



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Report on the Evaluation of Government's Poverty Reduction Programme

Date Evaluation was completed: 01 October 2007

Name of assessor: Tim Mosdell

Evaluation Number: 75

Date Assessment Completed: 31 January 2013

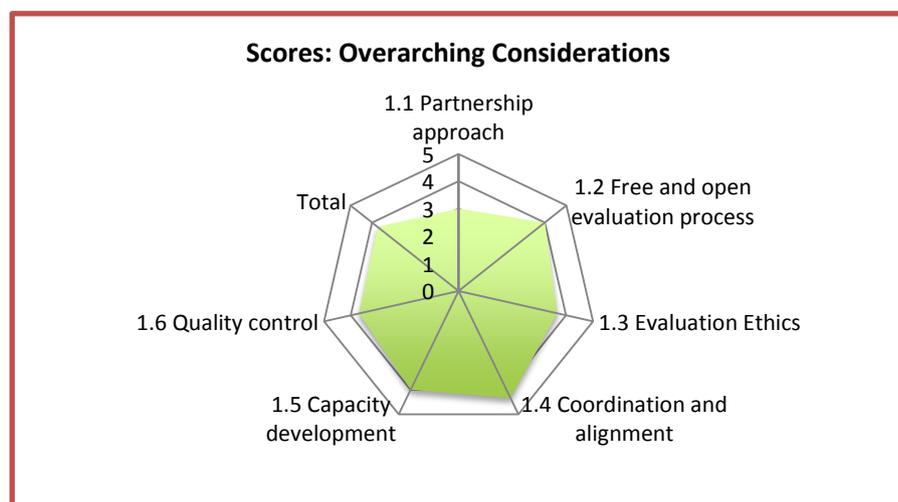
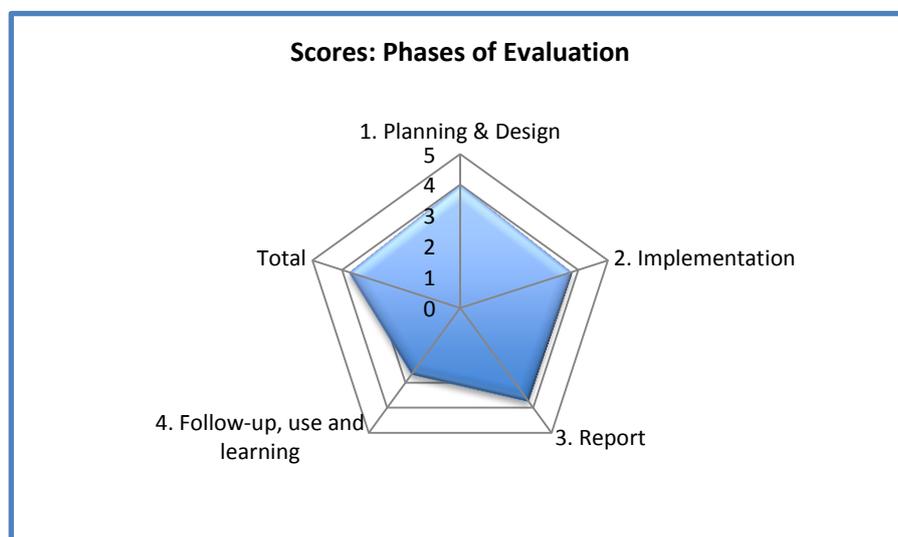
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Report on the Evaluation of Government's Poverty Reduction Programme
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 October 2007
Name of Assessor	Tim Mosdell
Evaluation Number	75
Completion Date of Assessment	31 January 2013
Initiated by	Public Service Commission
Evaluation undertaken by	Public Service Commission
Evaluation area / sector	Poverty, socio-economic dev, access to credit
	LED, SMEs & local development projects <i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 4
	Outcome 7 <i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Impact
	<i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Programme
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	2005-2007
Known Cost of Evaluation	Approximately R700K

