internal:	No

Assessors

Mike Leslie	mikel@pdg.co.za
-------------	-----------------

Assessment Documents

Document Name:	Document Type:	Added By:	Added On:
OCA Evaluation Report.doc	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	14 September 2016
20141205_OCA ToR_final.doc	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation	Mike Leslie	20 February 2017
15.3.18 OCA Evaluation Plan data collection instruments final.pdf	An inception report	Mike Leslie	20 February 2017
15.4.27 OCA Evaluation Report Impact Economix final clean.pdf	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	20 February 2017

Quality Assessment Summary

The quality assessment yields a score of 3.11 indicating an adequate quality evaluation. The evaluation of Operation Clean Audit Eastern Cape was conceived by GIZ and the Eastern Cape Office of the Premier in partnership with the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs as part of the Governance Support Programme of GIZ. It was conducted with very tight timeframes, with appointment and the first draft of the report expected between February and March 2015. Despite the time pressures, the evaluation was conducted with an emphasis on learning and utilisation and therefore placed much emphasis on a partnership approach over the duration of the evaluation (3.84).

The inception phase was used to good effect to ensure a shared understanding between the project reference group and the service provider. In order to fit within the timeframes for the project the inception report included a brief documentary and literature review as well as a data collection plan to enable the evaluation team to move directly to the fieldwork phase. This phase was used to good effect and received a score of 3.24 for Planning & Design.

Implementation was the strongest phase of this evaluation due to the expedience, collaboration and cooperation reported between the various stakeholders, evaluation team and municipalities included within the sample of the evaluation. The close proximity of inception to implementation ensured a close adherence to the agreed methodology and the evaluation team worked efficiently to conduct 50 interviews across 6 municipalities, multiple provincial departments and some national departments and external stakeholders. This resulted in an overall score of 3.33, indicative of a more than adequate quality.

The reporting phase was characterised by multiple iterations of the report in various forms as well as a series of presentations, comments and feedback from the reference group. Executive summaries of the report proved useful and accessible to readers, supporting comprehension and uptake but the longer versions of the report could have benefited from better structuring, formatting and presentation resulting in a phase score of 2.87, indicative of a report below adequate quality. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of work was undertaken in a very short period of time and the findings and conclusions spoke directly to the original project purpose related to use which directly informed how the results were utilised.

The evaluation was conducted within very tight deadlines and served the purpose of elevating and ensuring uptake of the lessons learnt of complex intergovernmental governance and administration interventions such as Operation Clean Audit. The evaluation was presented twice to the Eastern Cape Governance and Administration Cluster Heads of Department to ensure the key lessons and recommendations landed and this was a key driver of the phase score of 3.27. This was something of an achievement for the evaluation commissioners and ensured that the evaluation served a strong symbolic purpose.

The evaluation is also noted for making strong ethical considerations (3.70) in terms of data presentation and good project management (3.19) considering the very tight timeframes and resources. However, capacity development (2.60) and quality control (2.93) mark areas of weakness in the evaluation which under different circumstances may have been addressed differently.

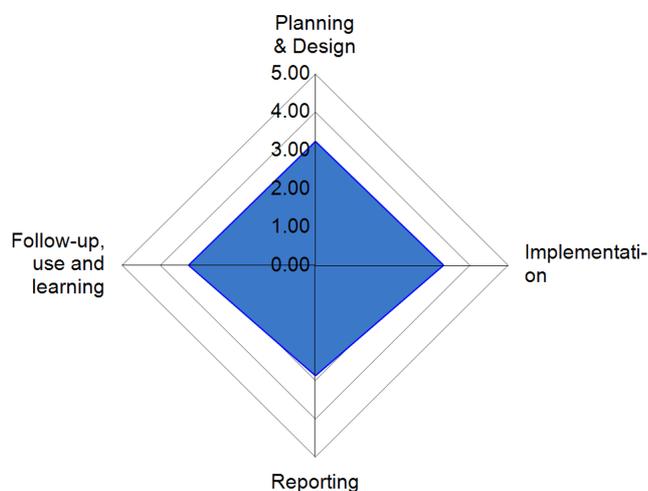
Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.24
Implementation	3.33
Reporting	2.87
Follow-up, use and learning	3.27
Total	3.11

