



planning, monitoring & evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DPME Evaluation Guideline No 2.2.19

Guideline on Quality Assessment of Government Evaluations

Created: 22 October 2016
Updated: 31 January 2017

Addressed to	Quality assessors of government evaluations as well as moderators and administrators of the process. Evaluators, programme staff and M&E advisors should also be familiar with it.
Purpose	The purpose of this document is to give practical guidance on the undertaking of quality assessments of government evaluations using the web-based platform within the Evaluations Management Information System (EMIS).
Policy reference	National Evaluations Policy Framework Standards for evaluation in government Evaluation competency framework for government
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1. Introduction

This document is intended to provide a step-by-step guide on how to undertake a quality assessment of a government evaluation. It has been developed to ensure that assessors follow a replicable process and consistently apply the quality assessment instruments via the electronic platform for transparent and objective meta-analyses of evaluations. If followed correctly, the output of this process should be an assessment report that gives a credible appraisal of the overall quality of the evaluation undertaken, as well as its various phases and components.

The process was developed and refined as part of an assessment of government evaluation projects for the Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (DPME) in which the first set of 93 evaluations completed between 2006 and 2013 underwent retrospective quality assessments, with an additional 64 quality assessments completed between 2013 and 2016 (total of 157). These assessments, and the executive summaries of the evaluations developed as part of the project, are available from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) website. This guide details an improved, user-friendly quality assessment process following the lessons gleaned from completion of the retrospective quality assessments and the introduction of an electronic platform (EMIS) for undertaking these assessments.

2. Context

The *Standards for evaluation in government* supports understanding and use of evaluations by setting benchmarks of evaluation quality, providing the basis for the assessment to which this

document serves as a guide. The standards distinguish between overarching considerations that should inform the entire evaluation process, and four phases of conducting an evaluation.

The *Standards for evaluation in government* document was integral to the development of the evaluation quality assessment tool and indicators. The order and structure of the indicators follow the sequencing of the evaluation phases, and each indicator is aligned to an overarching consideration with a few exceptions. After multiple iterations, the tool has been refined to provide an exhaustive presentation of all the principles that define an evaluation of good quality. The four phases of an evaluation against which standards are assessed include:

- (1) planning, design and inception;
- (2) implementation;
- (3) reporting;
- (4) follow-up, use and learning.

The cross-cutting overarching considerations that are assessed across the four phases include:

- (1) partnership approach;
- (2) free and open evaluation process;
- (3) evaluation ethics;
- (4) coordination and alignment;
- (5) capacity development;
- (6) quality control; and
- (7) project management.

The standards have an acknowledged bias towards utilisation, consistent with the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF), as the value of evaluation in government is contingent upon an understanding of how findings, conclusions and recommendations from evaluations may assist in realising the purposes of government evaluations in practice.

3. Evaluation Quality Assessment Framework

3.1. Evaluation Quality Assessment Framework

The Evaluation Quality Assessment Framework exists to clarify the arrangements, responsibilities, timing and processes followed for undertaking quality assessments. It recognizes the overarching goals of the quality assessment system as improving evaluation practice, assessing gaps and identifying technical support to evaluation practice.

The following high-level overview indicates how a quality assessment is processed.

