

Australian Government

AusAID

GUIDELINE

Manage an Evaluation

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For help, contact	qualityreports@ausaid.gov.au		
For use by	Investment, Initiative and Program Managers		

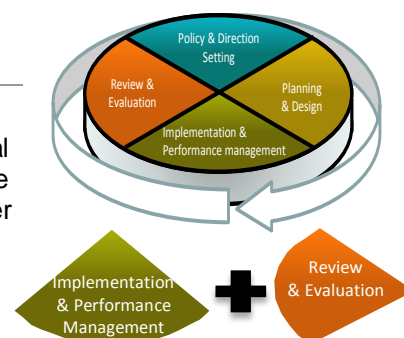
1. Introduction

This Guideline to Evaluation sits under AusAID's *Performance Management and Evaluation Policy* (PMEP). Evaluation at AusAID is undertaken at several levels: program-wide, across programs, and sectors and at initiative level. The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) undertakes evaluations of broader Agency relevance in line with its [evaluation policy](#) and the work program established by the Independent Evaluation Committee.

This Guideline relates primarily to evaluations carried out at initiative level. The principles contained in the Guideline could also be informative for other types of evaluations such as cluster or thematic evaluations – contact your Performance & Quality (P&Q) area or Quality, Performance and Results branch (QPR) for advice on planning cluster or thematic evaluations, as these evaluations need to be carefully scoped and managed. The PMEP requires that all monitored initiatives¹ undertake at least one independent evaluation during their life at the time and for the purpose considered most appropriate by the program manager. The scale should be proportional to the risk and value. This requirement may be covered by program level evaluations including cluster evaluations or those conducted by others such as ODE. In line with AusAID's [Transparency Charter](#), there is an expectation that all independent evaluations will be published.

For the purposes of the PMEP and this Guideline:

- the term evaluation covers all systematic and objective assessments of an initiative. While this includes the various types of reviews that the Agency has traditionally undertaken, there is an expectation over time that initiatives will increasingly be subject to more comprehensive evaluation to help improve the effectiveness of the aid program;
- the term independent means that the evaluation is led by a person or conducted by a team external to the program area to ensure there is no undue influence exercised over the evaluation process or findings; and
- the leader of an evaluation team would normally be a professional evaluator, rather than a technical expert in the relevant sector or thematic area.



2. Evaluation - Why

Independent evaluations form an integral part of the PMEP and complement other performance management processes, such as Quality at Implementation (QAI), which are based on self-assessment.

An evaluation may be undertaken for one or more of three main purposes described below:

¹ A 'monitored' initiative is where: the expected Australian Government funding over the life of the initiative is greater than \$3 million; or the value is less than \$3 million, but the initiative is significant to country or corporate strategies or key relationships with other development partners including other government agencies.

- **Management:** Independent evaluations help managers to understand what is working, what is not and why, and feed directly into improved management.
- **Accountability:** Independent evaluations are a key source of information on the effectiveness of the aid program to key stakeholders, such as the Australian public, partner governments, implementing partners and the communities that AusAID works with.
- **Learning:** Independent evaluations provide important information about what does or does not work in a particular context and why. This information may inform country and thematic strategies, design of new activities, management of existing ones, and provide learning to the global community.

3. Evaluation - What

In AusAID the term evaluation has been used to describe a range of different assessments, including desktop reviews, mid-term reviews, end of program reviews, independent completion reports and independent evaluations. Reviews and evaluations can be understood in terms of a continuum. AusAID defines a review as a particular type of evaluation which has a limited scope and scale. A desk review involves collation and analysis of existing data, such as performance monitoring, project documents and social indicators; a fieldwork review adds some data collection, such as a brief site visit and interviews. An evaluation is more comprehensive and adds additional data collection, especially over time and in comparison to baseline figures. Historically, AusAID has tended to conduct review-style processes at initiative level, however the Agency is now encouraging a more robust process of evaluation.

AusAID defines an evaluation as:

The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program.²

The decision of whether to undertake a review or a more comprehensive evaluation will be influenced by the risk/value profile of the program (proportionality principle), the evaluation purpose, its scope and key evaluation questions.

