Good Practice Evaluation and Research Technical Note

All photos courtesy Aaron Kearney, ABCID

Pacific Sports Partnership | Good Practice Evaluation and Research Technical Note

Introduction

In late 2017 evaluation and academic research conducted during the life of the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded **Pacific Sports Partnerships** program was reviewed. The review considered quality, usefulness and outcomes of the evaluation and academic research reports. It recommended developing a **'**good practice in evaluation research' technical note.

This technical note draws on a range of source material and practical experience of the lead author and reviewers. It aligns with DFAT's own Monitoring and Evaluation Standards, seeking not to replace them but to complement them for practitioners in sport for development and other development sectors.

By using this technical note, we hope that both commissioners and evaluators/academic researchers can enhance the transparency and quality of evaluation research in sport for development.

This Technical Note is designed for use by:

  a. **Sport for Development program designers and managers** who are commissioning evaluation and/or academic research.
  b. **Sport for Development evaluation and academic researchers** who are responding to Terms of Reference for requests for evaluative research, developing evaluation/ research plans and implementing evaluative research.

Important considerations

There are three important and inter-related considerations this technical note has been based on, all of which are complex and broad topics in themselves. If properly considered, they will lead to better evaluation and research outcomes. The considerations are:

  1. Participation;
  2. Cultural Competence; and
  3. Ethics.

Paying attention to each of these aspects will in turn benefit the others. See Annex 1 for further detail.

Figure 1 Participation, Ethics & Cultural competence combine to make your evaluation research better

Differences between evaluation and research

Throughout this note, we use the term 'evaluation research', to encompass the many different kinds of evaluation and research activity that sports partners may commission. However, 'research' and 'evaluation' are used in different ways to mean different things. Betterevaluation.org explores the many ways of framing research and evaluation and is a good place to start to go deeper on this topic.

We acknowledge the clear differences between research and evaluation, as outlined in the box below. However, the principles of commissioning good evaluations or research are broadly aligned and so we discuss them in relation to evaluation research throughout this note.

Research

- Purpose is developing or testing theory and producing relevant findings and/or generalizable results.

- Questions originate with scholars in a discipline.

- Quality and importance judged by peer review in a discipline.

- Ultimate test of value is contribution to knowledge.

Evaluation

- Purpose is to determine the effectiveness of a specific program or model.

- Questions originate with key stakeholders and primary intended users of evaluation findings.

- Quality and importance judged by those who will use the findings to take action and make decisions

- Ultimate test of value is usefulness to improve effectiveness.

From Patton, Michael Quinn (2014). Evaluation Flash Cards: Embedding Evaluative Thinking in Organizational Culture. St. Paul, MN: Otto Bremer Foundation ottobremer.org. http://www.ottobremer.org/sites/default/files/fact-sheets/OBF_flashcards_201402.pdf
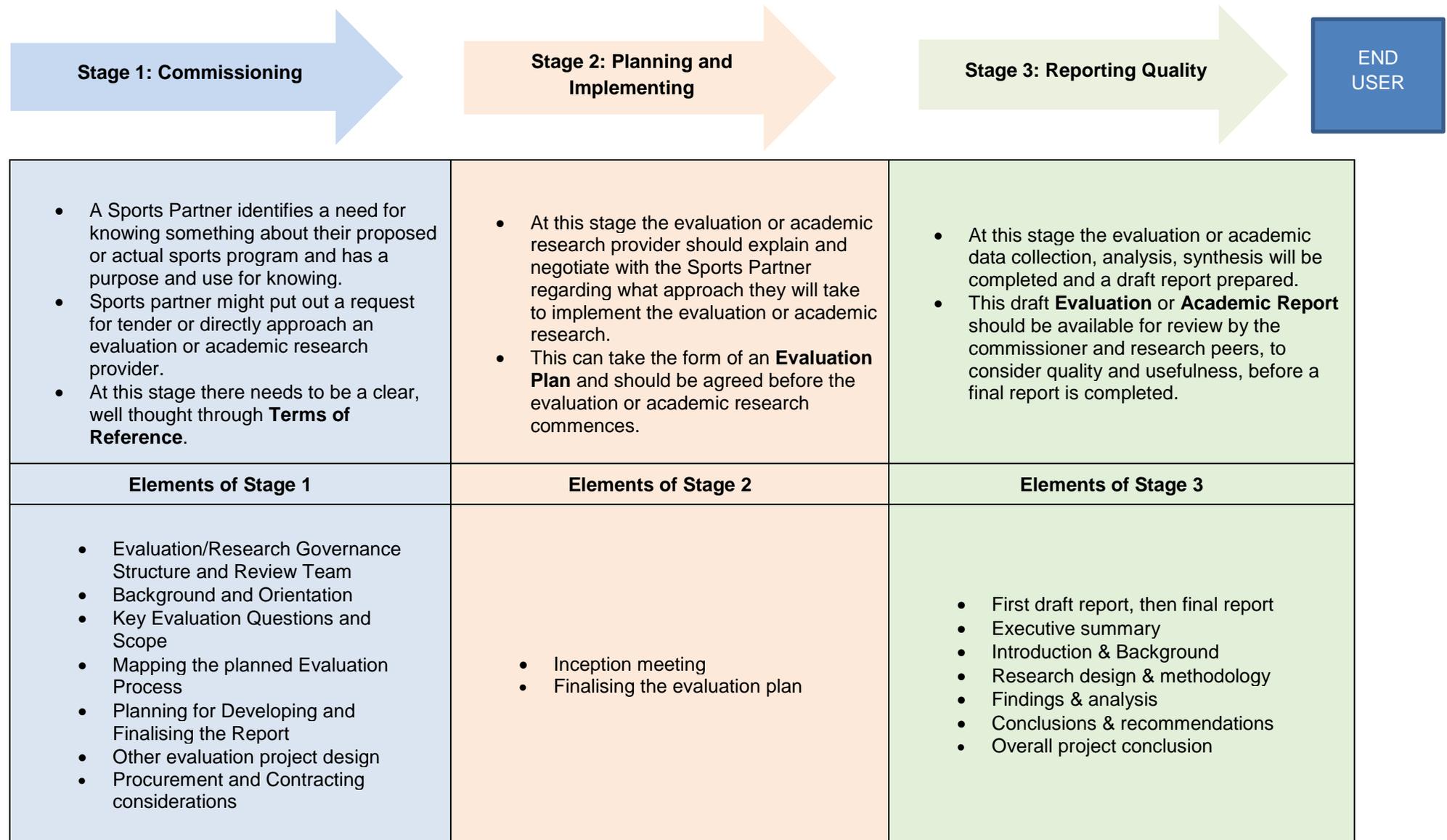
Three Key Stages and Terms of Reference