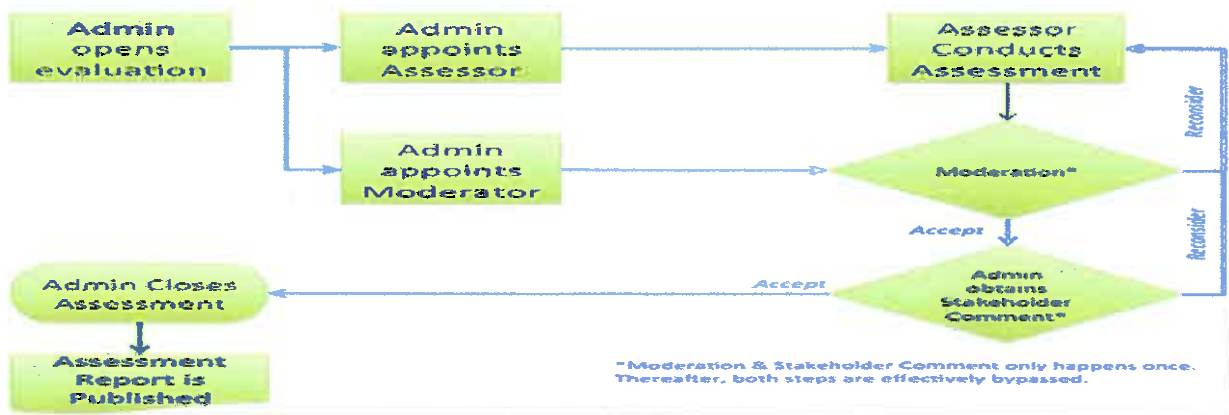


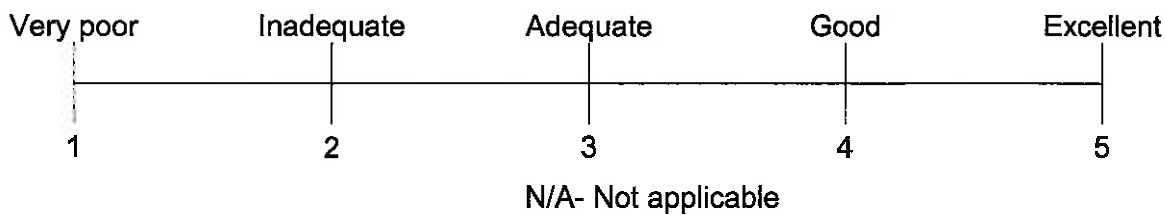
Figure 1: High-level overview of quality assessment process

The following sections provide more details on the components of the quality assessment framework and system.

4. Quality Assessment Ratings

During the development of the tool for the assessment of government evaluations a number of approaches were considered for rating an evaluation across a generalised set of criteria. The use of a Likert-type rating scale was decided for application to a set of evaluation standards. These standards were then rated on an equidistant scale ranging from 'Very poor' to 'Excellent' with each level of the standard rating scale clearly defined on a standard by standard basis. Figure 2 below presents the Likert-type scale applied for each evaluation standard as a distinct item.

Figure 2: Likert-type scale for evaluation standard items



In the event that an evaluation standard does not apply for a given evaluation (ie. in the case of obtaining ethical clearance for an evaluation synthesis), a Not Applicable (N/A) rating is provided. However, Not Applicable is not a rating in the true sense, since it designates that the evaluation standard is omitted entirely from the composite measure of an assessment area, phase and overarching consideration. Only with clear motivation in the comment may the rating Not Applicable be given.

In application of this scale, individual evaluation standard items are rated from 1-5, of which a group of items make up a composite measure of a given assessment area. Within each phase of the evaluation process, a unique set of assessment areas and their comprising evaluation standard items are aligned.

In this way, a designated group of evaluation standard items make-up a composite measure of an assessment area while the aggregate of all evaluation standard items for a given phase make up a composite measure of the phase. Assessment areas are generally comprised of multiple standard items. However, with the reduction of standard items over time some assessment areas are now defined solely by a single standard item and so analysis should be framed in terms of individual standard items, phases and overarching considerations.

Evaluation standard items are arranged sequentially within a phase from which a composite indicator score is generated. A similar arrangement is applied in the case of overarching considerations, except that these considerations are cross-cutting over the four phases. In this way, evaluation standard items combined differently are conceptualised as the constituent parts of an overarching consideration that are expressed as a composite measure. The rating scale and alignment therefore allow the rating of individual evaluation standard items that produce an overarching consideration composite score and a phased composite score, depending on which of the various elements of an evaluation an assessor is interested in.

4.1. Weighting

In the course of the development of the rating system, it became apparent that not every indicator is of equal significance in the evaluation process. Evaluation standard items are therefore weighted individually based on their relative importance across the entire evaluation process as determined by DPME stakeholders. In this manner, the weighting of an individual evaluation standard item is consistent whether it is calculated as part of the aggregate measure for an overarching consideration or phase.

When calculating an overall quality rating for the evaluation, it is recognised that different phases may have a greater significance to the overall evaluation relative to the others. Thus, in producing an overall composite measure of all the evaluation standard items within each of the four phases, each of the phases are given a different weighting based on the significance of that phase as designated by DPME within the overall evaluation process.

The following table shows the weighting applied to each phase in the calculation of the final composite indicator:

Phase of Evaluation	Weighting
1. Planning & Design	20
2. Implementation	20
3. Report	40
4. Follow-up, use and learning	20

4.2. Guide for interpreting the score results

Every evaluation that undergoes quality assessment receives an overall quality rating of 1.00-5.00, consistent with the 5-point Likert-type scale displayed above. In line with the ratings, a minimum rating of 3.00- "Adequate" is suggested. Those evaluations that meet the threshold of 3.00 as an adequate standard or above are proposed for benchmarking purposes. Those evaluations that fall below the adequate standard, from 2.99 and below, are indicative of an evaluation that is on balance of a poor quality, therefore the findings and recommendations may be questionable or the evaluation process followed may not support utilisation and uptake of the recommendations.

The distinction between phase, overarching consideration and criteria assessment area allows for a significant degree of specificity in identifying an evaluation's strengths and weaknesses. It helps the assessor, and evaluation stakeholders, to discern which aspects of a given evaluation are rigorous, as well as which elements of the evaluation are found to be lacking or methodologically unsound.

5. Resource Requirements

Prior to undertaking a quality assessment, there are certain resource (human, time, and technological) requirements that should be in place. The following is an overview of the resources required for proper adherence to the guideline.