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	4.00
Implementation	3.78
Report	3.71
Follow-up, use and learning	2.64
Total	3.65

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.00
Free and open evaluation process	4.00
Evaluation Ethics	3.67
Coordination and alignment	4.33
Capacity Development	4.00
Quality control	3.70



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

The evaluation was guided by a TOR which set out the purpose, scope, design and methodology and outputs.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The purpose of the evaluation, to evaluate a sample of government's poverty reduction initiatives in order to develop an overall understanding of their efficacy, was clear in the TOR.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation criteria were clearly set out in the TOR and included; relevance of objectives, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, institutional development impact, scale of engagement, targeting, interactions and externalities, and monitoring and evaluation.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The approach and methodology outlined in the TOR were suited to the purpose and scope of the project outlined.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Intended users, namely Departments responsible for the roll-out of poverty reduction programmes, were identified in the TOR.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The scoping of the TOR was done primarily by the Public Service Commission, although stakeholders were involved in subsequent phases of the project.

Rating 2

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

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

Comment and Analysis

The project had adequate time resources, but more could have been achieved if there was more time available.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The project had adequate budget resources, but more could have been achieved if there was more budget available.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The project had adequate staffing resources, but more could have been achieved if there was more staff available.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation did not explicitly plan for capacity building, but in the event, an element of this was included in the project.

Rating 2

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 the review reflected on the policy and programme environment, and where appropriate, reference was made to these.

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

The study draws heavily from existing literature and studies and a review of these is covered under each of the evaluative sections of the report i.e. Public Works, Land redistribution, income generating projects, and individual services and social development.

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

There was no explicit reference to an intervention logic or theory of change, with the thrust of the study being to develop an overall understanding of the efficacy of government's poverty reduction initiatives.

Rating 2

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

Comment and Analysis

Key stakeholders, although consulted in other aspects of the project, were not consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation.

Rating 2

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project and included; key informant interviews, document analysis, a telephonic survey, in-depth case studies and a review of a database developed in a previous study.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The planned sampling for the study was 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

From the outset, it was intended that elements of best practice should be shared amongst departments involved in the programmes to minimise poor project design and to deliver projects more efficiently.

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

The inception phase was used to develop a common understanding between the PSC and the external research team from the HSRC. External stakeholders were not involved in this part of the process.

Rating 3

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

The PSC as a matter of routine, refers its projects to their legal team before proceeding. The HSRC also consults with its legal team and ethics committee prior to project implementation. All respondents were asked to sign letters of consent.

Rating 4

2.2. Evaluator independence

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

Comment and Analysis

The external evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no evidence of any conflict of interest.

Rating 4

2.3. Key stakeholder involvement

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Part of the methodology explicitly involved soliciting the views of key stakeholders.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

An element of capacity building was incorporated into the evaluation process - a Deputy Director shadowed the process with a view to deepening an understanding of the process and methodology.

Rating 4

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation methods employed were appropriate to the project and included; key informant interviews, document analysis, a telephonic survey, in-depth case studies and a review of a database developed in a previous study.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The project experienced some problems in terms of gathering quantitative data at the project level.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Data gathering methods were appropriate given the scope of the evaluation and included interviews, document and data base analysis, and case studies.

Rating 4

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, although some challenges were phased in securing quantitative data at the project level.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

Key stakeholders were engaged as part of the methodology through key stakeholder interviews.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The methods for engaging beneficiaries occurred primarily at the case study level through approximately 100 beneficiary interviews. This was appropriate given the scope of the evaluation.

Rating 4

2.5. Project management

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

Comment and Analysis

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

Rating 4

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 report has a well written, well structured executive summary which offers a precis of the report as a whole.

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 study and possible interventions were explicit in the evaluation and well explained in a dedicated context section on the report.