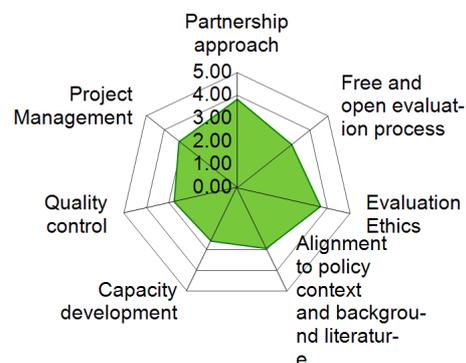
Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.84
Free and open evaluation process	3.00
Evaluation Ethics	3.70
Alignment to policy context and background literature	2.93
Capacity development	2.60

Quality control	2.76
Project Management	3.19
Total	3.11

Scores: Phases of Evaluation



Scores: Overarching Considerations



Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	Quality of the TOR	3.50
Planning & Design	Adequacy of resourcing	2.57
Planning & Design	Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology	3.00
Planning & Design	Project management (Planning phase)	4.00
Implementation	Evaluation ethics and independence	3.50
Implementation	Participation and M&E skills development	3.57
Implementation	Methodological integrity	3.11
Implementation	Project management (Implementation phase)	3.50
Reporting	Completeness of the evaluation report	2.50
Reporting	Accessibility of content	3.00
Reporting	Robustness of findings	2.65
Reporting	Strength of conclusions	3.00
Reporting	Suitability of recommendations	3.00
Reporting	Acknowledgement of ethical considerations	3.57
Follow-up, use and learning	Resource utilisation	3.00
Follow-up, use and learning	Evaluation use	3.33
Total	Total	3.11

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 TOR was 5 pages structured accordingly:
1. Background to the Governance Support Programme (GSP)
2. Background to the assignment
3. Objective of the assignment
4. Time frame and scope of work
5. Deliverables and quality of products
6. Competencies and skills set of the service provider
7. Other chapters and information
8. Steering of the assignment and reporting.

All key components of a complete TOR were included, although the intended audience and utilisation was implicit rather than explicit and the TOR was rather concise. Furthermore, the competencies and skills set section was a generic list of 7 bullets largely applicable to any evaluation in any context rather than distinct for the purpose of this evaluation.

Given this, the TOR is considered to be of an adequate standard.

Rating: 3: The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or internal evaluation proposal of an adequate standard

Moderation: Accepted

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 evaluation is best categorised as an implementation evaluation in terms of the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) typology. The TOR states the following: "The objective of this TOR is to review and integrate lessons learnt from implementing Operation Clean Audit (OCA) into District Support Service through Municipal Support Intervention Frame-work (MSIF) or to also inform other modalities of support at the national or provincial level. The review and integration will focus on the following areas:

- i. Review of the implementation of OCA, identification of lessons learnt (good or bad).
- ii. Recommendations how lessons learnt can further inform the Municipal Support Intervention Framework or other modalities of support
- iii. Recommendations for skills and expertise needed to strengthen successful oversight and intervention for good financial governance."

The purpose of the evaluation is therefore to ensure that any lessons and areas in need of improvement with regards to the implementation of OCA have a formative influence on municipal support interventions and intergovernmental governance and administration support initiatives of this nature.

The scope of this evaluation includes institutional structures across the three spheres of government and specifically targets different categories of municipalities within the Eastern Cape to differentiate the nature and approach for their support needs. This is appropriate and well-suited for the type of evaluation.