5.1 Administrator requirements

The administrator is responsible for initiating and concluding the quality assessment process. He or she must identify the evaluation under assessment, assign it a unique referencing number and initiate the quality assessment process by furnishing a copy of the final evaluation report to the assessor. The administrator should also be available for basic support and monitoring of the process, where appropriate.

The administrator is ultimately responsible for ensuring that both the moderator's feedback and the stakeholders' inputs are addressed by the assessor, prior to finalising the assessment. Once the final version of the quality assessment has been submitted the administrator is responsible for reviewing and approving it, at which time a notification email will be sent to both the assessor and moderator indicating that the quality assessment is complete and now available on the EMIS.

5.2 Assessor requirements

When selecting an assessor to undertake the quality assessment, there are a few considerations that should be taken into account. Firstly, the process is designed to be undertaken by an evaluations specialist, with significant knowledge of evaluation practice, the National Evaluation System as well as significant depth of understanding of relevant evaluation methodologies and analytical approaches. For reasons such as consistency in completion of the assessment tool and a holistic evaluation perspective, rather than a component or silo understanding, a single assessor should be appointed to undertake the quality assessment.

The assessor’s responsibilities comprise data collection, analysis and write-up. Once submitted, the assessor needs to avail him or herself for revisions following input from moderators and evaluation stakeholders, once the quality assessment report and summary are released. This entire process is dealt with in more detail via the steps identified in the next section.

5.3 Sector expert (ad hoc)

It is proposed that on an ad hoc basis a sector expert, preferably with some knowledge of evaluations, also be identified to act in a referential role for the assessor.

The reference person’s responsibilities require availability on an ad hoc basis and he or she is not expected to engage directly with the evaluation report or collected evaluation documentation.

5.4 Moderator requirements

A moderator sufficiently removed from the quality assessment is required to check for the completeness of the quality assessment and ensure consistency in the application of ratings throughout the assessment tool. As the moderator is not expected to do more than a high-level quality review (excluding review of the actual evaluation documentation and interview data) of the assessment report, this should be undertaken by a DPME/ Office of the Premier/ Departmental staff member familiar with the quality assessment process. The responsibilities are limited to providing one round of feedback to the assessor, prior to submission to the evaluation stakeholders.

5.5 Time requirements

All estimates of time requirements may fluctuate due to the varying nature of the evaluation under assessment, access to data/informants, and the findings of the quality assessment generated by the tool. A time allocation for the estimated actual working hours and timespan for completion is provided in the following table for each step in the process. The following serves as an example of the total time allocations.

Activity brief	Complete quality assessment process	Time	+/- 40 hours of work spread over 4-7 weeks depending on availability of interviewees, documentation and moderation
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6. Assessment Process

Once an evaluation has been selected for assessment and assigned to an assessor by the administrator, the assessment process begins. The quality assessment follows five stages, broken down over the following steps.

Initiation:

- Administrator assigns evaluation to assessor
- Assessor accesses EMIS and records evaluation details

Data collection:

- Assessor collects evaluation documentation
- Assessor identifies respondents and conduct interviews

Assessment and write-up:

- Assessor completes assessment tool and comments
- Assessor writes assessment summary
- Assessor references all documents and interviews
- Assessor uploads all documents used
- Assessor submits for moderation

Moderation and revision:

- Moderator reviews quality assessment report
- Assessor addresses moderator comments and resubmits
- Administrator confirms completion before submitting quality assessment report to evaluation stakeholders
- Stakeholders review quality assessment report and give comments
- Where comments are received, the Assessor considers any stakeholder issues and resubmits

Conclusion:

- Administrator reviews and approves quality assessment (QA) report
- Quality assessment report and evaluation report are published online; however, for evaluations in the NEP, the QA can only be made public once the final report has been approved by cabinet.

The following process map illustrates actions taken during the quality assessment process.