Rating 4

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

The evaluation questions were clearly articulated in the form of evaluation criteria for analysis which include; relevance of objectives, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, scale of engagement, targeting, interactions and externalities, and monitoring and evaluation.

Rating 4

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

The scope of the evaluation was apparent in the report and was confined to four programme type i.e. Public Works, Land redistribution, income generating projects, and individual services and social development.

Rating 4

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**

The methodology used in the evaluation was outlined in a dedicated section of the report.

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 arranged under each programme type and 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, both in the body of the report, and in the executive summary.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The project acknowledged limitations in terms of quantitative data availability in a dedicated section of the report.

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

The report was written in a professional, accessible style and is suitable for publication.

Rating **4**

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

While not a lot of data are presented in the report, where it was presented, it was done appropriately.

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 report does not make extensive use of tables and figures, but where these are used, they are clear, consistent, well labelled and generally contribute to the structure and argument of the report.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed**Comment and Analysis**

The data analysis appears to have been well executed, although as acknowledged in the report, there is a limitation in that not much quantitative data informed the findings.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence**Comment and Analysis**

Generally, the findings were well supported by evidence, although in many cases, this evidence was derived from interviews and not always fully backed up by quantitative evidence.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The interview based evidence was sufficient and appropriate to the analysis and was supported by quantitative evidence where available - this quantitative evidence was not always as forthcoming as would have been ideal.

Rating **3**

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

Comment and Analysis

There are a number of references in the report which suggest that alternative interpretation of the findings was possible.

Rating **4**

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

Comment and Analysis

With the exception of the shortcomings identified above and in the report, the study appears to be free of significant methodological and analytic flaws.

Rating **3**

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions flow coherently from the 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, and the study as a whole, builds on previous work done and takes relevant related work into account.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions address the original purpose of the study which was to provide an objective, comparative assessment of the different main components of the government's poverty reduction initiatives.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Although there was no explicit reference to an intervention logic or theory of change, the thrust of the study was to develop an overall understanding of the efficacy of government's poverty reduction initiatives.

Rating **2**

3.5. Recommendations

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

Comment and Analysis

Many sectoral partners and experts were reflected in the sample of those interviewed and as such can be considered to have been indirectly consulted.

Rating **3**

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

Comment and Analysis

Given that government officials and other stakeholders were an integral part of the interview process, it is fair to say that the recommendations were informed by their input.

Rating **4**

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

The recommendations are clearly relevant to the policy context.

Rating 5

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

The recommendations were targeted and quite specific and were aimed at practical implementation.

Rating 4

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

The limitations of the evaluation were noted in a specific section of the report.

Rating 4

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

Informed consent was secured by informants and interviewees, although this was emerged through interviews and is not explicit in the report itself.

Rating 3

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 report publicly given that consent had been secured from individuals.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Given other Department's awareness of PSC's constitutional mandate, there were no unfair risks to them in disseminating the report publicly even though some of the content may be critical of them.

Rating 3

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

The results were presented to certain key stakeholders, including Parliament, although not all Departments were included in this process.

Rating **3**

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed on time.

Rating **5**

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed on budget.

Rating **5**

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 is publicly available online.

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

Within the PSC, there has been a process of reflection, and the report has been widely cited.

Rating 3

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 study has not been directly presented to other Department's, many of whom were interviewees.

Rating 2

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 has conceptual value in terms of shaping policy and informing best practice in the future, although there is not much evidence of it having been widely distributed.

Rating 3

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

Although there is evidence of limited use, for example via citings, the recommendations of the evaluation have not yet been implemented in any systematic way.

Rating 2

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

The evaluation has not been distributed widely enough for it to have any meaningful influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Rating 2

References

Public Service Commission, 2007. Report on the Evaluation of Government's Poverty Reduction Programme, Public Service Commission, October 2007.

List of Interviewees

Marie Fourie, Director, Compliance Evaluation and Organisational Review - Public Service Commission, 31 January 2013.