Independent Final Evaluations*: overview for UK Aid Direct grantees

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*formerly referred to as Independent Progress Reviews

coffey international development
SPECIALISTS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

UK Aid Direct final evaluation guidance overview

Independent final evaluations (referred to as Independent Progress Reviews in the 2012 Evaluation Manager Strategy[1]) are to be commissioned and managed by UK Aid Direct grantees. The following document outlines important information concerning the purpose of the final evaluation, key roles and responsibilities. The document also provides optional Annexes to help grantee commission and quality assure their final evaluations.

1.1 Purpose of the independent final evaluation and key objectives

The independent final evaluation report needs to be a substantial document that (a) answers all the elements of the Terms of Reference (ToR); (b) provides findings and conclusions that are based on robust and transparent evidence; and (c) where necessary supplements the grantee's own data with independent research.

The independent final evaluation has two key objectives:

1 To independently verify (and supplement where necessary), grantees' record of achievement as reported through Annual Reports and defined in the project's logframe;

2 To assess the extent to which the project performed well and was good value for money, which includes considering;

- How well the project met its objectives;
- How well the project applied value for money principles of effectiveness, economy, efficiency in relation to delivery of its outcome;
- What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened; and
- How well the project aligns with DFID's goals of supporting the delivery of the MDGs.

1.2 Evaluation questions

The overarching objectives will be answered by responding to the full list of evaluation questions included in Annex 1 which presents an indicative ToR for the final evaluation. All grantees must review these questions and then adapt the ToR to ensure that they are answerable within the context of their projects. Grantees are also welcome to include additional questions that are relevant to individual research interests (such as project design questions), but at a minimum, the two objectives above must be addressed through the questions that are presented in Annex 1.

1.3 Roles and responsibilities

The key roles and responsibilities for the independent final evaluation are presented in table 1:

Table 1: Role and responsibilities during the evaluation process

Task	Responsible	Description
Design the Terms of	Evaluation Manager	A generic TOR for the evaluation has been developed by the Evaluation Manager (see Annex 1). Grantees should use this as the basis for their TOR and

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/237270/evaluation-manager-PPA-GPAF-evaluation-strategy.pdf

Reference (TOR)		amend it to suit their requirements where necessary. Grantees are responsible for finalising the TOR.
Provide guidance on the final evaluation	Evaluation Manager	Guidance on designing, commissioning and managing an external evaluation is provided in Annex 2. This guidance has been provided at the request of grantees and contains advice and templates. This is guidance only. Additional workshops on how to design and commission and manage a final evaluation will be provided by the Evaluation Manager in cooperation with the Fund Manager throughout the first half of 2015.
Commission and manage the final evaluation	Grantees	Grantees are responsible for designing the evaluation study, commissioning an Independent Evaluator(s), managing and quality assuring their inputs, and submitting their findings to the UK AID DIRECT Fund Manager.
Disseminate the final evaluation report	Grantees	According to transparency guidelines, grantees are encouraged to publish the final evaluation report. PLEASE NOTE: The final report should not be published until after it has been submitted to the Fund Manager and Evaluation Manager. The Fund Manager and the Evaluation Manager will communicate to grantees when the report can be disseminated more widely.

1.4 Procurement of the evaluation

Grantees will be responsible for commissioning and managing the evaluation. Grantees may use their discretion to determine how the procurement procedure is conducted, however the person(s) or firm contracted to conduct the evaluation must be independent from the grantee. While the evaluations must respond to all elements of the TOR, the cost and scope of the evaluation should be proportionate to the amount of funding received by grantees. It is recognised that the amount of funding, as well as the size and capacity of organisations to manage evaluation processes, varies greatly across the UK Aid Direct portfolio.

Total monitoring and evaluation costs often represent 3-5% of the total value of grants, however, it is up to each grantee to determine exactly how much is spent on the final evaluation. At a minimum, final evaluations should demonstrate impact as far as possible after accounting for proportionality principles. All grantees are encouraged to make a substantial investment in the final evaluation since the output of this process can have important reputational implications for grantees and the quality of the evaluation report will also affect the Evaluation Manager's ability to compare the performance of grantees across the UK Aid Direct.

1.5 Evaluation methodology

The consultant(s) (or consulting firm) commissioned to conduct the independent final evaluation and the grantee are jointly responsible for choosing the methods that are the most appropriate for the purpose of this evaluation. Methods should be appropriate to the context of the project intervention, which means careful consideration of qualitative and mixed method research approaches as well as quantitative research. The triangulation of both existing and additional primary and secondary data will ensure that the findings are robust.

Although grantees will use different research methods to demonstrate impact, the evaluation must be rigorous. In evaluation terms, this means 'evidence of rigorous thinking, and the deployment of a defensible and logical

argument'[2]. 'Rigorous' evaluations are not solely limited to impact evaluations and the design of the approach should not be 'method-driven'.