Rating: 4: The approach and type of the evaluation was well-suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR

Moderation: Accepted

Standard:	The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation TOR situated this evaluation within the context of GIZ's Governance Support Programme (GSP) and specifically the support provided to the Eastern Cape Government and Office of the Premier. Given its intergovernmental nature and the governance and administration focus of the GSP, the TOR identified a number of users and made passing reference to their stake in the evaluation. The intended use of the evaluation for these other stakeholders it not discussed outright, however, the intended use of this evaluation "to review and integrate the Operation Clean Audit (OCA) into District Support Services" under the auspices of the Office of the Premier is explicit and clear.
Rating:	3: The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	A reference group was constituted at the stage of conceptualisation to give input into the evaluation TOR. This reference group reportedly included GIZ, the Eastern Cape Office of the Premier (OtP), Provincial Treasury (PT) and the Eastern Cape Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). Through much effort from the OtP and GIZ, these stakeholders were brought to the table and each had a hand in, to a greater or lesser degree, scoping and formulating the evaluation. Given that GIZ was external to government and funded this evaluation as part of governance support this is considered good practice.
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
Moderation:	Accepted

Adequacy of resourcing

Standard:	The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time and budget allocated
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was resourced with a particularly tight timeframe and budget. A total budget of less than R350,000 was allocated for a period of 2 months to evaluate a complex intergovernmental support initiative that required face-to-face interviews with remote municipal staff across the Eastern Cape as well as national and provincial stakeholders. This put the evaluation at a disadvantage from the outset and was generally considered challenging.
Rating:	2: The evaluation was resourced with tight timeframes and budget which were challenging from the outset
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	The team conducting the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets
Comment and Analysis:	The Impact Economix team conducting the evaluation possessed a range of experience at national and provincial level evaluating intergovernmental interventions and initiatives. The staff members have postgraduate qualifications and are familiar with evaluations of this nature. The evaluation was driven largely by two staff from Impact Economix which for an evaluation of this nature and scope may have benefited from additional team members and support. Nevertheless, the staff and experience for an evaluation of this nature is considered adequate.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets
Moderation:	Accepted

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:	Unlike evaluations with the NES this was an evaluation conceptualised in part and funded by an external donor, namely GIZ. GIZ do not explicitly employ a 'theory-driven' approach to their evaluations and the nature of the intervention was not one such that they wanted to test a standard model or intervention approach, so much as to distill what had worked and what had not over a complex process and with changes in responsibility for OCA. As such, the intervention logic and theory of change was not conceptualised as being central to an evaluation of this nature and so this standard is not applied in this case.
Rating:	: N/A
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked
Comment and Analysis:	The planned methodology included extensive documentary review and case studies of six municipalities (e.g. two districts, two executive local municipalities and two plenary style local municipalities). The case studies entailed interviews with both senior administrative officials (e.g. Municipal Managers, Chief Financial Officers, Heads of Internal Audit, etc) as well as political representatives (e.g. Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Chairs of the Municipal Public Accounts Committees, etc). In addition, a number of interviews were conducted with staff in provincial government and some at national level. This methodology was appropriate for distilling the lessons learnt and making recommendations for improvement.
Rating:	3: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	The sampling planned was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The sampling of 6 municipalities, 2 of each type, as well as the spread of stakeholders were appropriate for an evaluation of this type. It was a straightforward sampling approach that relied largely upon qualitative data supplemented with secondary data and financial information supplied for the municipalities. This was considered adequate for an evaluation of this nature.
Rating:	3: The sampling planned was appropriate and adequate given focus and purpose of evaluation
Moderation:	Accepted

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 described by all stakeholders interviewed as effectively used to develop a shared understanding and agreement on how the evaluation would be undertaken. Given the timeframes, this included an expanded evaluation report which entailed documentary review and a set of preliminary data collection instruments. Given the circumstances, this evaluation is considered to have been well managed at this stage.
Rating:	4: The inception phase was used to good effect to achieve a common agreement and understanding of how the evaluation would be implemented
Moderation:	Reconsider
Moderation Comment:	It is not clear how an expanded evaluation report was part of the inception phase? Maybe a typo. Otherwise fine.

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 evaluation observed good practice ethical protocols in terms of obtaining signed informed consent prior to conducting any interviews and treating all submissions confidentially. Where quotes from interviews are used in text they are presented anonymously so as to avoid the risk of any quotes being attributed to specific individuals. Overall, the evaluation applied good practice ethical protocols.