There are at least three critical stages in commissioning and implementation of evaluation research; commissioning, planning and implementing; and reporting quality see figure 1.

While figure 1 provides a summary checklist and Annex 2 provides supporting detail to each element of these stages, the first step to **commissioning** a robust and useful evaluation or academic research project are well-prepared Terms of Reference (ToR) for your evaluation research that have been agreed with your stakeholders. Generally, A ToR presents an outline of the expectations and necessities of the evaluation including an explicit statement of the objectives of the evaluation, roles and responsibilities of the evaluators and the evaluation client, and resources available for the evaluation.

A TOR should include

- Why and for whom the evaluation is being done.
- What it intends to accomplish.
- How it will be accomplished.
- Who will be in involved in the evaluation?
- When milestones will be reached and when the evaluation will be completed.
- What resources are available to conduct the evaluation?

Some key Evaluation Questions used to guide ToR

- Have the right things been done? (relevance, effectiveness)
- Have things been done well? (efficiency, effectiveness)
- What results have been achieved? (effectiveness, impact, cost/ effectiveness)
- How do the results compare with an alternative intervention to achieve the same objective? (relative effectiveness, impact, cost/ effectiveness)
- How could things be done better in the future?
- Are the results sustainable?

Figure 1 - Key stages of evaluation research

Stage 1: Commissioning	Stage 2: Planning and Implementing	Stage 3: Reporting Quality	END USER
• A Sports Partner identifies a need for knowing something about their proposed or actual sports program and has a purpose and use for knowing. • Sports partner might put out a request for tender or directly approach an evaluation or academic research provider. • At this stage there needs to be a clear, well thought through **Terms of Reference**.	• At this stage the evaluation or academic research provider should explain and negotiate with the Sports Partner regarding what approach they will take to implement the evaluation or academic research. • This can take the form of an **Evaluation Plan** and should be agreed before the evaluation or academic research commences.	• At this stage the evaluation or academic data collection, analysis, synthesis will be completed and a draft report prepared. • This draft **Evaluation** or **Academic Report** should be available for review by the commissioner and research peers, to consider quality and usefulness, before a final report is completed.	
Elements of Stage 1	**Elements of Stage 2**	**Elements of Stage 3**	
• Evaluation/Research Governance Structure and Review Team • Background and Orientation • Key Evaluation Questions and Scope • Mapping the planned Evaluation Process • Planning for Developing and Finalising the Report • Other evaluation project design • Procurement and Contracting considerations	• Inception meeting • Finalising the evaluation plan	• First draft report, then final report • Executive summary • Introduction & Background • Research design & methodology • Findings & analysis • Conclusions & recommendations • Overall project conclusion	

ANNEX 1

1. Participation

Enabling collaboration and participation of stakeholders in evaluation and research for development programs, including for sports for development, typically leads to **more trustworthy and authentic** results and greater use by a wider range of stakeholders.

Many academic references explore the potential for empowerment through evaluation, and the social transformation that can be gained through **deep participation** in evaluation and research. Fetterman and Wandersman, in *Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice* in 2005[1], set out and describe in detail ten principles of empowerment evaluation.

Ten principles of Empowerment evaluation

1. Improvement
2. Community ownership
3. Inclusion
4. Democratic participation
5. Social Justice
6. Community knowledge
7. Evidence based strategies
8. Capacity building
9. Organisational Learning
10. Accountability

Donna Mertens (2009)[1] goes beyond these ten principles of participation to explore deep inclusion in evaluation and research through the 'transformation paradigm' in evaluation research. The transformation paradigm deliberately identifies relevant dimensions of diversity and their structural relation to oppression, consciously including these dimensions in evaluation research. To do this, transformative evaluation research must intentionally include a diversity of people, particularly those who may be generally excluded from mainstream society.

