



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Documenting Lessons and Outcomes of the Business Enabling Fund (BEF) of the Gijima KwaZulu-Natal Local Economic Development Support Programme

Date Evaluation was completed: 01 June 2011

Name of assessor: Robin Richards

Evaluation Number: 92

Date Assessment Completed: 06 February 2013

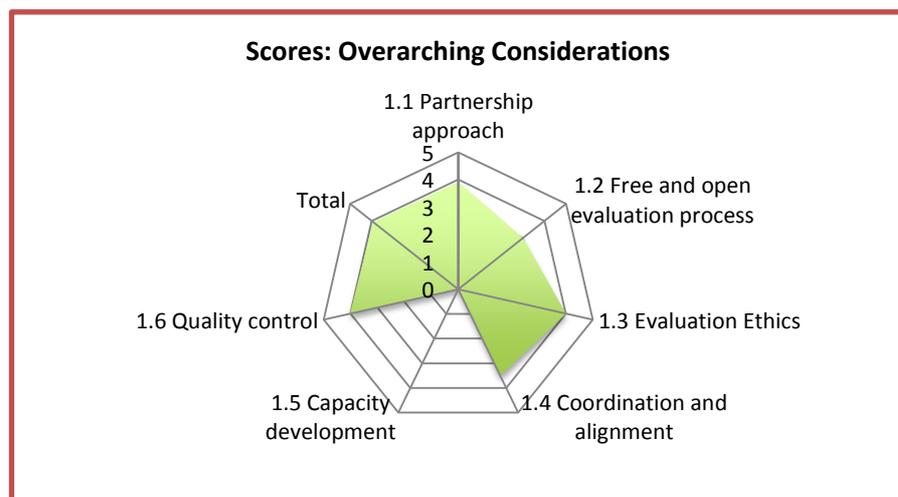
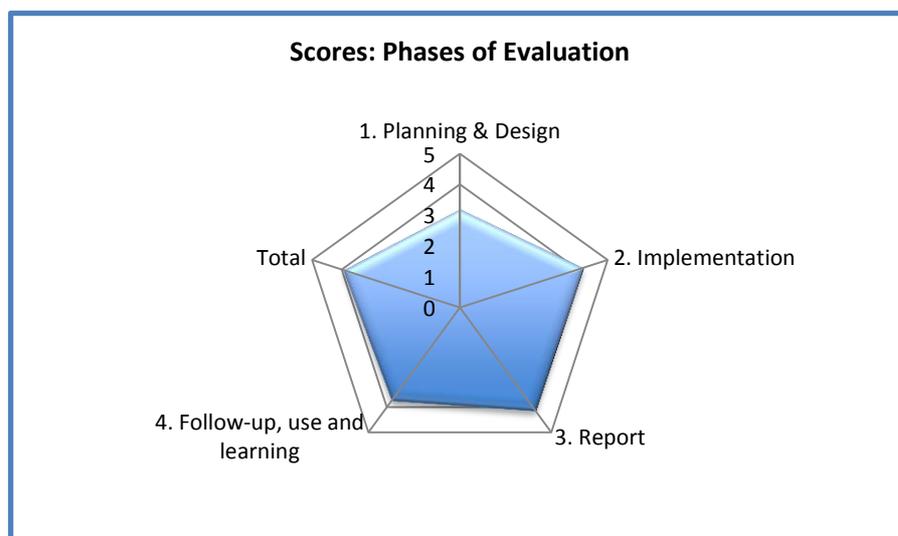
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	Documenting Lessons and Outcomes of the Business Enabling Fund (BEF) of the Gijima KwaZulu-Natal Local Economic Development Support Programme
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 June 2011
Name of Assessor	Robin Richards
Evaluation Number	92
Completion Date of Assessment	06 February 2013
Initiated by	KZN Department of Economic Development and Tourism
Evaluation undertaken by	Feedback Research and Analytics
Evaluation area / sector	Economic planning and development
	<i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 4
	<i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Implementation
	Impact <i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Programme
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	Provincial
Period of Evaluation	May 2011- June 2011
Known Cost of Evaluation	R500,000

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.19
Implementation	4.17
Report	4.12
Follow-up, use and learning	3.71
Total	4.00

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.91
Free and open evaluation process	3.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.00
Coordination and alignment	3.50
Capacity Development	Not Applicable
Quality control	4.02



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 was a very detailed Terms of Reference, meeting most of the criteria indicated in the standard.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The purpose of the evaluation was clearly articulated both in a broad statement about the purpose of the evaluation and in bulleted sub-points itemising the specific objectives of the evaluation.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

These questions were clearly stated in the ToR. A list of more than 30 questions was provided as a guide to assist the service provider in the enquiry to identify lessons learned from the implementation of the BEF.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

This was a hybrid evaluation that aimed to assess both implementation and impact components in documenting lessons and outcomes from the BEF. The service provider noted that the approach was adapted during the execution of the project and the final approach fitted the purpose and context of the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Yes intended users were local, district and provincial authorities, to assist these authorities in creating an enabling environment to support LED.