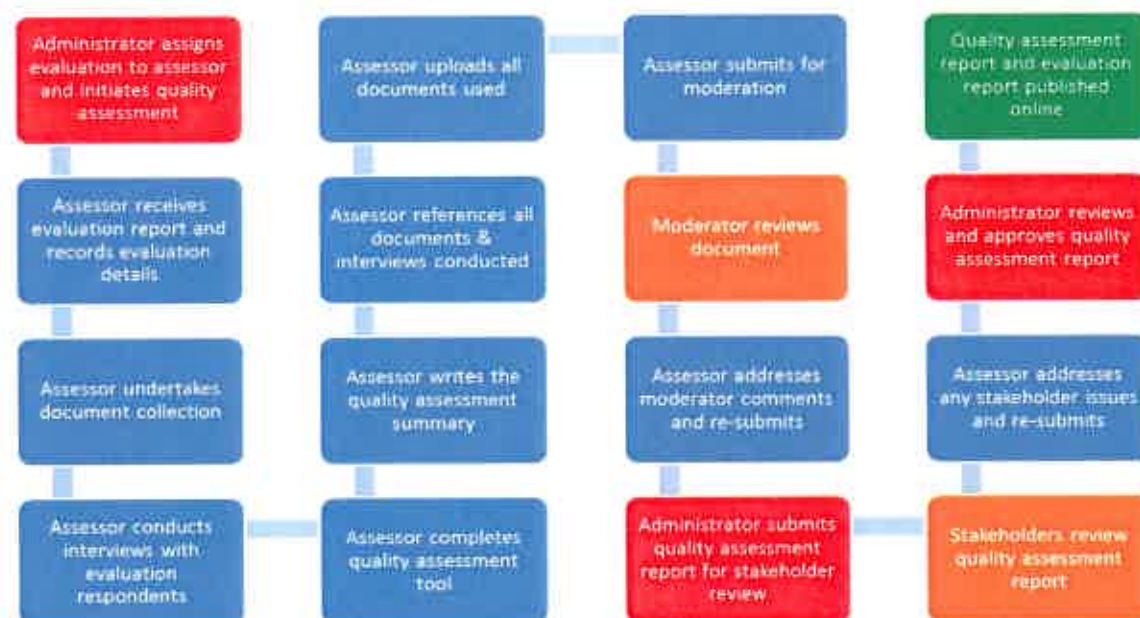


Figure 3: Process map of the quality assessment process

6.1 Initiation

Once an evaluation has been completed, a quality assessment will be initiated shortly thereafter. The initiation will consist of the administrator sourcing the evaluation report and giving the assessor access to the EMIS. The following two steps describe the process.

6.1.1. Administrator assigns evaluation to assessor

An administrator is responsible for the initiation, final review and approval of the quality assessment of a conducted evaluation. To initiate a quality assessment, the administrator will add an assessment, listing the title, a unique reference number for the assessment, and assign the moderator as per the EMIS instructions. Thereafter, the administrator will assign an EMIS user as the assessor and upload a copy of the evaluation report to the QA system. The assessor can then access the launched assessment and begin completing the evaluation details.

6.1.2. Assessor captures evaluation details

The assessor's first task is to capture basic information about the evaluation. This will require a thorough reading of the evaluation report. The assessor should capture basic evaluation background information such as the commissioning agency, date and duration of the evaluation, cost of the

evaluation, sector, evaluand, etc. Once all of the basic evaluation information is captured, this information should be saved on the EMIS under the evaluation details page and the assessor should proceed to data collection.

Activity brief	Assessor undertakes review of report and captures evaluation details	Time	Approximately 4 hours
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6.2. Data collection

In order to assess an evaluation, it is important to secure access to all of the relevant information relating to the evaluation process, from planning and inception through to follow-up, use and learning. The interviews also provide another source of data for triangulation purposes and may yield more nuanced insights into the evaluation process. The following steps explain the data collection process for the two methods employed for the purpose of the quality assessment.

6.2.1. Assessor collects evaluation documentation

During the course of an evaluation a range of documentation is generated that gives insight into the quality of the evaluation undertaken. The following table presents a list of documentation necessary for an assessor to undertake a quality assessment.

Required documents to inform assessment ¹	Other documents to inform assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation or evaluation proposal if conducted internal to the public service • An inception report • Data collection tools or instruments • The approved evaluation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service level agreement between the commissioning organisation and the service provider (when applicable) • Minutes of steering committee meetings • Fieldwork report • Copies of datasets

Table 1: List of evaluation documentation required for quality assessment

The list of preferred documents presents the ideal set of information that should be available to an assessor. Although not all of the mentioned documentation may be critical to an assessment, having access to the information may explain the rationale and practical considerations for decisions that were taken, and document the agreements reached to maintain the credibility of the evaluation.

Access to the aforementioned documentation should also assist in the identification of key respondents. Obtaining the most insight into the evaluation will require engagement with the appropriate role-players. As such, a preliminary review of the collected documentation is recommended to help inform the next step of the quality assessment, semi-structured interviews.

Activity brief	Assessor collects available evaluation documentation	Time	Approximately 2 hours Allow 1-2 weeks for sourcing all documentation
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6.2.2. Assessor identifies key informants and conduct interviews

Using the available documentation and preliminary contact with the evaluation secretariat or equivalent, the assessor will then identify potential informants from the evaluation. The following are generic role-players who should be considered for interviews:

¹ Denotes what should be considered the minimum required documents to undertake a quality assessment. If these four documents (or comparable substitutes) are not available, it is recommended the quality assessment should not proceed until such time as they are made available.

- **Programme manager**

As the manager responsible for programme implementation is central to the evaluation and should have been involved in either the planning, implementation or follow-up to the evaluation.

- **Evaluation manager or M&E advisor**

The evaluation manager or M&E advisor’s responsibilities for the evaluation may vary from department to department depending on the extent of involvement in the evaluation. In the case of internal evaluations, the M&E advisor may also be the evaluator.

- **Evaluator**

In most instances, the evaluator will be external to the commissioning organisation or department and may include an extensive team, depending on the scope and nature of the evaluation.