Rating: 4: There was clear evidence that ethical protocols were observed for most data collection instances including: informed consent agreements; confidentiality; documenting and storing data notes, recordings or transcripts; Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was achieved through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants

Moderation: Accepted

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 without significant interference but there were some initial delays and challenges in accessing both officials and provincial data. Fortunately, with support from the EC OtP and other provincial departments, municipal respondents availed themselves and the Auditor General South Africa (AGSA) assisted by supplying detailed municipal data for analysis.

Rating: 3: The evaluation team was able to work without significant interference and was given access to existing data and information sources

Moderation: Accepted

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 evaluation reference group provided a platform through which GIZ, EC OtP, Provincial Treasury, EC CoGTA and the evaluation team formally engaged. Although it was acknowledged that Provincial Treasury and EC CoGTA could have been more engaged in the process, the other stakeholders confirmed that they were regularly and actively engaged in this regard. Given that GIZ and EC OtP were the parties behind the evaluation, they were very deliberate in ensuring the involvement of the other departments (e.g. Provincial Treasury and EC CoGTA) and proved successful, if uneven, in securing broader participation.

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)

Moderation: Accepted

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:	The evaluation was conceptualised as part of broader capacity building and governance support intervention provided by GIZ to the EC OtP as part of its GSP. In that respect, the evaluation was in itself a practical exercise for EC government officials in how to conceptualise, plan, implement and use an evaluation that deals with an intergovernmental governance and administrative intervention funded by GIZ. The evaluation itself did not provide explicitly for a capacity building component on the side of the evaluation team, although they did include a experience for a young black emerging evaluation consultant on the team. However, this could not be considered formally structured or clearly acknowledged as part of the evaluation process and therefore is considered adequate.
Rating:	3: An element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand and evaluators was incorporated into the evaluation process
Moderation:	Reconsider
Moderation Comment:	If GIZ had significant evaluation expertise, then perhaps it makes sense that simply implementing a good evaluation of this type and involving EC government officials constitutes an element of capacity building, and that it was "structured" and "complete". If GIZ was also fairly new to this type of evaluation then I would argue this is more commensurate with the description of a score of 2 on this standard.

Methodological integrity

Standard:	A literature review was developed which informed the analytical framework and findings of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	As part of the combined Inception Report and Data Collection Plan a brief overview of the OCA history and stages of development includes some literature external to programme documentation and government reports. This is not a well developed literature review nor is it clear how it was used to inform an analytical framework beyond providing a descriptive framing of the intervention. Even considering the time and resource pressures for the evaluation this could have been better developed or more directly linked to the analytical framework and how the evaluation questions and sub-questions were unpacked and described.
Rating:	2: A literature review was undertaken but was not well developed eg a limited set of literature, not sufficiently analysed, or not used to inform the analytical framework or findings
Moderation:	Accepted
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 consistent with those planned as part of the Inception Report and Data Collection Plan. They appear to have been implemented adequately for the purpose of the evaluation. One area of question is the extent to which "case studies" were truly part of the methodology. Although six municipalities were sampled and qualitative data was obtained, each of these cases was never written up nor was a single narrative for any one of them analysed as part of the overall evaluation report. Although there does not appear to have been an expectation in this regard, it appears "case studies" was loosely referred to here to refer to the qualitative sample which informed the findings and analysis.
Rating:	3: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented adequately
Moderation:	Accepted

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:	A draft set of data collection instruments was shared with the reference group for comment and input prior to going to the field. Although this is not a true pilot, given the time and resource constraints of the evaluation it still allowed for some input into improvements in the qualitative instruments prior to going to the field. Nine such instruments were submitted and considered in this regard before going to the field.
Rating:	2: A pilot of data collection instrumentation occurred but not in a way that could meaningfully test or improve upon instrumentation
Moderation:	Reconsider
Moderation Comment:	Short time frames might be the reason for not piloting in the field, but if no piloting took place then this is aligned with the standard for 1, not 2. The involvement of the steering committee in giving input and approving instruments appears more relevant to the standards on Participatory Approach than this standard on piloting. If there is evidence of the following, I would consider a 2: (1) some steering committee members who gave inputs were peers/thoroughly understood the perspective of the intended respondents; or (2) evaluators used the first round of data collection sessions to learn and make changes to the instrument design or implementation. Consider changing the score or giving evidence or justification for how steering committee inputs can be considered a form of piloting.

