Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation Title:	Implementation Evaluation of the City Support Programme
Evaluation Number:	614
Start Date:	Friday, 18 November 2016
Completion Date:	Thursday, 29 March 2018
Period of Evaluation:	November 2016 to March 2018
Submitted:	Thursday, 03 May 2018 by Robin Richards
Approved:	Thursday, 03 May 2018 by Cara Hartley

Evaluation Details

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Created:	Thursday, 29 March 2018 by Cara Hartley
Submitted:	Thursday, 03 May 2018 by Robin Richards
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Period of Evaluation:	November 2016 to March 2018
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Known Cost Type:	Referenced
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Initiated By Internal:	No
Service Providers:	Genesis Analytics; RebelGroup Advisory Southern Africa
Undertaken By Internal:	No

Assessors

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Assessment Documents

Document Name:	Document Type:	Added By:	Added On:
16 10 04 Final Implementation Evaluation of the CSP ToR.pdf	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
DPME_CSP Evaluation_Literature Review_revised version 2.0_22 March 2017_clean.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
CSP Evaluation_Summary Report_v3_14 March 2018_clean.pdf	Evaluation report	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
RGSA_DPME_CSP Evaluation_Inception Presentation 6 December 2016 _Final.pdf	An inception report	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
RGSA_Implementation Evaluation of the CSP_Fieldwork report_sub_22 Sept 2017.pdf	Progress reports	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
CSP Evaluation_Annex A - City of Cape Town_Case Study_fin_21 Feb 2018.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
CSP Evaluation_Annex B - City of Johannesburg_Case Study_fin_21 Feb 2018 (002).pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
CSP Evaluation_Annex C - Buffalo City_Case Study_fin_21 Feb 2018.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018

CSP Evaluation_Annex D - Ekurhuleni_Case Study_fin_21 Feb 2018.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
CSP Evaluation_Annex E - Nelson Mandela Bay_Case Study_fin_21 Feb 2018.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 29 March 2018
ReD. CSP Evaluation_Final Evaluation Report_23 February 2018_clean.pdf	Evaluation report	Robin Richards	Wednesday, 18 April 2018
CSP Evaluation_Summary Report_v4_29 March 2018_clean.pdf	Evaluation report	Robin Richards	Wednesday, 18 April 2018
SKM_C654e17121316150.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Robin Richards	Wednesday, 18 April 2018
2016 12 06 CSP Inception Meeting Minutes (1).pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Robin Richards	Wednesday, 18 April 2018
CSP SteerCo Meeting Minutes 2017 12 13 (002).pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Robin Richards	Wednesday, 18 April 2018
2017 04 18_CSP Steering Committee Minutes.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Robin Richards	Wednesday, 18 April 2018
Assessment Report at Moderation.pdf	Assessment Report at Moderation	Cara Hartley	Thursday, 26 April 2018

Quality Assessment Summary

The overarching quality assessment score is 3.18 out of a total of 5 when applying the Quality Assessment Tool(EQAT). An overarching score of 3 and above out of 5 is considered sound and valid for decision making purposes. The main purpose of this evaluation was to undertake a mid-term implementation assessment of the City Support Programme. The period covered by the evaluation was from 2011-2017.

A score of 3.49 out of 5 was recieved for the planning and design phase of the evaluation. Highest scores for this phase were received for appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology and adequacy of resourcing. With respect to the design and methodology, the highest score was for the integration of theTOC into the evaluation planning and TORs. With respect to adequacy of resourcing, at the planning stage the team was well resourced in terms of staffing and skill sets. Lowest scores in this phase of the evaluation were for the quality of the TORs. Nevertheless, the score for this aspect of the evaluation was above 3.

A score of 3.23 out of 5 was received for the implementation phase of the evaluation. The highest score in this phase was for methodological integrity. There was a good quality literature review; data was collected from key stakeholders and the methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of information. The lowest score for this phase was for participation and M&E skills development where on-the-job training of DPME junior staff was limited.

The reporting phase of the evaluation received a score of 3.26 out of 5. The highest scores for this phase of the evaluation were for the accessibility of content and suitability of recommendations. The report is well stuctured and accessible and uses the DAC evaluation criteria to guide the structure of the report. The respondents agreed that the recommendations were useful and relevant and had been taken up in subsequent planning stages for the future implementation of the CSP.

Robustness of findings and the acknowledgement of ethical considerations received lower scores in this phase, but nevertheless were above the midway point on the scale. With respect to the robustness of findings, the findings made extensive use of project data, however, it would have been useful if there had been more integration of the findings with data obtained from the case studies and interviews. The Sector Expert felt that although the data was available, it could have been been used more more forcefully, rather than adopting a 'middle-ground' approach to describe the way the programme was functioning. With respect to ethical considerations, although these are described in the Summary Report, they appear to be missing in the Final Full Report.