- **Other potential respondents**

In instances where other key stakeholders played an integral role in the evaluation itself, it may be appropriate for the assessor to consider interviewing informants other than the aforementioned role-players. Peer reviewers or representatives of the commissioning organisation may also be interviewed as appropriate. See **Annexure A** for an example of an interview Guide.

Activity brief	Assessor interviews key informants involved in the evaluation	Time	Approximately 10 hours (up to 2 hours per informant and two weeks for securing and conducting interviews)
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6.3. Assessment and write-up

Once data collection is complete, the assessor can begin assessing the evaluation against the assessment areas and standards in the quality assessment tool. Based on the collected documentation and the primary data collected during the semi-structured interviews, each indicator standard should be rated and a comment motivating the rating. The completion of the assessment tool and write-up of the assessment summary is explained below.

6.3.1. Assessor completes assessment tool and report

The content of the quality assessment report is captured by the assessor in the ratings of the 42 standard items and comment boxes of the quality assessment tool. In order to produce a complete assessment report, all of the blank cells that require information, including rating scales and comment boxes, need to be completed during the assessment. Refer to the explanation of the rating scale in the framework section for further clarity in this regard.

For each of the four phases of the evaluation, the assessor should complete all standard items with comments and ratings. Comments should substantiate the ratings given by the assessor, and where appropriate refer back to specific documentation or interviews. Where there are gaps in the available documentation, interview data should address gaps.

Activity brief	Assessor completes ratings and comments for the quality assessment	Time	Approximately 6 hours
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6.3.2. Assessor writes the assessment summary

The assessment tool has been created in such a way that once the assessor records the ratings and comments for each standard in the tool, the information automatically pulls through to an assessment report which presents data for each of the evaluation phases and overarching considerations in a series of summary tables and graphs. A summary (between 3-5 paragraphs) outlining the key findings of the quality assessment should be completed by the assessor using the graphs and tables presented at the start of the report.

Phased scores

The composite indicator scores for the four phases of the evaluation give an assessment of the quality of evaluative conduct per phase. These scores are based on the overall rating scale of 1-5, with weightings given to each standard within a given phase. When the assessor compiles the quality assessment summary it is worthwhile interrogating the distribution of scores within a phase to distinguish those strong elements of the evaluation from the weak.

Overarching considerations

The overarching considerations are seven cross-cutting principles that inform the evaluation and each of the standards is aligned to a principle of best-fit applied across the four phases of the evaluation with a few exceptions. As such, a composite measure of the quality of the assessment is calculated on a scale of 1-5 for comparability and as an indication of how well the assessment has fared in this regard. When the assessor compiles the assessment summary, the scores of the overarching considerations provide a measure of the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment in terms of these principles.

Activity brief	Assessor writes a summary of the findings of the quality assessment	Time	Approximately 2 hours
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6.3.3. Assessor references all interviews and documents consulted

Once the assessor has completed the first draft of the quality assessment report, all documents used to inform the assessment should be referenced in a standard format such as Harvard reference style.

6.3.4. Assessor uploads all documents referenced

Once all of the documents have been appropriately referenced, the assessor should electronically upload all of the documents used to inform the assessment. In the event of particularly large files, smaller versions should be saved insofar as possible.

Once all documents have been uploaded the assessor should return to the ‘Assessment summary’ page. Unlike with the previous steps, the dashboard will continue to show that the ‘Assessment Documents’ are ‘Partially complete’. This will only change once the assessor submits the assessment for moderation as part of the next step.

6.3.5. Assessor submits for moderation

After the assessor has completed the assessment and uploaded all of the documentation, he/she should click the ‘Validation status’ button below the table on the ‘Assessment summary’ page. This will allow the assessor to confirm that all of the required fields and information have been completed prior to submitting the assessment. If any fields appear as incomplete, the assessor must resolve these before submitting as the system will not allow for any incompletes.

Once complete, the assessor should click the ‘Submit assessment’ button above the table on the ‘Assessment summary’ page. If there is not any outstanding information required, the assessor will be taken to the ‘Quality Assessment Summary’ page. Once there, the assessor must confirm that all documents have been uploaded by selecting the ‘Are all documents uploaded?’ box. Once this is selected, the assessor may select the ‘Save & Submit Assessment’ button. A pop-up box will appear asking whether the assessor is sure about the submission. The assessor should confirm only if the quality assessment is complete, and select ‘Ok’.

Once submitted, an automatic email will be generated and sent to the moderator and the administrator indicating the draft assessment has been completed. The next task will be the moderator’s.

Activity brief	Assessor submits draft assessment	Time	Less than 1 hour (includes previous two steps)
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6.4. Moderation and revision

Once the quality assessment has been completed and submitted, a draft of the assessment report is automatically made available to the moderator. The moderator will then review the submission and provide feedback to the assessor on any standard rating or comments that are inconsistent or incomplete.