Rating 5

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

Comment and Analysis

There was a multistakeholder based Project Steering Committee that was involved in this.

Rating 4

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

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

Comment and Analysis

The Departmental head noted that the evaluation was efficient and delivered on time in terms of the broader evaluation process undertaken and culminating in a workshop in June 2011. However the service provider expressed the view that initial estimates for the time needed for the evaluation were not accurate.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The study was co-funded by the DEDT and the National Treasury. The service provider also indicated that the evaluation was undertaken within budget. Nevertheless the budget was insufficient.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The DED indicated that the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets. The Service provider noted that initial estimates of time and expertise to undertake the evaluation were not accurate.

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 Department indicated that this was not formally planned.

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 no evidence of a review of the relevant policy or programme environments in the planning of the evaluation.

Rating 2

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 no evidence of a review of the appropriate literature in the planning of the evaluation.

Rating 2

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

Specific reference was made to the theory of change and this was used as the context against which to assess whether the BEF model is worthy of replication.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The Department indicated that stakeholders had been consulted.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation included the following components: a review of programme documentation and experience; the investigation into funded project processes and results; the grounding of findings in theory and literature; the validation of findings in comparison to similar funding mechanisms. The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach that combined the collection of secondary data with primary data via interviews.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

This was a qualitative project and interviews were undertaken with small numbers of key informants selected specifically to meet the four study objectives of the evaluation.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

The department noted that as the evaluation proceeded, plans for using the findings of the evaluation were developed.

Rating 3

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 ToR of the project evaluation specified this as a requirement for the evaluation. The inception report, resulting from meetings with the service provider, led to no significant changes to the implementation method.

Rating 4

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

This is not relevant to this evaluation.

Rating N/A

2.2. Evaluator independence

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

Comment and Analysis

The Department indicated that the service provider was able to work freely without any interference and this included the sample selection and determining who to interview. The service provider indicated that inputs from the client were intended only to support the service provider and do justice to the complexity of the evaluation.

Rating 4

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

The Department indicated that the service provider was selected on the depth of their skills and their experience with similar evaluation projects. Also, the evaluators chose their own sample and were free to interview any of the core stakeholders.

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***

There was a management committee comprising National Treasury, DEDT, and the service provider. There was also the multi-stakeholder programme Steering Committee (SC) established to provide oversight over the programme. Members of the SC were not only interviewees but also facilitated interviews with the sample of selected projects.

Rating 5

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

There is no current information on this.

Rating N/A

2.4. Methodology

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

Comment and Analysis

There is no additional information on this. The section on limitations in the report does not indicate any significant changes to the methodology due to the paucity of information on project results and experience. However, the service provider did indicate the need for mid-stream adjustments to the method.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

There is no additional information on this. The section on limitations in the report does indicate the paucity of information on project results and experience and also incomplete data from secondary sources.

Rating N/A

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

Comment and Analysis

Data gathering methods were appropriate and involved mixed methods, tailored to the specific objectives of the evaluation. In addition, an attempt was made to ensure external validity by collecting comparable data from a similar programme.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

These were appropriate. The evaluation adopted the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)'s Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD) criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of development assistance. This entailed evaluating the findings against the following cross-cutting indicators: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability and Replicability.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Beneficiaries and the client were the primary sample.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

Key informant interviews were undertaken with project members and members in exemplary projects.

Rating 4

2.5. Project management

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

Comment and Analysis

The Department indicated that the evaluation was efficiently executed and delivered on time, culminating in a workshop in June 2011. However, the service provider noted that planned timeframes had to be adjusted due to the complexity of the project as well as midstream adjustments to method and team-roles which resulted in time-delays.

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 Executive Summary was comprehensive and covered all the key elements of the evaluation.

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 was relevant and the LED implementation context in South Africa was outlined thoroughly.

Rating 5

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

The evaluation questions were guided by the suggested questions in the project Terms of Reference.

Rating 5

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

The scope of the evaluation was clearly articulated in the section of the report outlining the purpose and objectives of the evaluation.

Rating 5

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**

This was extensively described in the Methodology chapter of the report.

Rating 5

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 according to the following international criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness of development assistance. These are: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability and Replicability. Each of these indicators resulted in a set of conclusions derived from the findings of each of the identified measures.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions of the evaluation were succinct and the recommendations were presented in bullet-form with key sub-headings.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

These were clearly stated in a sub-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 to high a professional standard.

