



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

South Africa: Environment Outlook - A report on the state of the environment

Date Evaluation was completed: 01 January 2006

Name of assessor: Meagan Jooste

Evaluation Number: 61

Date Assessment Completed: 22 February 2013

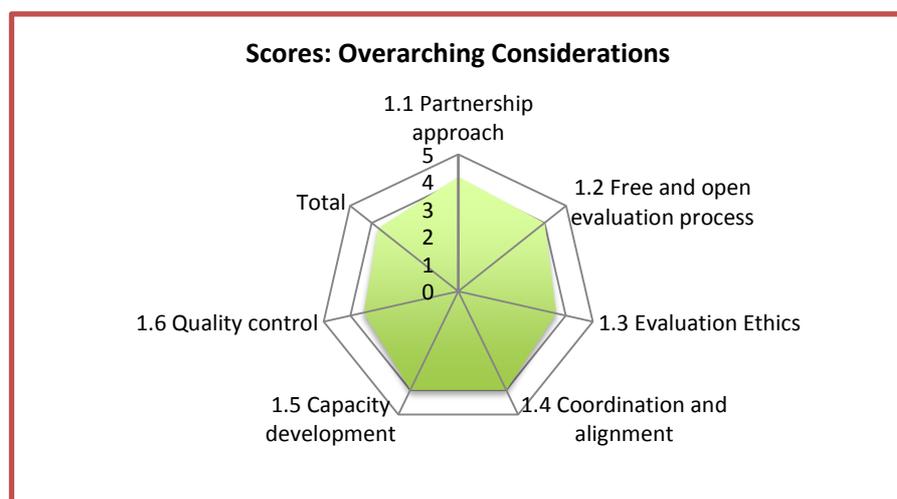
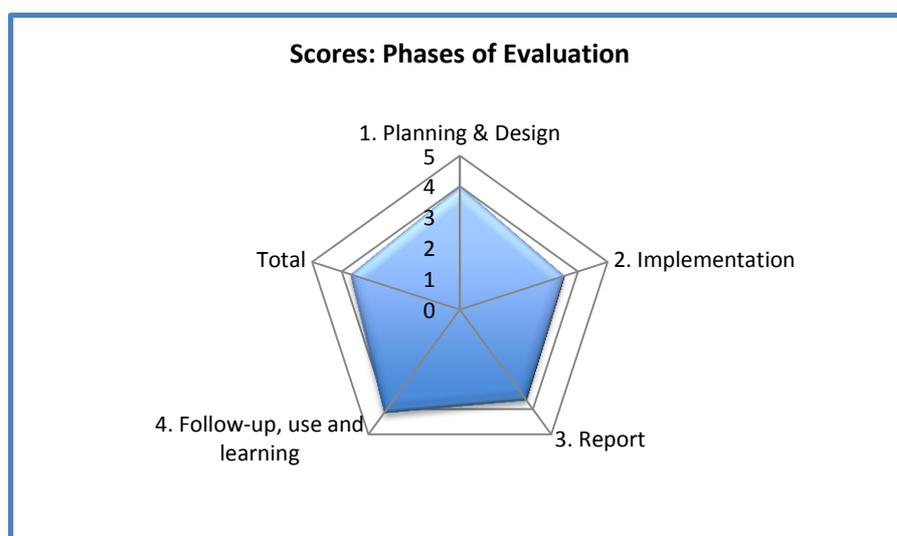
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	South Africa: Environment Outlook - A report on the state of the environment
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 January 2006
Name of Assessor	Meagan Jooste
Evaluation Number	61
Completion Date of Assessment	22 February 2013
Initiated by	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Evaluation undertaken by	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Evaluation area / sector	Environment, climate change
	<i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 10
	<i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Diagnostic
	<i>Other</i>
	<i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Sector
	<i>Programme</i>
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	1999-2006
Known Cost of Evaluation	Unknown

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	4.00
Implementation	3.52
Report	3.62
Follow-up, use and learning	4.14
Total	3.68

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	4.18
Free and open evaluation process	4.00
Evaluation Ethics	3.64
Coordination and alignment	4.00
Capacity Development	4.00
Quality control	3.52



1. Planning & Design

1.1. Clarity of Purpose and Scope in TOR

STANDARD: *The evaluation was guided by a TOR with at least the following sections explicit: purpose, scope and objectives; expectations regarding design and methodology; resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; expectations regarding evaluation process and products..*

Comment and Analysis

This report was modelled as an update to the 1999 report with the addition of a futures modelling exercise outlining four possible scenarios for environmental sustainability going forward. In addition, the structure and presentation of this Environmental Outlook report was influenced by international trends in the development of reports of this kind. A proposal for the structure of the report was submitted to the Director-General of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism as well as related Working Groups, so as to acquire buy-in for the evaluation approach adopted.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *The purpose of the evaluation was clear and explicit in the TOR*

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: *The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose*

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

1.3. Alignment to Policy Context and Background Literature

STANDARD: There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators.