An **independent** evaluation is: *undertaken by a person or team external to the program area where there is no undue influence exercised over the evaluation process or findings.* There are many factors which can influence the independence of an evaluation. In some circumstances it may be valuable to include an initiative manager in the evaluation team as a learning opportunity or to benefit from their knowledge of the program

Handy tip!

A Theory of Change should be developed during design, but if it is not clear, holding a workshop at the beginning of an evaluation is a useful way to clarify what the initiative will be evaluated against.

A quality evaluation often relies on the information gathered under the existing monitoring and evaluation system³ with additional data collected for the purpose of the evaluation. In some cases the extra data to be collected may be extensive – this will largely depend on the scope and depth of the evaluation, and whether existing monitoring and evaluation data is sufficient.

Each evaluation should adopt the methodology most appropriate to the purpose, evaluation question(s) and context. This may include qualitative methods (for example focus group discussions, observation, interviews), quantitative methods (for example questionnaires, statistical analysis) or a mix of methods. It is likely that most evaluations will incorporate mixed methods, and that a range of approaches will be adopted, including approaches that are both formative and summative (including impact evaluations).⁴

² OECD Development Assistance Committee, (2002), 'Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management,' <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>>

³ QPR Branch is developing guidance for M&E frameworks which will provide more support in this area.

⁴ Formative evaluations are defined by the [OECD DAC](#) as evaluations 'intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs.' Summative evaluations are defined as evaluations 'conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. Summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the program.' Impact evaluations should ideally be planned during design phase, and will need active support from an evaluation specialist from a P&Q area.

4. Evaluation - Expectations

The PMEP requires an independent evaluation (or review) *at least once during the life of an initiative* for all monitored initiatives (of \$3 million or over, or of strategic/political importance). This is a minimum requirement: evaluation can be useful across the aid management cycle. This mandatory requirement can also be met by: a joint evaluation, a partner-led evaluation (see further below), where it forms part of a cluster or has been evaluated by ODE.

Good practice is to prepare an annual evaluation work plan for the country or regional program to ensure adequate resources and time are available to undertake a high quality evaluation and to look for opportunities to undertake joint/cluster evaluations.

AusAID evaluations should consider the following criteria of aid effectiveness which align to international standards: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact⁵, and gender equality. Where an Impact Evaluation is considered, the evaluation manager should refer to the discussion paper: [Impact Evaluation in AusAID](#) and discuss the requirements with their Performance and Quality area. Note that an Impact Evaluation is different to an assessment of impact (as defined under the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria) as it aims to explain the extent to which the development intervention **caused** the observed impact.

Where a particular evaluation criterion has already been addressed through another assessment process (such as a partner's evaluation or a cluster/thematic evaluation), the evaluation manager can choose not to include it and should briefly explain this (an "opt-out justification") in the Terms of Reference and/or Evaluation Commissioning Minute (if prepared). The evaluation team should rate the initiative for the chosen evaluation criteria from 1-6.⁶ The evaluation should inform discussions during the next QAI assessment, but ratings should not automatically be used as the QAI ratings as these should be the initiative management team's own assessment of initiative performance.

The AusAID M&E Standards establish standards for the quality expected across the evaluation process, including: the Terms of Reference (Standard 4), the Evaluation Plan (Standard 5) and Evaluation Report (Standard 6). Regarding ethical standards, it is expected that evaluators uphold the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) [Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations](#).

5. Joint evaluations or partner-led evaluations

For initiatives that are co-financed with other donors or implemented through partners, a joint or partner-led evaluation is encouraged to share learning across all partners, and to avoid over-burdening implementing partners and beneficiaries with multiple evaluation processes. For the purposes of this Guideline, a joint evaluation is where AusAID is the lead or equal partner on the evaluation. A partner-led evaluation is where AusAID relies on the evaluation process of another aid partner, such as an NGO, managing contractor, donor Agency or multilateral.

In some cases AusAID's information needs may not be met through a joint or partner-led evaluation. In determining whether AusAID should commission its own evaluation, an assessment needs to be undertaken as to whether the partner's evaluation meets AusAID's learning, management and accountability needs.

Handy tip!