A score of 2.67 out of 5 was received for the follow-up, use and learning phase of the evaluation. Highest scores in this phase were received for evaluation use and lowest scores for resource utilisation. Most respondents felt that the evaluation had conceptual and symbolic value. Conceptually for example, further improvements to the TOC led to new understandings of what the programme does and how it operates as well as its objectives and envisaged outputs. The evaluation also led to a conversation on the context within which the programme operates, with limited resources for implementation and a more realistic assessment of what the programme can do against this backdrop. Symbolically it was felt that the evaluation added value because it created a platform for understanding it better. With respect to the lowest score in this phase, the evaluation was completed outside the suggested timeframes in the planning phase.

In summary, this was a valuable evaluation undertaken for a complex programme, involving many stakeholders. The quality of the evaluation was good and it contributed to a better understanding of the CSP and methods for improving its implementation in the future.

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.49
Implementation	3.23
Reporting	3.26
Follow-up, use and learning	2.67
Total	3.18

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.72
Free and open evaluation process	3.61

Evaluation Ethics	3.10
Alignment to policy context and background literature	3.53
Capacity development	2.00
Quality control	3.00
Project Management	2.71
Total	3.18

Scores: Phases of Evaluation
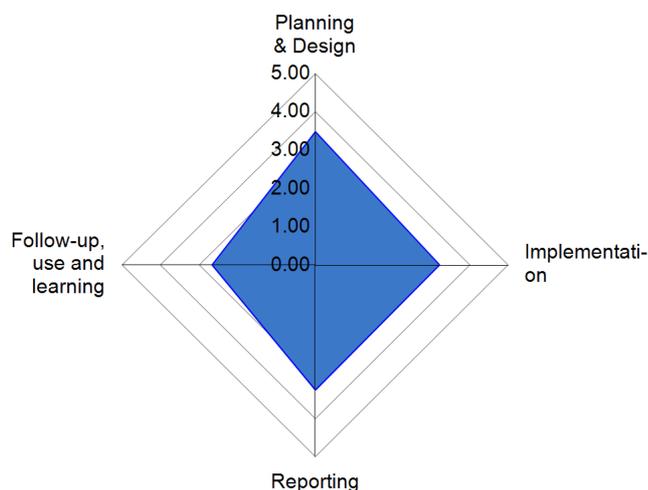
Scores: Overarching Considerations
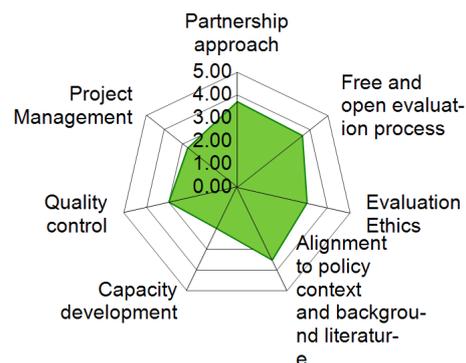
Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	Quality of the TOR	3.19
Planning & Design	Adequacy of resourcing	3.57
Planning & Design	Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology	4.27
Planning & Design	Project management (Planning phase)	2.00
Implementation	Evaluation ethics and independence	2.50
Implementation	Participation and M&E skills development	3.14
Implementation	Methodological integrity	3.58
Implementation	Project management (Implementation phase)	3.00
Reporting	Completeness of the evaluation report	3.00
Reporting	Accessibility of content	4.00
Reporting	Robustness of findings	2.80
Reporting	Strength of conclusions	3.33
Reporting	Suitability of recommendations	4.00
Reporting	Acknowledgement of ethical considerations	3.14
Follow-up, use and learning	Resource utilisation	2.00
Follow-up, use and learning	Evaluation use	2.83
Total	Total	3.18

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 comprehensive, well-structured and complete TORs, comprising the purpose of the evaluation; the evaluation focus (mid-term); evaluation questions; potential users of the evaluation and how they would use its findings; methodology and scope of the project as well as deliverables; timeframes and associated milestones. The TORs also included the required skills and competencies of the service providers; specifications on the structure of the proposal and management and reporting arrangements for the duration of the evaluation.The respondents from National Treasury felt that the TORs were clear and well-defined. The Service Provider felt that the upfront components of the evaluation in the TORs such as the literature review, were not clearly articulated in terms of its purpose and whether the review should focus on the theoretical underpinnings of the CSP; the policy aspect, or both.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or internal evaluation proposal of an adequate standard