Rating 4

STANDARD: There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

There was evidence that a review of appropriate literature was conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators.

Rating 4

1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project

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

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked

Comment and Analysis

The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked - particularly given that it required an extensive review of the state of the environment across all sectors.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

As with the first environment outlook report of 1999, this second outlook report was intended to complement fiscal policy statements, budgets, and economic development plans in such way that a clear picture of the status of environmental assets in the country was captured. To this end, there was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation.

Rating 4

1.5. Inception phase

STANDARD: *The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented*

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

2. Implementation

2.1. Ethical Review and Considerations

STANDARD: *Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was obtained through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants*

Comment and Analysis

As the data utilized in this evaluation were acquired from secondary data sources, no ethical clearance was required. The only challenge faced in terms of data collection was that, at times, certain departments were not willing to share information with the consultants appointed by the DEAT, to complete certain sectoral assessments. However, this obstacle was overcome by the DEAT intervening to request this data be made available.

Rating N/A

2.2. Evaluator independence

STANDARD: *Where external, evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference*

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest***Comment and Analysis***

Given that the evaluation comprised the consolidation of 16 specialist reports and that an independent expert review committee assessed the document, the evaluation team appear to have been impartial.

Rating 3

2.3. Key stakeholder involvement***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism. In particular, prior to the initiation of the evaluation, a National Planning Workshop was held (on 18 and 19 November, 2004). At this meeting, the priority themes and issues for inclusion in the report were identified. In addition, a scenario development workshop was held from 8 to 10 June 2005 so as to review the various alternative environmental futures considered. Throughout the development of the report an inter-departmental Steering Committee was also consulted.

Rating 5

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

Where appropriate, an element of capacity-building of partners responsible for the evaluation was incorporated into the evaluation. This began at the inception of the project already as the DEAT shared a DVD explaining the methodological approach, each party responsible for a thematic/sector report, had to follow to ensure consistency in the fashion of information reported in the document.

Rating 4

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

While data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems, the DEAT had to allow additional time and budget.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology

Comment and Analysis

Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information

Comment and Analysis

As the evaluation involved a review of the state of the environment, engaging beneficiaries was not a key source of data and information as data and information was collected through secondary sources.

Rating N/A

2.5. Project management

STANDARD: The evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

3. Report

3.1. Report was well-structured and presentation was clear and complete in each of these areas

STANDARD: Executive summary captured key components of the report appropriately

Comment and Analysis

The executive summary captures the key components of the report appropriately. It provides a clear assessment of the state of the key environmental priority sectors as well as what can be done to enhance environmental sustainability.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The context of the development intervention, in the form of identifying ways for everyday citizens to make their lifestyles more environmentally conscious, was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

The rationale for the evaluation questions was fairly well-explained though why the priority themes were selected over others is not documented.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The scope or focus of the evaluation was apparent in the report**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: A detailed methodology was outlined in the relevant section of a report (full report or 1/3/25) to the point that a reader could understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation**Comment and Analysis**

A good amount of information is provided on the methodology employed for the evaluation. In particular, the evaluation mentions the use of the internationally recognised system of Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response reporting framework for indicators of sustainable development, as well as the use of specific indicators in the analysis.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Key findings were presented in a clear way; they were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data was not presented in the body of the report

Comment and Analysis

Key findings were presented in a clear way.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Clear acknowledgement of the limitations of the study was made, specifically in regards to environmental data gaps, changing environmental challenges as well as changes in the global priority concerns in the environmental sector.

Rating 4

3.2. Writing and presentation

STANDARD: *Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc)*

Comment and Analysis

Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication.

Rating **3**

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

Comment and Analysis

Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data.