Leslie Groves and Irene Gujit[2] hold the view that 'participatory evaluation' needs the inclusion of primary stakeholders as 'co-evaluators'. This inclusion can ensure that their voices and evaluation capacity are strengthened throughout the evaluation research. If the evaluation research is not framed with participatory theory, it is still possible to include participatory methods and approach in evidence gathering or analysis to incorporate and strengthen stakeholder voices.

In the context of sport for development, Sherry et al (2017)[3] observe that collaboration is more than simply 'speaking to' individuals involved with the SFD programme. Collaborative evaluation research will explicitly address power differences, encourage critical reflection and use jointly chosen research tools appropriate to the context. Participation in evaluation and research can range from minimal to being deeply integrated at every stage. But, effective participation can take more time and resources, so weighing up who needs to learn from and would best contribute to an evaluative exercise, with available resources and time, is an important consideration. Nonetheless, deeply integrated participation is usually worth the effort.

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[1] Mertens, D.M. (2009) *Transformative Research and Evaluation*. The Guildford Press, New York, USA
[2] Accessed 16 March 2018 at http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/blog/four_reflections_on_participation_in_evaluation
[3] Sherry, E. Schulenkorf, N., Seal, E. and Nicholson, M. (2017) Sport-for-development: Inclusive, reflexive and meaningful research in low- and middle-income settings, *Sport Management Review* 20 (2017) 69-80

2. Cultural Competence in Evaluation and Academic Research

Cultural competence is a broad topic, covered by extensive academic literature, often exploring specific cultures and competence required for those cultures. The American Evaluation Association developed a statement on cultural competence in evaluation in 2011[4]. For the purpose of this technical note, and acknowledging the diversity of cultures across the Pacific Nations in which the Pacific Sports Partnership is implemented, brief excerpts from the American Evaluation Association statement follow in the box below.

'What is culture?

Culture can be defined as the shared experiences of people, including their languages, values, customs, beliefs, and mores. It also includes worldviews, ways of knowing, and ways of communicating. Culturally significant factors encompass, but are not limited to, race/ethnicity, religion, social class, language, disability, sexual orientation, age, and gender. Contextual dimensions such as geographic region and socioeconomic circumstances are also essential to shaping culture.

What is cultural competence?

Cultural competence is not a state at which one arrives; rather, it is a process of learning, unlearning, and relearning. It is a sensibility cultivated throughout a lifetime. Cultural competence requires awareness of self, reflection on one's own cultural position, awareness of others' positions, and the ability to interact genuinely and respectfully with others. Culturally competent evaluators refrain from assuming they fully understand the perspectives of stakeholders whose backgrounds differ from their own.

Cultural competence is defined in relation to a specific context or location, such as geography, nationality, and history. **Competence in one context is no assurance of competence in another**. The culturally competent evaluator (or evaluation team) must have specific knowledge of the people and place in which the evaluation is being conducted—including local history and culturally determined mores, values, and ways of knowing.

Cultural competence is an ethical issue that represents the **intentional effort of the evaluation team to produce work that is valid, honest, respectful of stakeholders, and considerate of the general public welfare.** Culturally competent evaluation emerges from an ethical commitment to fairness and equity for stakeholders. Insufficient attention to culture in evaluation may compromise group and individual self-determination, due process, and fair, just, and equitable treatment of all persons and interests. Effective and ethical use of evaluation requires inclusiveness, learning across cultural boundaries, and respecting different worldviews.'

Describing their approach to cultural competence, Sherry et al (2017) (pp73-74) remind us of the significant cultural differences that exist between and within, Pacific Nations and highlight the need for clearly defined and locally informed approaches to research. They worked towards a more balanced research process by ensuring program aims were relevant to the perspectives of those most closely involved, through working with local communities. All evaluators and researchers should be expected to demonstrate their particular approaches to cultural competence.

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[4] *American Evaluation Association Statement On Cultural Competence In Evaluation*, Approved by the AEA Membership: April 22, 2011. Accessed 16 March 2018 at http://www.eval.org/page/competencies

3. Ethical Conduct of evaluation research

Effective ethical practice in research and evaluation is closely linked to cultural competence. Basically, ethics refers to **right and wrong in conduct**. While all academic researchers will be required to apply their host university's codes of ethics, the Australasian Evaluation Society has developed **guidelines[5] for ethical behaviour and decision-making in evaluation**, which are intended to foster continuous improvement in the theory, practice and use of evaluation by stimulating awareness and discussion of ethical issues. These guidelines have been incorporated into the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association Evaluator competencies[6], which are designed to guide the professional development of evaluation practitioners.

Five ethical issues in evaluation

Bamberger[1] (1999) highlights five sets of ethical issues of particular importance in the international evaluation context:

1. Respect for multiculturalism and diversity. This is closely linked to cultural competence and most important in sports programs promoting gender equity; people living with disabilities and other targeted marginalised groups.
2. Protecting the legitimate concerns of both clients and stakeholders. This is about balancing the concerns of the evaluation commissioner with the sometimes conflicting interests of a wide variety of stakeholders.
3. Ensuring the cultural appropriateness of the evaluation approach. Again, linked to cultural competence this is about tailoring methods to suit the cultural situation.
4. Dissemination of information on evaluation methods, findings and proposed actions. In short this is about gaining permission from communities and making sure they are well briefed and there are no surprises in the implementation of the evaluation. This can take a significant amount of effort and planning.
5. Meeting the needs of different stakeholders and the general public. While meeting the needs of the donor or evaluation commissioner, it is an ethical challenge to develop national evaluation capacity and ensure that the evaluation is also useful for the nation.