6.4.1. Moderation of draft quality assessment report

The moderator has the responsibility of reviewing the completed draft assessment report (moderation of the report only, not of the supporting documentation) and checking for completion. This review will require close scrutiny of individual standard ratings and comments. The moderator is responsible for determining whether the assessor’s rating and comment for a given standard is ‘Accepted’, or whether to ‘Reconsider’ it. In the case of any ‘Reconsiderers’, the moderator will comment/ advise the assessor on what specifically needs to be reconsidered.

One of the most important responsibilities of the moderator is to ensure that the ratings are applied consistently with the rating scale definitions provided. If the ratings are not applied consistently, the moderator should mark incongruent standards ‘Reconsider’ and explain in the comment area.

Once the moderator has undertaken a thorough review of the draft assessment report, the moderator should save the work before returning to the summary page and selecting the ‘Submit moderation’ button, submitting the moderation feedback.

Activity brief	Moderator reviews draft assessment report for completion and consistency	Time	Approximately 4 hours
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6.4.2. Assessor addresses moderator comments and resubmits

Depending on the extent and nature of the feedback on the quality assessment provided by the moderator, the assessor will be responsible for addressing all standards designated ‘Reconsider’. The assessor should ensure that commentary is provided to substantiate the rating provided and that all comments are addressed. Where the assessor disagrees with the moderator or feels sufficient commentary is provided with an appropriate rating, the assessor’s final inputs are subject to the review of the administrator.

Submission of the revised quality assessment report will require submission of both the final assessment standards as well as resubmission of the quality assessment summary, complete with the confirmation that all documents have been uploaded again.²

Activity brief	Assessor resolves issues identified by moderator	Time	Revisions should not require more than 2 hours, subject to the availability of assessor
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6.4.3. Administrator submits quality assessment report to evaluation stakeholders

Once the administrator has received the resubmitted quality assessment report, the administrator should export a copy of the quality assessment to PDF format. When the quality assessment has been exported to a file that can be distributed independent of the website, the administrator should circulate the document to the commissioning organisation and any evaluation stakeholders.

6.4.4. Stakeholders review quality assessment report

Once a draft of the quality assessment report and summary has been made available to the evaluation stakeholders they should be provided a period of not more than 15 working days, to accept the findings or to challenge them and furnish supporting evidence if appropriate. If specific standards need to be addressed through revisions, the administrator is responsible for capturing this information via review of the assessments standards and submitting this with ‘Reconsider’ for the identified standards.

² Note: The Assessment Document tab on the Assessment Summary page will appear as partially incomplete until the revised quality assessment report is resubmitted.

6.4.5. Assessor addresses any stakeholder issues and resubmits

Depending on the extent and nature of the feedback on the quality assessment received from the evaluation stakeholders, the assessor's responsibility for addressing the issues raised will vary accordingly. Where the feedback received has a material bearing on the quality assessment score, revisions should be made. The assessor may consult with the moderator and administrator in undertaking revisions as appropriate. Once any revisions have been concluded, the assessor should make a final submission.

Activity brief	Assessor resolves any material errors based on stakeholder submissions	Time	Revisions should not require more than 2 hours, subject to the availability of assessor. Feedback from stakeholders may take up to 3 weeks.
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7. Conclusion

This represents the finalisation of the quality assessment process whereby the final revisions are accepted and the original evaluation report and assessment report published.

7.1.1. Administrator approves the final assessment report

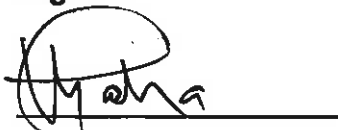
Once submission of the revised version of the assessment report occurs, the administrator has to undertake a final review to ensure that all matters raised by the moderator and evaluation stakeholders have been sufficiently addressed in the final quality assessment report. Once the administrator is satisfied with the final quality assessment report, all standards should be marked as 'Accepted' and the quality assessment report should be approved by the administrator.

7.1.2. Quality assessment report and evaluation report are published online

Once the quality assessment report has been approved, it should be made available along with a copy of the original evaluation report via the DPME/ Office of the Premier/ Departmental website. By making this information publicly available, the intention is to deepen the discussion and debate on evaluation practice and highlight evaluations practice that is above adequate standards. However, evaluations that are in the NEP, should only be made public once the final report has been approved by cabinet.

Activity brief	Administrator ensures the original evaluation report and quality assessment report are published online	Time	Within 2 weeks of the final quality assessment report
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Signed



Mr Tshediso Matona
Acting Director-General
Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Date: 14/2/2017

Annexure A: A Specimen of an Interview Guide

An Interview Guide is intended to assist the assessor with the semi-structured interviews that will be conducted with evaluation role-players, such as the programme manager, M&E manager/ advisor, the evaluator(s) and any other relevant evaluation stakeholder, such as a representative of the commissioning department.

The Interview Guideline is developed in such a way that the set of questions are generic and can be applied to all the evaluations under assessment. The interview questions are informed by the web assessment tool and should be used in conjunction with the tool to deepen and enrich the assessment and analysis.