Rating **3**

3.3. Presentation of findings

STANDARD: *The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables was readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions*

Comment and Analysis

The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis

Data analysis relied heavily on existing information and to this extent it was well executed.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis

As the report was meant to consolidate information regarding the current state of the environment, the findings were supported by available evidence.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument.

Rating **3**

STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Comment and Analysis

Appropriate consideration of alternative interpretations were made.

Rating **3**

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

Comment and Analysis

The report appeared free of significant methodological and analytic flaws.

Rating **3**

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions were derived from evidence.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions took account of relevant empirical and/analytic work from related research studies.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

While no explicit evaluation questions were outlined, the conclusions addressed the purpose of the evaluation well (i.e. it describes environmental issues in a South African context and provides non-specialist readers with a user-friendly guide to significant environmental trends, the relationships between these trends and human activities, and the current South African response to environmental deterioration).

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

3.5. Recommendations

STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts

Comment and Analysis

Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate experts.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Recommendations were made in consultation with the Project Steering Committee (which was an inter-departmental committee) as well as the internal Project Management Committee.

Rating 4

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

The evaluation derives a set of possible scenarios for the environmental future of South Africa based on a detailed review of the current state of the environment. It was at the time, a crucial attempt to project the future of the environment as well as to establishing a target for environmental sustainability.

Rating 4

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

The recommendations of the evaluation were clearly related to key themes/sectors of the environment in South Africa.

Rating 4

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

The relevant limitations of the evaluation were clearly outlined. Specifically, "The increasing complexity of environmental challenges and emerging issues requires sound thematic and integrated assessments that produce policy-relevant findings for decision-makers. Relatively few integrated assessments have been conducted in South Africa. Furthermore, there are serious gaps in the environmental data and, together with differences in scientific interpretation, any reader should realize that the analysis published here is not infallible."

Rating 5

3.7 Protection of participants and risk considerations

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

Comment and Analysis

The report did not make use of any 'sensitive' data and as such, there was no need to ensure confidentiality of participants in the study.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

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

Rating 4

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

The results of the study were presented to the evaluation working groups, the Portfolio Committee and to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism at the time (Marthinus van Schalkwyk). It was not however launched at a specific function as is usually the case with the release of sectoral reports.

Rating 5

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

4.3. Transparency

STANDARD: The report was publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns

Comment and Analysis

The report was publicly available.

Rating 4

4.4. Lessons learnt

STANDARD: After completion of the evaluation, a reflective process was undertaken by staff responsible for the evaluand to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations

Comment and Analysis

As an update to the 2006 State of Environment Report is currently underway, the steps in the development of the 2006 report were assessed and used to guide the development of the new report. In particular, the 2006 report provided a comprehensive, detailed review of the state of the environment at the time. The new report due for release will rely heavily on the content of the 2006 report but is also intended to achieve greater stakeholder buy-in by having a more comprehensive stakeholder engagement process than the 2006 report. One of the constraints with the 2006 report was that the Steering Committee members were frequently changing which made it hard to achieve buy-in. This is one issue which the new report will try to avoid.

Rating N/A

4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

STANDARD: The evaluation study was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (eg raised its profile)

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was seen to have added significant symbolic value to the policy environment. For example, it was the key resource which informed the Department of Environmental Affairs inputs to the Outcomes Approach of the Presidency in terms of Outcome 10. In addition, in part this report meant that the Air Quality Network was revived and responsibility for its management was placed with the South African Weather Services. However, this report was not intended to have direct implications for policy but rather to paint a picture of the status quo.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evaluation study was of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation study adds conceptual value in understanding what has happened to the environmental sector in the country and in shaping policy and practice. It serves as a resource to environmental educators in South Africa.

Rating 4

4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations

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

Comment and Analysis

There was evidence of the instrumental use of the study.

Rating 4

STANDARD: There was clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term

Comment and Analysis

There was evidence that the evaluation has had a positive impact on related research in the field over the medium to long term.

Rating 4

References

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. 2006. South Africa Environment Outlook: A report on the state of the environment - Executive summary and key

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. 2006. South Africa Environment Outlook: A report on the state of the environment - Message Synthesis. Available from:

List of Interviewees

Dr Rudi Pretorius, Director: Geographic Information Systems: Department of Environmental Affairs South Africa, Telephonic Interview, 19/02/2013