

Guidelines for Conducting Satisfactory Evaluations in Different Contexts:
Commonalities from Evaluations conducted in Developed and Developing Countries

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For the past few years I have been engaged in conducting metaevaluations of evaluations of various reform programs in both developed and developing countries. Based on those experiences, and without going into detail, it seems to me that evaluation clients would achieve more satisfactory evaluation services if they and their evaluators proceeded about as follows:

- (a) **Agree at the evaluation's outset on mutually agreeable standards for sound evaluations (e.g., utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and evaluator accountability).**
- (b) Reach an agreement with the client on any needed modifications in the chosen evaluation standards and, as appropriate, re-label the set as evaluation criteria.
- (c) Identify stakeholders and arrange to interact with them throughout the evaluation (e.g., in a stakeholder review panel).
- (d) Clearly identify the evaluation's purpose (formative and/or summative), questions (context, inputs, process, and/or product), and required reports (interim and final)
- (e) Project the needed/acceptable timeline and budgetary limitations.
- (f) Assure that the evaluator/evaluation team has acceptable credibility in terms of needed expertise and independence from the targeted programme.
- (g) Arrange and budget for providing evaluation participants with needed training and technical support.
- (h) **Draft an evaluation design and budget in accordance with the agreed-upon standards and evaluation specifications and in consideration of stakeholder inputs.**
- (i) Institute safeguards to protect the evaluation's integrity, especially to assure fairness, protect the rights of participants in the evaluation, and mitigate conflicts of interest.
- (j) Arrange to employ multiple information sources and methods (quantitative and qualitative).
- (k) Assure and/or arrange to provide confirmatory evidence regarding validity and reliability of obtained information.
- (l) **Negotiate a contract for the evaluation work in consideration of stakeholders' inputs and in accordance with the agreed-upon standards.**
- (m) Carry out evaluator and client roles in accordance with the evaluation standards, design, budget, and contract.
- (n) **Place special emphasis on reporting findings and providing follow-up assistance to secure informed use of findings.**
- (o) Archive and make available for inspection documentation of the evaluation's background, design, and execution, so that a qualified third party could judge the evaluation's merit and overall value.
- (p) Include the possibility of keying the evaluation to tailored evaluation criteria that are grounded in but go beyond published, consensual evaluation standards.
- (q) Build on the evaluation experience to strengthen evaluation capacity in the involved organization(s).

While all of the above actions contribute importantly to assuring sound conduct and use of evaluations, those bolded are those that I have found to be particularly problematic in evaluations I have assessed.

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