Standard:	The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal)
Comment and Analysis:	The approach and type of evaluation was well suited to the scope and purpose of the evaluation. This was a mid-term implementation evaluation of the City Support Programme (CSP), for the period 2011-2017. The study was meant to inform future CSP evaluations and to review the design and implementation of the CSP in order to improve its delivery. The Sector Specialist from the DPME was of the view that the TORs could have been strengthened further in terms of expectations/outputs of the evaluation.The Service Provider felt that the upfront components of the evaluation in the TORs such as the literature review, were not clearly articulated in terms of its purpose and whether the review should focus on the theoretical underpinnings of the CSP; the policy aspects, or both. However the Project Manager from DPME noted that a lot of time spent in the development of the TORs was on clarifying the research questions.The Co-Project Manager from National Treasury (NT) conceded that whilst it was always clear in their own minds that this was an implementation evaluation, some of the overarching research questions had aspects which overlapped into project impact. This may have affected the understanding from the Service Provider on the scope of the evaluation.
Rating:	3: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal)

Standard:	The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs
Comment and Analysis:	The ToRs identified the intended users of the evaluation in tabulated/summarised format. A comprehensive list of possible users was identified together with specific details on how users could potentially use the results based on their likely information needs.
Rating:	4: The TOR identified the intended users of the evaluation and differentiated between their information needs well

Standard:	Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Key stakeholders were engaged in the scoping of the evaluation. These included the DPME; Treasury and the CSP.
Rating:	3: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation

Adequacy of resourcing

Standard:	The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time and budget allocated
Comment and Analysis:	Given that this was an implementation evaluation, involving desktop work and a finite number of qualitative interviews, the resource allocation at the outset seemed reasonable. Respondents interviewed including the NT felt that the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time and budget at the planning stage, but unforeseen delays at the implementation stage of the evaluation resulted in budgetary and time overruns.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time and budget allocated

Standard:	The team conducting the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets
Comment and Analysis:	In reviewing the inception-phase documents of the evaluation, the evaluation appeared to be adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets. These matched the staffing and skill requirements specified in the project TORs. The team comprised Project Management experience; expertise in data collection and management and monitoring and evaluation; local and international sector experts with a deep knowledge and understanding of the CSP. Sector experts included the fields of finance; governance and planning; human settlements; economic development public transport and local government. In addition a quality assurance panel was also part of the team. The Sector Specialist and Project Manager from the DPME felt that overall the team was good. The sector Specialist however felt that it was slightly weaker on aspects relating to theoretical underpinnings of government finance and fiscal policy frameworks within an Intergovernmental (IGR) context. The NT respondent felt that on paper the Service Provider team was good but when the evaluation started, some of the team members listed in their proposal were not present to do the work and it was felt that further team changes were necessary to complete the evaluation. However, overall, respondents interviewed felt that this was the best team that was available at the time to undertake the evaluation and although there were problems initially with team composition, these were improved upon through the course of the evaluation to produce a satisfactory result.
Rating:	4: The evaluation was well resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology

Standard:	There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Specific reference was made to the Theory of Change in the TORs. The Service Provider noted at the Inception phase of the project that the Theory of Change (TOC) was important in the shaping of the evaluation framework. It gave direction in the development of key evaluation questions; in the collection of relevant indicators; in the use of data sources and in the methodology for data collection. The TOC was also well integrated into the TORs and was included in the description on the focus of the evaluation; in the key evaluation questions specified in the TORs and in the specific acivities of the evaluation, including the convening of a workshop to finalise the TOC. There were also visual representations of the TOC in the TORs.
Rating:	5: The intervention logic or theory of change of the evaluand was well integrated into the TOR and the Inception Report, including visual representations, and informed the design of the evaluation

Standard:	The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked
Comment and Analysis:	The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked. The project TORs specified the type of methodology most appropriate for the key research questions being asked as well as the data source for the collection of the information. A mixed methods approach was used, entailing interviews with key stakeholders; documentary reviews; budget and financial analysis. The Service Provider also felt that the methodology was appropriate for the questions that were 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:	Bearing in mind that this evaluation did not entail a survey component, but qualitative interviews with key stakeholders across the spectrum of departments and implementing agencies of the CSP, sampling was more than sufficient. It included representatives of relevant national departments; representatives from 5 metropolitan municipalities including officials and politicians; lead coordinators of the CSP; interviews with experts and partner institutions. The Service Provider felt the the list of interviews was exhaustive and amounted to some 100 respondents from the various categories of respondents listed above.
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:	An inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on the implementation of the evaluation and the Service Provider noted that there were some minor changes made resulting from this phase. Some of the issues and questions in the project TORs including emerging results (impact) of the programme at its midway stage, needed to be clarified and it was agreed that although the evaluation was primarily an implementation evaluation, where there was evidence of impact of the programme, pronouncements would be made on these if initial evidence could be found. However it appeared that not all issues were adequately resolved during this phase because the respondent from NT noted that the Service Provider insisted on revising the TOC at the outset. However, NT felt that this was not necessary and revisions to the TOC were only necessary as an output of the evaluation as one of its products at the end of the evaluation.
Rating:	2: There was an inception phase but it was not utilised appropriately or failed to affirm a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented

Implementation

Evaluation ethics and independence

Standard:	Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, informed consent, assurances of confidentiality and appropriate clearance were achieved; e.g. through an ethics review board, in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureacratic clearance
Comment and Analysis:	Ethical sensitivity was less of a factor in this evaluation because of the topic of the evaluation and the target interviews. However, the Service Provider indicated that all respondents interviewed had to sign Consent Forms agreeing to their level of participation in the study and key informants were also assured that their views expressed would not be attributable to them in the report. However in the documents reviewed, including the final report, there was no evidence of consent forms. In the Methodology section of the summary report the authors note that consent forms were used and respondents views were anonymised. The authors further note that United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines (UNEG) were used to ensure the ethical integrity of the study from beginning to end.
Rating:	3: There was clear evidence that ethical protocols were observed for some data collection instances including: informed consent agreements; confidentiality; documenting and storing data notes, recordings or transcripts; and ethics review board approvals where appropriate

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 Service Provider noted that there was pressure by some members of the Steering Committee to support specific ideological positions of the CSP and they had to defend their position. The Service Provider also felt that the DPME wanted them to engage on these ideological positions, however the Service Provider argued that this was beyond their brief to provide an opinion on the theoretical and ideological approach of the CSP and declined to do so. It was felt nevertheless that this was ulimately an independent evaluation and that the results and findings of the evaluation stand up to scrutiny. The Service Provider also felt that they could have received more timeous support and assistance with getting data necessary for the evaluation. When they did ultimately receive it, it was unprocessed and sent to them via Dropbox and some 20 000 documents were shared which was difficult to process. However the respondent from NT noted that although this volume of data was supplied to the Service Provider in this manner, it may have been the Service Provider's own shortcommings in processing this data, because their lack of a clear understanding of what data/information was needed to facilitate the answering of the research questions. Further, the Service Provider noted that the financial information relating to the programme was patchy and not available for the full duration of the programme and this made it difficult in terms of the evidence-base used to develop findings.
Rating:	2: There was some evidence that the evaluation team was not supported to get access to existing data and information sources

Participation and M&E skills development

Standard:	Key stakeholders were involved in the evaluation through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement
Comment and Analysis:	Key stakeholders were involved in the evaluation through a project Steering Committee (SC). Key stakeholders included: DPME; the South African Cities Network; SALGA; the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs; National Treasury; the Department of Transport and Department of Human Settlements and; the CSP. The Service Provider noted that participation in the SC was generally good and most key stakeholders attended with the exception of the National Department of Transport which often did not attend meetings and the National Departments of Human Settlements who attended meetings, but their contribution was patchy because they would send different representatives to these meetings, who were not familiar with the evaluation itself or its progress. The respondent from NT largely corroborated these views that key stakeholders were generally actively involved in regular formalised arrangements through a project Steering Committee.
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:	The project TORs did mention the need to include PDI members in the evaluation team who would gain evaluation experience and also allocated points in project proposals that incorporated capacity development elements into their proposals. However the Service Provider noted that they had proposed that the DPME second one or two members of their staff onto the team to work with researchers in an 'on-the-job' training capacity. But due to work pressures this did not happen to any extent. The DPME respondent noted that there had been some informal on-the-job training of junior staff.
Rating:	2: There was some evidence of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand or evaluators but this was either unstructured or incomplete

Methodological integrity

Standard:	A literature review was developed which informed the analytical framework and findings of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	This was a good quality literature review. The TORs required the development of a literature review, including a review of CSP insititutional documentation and related regulations and policies to provide an analytical framework to the evaluation. The TORs also called for the review to cover an international comparative component. The review successfully mapped out the local and international policy context within which the CSP emerged and in addition provided an overview of the CSP itself; how it was shaped; its locality; structure and purpose in the local government sphere and the way it links transversally to national departments and metropolitan governments.
Rating:	4: A good quality literature review was developed which was insightful in terms of the analytical framework and provided good context for the findings