Standard:	Data was collected from key stakeholders (e.g. implementers, governance structures, indirectly affected stakeholders) as data sources
Comment and Analysis:	Primary data was collected through 50 different interviews, including 33 with municipal officials. Considering that 6 officials were targeted per municipality and there were 6 municipalities this translates into 33 out of 36 targeted respondents at municipal level. Considering the 17 additional interviews conducted at provincial and national government level, this is indicative of the intended sample being well achieved with regards to the data collection plan.
Rating:	5: Data was collected from all of the key stakeholder groupings identified in the research plan and the intended sample was well achieved (approx. 90-100% of those intended)
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information
Comment and Analysis:	In the context of this intergovernmental intervention the municipalities were themselves the intended beneficiaries in terms of their improved audit outcomes. Municipal officials and political representatives were well engaged in this regard and made-up the majority of the qualitative data obtained for the evaluation.
Rating:	4: The methodology included meaningfully engaging beneficiaries as a primary source of data and information (or if based on secondary data, includes data from beneficiaries and beneficiaries consulted on emerging findings)
Moderation:	Accepted

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 parties indicated the reference group worked together well to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation. The relationship in this regard was generally considered constructive and solution-oriented by the parties involved despite challenges and turnover in the involvement of representatives during the life of the evaluation, including from the side of the EC OtP where a key staff member moved on from employment in provincial government. Nevertheless, feedback from respondents is indicative of a productive working relationship that contributed to an evaluation completed according to tight deadlines in line with the objectives of the TOR.
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
Moderation:	Accepted
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:	The challenge of the evaluation secretariat was with regards to the involvement of some stakeholders contributing to delayed turnaround on comments and inputs on evaluation milestones. A main challenge in this regard was the the difficulty getting all stakeholders to the table for meetings and comment on deliverables. Despite some delays and challenges in this regard, the evaluation secretariat was able to adequately facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation.
Rating:	3: Support provided by the evaluation secretariat facilitated achievement of the objectives of the evaluation
Moderation:	Accepted

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: A table at the beginning of the final OCA short evaluation report sets out the multiple drafts and iterations of the evaluation report. Although the TOR indicated that only a draft and final version would be necessary at not more than 40 pages each, the length of the draft reports and the tight deadlines for their production resulted in not less than five iterations of the evaluation report. The first draft was presented to the Reference Group with revisions quickly made and a second draft was resubmitted within a week of that presentation. The second draft appears to be the first version which received detailed stakeholder comment on the report itself and input suggests that this version was of sufficient quality and did not require major or substantive changes as a revised draft was submitted five days later. However, subsequent comment resulted in two other iterations of the report, distinguishing between a long report version at 291 pages including annexures and a short version including policy and executive summaries which came in at 99 pages in total.

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

Moderation: Accepted

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 long version of the evaluation report includes the following components:
i) executive summaries (e.g. policy and executive)
1) introduction (inclusive of background, purpose, questions, and methodology)
2) findings according to one key evaluation question
3) findings related to a second key evaluation question
4) conclusions and recommendations
5) references.

The inception report set out three key evaluation questions. It appears KEQ2. "What worked well and what challenges were experienced with OCA support approach/mode and implementation in the EC 2010/11-2013/14?" was effectively collapsed with KEQ 1. "How was OCA implemented in the Eastern Cape including approach followed, use of resources, roles and responsibilities, intergovernmental mechanisms, etc?" and presented in section 2) findings of the evaluation report. Section 3) is then dedicated to KEQ3. "How can the lessons learnt further inform the MSIF and District Support Model to ensure coordinated financial management support to municipalities?" There is no explanation or acknowledgement of why the evaluation collapsed these questions further after re-ordering and structuring them from the 7 questions in the TOR to the 3 questions in the inception report. While there is a logical and simple sequence to the structuring of the report, it leaves some questions as to whether this is well structured or complete in terms of addressing the guiding evaluation questions in the TOR and those set out in the inception report.