Contact your P&Q area or QPR when planning a joint or partner-led evaluation to discuss your approach and ensure your information needs

Joint Evaluation

If planning a joint evaluation, sufficient time must be allowed for negotiating with other partners on key evaluation tasks and deliverables, and agreeing on the approach. The management response will normally also be a joint response, and sufficient time will be needed for agreement on this. The final report should be uploaded to AidWorks and published on the AusAID website.

Partner-led Evaluation

If a partner-led evaluation is to satisfy AusAID's evaluation needs, AusAID needs to be actively involved in the evaluation to ensure that it has sufficient voice. This means allowing sufficient staff time for involvement in the evaluation process, and ensuring:

⁵ Formulated by the OECD - DAC. Definitions of the criteria are available [here](#). Evaluations of humanitarian assistance may use the ALNAP interpretation of DAC criteria, available at http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/eha_2006.pdf, and evaluations in fragile or conflict-affected areas should consider the DAC *Guidance on Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility*.

⁶ A QAI Ratings Matrix is available on Rules and Tools which provides guidance on allocating ratings.

- the evaluation meets AusAID's independence requirements (see Independence in AusAID Evaluations);
- AusAID has appropriate input into the Terms of Reference and Evaluation Plan, to ensure the evaluation addresses AusAID's key questions and criteria;
- AusAID has the chance to comment on the Aide Memoire and draft evaluation report;
- the final evaluation report will be uploaded into AidWorks and published on the AusAID website.

6. Undertaking an evaluation

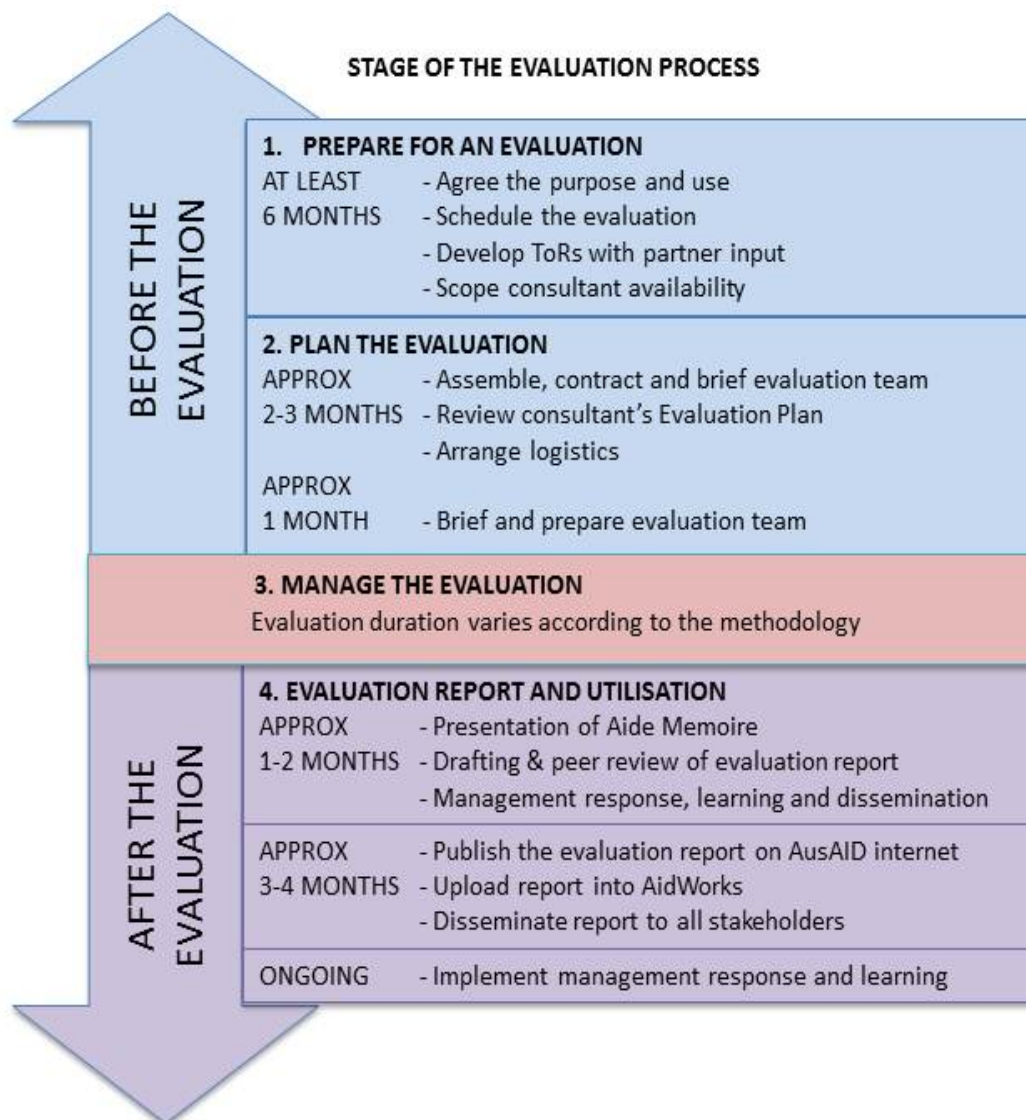
Handy tip!