Rigour is affected by a number of different quality criteria that grantees should discuss with their evaluators to ensure that they are accounted for in the design and reporting of their evaluations. Key 'rigour' criteria to adhere to include:

- in-depth data collection;
- careful recording of data;
- contextual documentation;
- systematic and thorough analysis;
- explanations of conceptual and analytical processes; and
- auditability of documentation. [3]

1.6 Utility of the final evaluation report

UK Aid Direct Fund Manager: The Fund Manager will review and use the final project evaluations as part of its assessment of individual grantee performance at the end of the grant period. This review will occur on an on-going basis as grantee final evaluations are submitted, and may include ad hoc follow-up questions or points of clarification.

UK Aid Direct Evaluation Manager: The Evaluation Manager will review and use the information generated by the final, project evaluation reports to inform the UK Aid Direct's overall, fund-level report. The analysis of the information from the independent evaluation process will represent a major source upon which the Evaluation Manager will assess the final performance of the Fund in 2016.

UK Aid Direct grantee: In addition to the evaluation objectives that are described in this guidance document, UK Aid Direct grantees may also use this evaluation as an opportunity to advance its own learning objectives and to leverage the

[2] Bamberger, Rugh and Mabry (2006). *Real World Evaluation: Working under Budget, Time , Data and Political Constraints.* Thousand Oaks CA. Sage.
[3] Spencer, Lewish and Dillion (2003). Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence. Government Chief Social Researcher's Office. London: Cabinet Office.

Annex 1: Sample TOR

Grantees should adapt this ToR as needed, however they should include the evaluation questions listed under section 1.7.

1.1 Background information

DFID provides significant funding to civil society organisations (CSOs) annually in line with its overall strategy to alleviate poverty and promote peace, stability and good governance. The Programme Partnership Arrangements (PPA) and UK Aid Direct are two of DFID's principal funding mechanisms and have provided £480 million to approximately 230 CSOs between 2011 and 2013. The current political climate and results-based agenda demand a rigorous assessment of the effectiveness of funds disbursed to ensure that they are managed to provide value for money.

TripleLine is the Fund Manager for the UK Aid Direct and is responsible for assessing performance of grantees at the project level. Coffey International Development is the Evaluation Manager and is responsible for assessing the performance of the funding mechanisms as a whole. For more information on the fund level valuation, please see the 2012 Evaluation Strategy.

1.2 Grantee project description

Grantee to insert project description here

1.3 Purpose of the independent final evaluation for UK Aid Direct grantees

The independent final evaluation reports that are submitted by grantees will be used to inform the Fund Manager's understanding of the grantee's performance at the project level and will also be used to inform the Evaluation Manager's assessment of performance at the UK Aid Direct fund level.

The independent final evaluation report needs to be a substantial document that (a) answers all the elements of the Terms of Reference (ToR); (b) provides findings and conclusions that are based on robust and transparent evidence; and (c) where necessary supplements the grantee's own data with independent research.

1.4 Key objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation has two explicit objectives that are explained below:

1. To independently verify (and supplement where necessary), grantees' record of achievement as reported through its Annual Reports and defined in the project logframe;
2. To assess the extent to which the project was good value for money, which includes considering:
   - How well the project met its objectives;
   - How well the project applied value for money principles of effectiveness, economy, efficiency in relation to delivery of its outcome;
   - What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened; and
   - How well the project aligns with DFID's goals of supporting the delivery of the MDGs.

Grantees are welcome to include other learning objectives as part of their final evaluations, but at minimum, the two objectives above should be addressed.

1.5 Verification of grantee reporting

The first task of the final evaluation is to verify grantee achievement. The record of achievement will be presented in past Annual Reports and progress against the project logframe. This exercise could include verifying information that was collected by the grantee for reporting purposes and possibly supplementing this data will additional information collected through primary and secondary research.

Verifying the results from the project log frame will begin to capture what the project has achieved. However, there will be other activities and results that occur outside of the logframe that may require examination in order to respond to the different evaluation questions. Verifying reporting will also necessarily include a review of the data and systems that were used to populate results.

1.6 Assessment of value for money

Each final evaluation should assess the extent to which the delivery and results of the project are good value for money. Value for money can be defined in different ways, but at minimum the evaluation report should include an assessment against:

- How well the project applied value for money principles of effectiveness, economy, efficiency in relation to delivery of its outcome;
- What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened; and

Further guidance on how evaluators may want to consider assessing value for money is included in Annex 7.

1.7 Evaluation questions

To ensure comparability across the final evaluation reports, the evaluator(s) should adapt and respond to the questions below. Projects are welcome to include additional questions based on their own learning needs, however this is not required. Please note that the attention given to each evaluation question may vary depending on the objectives of certain projects and the availability of data, so the independent evaluator(s) should use his/her discretion in the level of effort used to respond to these questions.