All evaluators and researchers should be expected to demonstrate their particular approaches to ethical conduct.

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[5] Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations, Australasian Evaluation Society, 2013. Accessed 19 March 2018 at https://www.aes.asn.au/images/stories/files/membership/AES_Guidelines_web_v2.pdf

[6] Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association Evaluator Competencies 2011, Accessed 19 March 2018 at http://www.anzea.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/110801_anzea_evaluator_competencies_final.pdf

ANNEX 2

Note: the elements of each Stage and their breakdown below are organised in sequence for ease of understanding. However, this is not an indication that they should be acted on in sequence. They are more likely to occur iteratively, and the checklist is to help you remember that each element should be considered.

Stage 1 Commissioning

Elements

- Evaluation / Research Governance Structure and Review Team
- Background and Orientation
- Key Evaluation Questions and Scope
- Mapping the planned Evaluation Process
- Planning for Developing and Finalising the Report
- Other evaluation project design
- Procurement and Contracting considerations

Element 1: Evaluation research governance structure	
Agree on project management structure	Establish and describe the **governance and project management structure for the evaluation / research**.
	Consider forming a **Project Steering Committee** comprised of key stakeholders who will guide the project from the concept stage to conclusion. They will ideally participate in the development of ToR; definition of evaluation questions; selection of the evaluation research team; the project inception meeting, including:
	• identification of key informants and communication and engagement strategies
	• any participatory processes for data analysis
	• consideration of findings and development of recommendations
	• review of draft and final reports
	• sign off and acceptance of final products.
Determine project steering Committee	At this point, or preferably before this point, **engage widely** to determine who could participate in this project steering committee. Some guiding questions to consider are:
	• Who are the key stakeholders, including beneficiaries?

	• How will their voices be heard and their views and values honored?
	• Should they Chair the committee?
	• Develop a charter for the committee, defining what the committee will do and what it won't do; set out a schedule of meetings and members likely time commitment.
	• How will their participation be supported (e.g. covering costs)?
	• And, if you are not forming a project steering committee, how will you gain 'buy-in' and support for the evaluation?
Incorporate cultural competence into project steering Committee	Have a conversation with this Committee about what cultural competence means for the Committee. • How do the key stakeholders of partners prefer to make decisions? • What should happen throughout the evaluation to ensure cultural competence? • What are the cultural risks of implementing the evaluation?
Decide on ethical approaches	Have a conversation with this Committee about ethical approaches that need to be supported (e.g. providing for safe expression of voice of particular informants such as women in a patriarchal society) or identifying potential risks to stakeholders (e.g. LGBTQI informants) for being involved and expressing their views.

Element 2: Background and Orientation	
Describe context and SFD program	Provide a **brief description of the context of the actual or intended SFD program or activity**, which includes: • total value (actual or proposed); timeframe; intended end-of-program outcomes • short summary of the key approaches that have been or may be employed in the program • a brief explanation of the SFD program's contribution to the Pacific Sports Partnership (the broader context).
Describe rationale for evaluation research	Describe the **rationale for the evaluation or academic research**, including the overall **purpose** (*How will it be used?*) and **primary users** of the information generated. *Why do you need to do it?*
Identify what the evaluation research will inform	Identify the **key decisions** (e.g. management, learning, demonstration of impact) that the evaluation is intended to inform.
Support participation by Project Steering Committee	Ensure that the Project Steering Committee members have contributed to, understand and support the rationale for the evaluation. Ensure that the Project Steering Committee members have contributed to the context description.

Element 3: Key Evaluation Questions and Scope	
List key evaluation questions	List the **key evaluation or research questions**. *What is it you and your stakeholders need to know? Or want to find out?* There may be several overarching questions with a set of sub-questions. Putting time into clearly defining the evaluation question is important as the questions provide the basis for the research methods that will be employed. It is important to define questions before methods are described. Further check that the questions are

	consistent with the overall purpose and management decisions of the evaluation.
Prioritise questions	**Prioritise your questions**, as you may need to forego some questions being answered, dependent on time and resources available for the evaluation / research team.
Add information where required	Provide sufficient supporting information about Key Evaluation Questions to guide the development of an appropriate evaluation plan.
Identify resources available for evaluation	If possible, **identify the resources available for the evaluation**. This will save time by enabling the team tendering for the evaluation to develop an approach that will fit within a defined budget.
Involve project steering Committee	Ensure that the evaluation questions identified are negotiated and finalised with the project steering committee, so that they fully understand what will be researched.