Standard:	The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented adequately
Comment and Analysis:	The methods employed in the evaluation were generally consistent with those planned. This included a literature review; analysis of programme documents; analysis of budgetary and financial information and case studies of 5 metropolitan cities. There did appear to be a slight increase in the number of suggested respondents to target representing different relevant stakeholder/interest groups of the CSP. The TORs mentioned some 80 respondents to target but the Service Provider indicated that after discussions and the Inception Meeting this list was approximately 100. Some 92 respondents were listed in the final report as key sources of information. The report contained no summary tables on the number of respondents successfully interviewed and the stakeholder groups they represented. The Service Provider noted the difficulties in obtaining interviews with political representatives and officials in the case study cities. In some metropolitan areas, municipal managers and councillors refused to participate in interviews.There also appeared to be some variance in understanding of the reasons for the use of case studies in the evaluation. According to the Service Provider, it was initially thought that the case studies would feed into the larger output of the final evaluation report, however they believed that the DPME viewed the case studies of the cities as mini-evaluation reports in themselves. The Service Provider felt that this made the reports for the case studies longer and more time consuming to develop. The DPME respondent confirmed the view that the case study findings were meant to feed into the larger evaluation report. Furthermore financial data on the programme was not readily available and was found to be not complete for the entire duration of the programme. This limited the evidence that the Service Provider could present on the financial components of the programme and its sustainability going forward.
Rating:	3: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented adequately

Standard:	A pilot of basic data collection instrumentation occurred prior to undertaking data collection and it was used to inform the research process
Comment and Analysis:	The Service Provider noted that the research intruments for qualitative interviews were pilotted and this led to some adjustments to the instruments.
Rating:	3: A pilot of basic data collection instrumentation occurred prior to undertaking data collection and it was used to inform the research process

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 key stakeholders including representatives of the relevant national departments; the CSP coordinators;metropolitan officials ; experts and external stakeholders such as the South African Cities Network. In addition, key stakeholders' opinions were solicited in a findings validation workshop and to obtain inputs on recommendations. However some political respresentatives refused to participate in interviews.
Rating:	4: Data was collected from the intended key stakeholder groupings in line with the envisioned range and type of stakeholders (approx. 80-89% of intended)

Standard:	The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information
Comment and Analysis:	The methodology engaged beneficaries appropropriately through interviews with national officials; city officials and politicians at the metropolitan city level as well as through the convening of a validation workshop to obtain feedback on the evaluation's findings and to assist with the development of recommendations on the future implementation of the CSP.The project TORs are explicit as to who should be interviewed at a minimum for the evaluation. Minimum requirements did not include indirect beneficiaries such as ordinary residents and civil society members in general. Because the CSP is an interdepartmental programme but aimed to improve municipal performance in the provision of infrastructure leading to more integrated, sustainable cities for the benefit of residents, and ultimately the poor, it would not have been practical to include indirect beneficiaries at a sufficiently large scale in this evaluation. The focus of the evaluation was on implementation of the programme and therefore given resource limitations, the primary focus was on government officials and agencies immediately supporting the programme.
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 beneficaries consulted on emerging findings)

Project management (Implementation phase)

Standard:	The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together adequately to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The Service Provider felt that although the evaluation did achieve its objectives, the Steering Committee (SC) was too broad and there were too many people with different vested interests. As a result opinions on the SC were so diverse that it was sometimes difficult to negotiate these meetings. However the SC did engage with all the material that was produced and therefore, the service provider felt that it did work adequately to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the evaluation.
Rating:	3: The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together adequately to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation

Standard:	Support provided by the evaluation secretariat (e.g. the administrators responsible for the evaluation) facilitated achievement of the objectives of the evaluation (eg turnaround times, addressing problems, preparation for meetings etc)
Comment and Analysis:	The Service Provider felt that the support provided by the Secretariat was insufficient. Adminstrators were not always available to assist the Service Provider in accessing all documents and to access respondents for interviews. It was felt that the DPME were short staffed and stretched too thinly to provide adequate support. The Service Provider also felt that there was some tension between Treasury and the DPME on the project. This view was confirmed by the NT respondent who noted that staff changes in the Project Manager role within DPME for the evaluation resulted in delays and a lack of support and progress with the evaluation initially. However he felt that this was rectified when the original Project Manager returned to the evaluation. These dynamics played out at meetings where the service provider felt that it was not always being supported. With respect to obtaining documents necessary to review, there was a considerable delay in obtaining these and in the end some 20 000 unprocessed documents were provided to the Service Provider via Dropbox. The Service Provider felt that obtaining such a volume of unorganised material at once in this way to did not assist them in efficiently being able to assess all relevant documents to the programme. Nevertheless, the respondent from NT felt that it was not the volume of documents sent to the service provider that was the issue, but rather the fact that they were unfocussed in what they were looking for to answer key evaluation questions. However, the respondent from NT felt that SC generally functioned adequately, minutes were taken and circulated and draft reports were also circulated. However, there had been some problems with the processing of comments on report findings. Some of these comments got lost and this was a bit disconcerting. However this did not significantly slow down the evaluation process itself in achieving its objectives. Bearing in mind that this was a complex evaluation involving many stakeholders, across different government departments and involving a large Steering Committee, the problems encountered seemed to have been overcome and the Steering Committee on balance provided sufficient support to achieve the objectives of the evaluation.
Rating:	3: Support provided by the evaluation secretariat facilitated achievement of the objectives of the evaluation