All evaluators are encouraged to structure their research questions according to the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

Relevance

- To what extent did the grantee support achievement towards the MDGs, specifically off-track MDGs?
- To what extent did the project target and reach the poor and marginalised?
- To what extent did the project mainstream gender equality in the design and delivery of activities (and or other relevant excluded groups)?
- How well did the project respond to the needs of target beneficiaries, including how these needs evolved over time?

Effectiveness

- To what extent are the results that are reported a fair and accurate record of achievement?
- To what extent has the project delivered results that are value for money? To include but not limited to:
    - How well the project applied value for money principles of effectiveness, economy, efficiency in relation to delivery of its outcome;
    - What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened; and
- To what extent has the project used learning to improve delivery?

- What are the key drivers and barriers affecting the delivery of results for the project?

Efficiency

- To what extent did the grantee deliver results on time and on budget against agreed plans?
- To what extent did the project understand cost drivers and manage these in relation to performance requirements?

Sustainability

- To what extent has the project leveraged additional resources (financial and in-kind) from other sources? What effect has this had on the scale, delivery or sustainability of activities?
- To what extent is there evidence that the benefits delivered by the project will be sustained after the project ends?

Impact

- To what extent and how has the project built the capacity of civil society?
- How many people are receiving support from the project that otherwise would not have received support?
- To what extent and how has the project affected people in ways that were not originally intended?

2. Evaluation methods

The consultants(s) (or consulting firm) commissioned to conduct the final evaluation and the grantee are jointly responsible for choosing the methods that are the most appropriate for demonstrating impact. Evaluation methods should be rigorous yet at all times proportionate and appropriate to the context of the project intervention. Where possible, the evaluator(s) are encouraged to triangulate data sources so that findings are as robust as possible.

2.1 Different approaches to assessing impact

Although it is not strictly mandatory, the evaluator(s) are encouraged to apply a mixed-methods approach for assessing impact. This would combine qualitative data to provide an explanation of 'why' and 'how' the project has achieved the type and scale of results that are quantitatively observed.

Assessing impact through experimental or quasi-experimental approaches

To definitively attribute impact, then the establishment of a counter factual is required: e.g. what would have happened to beneficiaries in the absence of the intervention? Evaluators are encouraged to consider the extent to which approaches, such as measuring the difference between treatment and control groups, can be successful in capturing impact while also balancing concerns relating to proportionality. It is likely that experimental or quasi-experimental approaches will not be appropriate for a large number of grantees.

Assessing impact through contribution-based research

Contribution-based approaches are helpful for overcoming the attribution issue of proving cause and effect. A contribution-based approach should result in a 'plausible' account of the difference that DFID's funding has made to the impact of grantees. Such an approach is typically informed by a wide range of evidence sources that are brought together to produce a 'plausible' assessment of the 'contribution' of grantees to higher level outcomes and impacts. It is likely that such an approach will be appropriate for a large majority of grantees.

Further guidance

Additional guidance concerning the fundamental principles and techniques of impact and contribution research is presented in 'Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods of Impact Evaluations' available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67427/design-method-impact-eval.pdf

And Annex 8.1 of the Evaluation Manager's Evaluation Strategy for the UK Aid Direct and PPA which is also publically available: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-strategy-programme-partnership-arrangements-ppa-and-global-poverty-action-fund-gpaf

2.2 Indicative materials to review

Relevant to review may include review of the grantee's original application for funding; MOU with DFID for funding; updated versions of organisational project logframes; monitoring data; monitoring systems, annual reports and comments provided by the Fund Manager; organisational monitoring & evaluation strategy; studies undertaken by the grantee; financial information / information on resources spent; information on synergies / collaboration with DFID country programmes and other actors; published material (e.g. to demonstrate sharing of learning with others); and additional relevant documents.

2.3 Indicative methods for conducting primary and secondary research

Relevant primary and secondary research may include: interviews with staff at the grantee organisation involved in the management and delivery of work; interviews with various delivery partners; focus group discussions with ultimate beneficiaries; surveys with project partners and other relevant stakeholders where (possible and proportionate); systematic reviews of secondary studies and sources, measuring impact where possible and proportionate through comparison groups and other quantitative methods; and verifying reported data through back checking and quality control assessments.

3. Contractual and reporting arrangements

3.1 Profile of the Independent Evaluation provider

The Independent Evaluator should be a suitably-qualified and experienced consultant or consulting firm. The consultant profile should include:

- An evaluation specialist with a minimum of seven years' experience in programme/project evaluation in an international development context. [4] Often a mixed approach that incorporates the technical skills of an evaluation specialist but includes some inputs from a sector specialist is most effective;
- Experience of results-based monitoring and evaluation;
- Ability to design and plan the evaluation approaches and research methodologies, including quantitative and qualitative research methods. Where feasible and proportionate, the person or team should include skills and expertise required to design, plan and conduct impact evaluation, potentially using experimental or quasi-experimental techniques;
- Relevant subject matter knowledge and experience such as education sector, gender, non-state actors and economic growth to ensure the evaluation design and research methods are as relevant and meaningful as possible given the aims and objectives of the project and the context in which it is being delivered;
- Ability to manage a potentially large-scale and complex evaluation and research process, including interpreting baseline data and conducting a final evaluation;

[4] Please note that while sector specialists do add valuable perspectives, these specialists are not necessarily equipped with the skills required to conduct an evaluation that requires this degree of evaluation rigour.