Contact your P&Q area to let them know you intend to do an evaluation and to discuss what support they can provide

6.1 Prepare for the evaluation

Good planning is essential for a quality evaluation. Indicative evaluation dates should be recorded in AidWorks when an initiative is established or as soon as possible afterwards. Preparation and planning needs to begin at least 6 months prior to the data collection taking place (noting this will be much longer for an Impact Evaluation). After the in-country visit, drafting and quality assurance of the report and preparing a management response require around 3-4 months, followed by ongoing implementation of the management response and learning activities. It will be important to clearly allocate time for the evaluation manager's role. The amount of time will depend on the size and scope of the evaluation. Further information on timing and evaluation approaches which may be suitable in different contexts is provided in Review and Evaluation.

A typical schedule (noting that these timeframes are not likely to be adequate for impact evaluations) would include the following:



Agree the purpose and use of the independent evaluation

An independent evaluation should be undertaken when it can best inform real changes to the initiative, or learning for other programs. Therefore, the purpose and use of the independent evaluation need to be agreed early on to inform the scope, timing and management of the evaluation. To achieve this, the program area can:

- Identify who are the key stakeholders or intended users, and what they most need to know (e.g. the Assistant Director General (ADG) might use the evaluation to confirm or change strategic direction).
- Plan the evaluation process to support the use of the evaluation, including engaging key stakeholders to ensure it is relevant to their needs and to build up their interest in the findings.
- Work with the program management team to build in opportunities for stakeholder engagement and to target the report to key audiences.
- Develop a strategy for learning and dissemination activities during the evaluation and when the report has been finalised. This should be outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Evaluation Commissioning Minute (if used) so that learning activities are agreed early on.

Key questions to determine the purpose and use include:

- what information is needed about the initiative and why?
- what are the key decision-making points in the initiative?
- who needs the information and how will they use it?

Early buy-in from senior managers and key stakeholders is important to maximise learning and management use of the evaluation and to avoid problems later on, for example in agreeing the final report for publication. Preparing an evaluation commissioning minute (with the draft ToR attached if they are available) can be useful in ensuring senior managers are across the evaluation details.⁷

Handy tip!

It can be useful to prepare an evaluation commissioning minute to outline and agree key elements of the evaluation including: Purpose and scope; High level learning activities; Process and key dates; roles and responsibilities

It can also be useful to establish an evaluation reference group, with representatives of thematic areas, program partners, P&Q staff and senior managers at the beginning of an evaluation process to ensure buy-in by relevant areas, improve the quality and contestability of the evaluation, and maximise use of the findings by involving relevant areas in the process. Evaluation reference groups can play diverse roles, including:

- providing input on the purpose and use of the evaluation
- providing input into the ToR, key evaluation questions, and Evaluation Plan.
- reviewing the draft report.
- contributing to dissemination and learning, and to implementation of the management response.

It will be important to consider what decisions the evaluation findings will inform in the commissioning minute or TOR so these can be integrated into the evaluation, considering for example:

- What the final report and management response will inform (new designs, APPR, etc.)
- How other stakeholders (thematic areas, whole-of-government partners, partner governments, donors) should best be engaged – during the evaluation or after the evaluation? As interviewees, evaluation team participants, via workshops, meetings or seminars?