Element 4: Mapping the planned Evaluation Process	
Set schedule	Set out **your indicative schedule for the evaluation / research**. Make sure key deliverable and any other time critical dates are detailed.
Plan for inception meeting	**Plan a verbal, ideally face-to-face, briefing of the key issues and priority information.** This can take the form of an inception meeting with the Project Steering Committee. At this meeting you will need to discuss/ elaborate the SFD program; have the evaluation / research team present their approach; map out a realistic project schedule; identify key informants for the various evaluation questions; discuss strategies for inviting and engaging key informants (be conscious of in-country communication styles and protocols)
Review program documents	Allocate adequate time for the team to **review and appraise program (and other) documents**.
Request detailed evaluation plan	**Request a detailed evaluation / research plan** – the depth of planning required should reflect the importance of the evaluation / research questions and management decisions which depend on the questions being answered.
Ensure sufficient time for evidence gathering and analysis	Ensure the submission date for the final evaluation plan allows sufficient time for appropriate data collection activities to be scheduled.
	Ensure that proposed scheduling allows for at least adequate, but preferably, **best quality data collection**, analysis and synthesis to answer Key Evaluation Questions.
	Ensure there is **sufficient allocation of time and resources** for processing the data and information collected to enable systematic analysis and interpretation, and the development of a logically structured evidence base. Remember qualitative data analysis can take longer than quantitative data analysis.
Consider local cultural events in scheduling	Ensure that the proposed scheduling of the evaluation considers and is flexible to important local cultural events that may preclude access to key informants and the project steering committee. Flexibility should be provided in certain circumstances. For example, deaths in a village or wider communities.

Element 5: Planning for Developing and finalising the Report

Plan for feedback	Plan a **feedback session to relevant information users**, either together or separately depending on the sensitivity of findings.
Schedule time for high-quality draft report	Allow for adequate time to complete the **draft report to high-quality**.
Develop efficient process for feedback & commenting	Ensure that the **process for commenting is efficient** and, if important, allows independence of the evaluation/ research team's final report, while providing for inclusion of key stakeholders in commenting. **Tip:** Provide a template for the review committee to comment in, which clearly sets out the criteria against which you are seeking feedback.
Allocate time for responding to feedback	Allocate adequate time for responding to comments.
Provide instruction to support utility	**Enhancing utility:** Clearly describe who will be using the report and how they will want to use it; Consider e.g. Executive Summary? Key points for Policy Makers? Tailored communication products for key stakeholders?
Consider participation in the reporting stage	Consider participation: • How will draft findings be discussed with beneficiaries, informants and decision makers? • How will their views be integrated into the report?
Consider cultural competence in the reporting stage	Consider cultural competence • What are the language and literacy considerations for communicating results? • What is the practice of the national government around language? • Consider video presentation of results and infographics, including where written words are inappropriate.
Consider ethics in the reporting stage	Consider ethics • Plan to re-visit villages/ locations where data was collected to honour the gift of data – practice reciprocity. • Test the evaluation findings with the informants, while ensuring that individuals are not identifiable.

## Element 6: Other evaluation project design considerations

Define roles	Describe the **likely roles and functions of each evaluation/ research team member**. The skill sets of the team members will reflect the priority questions of the evaluation.
Define progress reporting	Indicate evaluation / research **progress reporting requirements** that allow you to keep track of the progress of the evaluation / research without distracting the team from carrying out important evaluation activities.
Seek evaluators with skills appropriate to evaluation approach (e.g. participatory evaluation)	Ask for evaluators with skills in participatory evaluation.

Seek evaluators who demonstrate cultural competence	Ask the potential evaluation team to demonstrate how they are culturally competent for the context or how they will endeavor to be.
Request evidence of ethical approaches	Request the potential evaluation team to describe the particular ethical approaches that they will apply in the context of the planned evaluation. Request declaration of interests, in the context of any potential conflict(s) of interest.

Element 7: Procurement and Contracting	
Prepare the request for tender	**When preparing the Request for Tender,** include provisions in the Request for Tender documentation that require the tenderer to demonstrate their **actual experience** in conducting evaluation or academic research in **developing countries**, including the application of **culturally competent**, **ethical** and **participatory** approaches. The Tender Evaluation Criteria should be weighted in favor of authentic demonstration of this experience.
Include quality provisions	Include **quality provisions in the Terms of Reference and the draft contract**, which will be signed by both parties, in commissioning the evaluation / research. These quality provisions should explicitly state that any deliverables e.g. Evaluation Plan, Draft Reports and Final Reports are **subject to approval by the Project Steering Committee** before scheduled payments will be made, and set out the agreed turnaround times for providing this approval and feedback. Ensure this time is factored into the **Project Schedule**. This step will ensure that you are able to expect a quality product that meets your needs as commissioner of the project.
Specific contractual arrangements	The agreed contractual arrangement should specify: • Conditions of engagement • Resources available • Services to be rendered • Any fees to be paid • Timeframe for completing the evaluation • Evaluation Team members and their roles (and arrangements for any variation to that) • Project management, governance and quality assurance and control arrangements • Ownership of materials and intellectual properties • Protection of privileged communication (describe privacy policy that will apply) • Storage and disposal of all information collected • Procedures for dealing with disputes • Any editorial role of the commissioner • The intended publication and release of evaluation report(s) and subsequent use.