Reporting

Completeness of the evaluation report

Standard:	The first draft evaluation report was of a sufficient quality to go to stakeholders and did not require major changes
Comment and Analysis:	The Project Manager from the DPME felt that the first draft was not of a sufficient quality to go to stakeholders and that the analysis needed strengthening in later drafts. The respondent from NT also felt that the first draft of the report was poor, but that subsequent versions after incorporating comments, resulted in significant improvements to its quality.
Rating:	2: A first draft of the evaluation report was of a poor quality and required major changes

Standard:	The final evaluation report is well-structured and complete in terms of the following: executive summary; context of the development evaluation; evaluation purpose, questions and scope; methodology; findings and analysis; conclusions and recommendations
Comment and Analysis:	The final evaluation report is well structured and complete and contains a comprehensive Executive Summary. The development context of the evaluation is outlined in the Literature Review component of the report. The report also notes that this is an implementation evaluation of the CSP programme at its midway stage and covers the period from April 2011 to March 2017. The report outlines the central evaluation questions guided by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria and then a series of sub-questions relevant to the CSP programme. The report also descibes the methodology of the evaluation.The findings of the evaluation together with analysis of findings are provided logically through the use of the DAC evaluation criteria, of efficiency, effectiveness; sustainability with an added dimension not in the DAC evaluation questions, that of 'coherence' which explored how well or not the different actions of the CSP worked together. The report notes that because this was a mid-term Implementation Evaluation, the Impact dimension of the DAC was not covered in the research or report. A set of comprehensive conclusions and recommendations are provided. The Conclusions section in the report are broken down into the key thematic areas of: implications for the TOC for the CSP; key successes and key challenges of the programme and a set of learnings derived from an assessment of the programme at it midway stage. Recommendations relate to three main areas of the programme, viz: strategic recommendations (the key strategic actions of the programme that are needed in the future); the structure of the programme (those relating to how it is located/insitutionalised in the governance framework) and; operational recommendations (how it should be rolled out in the different metro contexts).
Rating:	4: The final evaluation report is well-structured, complete and presents the following report components well: executive summary; context of the development evaluation; evaluation purpose, questions and scope; methodology; findings and analysis; conclusions and recommendations

Accessibility of content

Standard:	The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and adequate for publication (e.g. adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions; levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc.)
Comment and Analysis:	The final evaluation report is user-friendly and the flow is logical and easy to read. The language is accessible and conforms to standard practises of reporting in the social sciences in terms of style of writing and reporting conventions. There were no widespread grammatical or typographical errors. Referencing appeared to be consistent and references in the text were mostly also included as complete references in the Reference List.
Rating:	4: The final report is well written, accessible to the common reader and ready for publication with only minor spelling, grammar or formatting mistakes

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:	Figures and tables are well used in the report. Tables are descriptive and are used to support the narrative in the report findings section. Tables and figures are formulated from CSP project data and related information. They are clear with appropriate labels and headings and explanatory notes are provided where needed. Tables and figures are used throughout the report as evidence to the supporting narrative in the findings chapter of the report.
Rating:	4: Figures, tables and conventions are well used for a variety of types of data presentations and supporting explanations make them accessible to readers