Rating: 2: The final evaluation report is poorly structured and does not address all of the following components: executive summary; background/context of the evaluation; evaluation purpose, questions and scope; methodology; findings and analysis; conclusions and recommendations

Moderation: Reconsider

Moderation Comment: I notice that you do not cite the full inception report as a document reviewed (only the data collection instruments which I assume were not the full inception report). I wonder whether the decision to change/collapse the questions took place in that phase. If you have nothing to suggest this from your interviews and other documents, and the full inception report was not made available for review, then I agree with your rating.

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 considered of an adequate quality for a final evaluation report. Although there are considerable formatting errors (e.g. numbering of sections, table formats, and titles appearing on pages separate from the tables, etc), the report is generally adequate and user-friendly otherwise. Given the multiple iterations, the final short version and its two summaries are written most accessibly and generally adequate for publication.
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)
Moderation:	Accepted

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:	Appropriate figures and tables are used in the report. The final short evaluation report utilises 7 figures and 15 tables to present data on findings. The final long version report utilises 25 figures and 52 tables in total. The figures and tables are generally straightforward in terms of data presentation and readily discernible to most users. There are a few instances where the relevance and value of including figures in both the long and short reports (e.g. figure 2) and the copying and pasting of goals and objectives tables and sub-programmes from EC CoGTA in the long report, are questionable. However, this is limited in the short version final report and appears generally adequate.
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
Moderation:	Accepted

Robustness of findings

Standard:	Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard
Comment and Analysis:	Data analysis generally appears to have been executed to an adequate standard for most datasets. Although there is limited use of direct quotations within the short report, there is more use of quotes in the long version and in the annexures. The evaluator reported transcribing data and subjecting it to analysis using Atlas.ti software to code it thematically and present the data. In both the long and short versions the thoroughness of this qualitative data analysis exercise appears limited considering the number of interviews conducted. It appears as though much of the analysis informed the written narrative rather than it being presented in excerpts from the data itself. Descriptive analysis of graphs and tables of secondary datasets accompanies qualitative data and indications of changes in audit outcomes. This is straightforward and generally of a decent quality. Data analysis appears adequate for the purpose of this evaluation.
Rating:	3: Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard for most datasets
Moderation:	Accepted

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 are supported by a variety of collated data from across internal reports, qualitative interviews and secondary data. There is a degree of triangulation, although it is more alternating between presenting data from one source than another rather than an enriching, deepening and contrasting of the information. That said, analysis is of an adequate standard to support the argument and does integrate the different sources.
Rating:	3: The evidence gathered is analysed to support the argument to an adequate standard and integrates sources of data
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	There is appropriate recognition and exploration of the possibility of alternative interpretations
Comment and Analysis:	There is generally limited recognition and exploration of the possibility of different or competing interpretations of the data. Data is generally presented in a straightforward and direct manner to demonstrate a finding rather than exploring multiple possible interpretations of it. Where there are potentially competing or alternative interpretations of the data in the report this is implicit or indirect, rather than an acknowledgement that the same information could be interpreted in different ways.
Rating:	2: There is an implicit or indirect recognition of alternative interpretations
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws
Comment and Analysis:	Generally speaking, the report appears to avoid significant methodological and analytic flaws. Since the evaluation was structured and organised in relation to a set of evaluation questions concerned primarily with review and appraising the lessons learnt and achievements from the OCA process, it did not employ a thorough criteria-based valuing exercise. It did follow a clear sequence in terms of how it presented and analysed data about the OCA's implementation in the province, then unpacking this at a sample of municipality before presenting data and indicating how this could inform future financial management support. The methods and analysis were partly exploratory and descriptive with the primary intention to ensure ownership of recommendations for improvement and internalisation of lessons learnt. Seen in this light, the evaluation report is considered adequate despite limited critique of its lack of a structured analytical approach for holistically valuing the OCA intervention.
Rating:	3: The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws
Moderation:	Reconsider
Moderation Comment:	Typo in the third sentence - municipality should be municipalities. Otherwise, accepted.