- Ability to design, manage and implement primary research in potentially challenging project environments, such as fragile and conflict affected states. This may include the design of surveys, in-depth interviews, focus group and other research;
- Design and manage data and information systems capable of handling large datasets for monitoring and evaluation purposes; and
- Consideration of the extent to which the evaluator or evaluation team has appropriate country knowledge/experience. This includes language proficiency to conduct the research required or that resources be made available (e.g. translator or social gatekeeper) to enable the research to proceed smoothly; and

While evaluation consultants may be nominated by the grantees they must not have a conflict of interest with the on-going activities of grantees.

3.2 Management arrangements

Grantees are responsible for the recruitment and briefing to the final evaluator(s), and will be the point of contact within the grantee organisation for the duration of the evaluation process. The grantee should also provide logistical and technical support to facilitate required meetings and interviews.

3.3 Deliverables and timeframe

The final evaluation consultant(s) will submit the final report to the grantee who, in turn, will submit it to the Fund Manager within three months of the project's completion. In order to minimalize the risk of not being to access the required project staff and key stakeholders it is recommended that the reports should be completed before the project closes. The main body of the report (draft and final version) must be limited to 40 pages (this can include or exclude annexes). One of the annexes should consist of a table which summarises the findings according to the OECD-DAC criteria.

To ensure consistency across evaluation reports, the following structure should be used for reporting:

Executive Summary

Introduction

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Organisation context
- Logic and assumptions of the evaluation
- Overview of UK Aid Direct funded activities

Evaluation Methodology

- Evaluation plan
- Strengths and weaknesses of selected design and research methods
- Summary of problems and issues encountered

Findings

- Overall Results
- Assessment of accuracy of reported results
- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency

- Sustainability
- Impact

Conclusions

- Summary of achievements against evaluation questions
- Summary of achievements against rationale for UK Aid Direct funding
- Overall impact and value for money of UK Aid Direct funded activities

Lessons learnt (where relevant)

- Project level - management, design, implementation
- Policy level
- Sector level
- UK Aid Direct management

Recommendations

Annexes (such as)

- Independent final evaluation terms of reference
- Evaluation research schedule
- Evaluation framework
- Data collection tools
- List of people consulted
- List of supporting documentary information
- Details of the evaluation team
- Grantee management response to report findings and recommendations

Annex 2: Tips for managing the independent final evaluation process

NB: An evaluation is a process that needs to be planned, designed, conducted, and managed. Table 1 summarizes the main steps involved in the evaluation process. Many of the examples provided in this annex are adapted from government procedures and may be more complex than UK Aid Direct grantees require, however they may still be useful to those agencies without significant experience with independent evaluation. None of guidance is mandatory however, thoughtful quality assurance process for the final evaluation is highly encouraged.

1.1 Planning an evaluation

Table 1: Eight steps to plan for an evaluation[5]

Steps involved in evaluation	Questions to consider
1. Defining the objectives and intended outcomes	• What is the programme logic or theory about how inputs lead to outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the particular policy context?
2. Defining the audience for the evaluation	• Who will be the main users of the findings and how will they be engaged?
3. Identifying the evaluation objectives and research questions	• What do decision makers need to know about what difference the programme made, and/or how it was delivered? • How broad is the scope of the evaluation?
4. Selecting the evaluation approach	• What type of evaluation is required? • How extensive is the evaluation likely to be? • What level of robustness is required?
5. Identifying the data requirements	• At what point in time should the impact be measured? • What data is required? • What is already being collected / available? • What additional data needs to be collected? • Who will be responsible for data collection and what processes need to be set up?
6. Identifying the necessary resources and governance arrangements	• How large scale / high profile is the programme, and what is a proportionate level of resource for the evaluation? • What budget is to be used for the evaluation and is this compatible with the evaluation requirements? Has sufficient allowance been built in? • Who will be the project owner, provide analytical support, and be on

[5] *Source: The Magenta Book.* The Magenta Book provides guidance from HM Treasury on what to think about when designing an evaluation. It explains how results can be interpreted and presented, and what should be considered in this process.

	the steering group? • What will the quality assurance processes be?
7. Conducting the evaluation	• Who will be responsible for specification development, tendering, project management and quality assurance? • When does any primary data collection need to take place? • Is a piloting or cognitive testing of research instruments required? • When will the evaluation start and end?
8. Using and disseminating the evaluation findings	• What will the findings be used for, and what decisions will they feed into? • How will the findings be shared and disseminated?