Stage 2 Planning and Implementing | Checklist for reviewing an Evaluation Plan and Managing Implementation

Stage 2 Planning and Implementing

Elements

- Inception meeting
- Finalising the evaluation plan
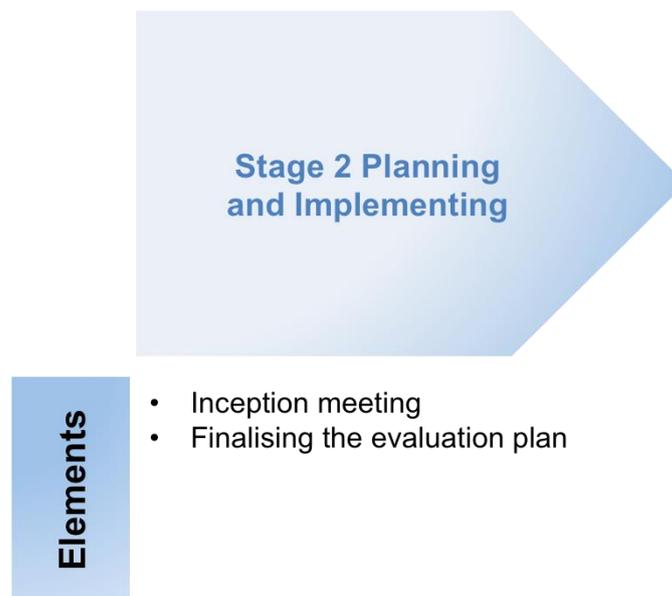
In response to a request for tender or quote, a 'tenderer' will typically be expected to provide a detailed plan for how they propose to conduct the evaluation or academic research. This will then be **further developed** with the selected successful tenderer, often through a project inception meeting, into an **agreed Evaluation or Research Plan**. This Plan will be the key guiding document for implementation of the evaluation research. This checklist describes the important elements that should be included in such a plan.

Element 1: Inception meeting	
Conduct inception meeting	**Inception meeting:** An evaluation research project inception meeting, conducted before data collection commences, is a great place to **bring together key stakeholders** (often represented by the Project Steering Committee) **with the evaluation or research team**. This is where important information about the **cultural context** can be shared and expectations can be explained and negotiated. An example agenda for an inception meeting could include:
	• A detailed presentation about the context and the rationale for the evaluation / research questions by the Project Steering Committee,
	• Explanation of the proposed approach by the Evaluation team,
	• Clarification of roles of the team members, the Project Manager and the Project Steering Committee,
	• Discussion about ethics and particular ethical considerations to be applied,
	• Discussion of data collection methods and culturally appropriate data collection tools and processes,
	• Identification of key informants and development of strategies for communication and engagement with key informants, including identification of communication protocols that are culturally appropriate,

Element 1: Inception meeting

	• Identification of participatory processes for data collection and analysis, review and development of recommendations, • Discussions about transcription and translation for qualitative data, • Identification of cultural nuances, risks and mitigation strategies, • Potential logistical challenges, • Realistic scheduling, and • Agreement on frequency and extent of project status reporting. A well-designed Inception Meeting will enable completion of a strong and agreed Evaluation/ Research Plan.
Consider collaboration and participation	**Collaboration and Participation,** as suggested through such an Inception Meeting, or other equivalent processes, is vital to the preparation of a strong evaluation / research plan that will enable high-quality evaluation / research.

Element 2: Finalise the evaluation plan

Specify use and purpose	**Use and Purpose:** The primary intended users of the evaluation are clearly identified and their evaluation needs are described; the purpose and/or objectives of the evaluation are stated.
Include a summary in the plan	A **summary** is provided to orient the reader to the overall evaluation / research design.
Describe any limitations or constraints	**Limitations or constraints on the evaluation are described** (e.g. timeframe; resources; available data; political and cultural sensitivities). These should have been initially indicated in the Terms of Reference.
Explain Key Evaluation Questions	The **Key Evaluation Questions are described/ explained** and are supplemented as required with sub-questions for deeper exploration.
Indicate priority of Key Evaluation Questions	It is clear which **questions are considered to be of higher priority** and are expected to provide the most important information. This can be more important in a resource-constrained environment. *What is it that you most need to know?*
Ensure schedule has flexibility for unexpected issues	There is sufficient **flexibility in scheduling and resources** to be able to address important unexpected issues as they emerge.
Gain permission for evaluation as necessary	Who will authorise the conduct of the evaluation/research in country? At a national level in government or at a local level in villages and communities, or both? This can take time and needs to be sensitively planned. Ideally permission will be sought well in advance of data collection teams arriving. A local research manager can help an international evaluation research team work through these challenges.
Describe data collection methods for each question	The **methods to collect data are described for each question** (or related questions) and demonstrate that they are culturally appropriate including providing ethically for women and girls; children; youth; people living with disabilities and other targeted marginalised groups.
Ensure data collection methods are appropriate	The proposed **data collection methods are appropriate for the key evaluation questions** posed and may include mixed (quantitative and qualitative) and multiple methods.