Schedule the evaluation

The purpose and utilisation of the evaluation should guide when it is scheduled. Other factors to consider in scheduling an evaluation include:

- what other relevant evaluations are planned and how this evaluation will complement them.
- the suitability and agreement of the time with partners and other AusAID staff in Canberra and at Post.
- sufficient flexibility to fit with availability of appropriate consultants, and to suit possible methodologies.

The timeframe of an evaluation needs to be planned carefully so that different methodologies can be supported and to allow independent input into the evaluation. The [AusAID M&E Standards](#) (Standard 4) provide more information on this.

Develop the Terms of Reference (TOR) and scope consultant availability

The TOR is a key document in framing the evaluation and should be drafted early in consultation with partners and other key stakeholders. Existing data should be reviewed as part of identifying information gaps which will be addressed in the TOR. The content should be kept concise and high-level, as the methodology

⁷ Contact your P&Q area for examples of an evaluation commissioning minute.

will be developed by the evaluation team in the Evaluation Plan. QPR and P&Q areas can provide further advice, particularly for evaluations of complicated initiatives.

The relevant evaluation delegate needs to clear the draft TOR and proposed evaluation team before a formal offer of contract is made to evaluation team members.

Terms of Reference should meet the [AusAID M&E Standards](#) (Standard 4) and will normally include:

- Background, purpose and intended use of the evaluation
- Key evaluation questions/ scope
- High level learning activities and management decisions that the evaluation findings will inform
- Composition of the evaluation team
- Quality assurance requirements (e.g. peer review)
- Reporting requirements
- Timeframe

Handy tip!

Begin scoping consultant availability as soon as you know the approximate timing of the evaluation.

The main roles and responsibilities of different people in AusAID throughout the evaluation process are:

Roles and Responsibilities	
Initiative manager	Consult with partners and the Counsellor/Director on the timing, purpose and use of the evaluation, input on TOR, and allocate roles such as the Evaluation Manager
Evaluation manager	Oversee and manage the evaluation process, including drafting TOR, contracting and liaising with the evaluation team, oversight of the evaluation report and learning activities
Relevant evaluation delegate ⁸	Agree the purpose and use of the evaluation, approving TOR (in consultation with senior management as required), assessing whether any DAC criteria are assessed sufficiently through other means that they may be excluded from the evaluation
P&Q area	Provide guidance on the process and managing an evaluation, and input (where possible) on key decisions about the evaluation including consultants and costs
Thematic/ sector areas	Join the evaluation reference group and providing input into key evaluation questions
QPR (PEPD)	Develop the evaluation guidance and supporting materials, monitor their implementation and revise as required; assist with the interpretation and application of the guidance where possible

6.2 Plan the evaluation

Assemble and contract the evaluation team

The quality of the evaluation team will directly influence the quality of the evaluation. It is important to determine the skills and expertise that will be required and explore availability with potential team members approximately 6 months prior to the evaluation, as many consultants are engaged well in advance and it can be difficult to find someone with the appropriate expertise at short notice.

Role of the Team Leader

A Team Leader should be appointed as early as possible in the planning process. The Team Leader is expected to be a professional evaluator, rather than a technical expert in the relevant sector or thematic area. They should be consulted in selecting other team members. The Team Leader's role is to effectively utilise the expertise of each team member in meeting the TOR and contractual obligations. The Team Leader arbitrates differences of opinion, and is ultimately responsible for delivering a quality evaluation report.

Other evaluation team members

The evaluation team should include the collective expertise and experience required for the evaluation, and should be assembled with a view to ensuring the independence and credibility of the evaluation – details on this are provided in Independence in AusAID Evaluations. Appropriate gender balance of the team (including the interpreter) to facilitate input from both male and female beneficiaries should also be considered.

Collective skills for the evaluation team should match the purpose of the evaluation and should include:

- monitoring and evaluation expertise

⁸ The Counsellor or Director would generally be responsible for the quality of the evaluation, and the ADG or Minister Counsellor would be responsible for approval of the evaluation report for publication.