Robustness of findings

Standard:	Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard
Comment and Analysis:	Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard bearing in mind the data presented was descriptive in nature and sourced from existing project-data on the programme and analysed through Excel. The DPME Project Manager felt that the data analysis had been well executed. However the DPME Sector Specialist felt that the findings presented were not always sufficiently explicit, even though the data was available. The Service Provider adopted a middle-ground approach in their analysis because of the diversity of voices and opinions in the Steering Committee.
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 Sector Specialist from the DPME felt there was sufficient data and evidence which could have been used and analysed by the Service Provider to produce more forceful findings. Instead the Service Provider presented the findings in a way that occupied 'the middle-ground', thereby satisfying to some extent the diversity of stakeholders and interest groups. However he felt that findings that were presented were based on sufficient evidence. The DPME Project Manager felt that there could have been more triangulation between the various data sources to verify findings in the analysis. For example between existing documentation on the programme and key interviews with stakeholders. Generally, the final report makes extensive use of project-data and documentation that was collected from a wide variety of sources. In sum, from reviewing the evaluation report and also taking into account the views of respondents, it would have been useful to see more integration of data obtained from the case studies and interviews with the programme-related factual data presented in the final full report.
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:	The report does recognise the possibility of alternative interpretations of the data. For example, given the cross-cutting nature of the CSP, it notes that there is an overlap between 'City', 'Component' and 'CSP' work and it is not easy to accurately separate the activities when investigating the total number of hours spent by the CSP team on various components of their work.Therefore, the possibility exists for alternative interpretations in assessing where the bulk of their time has been spent. The same holds true for other aspects of the analysis such as assessing the linkages between project effort and outputs -attributable to programmatic data collection limitations. Given the different ideological positions that appeared to have been expressed by some stakeholders on the Steering Committee and the perceptions that the Service Provider needed to consider these in its findings and recommendations and to adopt a 'middle-ground' approach, the Service Provider could have noted this aspect in the report, and that this may have resulted in the further possibility of alternative interpretations.
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 report appears to be largely free of methodological and analytical flaws. The evaluation utililsed a mixed method approach to analyse programme implementation. Project level data was obtained from CSP project sheets; Annual Reports and plans; National Departmental Annual Reports; government policy documents; minutes of meetings; project-related documents including operational documents. However, bearing in mind that just under 100 people were interviewed for the evaluation, it would have been useful to have seen more reporting and analysis of the findings from these interviews as supporting evidence together with the quantitative/factual data that was collected, presented and analysed, to triangulate the findings.
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:	The authors state clearly that because this was a mid-term implementation evaluation, one of the dimensions of the DAC evaluation criteria, that of measuring impact, was covered only tangentially, where findings were available. Furthermore, various data collection challenges were also clearly articulated. These included difficulties in accessing and identifying relevant CSP documents and data. This initially undermined the team's ability to compile the literature review and analyse and understand project implementation and financial expenditure. In addition, in some of the metro case studies insights from politicians could not be solicited because some declined to give interviews. Representatives of some of the national departments also did not readily avail themselves for interviews. However, the authors note that despite these limitations, every effort was made to ensure that the findings and conclusions of the evaluation were not adversley affected in any way.
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:	Conclusions are derived from evidence and cover the successes and challenges of the programme across the DAC evaluation criteria. The Conclusions also draw on findings from the metropolitan case studies. Conclusions also discuss other aspects of the CSP drawing from the findings and condense these into several learnings and observations.An example of this was the finding that the CSP has not been institutionalised and its limited success in the area of key policy and regulatory reforms because these still rest with line-departments. Its varying levels of success at the metropolitan level due to lower levels of capacity of officials at this level is a further example. However, although Conclusions are derived from evidence, there seems to be limited use of different sources of data to derive Conclusions.
Rating:	3: Conclusions are derived from evidence

Standard:	Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Comment and Analysis:	Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions by highlighting how the CSP has been implemented at the mid-term stage. Conclusions focus on most of the original evaluation questions dealing with project effectiveness; efficiency; project sustainability.
Rating:	3: Conclusions adequately address the original evaluation purpose and questions

Standard:	Conclusions are drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change
Comment and Analysis:	Conclusions were drawn with specific reference to the TOC. The conclusions analyse and link the progress of the programme with specific envisaged outputs and outcomes mapped in the TOC. The conclusions also note that certain critical assumptions underlying the TOC have not held such as obtaining political buy-in of the programme and the capacity requirements to implement the programme. Both of these factors impacted adversely on the achievement of immediate desired programme outcomes.
Rating:	4: Conclusions are drawn with an explicit reference to, and provide a clear judgement on, the intervention logic or theory of change

Suitability of recommendations

Standard:	Recommendations are made in consultation with relevant government officials, stakeholders and sectoral experts
Comment and Analysis:	According to the Service Provider, the recommendations were developed jointly by the the Service Provider and key stakeholders participating in the evaluation. This included government officials and sectoral experts, including the following: service providers; the DPME; National Treasury; the South African Cities Network amongst others. The DPME Project Manager felt that there could have been more consultation with civil society, because the CSP was a change programme, designed to improve the living spaces and built environment for ordinary city dwellers including the poor. However the respondent from NT took a slightly different view, noting that the recommendations had been developed through adequate consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the direct beneficiaries of the programme, namely city and government officials who would be able to improve the programme implementation through the recommendations that were provided.
Rating:	4: Recommendations are made with relevant government officials, stakeholders including beneficiary representatives and sectoral experts beyond the project steering committee, making a significant contribution

Standard:	Recommendations are useful- they are relevant, specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable
Comment and Analysis:	Overall, recommendations specifically focus on strategic; structural and operational aspects of the programme and appear to be sufficiently specific and feasible, affordable and acceptable.Interviews with respondents support this view.The Service Provider was of the opinion that the recommendations from the evaluation had been useful because they participated in the improvement plan workshop and recommendations have been taken up in the planning of the next phase of the CSP. The DPME Project Manager indicated that the findings are relevant and that there was a need for an assessment of how cities are investing in the built environment. The respondent from NT said that the recommendations were useful and were being taken forward in an implmentation plan.
Rating:	4: Recommendations are well-formulated for use- they begin to differentiate by user and are relevant to the current policy context, specifically targetted, feasible to implement, affordable and acceptable to key stakeholders