1.2 Identify the data requirements

The evaluation questions will determine the data requirements for the evaluation. The sample TOR shows the objectives and the mandatory research questions for the final evaluation. In planning an evaluation, it is important to prioritise identifying what data grantees have available compared to what additional data may need to be collected. A combination of data from primary and secondary data sources will be used to respond to the evaluation questions, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of data sources

Primary information	Secondary information
• Interviews with stakeholders • Survey of beneficiaries • Focus group interviews • Case studies	• Monitoring data from the project • Comparisons with similar activities • Statistical data • Previous evaluations – see more below

1.3 Resources

When commissioning an evaluation, grantees should consider the resources required to lead a rigorous evaluation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Consultancy days, including preparation and site visits;
- Reimbursable travel and accommodation expenses such as economy class airfares and mid-class accommodation;
- Support from project staff to help to arrange meetings, focus groups, interviews and other logistical assistance; and
- Vouched expenses (including travel at economy rates and mid-class accommodation) and subsistence costs according to established rates per country (to be agreed in advance with the contracting party).

1.4 Mapping the Theory of Change

Mapping the project's Theory of Change with an outcome map helps to make evaluations more specific. Logframes are linear representations of complex interventions which do fully account for the different internal and external factors that have affected results. Outcome maps, by contrast, are flexible and allow grantees to account for the different factors and assumptions that affected the extent to which certain changes have or have not occurred. This is helpful for pin-pointing the types of changes that may be captured in the evaluation given the progress of different target groups.

Mapping how activities lead to certain outcomes also enables grantees and evaluators to identify the different stakeholders with perspectives on what change has happened and why. Including a range of these stakeholders in the evaluation process will allow evaluator to triangulate data (e.g. household level, government level, school level), to make a balanced judgement of achievement. Further resources are available at:

www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_mapping.Logframes are linear

1.5 Developing an evaluation framework

One way for grantees and evaluation consultants to ensure that the final evaluation is as objective and transparent as possible is develop an evaluation framework. An evaluation framework clearly presents how evaluation questions are interpreted and how they will be answered. Benefits of an evaluation framework:

- Transparency: all stakeholders can see the basis upon which judgements will be made;
- Objectivity: setting out the judgement criteria and indicators ensures that judgements will be made objectively based on the evidence gathered;
- Systematic approach: the framework structures the research and analysis exercise. All of the evidence can be systematically reviewed against the indicators that are set and agreed with stakeholders; and
- Clarity: the framework provides clarity on how the evaluation will be undertaken and how the evidence will be used.

The evaluation framework should continue to be refined as the evaluation process progresses and should seek input from key stakeholders. Table 3 presents an example of how an evaluation framework can respond to an evaluation question.

Table 3: Example of an evaluation framework structure in response to an evaluation question

Evaluation Question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator	Research approach	Data Sources	Findings
To what extent is the project learning from the delivery process and adapting their activities as a result?	Extent to which project is learning from the delivery process	Number of lessons learned from the delivery process. Type of lessons learned from project delivery as reported by grantees	Desk based review Review of project systems Semi-structured interviews	• Monitoring reports • Meeting minutes • Policy papers • Financial reporting • Interviews with staff and other relevant	

				stakeholders	
	Extent to which the project adapts its activities on the basis of lessons learned	Number of project adaptions as a result of the lessons learned Type and quality of adaptations that lead to enhanced results	Desk based research Semi-structured interviews Review of project systems Focus groups discussions	• Monitoring reports • Meeting minutes • Policy papers • Financial reporting • Interviews with staff and other relevant stakeholders • Focus group discussions with primary beneficiaries	

1.6 Quality assurance of final evaluations

Grantees are responsible for quality assuring the evaluation as it is undertaken and it is imperative that the evidence collected as part of the reporting is robust and reliable. Where high quality data is not available, the limitations of the data and any conclusions drawn from it should be clearly stated.

The Evaluation Manager encourages grantees and their evaluators to appraise the quality of the evaluation using the framework below on an on-going basis.

Table 4: End of project independent evaluation quality assurance framework

Appraisal focus	Key appraisal questions	Key quality indicators
Findings	1. How credible are the findings?	Findings /conclusions are supported by data /study evidence. Findings /conclusions 'make sense' /have a coherent logic. Findings /conclusions are resonant with other knowledge and experience. Use of corroborating evidence to support or refine findings.
	2. How well does the evaluation/evidence address its original aims and purpose?	Clear statement of study aims and objectives (where relevant). Findings clearly linked to the purposes of the study, and to the initiative or policy being studied. Summary of conclusions directed towards aims of study. Discussions of limitations of study in meeting aims.