In preparation for the interviews, it is important that the assessor familiarises him/ herself with the assessment standards and available evaluation documentation beforehand. This will assist in determining where the information gaps are and therefore which questions are more relevant and/or pertinent for a specific respondent.

These interviews are qualitative, experiential, and perception-based and in many instances based on historical information. Thus, the information gathered may include subjective views and opinions. These are important and relevant as they provide a sense of how role-players viewed the evaluation process and various project deliverables. Note that the questions also endeavour to gather factual information that provides a more objective account of the evaluations.

The way in which the Interview Guideline has been set up is that there are separate sets of questions for Programme Managers, M&E managers/advisors and the evaluators. While there is some repetition in some of the questions, they are targeted to the respective positions. Should another role-player be interviewed, it is recommended the assessor apply those questions deemed most appropriate from the following list.

Note: The set of interview questions is extensive. It is the responsibility of the assessor to determine what is relevant for the interview based on what information is available.

Guiding questions for the Programme Manager

Introduction

As the assessor, introduce the assignment and the purpose of the interview. Emphasise that the interview is not designed in the *strict* sense of a question and answer interview, but is a conversation to enrich the understanding and analysis of the evaluation that is being assessed.

Understanding the context/ background

1. What prompted the evaluation?
2. What and who was involved in the decision-making process?
3. Was the evaluation an internal or external evaluation?

Planning, design and inception

1. Were the Terms of Reference (ToR) clear and well defined?
2. What were the levels of partnership and/or stakeholder involvement in the development of the ToR and the design of the evaluation?
3. Was a steering committee or any similar governance and management structure established for the evaluation?
4. In your view, were the resources allocated to the evaluation adequate? If not, why not and what could have been done differently?
5. In selecting the service provider appointed to undertake the evaluation, how important was content knowledge of the sector for the evaluation?
6. What was the context at the time of the evaluation?
 - a. Was the timing of the evaluation appropriate?
7. During the evaluation inception phase, were there changes or refinements made to the ToR i.e. the scope of work, methodology, time-frames, etc? Elaborate on these.

Implementation

1. What mechanisms were in place to ensure the credibility and impartiality of the evaluation?
 - a. External evaluation: Was the evaluation team able to work freely and without interference?
 - b. Internal evaluation: Was any process undertaken to ensure the evaluation was impartial and credible? (A possible option for this is a peer review?)
2. Were stakeholders, including the clients and beneficiaries, consulted and given the opportunity to contribute during the evaluation process? If so, how?
3. Were the data and information collected appropriate and useful in terms of the programme?
4. What are some of the ethical considerations relevant to the sector?
 - a. Were participants involved in the evaluation sufficiently protected?
 - b. Were proper ethical standards and practice applied?
5. Was there a reporting protocol in place for interim and progress reporting?
6. To what extent were you involved in the management and oversight of the evaluation?
7. Was the evaluation conducted within the allotted time-frame and within budget?
 - a. In the event of changes to conditions, time-frames, budget, etc., how were these dealt with?

Reporting

1. Did the report provide a clear sense of the data collected, the analysis, findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations relevant to the programme?
2. Was the data analysis well executed in your opinion?
3. Were the findings based on sufficient evidence?
4. How relevant are the findings and recommendations to the current policy context?
5. Were stakeholders engaged to provide inputs into the evaluation report(s)? If so, to what extent were these incorporated?
6. Is the report accessible to the wider public i.e. in terms of its readability and appropriateness to different audiences?

Follow-up, use and learning

1. To what extent has the evaluation been used to shape policy?
 - a. Are there clear policy changes proposed as a result of the evaluation?
2. Has the evaluation been circulated amongst staff?
 - a. How would you describe staff understanding of the evaluation?
3. How useful has the evaluation process, including the findings and recommendations, been for the programme?
 - a. Were programme staff consulted regarding the recommendations?
 - b. To what extent are programme staff committed to implementing the recommendations?
 - c. What is the
4. Can you give your impression on the quality of the evaluation overall?
5. What, in your view, worked well in the evaluation process overall?
6. What lessons can you share from the experiences gained through the evaluation process?

Guiding questions for the M&E manager/advisor

Introduction

As the assessor, introduce the purpose of the quality assessment to the M&E manager/advisor. Emphasise that the interview is not designed in the *strict* sense of a question and answer interview, but is a conversation to enrich the assessor's understanding and analysis of the evaluation that is being assessed.

Understanding the context/ background

1. What prompted the evaluation?

2. Who was involved in the decision-making process to undertake an evaluation?
 - a. To what extent was an M&E expert consulted?
3. Was the evaluation an internal or external evaluation?