Rating 5

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 the presentation of the descriptive data, for example , data was presented across municipalities and longitudinally across time in respect of access to funding and proposals received. In addition, where direct quotations from key stakeholders were provided as supporting evidence, these were referenced to contextualise the opinion expressed.

Rating 4

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 tables and figures used were descriptive and professionally presented, using a consistent format. Tables and figures assisted with the comprehension of findings.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis

Data analysis was well executed, combining the findings from the analysis of secondary sources with the findings from primary sources. Table 3 of the report explains the data sources and data-processing stages.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis

This was the case. For example, vignettes of project outcomes were provided illustrating projects with successful outcomes and those projects that had failed.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

This was demonstrated in the report, through for example, the highlighting of key comments from stakeholders interviewed, suggesting that interviews had been thoroughly content-analysed.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

This was acknowledged especially in relation to the complexity of the context in which LED projects are implemented and the variety of variables at play contributing to project outcomes.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

This appeared to be the case because the report made use of existing data (secondary sources) on projects and where this data was incomplete it was acknowledged. However attempts were made to fill the gaps through interviews with key informants and, where possible, using a variety of different data sources.

Rating 4

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

This appeared to be the case. For example evidence such as the proportion of funds not granted and disbursements withheld were key indicators used to assess whether the BEF was successful. These indicators were assessed against the context in which the BEF was implemented, such as for example the operation of the BEF in many municipalities that were poorly resourced in terms of knowledge, skills and mandate to support LED projects.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

To some extent, this was achieved through the attempt at comparative evaluation to confirm lessons learned with the implementation of the BEF.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions were very brief, but to a limited extent, attend to the original evaluation questions.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no explicit reference to the intervention logic in the conclusions.

Rating 3

3.5. Recommendations

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

Comment and Analysis

Recommendations were made in consultation with the project steering committee, staff in the DED and district municipal representatives.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The department indicated that this was the case.

Rating 4

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

The Department felt that the findings were very relevant to understanding the effectiveness of the BEF instrument in terms of its intended purpose. It also enabled a better understanding of the municipal LED environment. The findings have assisted the DED to adjust its practical approaches with regard to municipal funding.

Rating **5**

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

Recommendations were targetted mainly at the local municipal level where projects were funded. Recommendations were specific, feasible and fundable. They covered aspects such as improving monitoring and evaluation through demanding a more rigorous approach to data collection; aligning performance measures to expected results, etc.

Rating **4**

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

Limitations of the evaluation were noted in sub-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

These procedures were documented in the appendices of the report that included the interview guides and information to interviewees on processes to be followed to ensure their confidentiality. The service provider noted that respondents were not identifiable from the findings and evaluation outputs submitted to the client. Confidentiality was maintained and findings aggregated to maximise their value while protecting confidentiality.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

The report is available on the Gijima website.

Rating 4

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

Comment and Analysis

There was no information on this aspect of the study.

Rating N/A

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

The findings of the evaluation went through several draft versions and this was preceded by inputs and presentations to stakeholders. The service provider noted that a large forum was facilitated by the client where penultimate findings were presented and discussed.

Rating 4

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

As indicated already by the DED, the evaluation was completed within expected timeframes of the broader evaluation programme. However, the service provider did report delays due to the complexity of the project, adjusted research method and evaluation team changes.

Rating 3

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

As indicated already, the evaluation was adequately funded and appears to have been completed within the agreed budget.

Rating 4

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 has been published on the Gijima web site and is available in hard and electronic copy.

Rating 3

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

There is no information on this aspect of the evaluation.

Rating 4

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 department indicated that the evaluation had more of a practical impact on shaping policy than a symbolic impact.

Rating 3

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

Comment and Analysis

This has been the case, the Department has noted that they no longer fund municipalities directly because quality control mechanisms in local municipalities are limited. Direct technical assistance is provided to local municipalities in planning processes. The department has also negotiated an agreement with CoGTA KZN on alignment of funding instruments and support provided to district and local municipalities on LED. They have also re-established a provincial LED forum co-hosted with CoGTA and involving relevant key stakeholders.

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

Findings of the evaluation have been incorporated into the department's policies over a year ago and the department indicated that the revised policies for dealing with funding LED programmes have taken effect already.

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

The Department noted that the evaluation had been effective because it has led to changes in the way it works and thinks about LED at the local level and how to support local municipalities in this regard. The study formed the basis for a robust discussion amongst various stakeholders.

Rating 4

References

Feedback Research and Analytics, September 2011. Final Report Documenting Lessons and Outcomes of the Business Enabling Fund (BEF) of the Gijima KZN-LED Support

List of Interviewees

Ranveer Persad, General Manager RLED KZN DED, self administered electronically and follow up telephonic interview, 1/2/2013.

Terence Beney, Project Director Feedback Research and Analytics, self administered electronic and follow-up email 5/2/2013.