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 Summary Report describes the procedures to ensure confidentiality and discusses the ethical considerations of the evaluation. However the full report provides no details of the ethical considerations or measure to ensure confidentiality.
Rating:	2: The full report does not acknowledge whether confidentiality was ensured or informed consent secured but there is some evidence that this is the case

Standard:	There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the evaluation report on a public website
Comment and Analysis:	The Service Provider felt that there were no risks in disseminating the evaluation report on a public website. Furthermore, the subject matter is not of a sensitive nature and respondents views that were reported in the final report were anonymised.The DPME felt that there are no risks in disseminating the evaluation report.The respondent from NT felt that there are no risks in disseminating the Summary Version of the report (the 1/5/25 version).
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 indicative time for the completion of the evaluation report indicated in the project TORs that the duration of the evaluation was 7 months. However, the final evaluation reports were submitted in 2018, suggesting substantial time overruns. The Service Provider felt that the research questions were too many and expansive and intended to please too many different stakeholders. There was also no initial written analytical account of the programme that could be used and against which implementation of the CSP could be assessed. This had to be compiled before the evaluation was able to start. The Service Provider also felt that the initial TOC was weak and had to be revised at the outset. In addition, accessing data and respondents for interviews caused further delays. These factors delayed the completion of the evaluation. However the clients felt that the Service Provider could have speeded up the work and spent too much time on the case studies and revising the initial TOC. In addition, the quality of the analysis in the first drafts of the report had to be improved and this delayed the completion of the evaluation. The Service Provider noted that there were no budget overruns for the commissioning departments, but project delays and changes to the scope of work did result in budgetary overruns which they absorbed. The DPME agreed that the evaluation took longer to complete beyond the envisaged timeframe.
Rating:	2: The evaluation was completed outside of the planned timeframes and over budget, but with approval of the commissioning organisation

Evaluation use

Standard:	Results of the evaluation have been presented to relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	Findings from the evaluation have not been presented to all stakeholders and this includes Cabinet. Nevertheless CSP staff have been presented with the findings. Minutes from Steering Committee meetings suggest that findings have been presented to a limited extent to stakeholders outside government.
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 Service Provider indicated that they were not aware of any reflective process having been undertaken. The DPME said that a reflective process had been undertaken with the CSP. This process was an honest assessment on what the weaker aspects of the evaluation process were including the time delays which impacted on Treasury and some of the limitations of the project Secretariat.The NT respondent also noted that a reflective process had been undertaken with the DPME.
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:	The Service Provider was of the opinion that the evaluation had raised the profile of the CSP because it had created a platform for them to understand it better. Up to the point of the beginning of the evaluation, the purpose of the CSP had not been communicated to all relevant stakeholders. The DPME agreed that the evaluation had created a useful platform to discuss the CSP and raise its profile.
Rating:	3: The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as being of symbolic value to the policy or programme

Standard:	The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping future policy and practice
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation appeared to have contributed some conceptual value and the Service Provider and the DPME felt that it had, although there were some mixed opinions on this. The Service Provider noted that their work around improving the TOC helped to conceptualise the challenges of the CSP and what the programme is trying to achieve. For example, after this process it was recognised that It was not a support programme but a 'change programme'. This changed perspectives of the programme in terms of what it does and how it operates. Ultimately the Service Provider was of the view that this translates into a broader conversation about how programmes are conceptualised what expectations of the programmes are. The Service Provider felt that there is sometimes a disjuncture between what the politicians expect of a programme and what it achieves. They often look at the outcome and impact levels without realistically looking at what a programme can do with its resources. From this perspective the service provider felt that it was an important evaluation because it creates a conversation around designing programmes, against a backdrop of often very complex institutional environments involving complex intergovernmental relations and frameworks. Mixed opinions on the conceptual value of the evaluation were expressed from the client side. The DPME Sector Specialist felt that the evaluation had conceptual value because it helped to refocus the CSP. Hitherto it had been a dispersed and diffuse programme. The DPME Project Manager also felt that the evaluation had added conceptual value. However, the respondent from NT noted that whereas the TOC workshop that preceded the evaluation had been really useful in adding conceptual value, the evaluation itself did not add conceptual value. On balance, despite this latter view expressed, there was evidence that the evaluation had conceptual value by assisting with refocussing the programme and informing the improvement plan for future adjustments to the CSP.
Rating:	3: The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice

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List of Interviewees

Andreas Bertoldi, Project Leader, RebelGroup. Interview via Skype.11 April 2018

Ahmed Vawda, Sector Expert, Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation. Interview over phone. 18 April 2018

Matodsi Amisi, Director Evaluation, Contract Manager. Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation. Interview via Skype. 20 April 2018

Jeremy Timm, Project Manager, National Treasury. Interview over phone. 24 April 2018