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:	A sub-section on challenges and limitations of the evaluation appears to address some of the challenges in data collection but it is not exhaustive. It neglects to mention some of the limitations of a tightly resourced evaluation structured in relation to a "review" and "lessons learnt" for improvement rather than a systematic appraisal according to a clear set of valuing criteria. Nor does it consider or reflect on the decision not to employ an intervention theory based approach or unpack in more detail the challenges of data access or agreeing upon a clear description of the District Support Model ahead of time. The evaluation is somewhat inadequate in this regard.
Rating:	2: There is some acknowledgment of the limitations of the methodology and findings but these are not clear or exhaustive
Moderation:	Accepted

Strength of conclusions

Standard:	Conclusions are derived from evidence
Comment and Analysis:	Conclusions appear to be derived from the evidence presented but they are dispersed and distributed between the two sections on findings and the final section which combines "lessons, conclusions and recommendations" into one section. Those conclusions however are more an integration and synthesis of the multiple conclusions produced in sections 2 and 3 of the report respectively. They are adequate in terms of being clearly derived from the evidence presented before them.
Rating:	3: Conclusions are derived from evidence
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions are presented in terms of a consolidated set of lessons learnt from the Eastern Cape provincial support to municipalities through OCA. This is directly in line with the objective in the evaluation purpose "to review and integrate lessons learnt from implementing Operation Clean Audit (OCA) into District Support Service through Municipal Support Intervention Framework (MSIF) or to also inform other modalities of support at the national or provincial level". It has also done this by presenting findings and drawing some conclusions about how the OCA was implemented, what worked well and didn't, and how that can inform a district support model.
Rating:	3: Conclusions adequately address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Moderation:	Reconsider
Moderation Comment:	This sounds very positive in terms of addressing evaluation purpose. Presumably a higher score was not given because of the unexplained shortening/changing of the evaluation questions? It may be worth adding a note to explain why a 3 instead of a 4 was given.

Standard:	Conclusions are drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change
Comment and Analysis:	As per the reasons set out in the quality assessment standard in the inception and planning phase this standard does not apply for the purpose of this evaluation.
Rating:	: N/A
Moderation:	Accepted

Suitability of recommendations

Standard:	Recommendations are made in consultation with relevant government officials, stakeholders and sectoral experts
Comment and Analysis:	Given the constitution of the reference group mentioned earlier, recommendations were made with relevant government officials, stakeholders and sector experts from the respective departments. Although there was interest in drawing in municipalities to give input on these recommendations this did not appear to have occurred and as a result only beneficiary representatives were not consulted (outside of the data collection process) on the subsequent recommendations arising from the evaluation.
Rating:	3: Recommendations are made in consultation with relevant government officials, stakeholders and sectoral experts
Moderation:	Accepted

Standard:	Recommendations are useful- they are relevant, specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable
Comment and Analysis:	<p>Recommendations were crafted with a deliberate intention to be useful and to support improvements for intergovernmental support initiatives of this nature. In each recommendation, the party responsible for it is clearly identified and a reasonable set of recommended actions are made that appear generally accepted.</p> <p>The recommendations do get a bit ambiguous in some areas, as the following examples illustrate: "Structures and processes need to be put in place (either by OTP, and/or CoGTA EC, and/or PT) whereby the support plans of each role-player are discussed both at an overall National/ Provincial level, as well as at a municipal specific level" "A set of coordination and inter-governmental structures and processes will need to be agreed at Provincial level and which rationalises the reporting needs of both CoGTA (national and provincial) and Treasury (national and provincial) to minimise the reporting burden on municipalities". Despite some ambiguity, the recommendations are generally considered useful and sufficiently targeted for the purpose of the evaluation.</p>
Rating:	3: Recommendations are useful- they are relevant, specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable to an extent
Moderation:	Accepted