- relevant technical expertise
- local knowledge
- consultative and participatory research methods if relevant
- gender equality analysis skills if gender is covered in the evaluation
- appropriate analytical, research and report writing skills

It can be valuable to include other parties in the evaluation team, in an active or observer capacity, such as:

- Partners, to build capacity and maximise the use of findings in decision-making
- An interpreter familiar with AusAID work where there are likely to be language barriers. This should not be an AusAID staff member.
- AusAID staff where appropriate, to maximise learning and management application of findings, though this needs careful management to ensure the objectivity of the evaluation is not compromised. This might include staff from ODE, QPR, P&Q managers, sectoral/ thematic areas and advisers or initiative management staff.

Cost and procurement

An indicative evaluation cost should be built into the initiative budget at the design stage and should be part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. The actual evaluation budget will depend on the methodology and duration, and will be relative to the initiative's risk and value. Costs and timing for translation of the report and for consultant involvement in learning activities might also be required. If funding has not already been allocated for evaluation, or the amount needs to be changed, FMA Reg. 9 approval will be required (see the Instruction How Do I Get Approval to Spend Public Money? for further information)⁹.

Handy tip!

Contact your Contracts and P&Q areas for advice on previous performance of contractors, or contact QPR for advice on identifying a suitable consultant

Independent evaluations will generally fall into the category of small value procurement (short-term specialist advice) and consultant fees should be aligned with the Adviser Remuneration Framework. Team members may be contracted through the use of the Aid Advisory Services Standing Offer and would generally fall under Category C: Monitoring and Evaluation.

If a suitable consultant can't be secured through the Aid Advisory Services Offer, a separate procurement will be required. The evaluation manager will need to ensure the appropriate steps are followed - contact Procurement ManagementGroup@ausaid.gov.au for further advice.

Brief and prepare the evaluation team

Upon appointment of the evaluation team, the initiative manager and evaluation manager should:

- brief the team (with implementing partners if appropriate)
- provide all relevant information related to the initiative¹⁰
- provide the Evaluation Report and Aide Memoire templates, and refer the team to the [AusAID M&E Standards](#) (Standard 6) for AusAID's expectations of an evaluation report
- ensure the team is aware of the key intended audience for the evaluation, and that the final report and management response will be published on AusAID's website

Handy tip!

Provide the [AusAID M&E Standards](#) to the evaluation team so they know what your expectations are for the evaluation

Develop and review the Evaluation Plan

The Evaluation Plan is developed by the evaluation team, and builds on the TOR by identifying what is feasible; suggesting refinements, and explaining in detail how the evaluation will be conducted – the TOR provides the 'what' of the evaluation, and the Evaluation Plan provides the 'how'. The Evaluation Plan should be submitted approximately a month before the evaluation, and input should be sought from the evaluation reference group (where established) as well as other relevant sector/ thematic areas, P&Q areas and the evaluation delegate, to ensure it meets their evaluation expectations.

⁹ The majority (approx. three quarters) of AusAID's initiative reviews and evaluations cost between \$40,000 and \$100,000, with costs dependent on context and scale of the evaluation

¹⁰ Such as QALs, technical reviews, progress reports, and other reviews/ evaluations.

Evaluation Plans should meet the [AusAID M&E Standards \(Standard 5\)](#) and should include:

- an evaluation design that describes an appropriate methodology for assessing the initiative given the time and resources provided
- inclusion of sub-questions for key evaluation questions as necessary
- the proposed data collection and analysis process, including the sampling strategy and key informant categories
- challenges/ limitations to achieving the evaluation objectives that will have to be addressed
- roles and responsibilities of team members
- a draft itinerary, and target dates for deliverables
- approaches to enhance utilisation of findings

Both the evaluation manager and the evaluation team must be satisfied with the final Evaluation Plan. The evaluation manager must be satisfied that the key elements of the TOR are reflected in the plan, and that any alterations are acceptable. The evaluation team must be satisfied that the evaluation approach will allow them to meet their contractual obligations in producing a quality, independent product.

If there are significant changes from the TOR, the Evaluation Plan should be cleared by the evaluation delegate before work starts on the evaluation activities. Refer to the [AusAID M&E Standards](#) for more information on expectations for Evaluation Plans.