Planning and design

1. Was the ToR clear and well defined?
 - a. Was the goal and purpose of the evaluation clear?
 - b. Were evaluation questions appropriate for the type of evaluation?
 - c. How well defined was the scope of work?
 - d. Were the timeframes realistic for the scale and type of evaluation?
2. Was the ToR appropriate for the type of evaluation that was selected?
 - a. What informed the choice of the type of evaluation?
3. Was the methodology appropriate for the type of evaluation selected?
4. What were the levels of partnership and/or stakeholder involvement in the development of the ToR and the design of the evaluation?
 - a. Was there any particular support in championing the evaluation?
 - b. Was there any resistance?
5. Was a steering committee or any similar governance and management structure established for the evaluation?
6. In your view, were the resources allocated to the evaluation adequate? If not, why not and what could have been done differently?
7. During the evaluation inception phase, were there changes or refinements made to the ToR i.e. the scope of work, methodology, time-frames, etc?

Implementation

1. What mechanisms were in place to ensure the credibility and impartiality of the evaluation?
 - a. External evaluation: Was the evaluation team able to work freely and without interference? What was your role as M&E advisor?
 - b. Internal evaluation: Please explain your role in the internal evaluation? Was any process undertaken to ensure the evaluation was impartial and credible? Was the evaluation subjected to any form of peer review?
2. Were stakeholders, including the clients and beneficiaries, consulted and given the opportunity to contribute during the evaluation process?
3. Were the data and information collected appropriate and useful for the purpose of the evaluation?
4. Were participants involved in the evaluation protected, and were proper ethical standards and practice applied?
5. Was the evaluation conducted within the allotted time-frames and within budget?
 - a. What were the implications of the time-frames and resourcing on the evaluation in practice?
6. How would you describe the functioning of the steering committee?
7. Did the evaluation secretariat provide adequate support to the process? Why or why not?

Reporting

1. Was there a reporting protocol in place for interim and progress reporting?
2. Did the report provide a clear sense of the data collected, the analysis, findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations?
3. Was the data analysis well executed?
4. Were the findings based on sufficient evidence?
5. Did the conclusions adequately address the original research question(s)?
6. Was the evaluation design employed appropriate for arriving at the kind of conclusions and recommendations made?
7. Were acknowledgements of the limitations of the evaluation findings and conclusions made explicitly?

Follow-up, use and learning

1. How well has the evaluation process lent itself to learning and skills development on the part of staff involved in the regular monitoring & reporting of the programme?
2. How has the evaluation report been received by the departmental/commissioning organisation stakeholders?
3. To what extent do you think this evaluation will shape policy and practice?
4. What lessons can you share from the experiences gained through the evaluation process?

Guiding questions for the Evaluator**Introduction**

Introduce the assignment and the role of the assessor. Emphasise that the interview is not designed in the strict sense of a question and answer interview, but is a conversation to enrich the understanding and analysis of the evaluation that is being assessed.

Understanding the context/ background

1. Was there a clear understanding from the evaluation team on the background context to the evaluation, including the triggers that prompted the evaluation?
2. Had the evaluation team conducted any work in this sector or with this organisation prior to this assignment? If so, what?

Planning, design and inception

1. Were the Terms of Reference (ToR) clear and well defined?
2. Was the ToR appropriate for the type of evaluation that was selected?
3. Was the proposed methodology set out in the ToR appropriate for the type of evaluation selected?
4. Were the resources available to the evaluation adequate given the scope of the ToR?
5. During the evaluation inception phase, were there changes or refinements made to the evaluation design that differed in any way from the ToR? If so, what and why?

Implementation

1. Did you feel that there was sufficient independence in the evaluation process?
2. What was the level of support provided by the client?

3. In what way were stakeholders, including the clients and beneficiaries, consulted during the evaluation process?
4. Were there any challenges experienced in the application of the planned/suggested methods of data collection?
 - a. What effect, if any, did this have on the evaluation?
5. Were data and information easily available?
 - a. What were some of the challenges/limitations?
6. What method was applied to analyse the data/information gathered?
 - a. How effective was it?
7. Were the instruments used in the evaluation effective?
 - a. Were they piloted prior to application?
8. Were participants involved in the evaluation protected, and were proper ethical standards and practice applied?
9. Was the evaluation conducted within the allotted time-frame and within budget?
 - a. In the event of changes to conditions, what did this mean for the evaluation team?
10. How would you describe the functioning of the steering committee?
11. Did the evaluation secretariat provide adequate support to the process? Why or why not

Reporting

1. Was there a reporting protocol in place for interim and progress reporting?
2. What was the approach and logic applied in presenting the evaluation results and compiling the final report?
 - a. Were any challenges encountered in compiling the final report? If so, what?
 - b. Was the draft report subjected to peer review before finalisation? If so, what were some of the issues raised by the peer reviewer?
3. What informed the recommendations that were made? How were these arrived at?
4. Were stakeholders engaged to provide inputs into the evaluation report(s) and to what extent were these incorporated?

Follow-up, use and learning

1. To what extent was a transfer of skills incorporated into the evaluation process?
 - a. How successful was the evaluation in this regard?
2. Can you speak to the sense of ownership and confidence expressed by the commissioning organisation of the evaluation conclusion and recommendations?
3. What lessons can you share from the experiences gained through the evaluation process?