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:	The report is adequate in documenting procedures to ensure confidentiality and ensuring informed consent. Copies of data collection instruments were submitted with the inception report which provides evidence of how this was managed and it reflects in the handling of the data in the final evaluation report.
Rating:	3: The full report documents some procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where necessary
Moderation:	Accepted
Standard:	There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the evaluation report on a public website
Comment and Analysis:	There is no risk to participants or institutions in disseminating the evaluation report in summary or full form on a public website. Care was taken to ensure no unfair risks to participants or institutions in the findings and analysis contained therein.
Rating:	4: There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the original full evaluation report on a public website
Moderation:	Accepted

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 roughly within the planned timeframes and budget. For the scope of evaluation and turnaround time, this was something of achievement on the part of the service provider. While final iterations and comments on the draft report did run over a period of additional weeks, both the evaluator and commissioners indicated that the substance of the work was completed within the set timeframes and that this was both appreciated and should be recognised.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes and budget
Moderation:	Accepted

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 inside of government and outside of it when considering the GIZ as a key stakeholder. The results were escalated to the level of a Governance and Administration cluster presentation which was considered a significant achievement in terms of utilisation of the report. The evaluation report was actually presented twice, once by the EC OtP and a second time with the support GIZ to ensure comprehension and uptake arising from the key lessons and recommendations.
Rating:	4: Results of the evaluation have been presented to all relevant stakeholders, inside and outside of government
Moderation:	Reconsider
Moderation Comment:	Typo in last sentence, "support OF GIZ". Otherwise, good.

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:	Since the evaluation was itself considered a practical capacity building exercise for EC stakeholders coordinated by GIZ there was a degree of reflection on the evaluation into the process. This also informed the evaluation report's final recommendations to "commission an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of fraud reporting and investigation". The final meetings and presentation between the service provider was said to embed this reflection into it but it was not done in a clear and commonly identified process.
Rating:	2: The steering committee undertook a meeting in which some form of reflection occurred, but not in a clear, reflective process
Moderation:	Accepted

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:	The evaluation was certainly considered of an important symbolic value with regards to the GSP in the EC and how the lessons of the OCA could be more widely shared. The presentation at the governance and administration cluster (twice) was considered indicative of the extent to which it had raised the profile and proved a meaningful exercise in informing future practice.
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
Moderation:	Accepted

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 decision not to employ a theory based approach to the OCA intervention limited the systematic conceptual value of the evaluation itself. However, it was clearly of practical use as it was described by interviewed respondents as straightforward in terms of clearly distilling lessons and highlighting successes and weaknesses from OCA to inform other similar interventions. Thus the tangible value of highlighting successful or weak aspects of the OCA approach, ownership, coordination and other
Rating:	3: The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice
Moderation:	Reconsider
Moderation Comment:	The last sentence is incomplete. The points made (outside of the last, incomplete sentence at least) and score given are accepted.

References

Impact Economix. 2015. Evaluation of Operation Clean Audit: Eastern Cape- Final Report. 27 April 2015.

Impact Economix. 2015. Evaluation of Operation Clean Audit: Eastern Cape- Final Short Report. 26 May 2015.

Impact Economix. 2015. Evaluation Plan and Data Collection Instruments. 11 February 2015.

Eastern Cape Office of the Premier, 2014. Terms of reference for Review and integration of the Operation Clean Audit (OCA) into District Support Service through Municipal Intervention Framework (MSIF).

List of Interviewees

Rae Wolpe. Evaluator- Impact Economix. Face to face interview 8 February 2017.

Godje Bialluch. Programme Manager- Governance Support Programme, GIZ. Telephonic interview 16 February 2017.

Eastern Cape Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs managers did not respond to requests for interview.

Candice Morkel. Former General Manager, Eastern Cape Office of the Premier. Telephonic interview 5 November 2016.