Once the Evaluation Plan has been agreed, the initiative and evaluation managers will need to arrange the logistics of the evaluation to support the agreed methodology.

Roles and Responsibilities	
Evaluation manager	Plan the evaluation with the Counsellor/ Director, assemble the evaluation team, review and seek independent input into the Evaluation Plan
Counsellor/Director	Join briefing of the evaluation team
Initiative manager	Assist with logistics and arrange briefing of the evaluation team
Relevant evaluation delegate	Review and approve the Evaluation Plan; approves procurement method and outcome
QPR, P&Q area	Provide advice on Evaluation Plans
Thematic/ sector areas	Review the Evaluation Plan to ensure thematic/sectoral issues are appropriately addressed. Join the evaluation team if appropriate

6.3 Manage the evaluation

The evaluation manager is responsible for overseeing the evaluation team's work. Depending on the scale and scope of the evaluation, the evaluation team's work will normally include:

- Document Review (and appraisal): including design documents, progress reports and monitoring data, and relevant literature. The purpose of the document review is to understand the background and context of the initiative, and to identify evidence which is available in existing data and documents.
- Fieldwork: including interviews, data gathering, site visits, focus group discussions, workshops, etc. in the country. The evaluation team will determine what fieldwork activities are necessary to answer the key evaluation questions based on the evaluation methodology.
- Analysis of monitoring and evaluation data and follow-up inquiry.
- Presentation of initial findings (generally in an Aide Memoire) to AusAID. It is also recommended that the evaluation team discusses its preliminary findings with all key stakeholders after initial discussions and/or approval by AusAID, ideally while the team is in-country.
- Draft and Final report: engaging with AusAID on the peer review and any adjustments to the final report.
- Dissemination of findings: AusAID may ask the evaluation team to be available for follow up dissemination activities, such as presentations or workshops.

6.4 Evaluation report and utilisation

Aide memoire

Good practice is for an Aide Memoire (see the Aide Memoire template) to be used by the evaluation team at the end of an in-country visit to present initial findings, seek verification of facts and assumptions, and discuss the feasibility of initial recommendations in the program/ country context. Sufficient time needs to

Handy tip!

Ensure adequate time is provided in the contract for analysis of findings and revision of the evaluation report after peer review

be factored into the evaluation schedule to allow for data analysis and development of the Aide Memoire by the evaluation team during the evaluation. The key audiences for this document are generally the AusAID evaluation manager and initiative manager, relevant counsellors, senior managers. Once agreed with AusAID, it is good practice to share and discuss the Aide Memoire with the partner government (where relevant) and other active stakeholders (such as development partners, community groups, etc.) while the evaluation team is still in-country.

Drafting the evaluation report

The evaluation report presents the findings and recommendations for the evaluation, and will be published on AusAID's website. As the primary output of the evaluation, it is crucial that the evaluation manager ensures the report is high quality. The report should be prepared using the [Evaluation Report template](#), and in line with the [AusAID M&E Standards](#) (Standard 5).

Quality assurance of the draft evaluation report

The draft evaluation report should be reviewed from these perspectives:

- compliance with the TOR and Evaluation Plan (by the evaluation manager);
- whether it meets the standards outlined in the [AusAID M&E Standards](#) (Standard 6); and
- the quality of evaluation content – assessed through peer review.

What makes a good quality report?

- The evaluation questions have been adequately addressed
- The Executive Summary is succinct and clear, and can be read as a stand-alone document
- The reader is provided with insight into why aspects of the initiative did or did not work well.
- The report makes logical links between evidence and findings
- Key achievements and challenges are clearly presented in the Executive Summary and throughout the report
- The report is targeted to the needs of the key stakeholders
- Conclusions and recommendations are logical and strategic; judgements are clear and unambiguous
- The report is easy to read and the tone is neutral and balanced

Handy tip!

The Executive Summary should be no longer than 4 pages. The evaluation report should be no longer than 25-30 pages excluding appendices.

Review of the report by peers ensures the evaluation findings are robust, applicable to AusAID's operating environment, and relevant for other stakeholders. The seniority and breadth of people involved in the peer review and the process itself (a face to face meeting or via email) will vary according to the significance of the initiative, the purpose of the evaluation and whether the findings are likely to be contentious.