Describe how data will be triangulated	**'Triangulation' of data collection methods** is proposed to strengthen the confidence in the findings. Triangulation e.g. may involve collection of data from a number of different perspectives; or a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.
Describe sampling strategy	**The sampling strategy is well described**, and clear and appropriate for the evaluation questions posed. This will involve a description of the target groups of key informants, number of people and sources to be sampled, and description of secondary (e.g. literature and document review) and primary data (e.g. individual people and groups) sources.
Describe data analysis process	**The plan describes how data will be processed and analysed.** Data collection requires particular care, whether collecting quantitative or qualitative data. Consider who will participate in designing and testing the data collection tools. • Who will be involved in designing the questionnaires? • Who will be involved in designing the interview guides? Ensure that these tools work in the cultural and local context. • Will data collection be implemented by nationals? • How will data collection teams be trained and managed? Consider **language used for data collection** – audio/ video recording or written? Transcription and translation? In countries with many languages and dialects e.g. Papua New Guinea, it cannot be assumed that spoken language in one location is equivalent in meaning to spoken language in another location. You may need to consider engaging locally specific translators / transcribers who understand **the nuances of the range of local languages**. • What will be the language of analysis? • Will findings and reports need to be published in local language and English? Remember that accurate transcription can be expensive and ensure this cost is covered. Further, who will be analysing the data? • Will data analysis be done with participation of stakeholders (even including members of the Project Steering Committee) and beneficiaries who have a deep understanding of the context in which the evaluation / research will be conducted? • Participatory analysis of data can be hugely enlightening to all stakeholders. Or, • Will analysis be conducted by only the research team away from the site?
Identify & address ethical issues	The plan identifies **ethical issues and how they will be addressed**; this can be complicated for evaluation / research that involves consideration of gender equity, patrilineal vs matrilineal societies, people with disabilities, other marginalised groups. Get local advice and ensure that best practice ethical processes are followed. For example, refer*: [International Development Research Centre's Advisory Committee on Research Ethics](#), or one of the other ethics guide's mentioned in References and Resources section.*
Describe how judgments will be made	The **process for making judgments** based on the evidence collected **is explained**. This needs to be agreed in the Evaluation / Research Plan, to

	ensure that the final report meets the needs of the intended users and is valid (or trustworthy). Also consider:
	• Who is making the judgments? • Have key stakeholders participated in making judgments; had the opportunity to analyse the data collected and consider what it means? • Who will be influenced by the judgments? What are the risks?
Describe how findings will be utilised	Approaches to enhance the **utilisation of findings** are outlined (if this has been requested in the terms of reference). **Communicating the findings**: This could include development of a range of communication products, based on the evidence collected in the evaluation / research, for particular audiences. **Testing the findings with informants:** This may also include return visits to present findings to those informants and stakeholders from whom data was collected-effectively closing the loop in information sharing. They may even be involved in testing and interpreting the findings. This can enhance validity and reliability of the evaluation / research.
Document implementation schedule	The evaluation / research plan sets out a **detailed implementation schedule**. This schedule reflects adequate time to answer the posed evaluation questions, within the available resources, while maintaining the agreed level of participation.
Allocate roles and tasks	The **roles and allocation of evaluation tasks** to team members is clearly described (i.e. data collection, analysis, synthesis and reporting)
Plan for delivery of the final report	The plan for **delivery and / or publication of the final evaluation /research report** (and perhaps other communication products (refer 2.15) is documented, including agreement on structure and indicative content. If the research work is academic in nature, an interim usable report may be negotiated prior to academic journal publication, which can take some time.

Stage 3 – Reporting | Checklist for reviewing the quality and usefulness of the draft or final evaluation / research report

Stage 3 Reporting Quality

Elements
- First draft report, then final report
- Executive summary
- Introduction & Background
- Research design & methodology
- Findings & analysis
- Conclusions & recommendations
- Overall project conclusion

So, you have commissioned and negotiated implementation of the evaluation / research. Now it's time to consider the draft report before delivery of the final report and any associated communication products. This checklist indicates those elements that need to be considered at this stage, to ensure that the final product is useful, valid and reliable and meets the expectations of the key stakeholders who have been part of the journey.

Element 1: First Draft Report, then Final Report	
Provide draft report to Project Steering Committee	A Draft Report should be provided to the Project Manager and Project Steering Committee for participatory review and feedback to the evaluation team, prior to submission of a Final Report. As mentioned in previous checklists this should be factored into the contract and is a critical component of a quality evaluation. This process can take time but is essential for ensuring that the final report, with useful stakeholder feedback incorporated, meets the needs of the commissioners and their stakeholders.
	Ideally, at draft stage, findings will be taken back and tested with key informants, particularly if they have not already been engaged with data analysis. This process will enhance trustworthiness, and authenticity of the final report.

Element 2: Executive Summary	
Include appropriate executive summary	Depending on the size of the report, an appropriately sized **Executive Summary** can be included.
	This can include:
	- A summary of the background and context
	- Intended purpose of the evaluation / research
	- Key evaluation questions
	- Principle findings summarized against the key questions.

- Primary recommendations (if made)

The executive summary ideally provides all the core information to enable primary users to make good quality decisions.

Element 3: Introduction / Background	
Include background to the program evaluation	A **background to the evaluation / research** describes: • the total value of the development program / project; the number of years of the development program / project (completed / intended), • the stage of the development program, • a description of the system / context in which the evaluation / research is being conducted, • key outcomes of the work to date, and the key issues and key evaluation questions identified in the Terms of Reference, and why they are important to explore.