	3. Scope for drawing wider inference – how well is this explained?	Discussion of what can be generalised to wider beneficiary population Detailed description of the contexts in which the study was conducted to allow applicability to other settings /contextual generalities to be assessed. Discussion of how hypotheses /theories of change may relate to wider theories of change at the policy level. Discussion of limitations on drawing wider inference.
Design	4. How defensible is the research design?	Discussion of how overall evaluation /research strategy was designed to meet the aims of the study. Discussion of the rationale of the study design. Use of different features of design /data sources evident in findings presented. Discussion of limitations of research design and their implications for the study evidence.
Design	5. How well was the data collection carried out?	Discussion of: • Who conducted the data collection; • Procedures /documents used for collection /reporting; and • Checks on origin /status. Description of fieldwork methods and how these may have influenced data collected.
Analysis	6. How well has the approach to and formulation of the analysis been conveyed?	Description of form of original data. Clear rationale for choice of data management method. Discussion, with examples, of how any constructed analytic concepts have been devised and applied.
Reporting	7. How clear are the links between data, interpretation and conclusions – i.e. how well can the route to any conclusions be seen?	Clear conceptual links between analytic commentary and presentations of original data. Discussion of how /why particular interpretation /significance is assigned to specific aspects of data. Discussion of how explanations /theories /conclusions were derived.
Neutrality	8. How clear are the assumptions /theoretical perspectives /values that have shaped the form and output of the evaluation /evidence submitted?	Discussion/evidence of the main assumptions/hypotheses/theoretical ideas on which the evaluation was based and how these affected the form, coverage, or output of the evaluation. Discussion/evidence of the ideological perspectives/values of the evaluation team and their impact on the methodological or substantive content of the evaluation. Evidence of openness to new/alternative ways of viewing subject /theories /assumptions. Discussion of how error or bias may have arisen in design/data collection/analysis and how it was addressed, if at all. Reflections on the impact of the researcher on the evaluation process.

Auditability	9. How adequately has the research process been documented?	Discussion of strengths and weaknesses. Documentation and reasons for changes in coverage /data collection /analytic approach and implications. Reproduction of main study documents.

Annex 3: Commissioning an evaluation

NB: the information below is only to guide agencies that may not have had significant experience commissioning an evaluation before. The suggestions are not mandatory.

1.1 What is a Terms of Reference ?

Developing a clear and comprehensive Terms of Reference (ToR) is a critical step in commissioning a high-quality evaluation. A ToR establishes the purpose, objectives and structure of the evaluation to be commissioned. It is used primarily for two purposes:

- The ToR is often included as part of an advertisement or tender package in a procurement competition. It provides consultants or consultancies with important information that they will need to bid for the evaluation work; and
- The ToR is nearly always included as part of the contract with the evaluator and it sets out the responsibilities of the evaluator on the assignment.

The ToR will generally address key issues such as the; background of the assignment; objective of the evaluation; preferred evaluation approach (if there is one); professional skills and qualifications of the evaluator; budget for the assignment; and reports or presentations required to be produced.

1.2 Why is a ToR important?

The ToR serves multiple purposes and is important for planning, procurement and evaluation management. During the planning stage, developing the ToR will require the commissioner to clarify its own expectations, consult with and define roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders, make budget decisions that could have project-wide impacts, and develop a plan for the overall evaluation.

During the procurement process, the ToR should provide prospective service providers with the information and guidelines they will need to develop an evaluation approach and provide a costed proposal. This could include context, when they should begin, and what the outputs and products of their work should be.

As part of the contract with the evaluator, the ToR generally sets out the management structure and lines of accountability for the evaluation, the key timeframes and deliverables, the methods of reporting, and key performance criteria that can be used to assess whether the evaluator professionally delivered the assignment.

1.3 Procurement steps

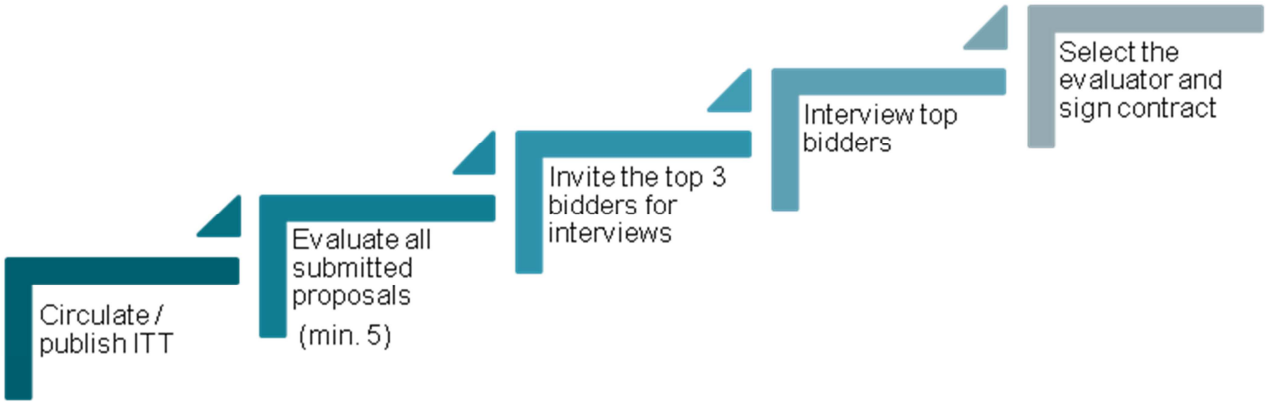
Once the previous steps are accomplished, a project specification for an evaluation could be developed in the form of Invitation to Tender documents (ITT). The ITT can merge ToR with additional documents including:

- the background, rationale and objectives of the programme to be evaluated, its target recipients, delivery method and intended outcomes;
- the extent of the existing evidence base related to the project;
- the evaluation objectives and research questions;
- the audience and intended use of the evaluation (including the Fund Manager, Evaluation Manager and grantee);
- the available information, such as monitoring data collection processes already set up;
- the possible evaluation approach, research design and methods;

- the required capabilities, skills and experience of the proposed evaluator(s);
- the required evaluation outputs and the milestones to be met;
- the indicative budget and timetable[6]; and
- other possible technical information, including award criteria.

Figure 1 illustrates the key steps of the tendering process, once the ITT has been developed.

Figure 1: Milestones in commissioning an external evaluation



ITT documents are sent to potential contractors and/or published, providing clear instructions on how to submit tenders, deadlines for receipt, draft contractual terms and conditions, and any associated pricing and technical schedules. The commissioner of an evaluation should request information about the contractor's intention to submit an offer, and strive to receive at least 5 proposals to ensure the competition.

Each tender should be individually assessed and the assessments compared, together with the prices tendered, to identify the tender which offers the 'economically most advantageous tender' against the pre-determined award criteria clearly defined in the ITT. Table 1 below outlines the criteria most frequently used in commissioning the evaluation services.

Table 1: An example of award criteria and their weighting

Criteria	Weighting:
Quality of tender including several sub-criteria such as:	70-80%
• method statement – description of activities to deliver requested services;	30-40%
• project team's and organisation's experience and relevant expertise;	15%
• project and resource plan;	15%
• quality assurance and risk;	10%
Price	20-30%
Total	**100%**

[6] *Please see HMT Magenta Book.*

It should be noted that the character of an intervention or project to be evaluated is important to determine the price/quality ratio indicated above: the more innovative or complex the intervention, the higher emphasis should be placed on the quality assurance of the evaluation.

The evaluation panel could comprise of the grantee staff with sufficient technical ability to evaluate detailed tenders. It is important that the evaluation panel should be above criticism and therefore no member of the panel should be associated in any way with any of the suppliers. The panel will:

- evaluate the tenders;
- make the recommendation for award; and
- ensure procurement policies are adhered to.

The selection procedure could consist of two stages: in the first phase, bidders could be assessed according to criteria quoted above. Each tender could be evaluated individually by all members of the evaluation panel by filling in a scoring template. Only the top scoring tender submission could be invited to an interview and separate evaluation criteria could be developed and circulated among the top bidders for this stage. The assessment process could be carried out by the evaluation panel and documented, using the assessment template.

All bidders could be debriefed on the results of the tendering process in order to help them to improve their competitive performance. Also, unsuccessful tenderers may wish to know the reasons for their rejection. Please refer to Annexes 4 and 5 for the relevant letter templates.

1.4 Interaction during the evaluation

It is important to note the management of an evaluator should continue throughout the lifetime of the evaluation process. There are a number of reasons why the management of an evaluation requires continuous and meaningful interaction between all the involved partners (including the evaluation team itself). Those include:

- to test and refine the evaluation methodology, including data collection tools;
- to specify the methods and work plan in a more detailed way than was possible at the proposal stage;
- to keep the evaluation team up-to-date with regard to any changes;
- to notify any unforeseen circumstances or problems faced during the evaluation; and
- to ensure the quality of the evaluation.

One simple mechanism to ensure the frequency of meetings is to specify them at the ToR stage. A minimum of two meetings are usual at inception and to approve a draft final report.

Annex 4: Procurement process - Letter to an unsuccessful bidder

NB: Neither a feedback letter nor use of this template mandatory; it is only to guide agencies that may not have had significant experience commissioning an evaluation before.

Dear X,

Thank you for your tender dated (***date of tender***) for (***title of contract***). We have now completed our evaluation of all the tenders received for this contract and, on behalf of the (***contracting authority***), I must inform you that on this occasion your tender has not been successful. The table below shows the individual scores given against the published criteria in respect of your submission and those of the winning tenderer (***name of winning tenderer***).

AWARD CRITERIA	YOUR SCORE	WINNING TENDERER'S SCORE
OVERALL SCORE		

You may request additional debrief information be made available to you within (***x***) days of this letter, provided such request is received by (***contracting authority***) no later than 2 working days after the date of this letter. Should your request be made after this time, additional debrief information will still be available to you within 15 days of receipt of a written request.