Arranging a peer review meeting can be valuable to bring together senior managers, initiative managers, sector/ thematic groups and the evaluation team to discuss the evaluation report. This enables:

- engagement and briefing senior management and other key decision-makers on the evaluation process and findings prior to preparation of the management response;
- discussion of the content of the evaluation and report; and
- discussion of the quality of the report, including its accuracy, messaging, and utility for its purpose.

Handy tip!

If feasible, up a separate management response meeting so that the peer review can focus on the quality of the evaluation findings and report

A peer review would generally involve partner government representatives; people familiar with the initiative (such as AusAID officers, other Government agencies, NGOs and other donors); and/or people with technical expertise who are independent of the initiative. The evaluation team (or at least the Team Leader) should also be involved to respond to questions on the draft report. For evaluations of significant activities that have potentially wide-reaching implications for future programming, a review meeting involving a wider range of expertise is advisable.

Clear actions need to be obtained from the peer review and circulated to the peer reviewers and evaluation team. Actions may be to:

- proceed to finalisation and release of the evaluation report; or
- request the evaluation team to make specific factual revisions to the draft report; or
- where the evaluation is considered to be highly important to informing program management and the evaluation was unsatisfactory, further data collection and analysis may be required by the evaluation team.

After the peer review the evaluation manager should meet with the evaluation team to negotiate revisions and agree on steps to be taken to finalise the report content. Changes to substantiated findings should not be requested, as this would undermine the independence of the evaluation, but it is appropriate to request changes relating to: contractual obligations; findings where these have been based on a misunderstanding of the context or are not substantiated by evidence; and alteration of the report to improve clarity or readability.

Once the evaluation team has made any negotiated changes, and these have been approved by the evaluation delegate, the report content will then be considered final.

Management response, learning and dissemination

AusAID should provide a management response to all evaluations (using the Management Response template) to ensure that the Agency obtains full value from the evaluation.

Learning and dissemination activities should be arranged and implemented as outlined in the TOR or evaluation commissioning minute (if one is prepared), with any additional learning activities arranged according to who will benefit from the evaluation findings and how best to influence those people.

The evaluation manager is responsible for ensuring that the management response and learning activities are agreed to by the evaluation delegate.

The final report and management response should be disseminated to all those who participated in the evaluation, including community groups and beneficiaries if they were interviewed or contributed to the evaluation in any way. Strong consideration should be given to whether the report should be translated.

Publish the report, Upload to AidWorks

AusAID's [Transparency Charter](#) states that AusAID will: 'Publish detailed information on AusAID's work [including] ... the results of Australian aid activities and our evaluations and research - on AusAID's website.' AusAID has committed to publish all independent evaluations on the internet unless there are compelling reasons otherwise. It is recommended to publish the management response on AusAID's internet alongside the final evaluation report to explain how AusAID will use the findings from the evaluation. If the evaluation includes controversial findings it is recommended to prepare talking points before publishing the evaluation.

Publication of the evaluation should be raised early in the process with the evaluation team, the partner government and other participating stakeholders to ensure they are aware of AusAID's expectations. Arrange public release of the report on the AusAID website with the Communications Section, and submit it online via the Web Publishing intranet site. All evaluation reports and management responses must be uploaded into AidWorks.

Roles and Responsibilities	
Evaluation manager	Managing the review and revision of the evaluation report and findings to ensure they are high quality and meet the evaluation purpose, leading learning activities, promoting evaluation use by engaging senior staff
Initiative manager	Preparing the management response, assisting with learning activities and dissemination, arranging for the approval and publication of the report on the AusAID internet and AidWorks
Evaluation delegate	Reviewing the draft report and chairing the peer review process, providing input into the development and implementation of the management response, clearing the report for publication and using the evaluation information for decision-making
P&Q/ thematic/ sector areas	Reviewing the draft evaluation report, participating in the peer review, and participating in learning activities where required

7. Supporting Material

Independence in AusAID Evaluations
[AusAID M&E Standards](#)
 Reviews and Evaluations
[Impact Evaluation in AusAID](#)

Management Response template
[Evaluation Report template](#)
 Aide Memoire template