Element 4: Research Design and Methodological Approach	
Describe research design	A quality report should include a **description of the research design**, describing the design in the context of the literature or paradigm from where that research design is drawn, along with a detailed **description of the actual methodological approach applied** in relation to the evaluation or research questions. Further, any particular practices applied in the context of the project to e.g. ensure higher quality cultural competence, participation, greater trustworthiness and authenticity should be described.
Acknowledge strengths and limitations of methods	Further, **key strengths and limitations of the methods applied** should be described and any relevant guidance provided to enable appropriate interpretation of the findings. This is where detailed data analysis and synthesis (including approaches to triangulation) should be described. It is important that this is done to ensure that a researcher undertaking **a similar approach** would be likely to achieve **similar results**.

Element 5: Findings and Analysis	
All evaluation questions clearly addressed	The evaluation report **clearly addresses all evaluation questions** asked in the Terms of Reference. If an evaluation question is not able to be answered, an explanation should be provided.
Report supports intended uses	The report is prepared in a way that **supports intended uses**.
Conclusions and judgments are supported by evidence	The report clearly explains the **extent to which the evidence supports the conclusions and judgments** made while being frank about where this is not strong and e.g. further work could add value.
Considers alternative viewpoints	**Alternative points of view are presented and considered** where appropriate.
Explores complexity and context	**Complicated and complex aspects of issues** are adequately explored and not oversimplified. The role of context and emergent risks to development program implementation are analysed.
Validity and reliability are explained	There is an **explanation** of the **validity and reliability** (for quantitative research) or **trustworthiness and authenticity** (for qualitative research) of the findings,

	and how these criteria have been addressed through the evaluation / research approach. Effective participation throughout the evaluation can enhance trustworthiness and authenticity.
Implications are explained	The **implications of key findings** are fully explored.

Element 6: Conclusions and Recommendations (If recommendations are expected / required)	
Logical conclusions & recommendations	The **conclusions and recommendations logically flow** from the presentation of findings and any associated analyses. Depending on the evaluation subject, it can be highly valuable to hold participatory workshops with key stakeholders for development of conclusions, crafting of recommendations and allocation of responsibilities. This can enhance the likelihood of implementation of recommendations, and ownership of the evaluation results.
Responsibility for responding to recommendations is clear	**Individual positions** in organisations have been allocated **responsibility** for responding to recommendations.
Recommendations are clearly explained	Where there are significant cost implications of recommendations, these have been estimated (financial, human and materials costs). The recommendations are feasible. The circumstances under which any important lessons are transferable are described.

Element 7: Overall evaluation project Conclusion	
Evaluation project is concluded	Convene a final Project Steering Committee meeting to: • Collect feedback from Project Steering Committee about the evaluation process, • Document Lessons Learned about and throughout the process, and Plan for next steps.

ANNEX 3

Useful resources and references

If you want to know more, consider some of these resources and references:

DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards January 2018

DFAT personnel need guidance on: how to articulate their requirements fairly consistently to M&E Practitioners and the industry more broadly; how to assess the quality of the M&E products they receive; assurance that M&E products do meet a reasonable standard of quality; and how to work with implementation teams and M&E practitioners to improve the quality of products where necessary. Equally, the suppliers of M&E products benefit from this clear articulation of what is required, and the Standards provide a strong basis for the negotiation of the delivery and resourcing of quality products. It also improves the efficiency of monitoring and evaluation processes as both the demand (DFAT) and supply sides (M&E provider and implementing partners) have a clear idea of the expectations before embarking on M&E tasks.http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/dfat-monitoring-and-evaluation-standards.aspx

Using the BetterEvaluation Rainbow Framework

The BetterEvaluation Rainbow Framework organises different evaluation options (methods and processes), in terms of different tasks in an evaluation, into seven clusters. The Rainbow Framework can help you plan an evaluation by prompting you to think about each of these tasks in turn, and to select a package of methods and strategies that cover all the tasks. The Better Evaluation website is holds a wealth of useful evaluation advice. http://www.betterevaluation.org/plan

Useful References

- American Evaluation Association, *Statement On Cultural Competence In Evaluation*, Approved by the AEA Membership: April 22, 2011. Accessed 16 March 2018 at http://www.eval.org/page/competencies

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) (2012) *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*. Accessed 19 March 2018 at http://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/research-and-guides/ethics/gerais.pdf

- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods 4th edition*; Oxford University Press, Oxford

- International Development Research Centre's Advisory Committee on Research Ethics, Accessed 19 March https://www.idrc.ca/en/idrcs-advisory-committee-research-ethics,

- O'Cathain, A. *Assessing the Quality of Mixed Methods Research* pp 540-545, Chapter 21 in Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2010) *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. Second Edition SAGE Publications Inc. California.

- Sherry, E. Schulenkorf, N., Seal, E. and Nicholson, M. (2017) Sport-for-development: Inclusive, reflexive and meaningful research in low- and middle-income settings, *Sport Management Review* 20 (2017) 69-80

- Social Policy Evaluation and Research Committee (2008) *Good Practice Guidelines*, Government of New Zealand, June 2008. Accessed 19 March 2018 at http://www.thehub.superu.govt.nz/sites/default/files/43067_good-practice-guidelines-june-2008-final-version_0.pdf - This is a set of guidelines for conducting research in the Pacific.