Source: Scottish Public Procurement Toolkit

Annex 5: Procurement process - Letter template to a successful contractor

NB: Neither a feedback letter nor use of this template mandatory; it is only to guide agencies that may not have had significant experience commissioning an evaluation before.

Dear X,

I refer to your tender submission dated (***date***) in respect of (***title of contract***).We have now completed our evaluation of all tenders received for this contract in accordance with our previously published evaluation criteria, and your tender has been found to be the most economically advantageous tender. The table below shows the individual scores given against the published criteria in respect of your submission.

AWARD CRITERIA	WEIGHTING	YOUR SCORE
OVERALL SCORE		

Draft Note: Rewording will be required if letter is sent other than by email. Also, purchaser must ensure that standstill period is a minimum of 10 calendar days).

As soon as possible after the expiry of the standstill period, unless at some point before that date:

- interim proceedings are commenced to prevent (***the contracting authority***) awarding the contract, or
- there is judicial interruption in the form of an order by a court of competent jurisdiction that (***contracting authority's***) decision as regards the award of contract should be set aside, or its implementation suspended pending a full hearing of the matter by a court of competent jurisdiction,
- it is intended that a letter accepting your offer will be issued to you in respect of the above contract. (*Draft Note: May have to be reworded if award is not through 'offer and acceptance' route*).

You will be notified in writing upon the commencement of any court action or proceedings preventing, or which may prevent or delay, the contract award or of any other circumstances which may prevent or delay contract award.(***Contracting authority***) will have no liability to you in the event of delay or non-award.

Annex 6: Final evaluation consultant sample budget template

NB: Use of this template is not mandatory; it is only to guide agencies that may not have had significant experience commissioning an evaluation before.

The estimated budget for this work is [grantee to specify]. This budget is inclusive of all costs covering team member costs, travel, research costs and any other costs associated the completion of the work.

Bidders are required to organise and fund their own duty of care arrangements as required.

Bidders are required to provide a fully costed proposal in the form of a price schedule that as a minimum should include:

- Sub-total of fees for the delivery of any task or deliverable;
- Sub-total for number of days per partner organisation (as applicable);
- Expenses and overheads broken down by the project cost categories [grantee to provide]; and
- Total costs before and after any taxes that are applicable.

Note for grantee, if costs are required to be submitted on a time and materials basis then the above minimum could also include:

- Evaluation inputs – broken down by the number of days for each individual against each of the tasks set out in the detailed work plan;
- Day rates for each evaluation member;
- Total number of days per evaluator member; and
- Total fees per team member.

Annex 7: Guidance for measuring cost effectiveness and value for money

NB: Use of this approach to assessing value for Monday is not mandatory; it is only to guide to grantees and evaluators that may not have had significant previous experience assessing value for money.

1.1 Defining cost-effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness is a measure of efficiency, which DFID defines as: 'A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.'

Measuring cost-effectiveness (and value for money) involves assessing whether or not the least amount of resources have been used in the most effective way possible to achieve the quantity and quality of results required in order to meet the original aim and objectives of the activity delivered. In other words, are you doing the right things, in the right ways at the right price?

This does not mean that the cheapest activities or inputs represent the best value for money. If cheap inputs or activities result in the delivery of poor quality outputs and outcomes then the project is evidently not doing the right things to achieve the results required.

1.2 How to demonstrate your cost-effectiveness

In order to demonstrate that you are using your resources in the most cost-effective way you will need to demonstrate that:

You are doing the right things in the right ways – this means demonstrating that the scale and type of costs that you are incurring as a result of the activities and services you are delivering are necessary to enable you to achieve your outputs and outcomes.

This part of the value for money assessment is closely linked to other parts of the performance assessment. This is about demonstrating that the activities you are delivering and the way you are delivering them are as relevant as possible to the needs and priorities of your target beneficiary groups. Arguably, the more relevant the activities and method of delivery, the more effective they will be in addressing the problems you have set out to resolve. This approach enables you to demonstrate that your intervention and the costs you incur are justified by the problem you have identified.

Understand your 'cost drivers' - cost drivers are defined as those factors that directly and indirectly change the cost of a unit of activity. For example, the cost of transporting project staff to a particular location will increase as the distance travelled increases. Intervening in a high risk area will increase delivery costs because of the need for additional security. In the example to the right, cost drivers could be clearly identified, evidenced and reported to form the basis of a robust case for incurring these types and levels of cost.

You are doing the right things in the right ways at the right price – fundamentally it is important that you are not only able to justify the costs that you are incurring but also to demonstrate that you are achieving the 'right price' for the different types of resources you are using to deliver your activities.

1.3 How to measure and evidence cost-effectiveness

You should consider at least two broad approaches to assessing value for money. These are:

- A management approach; and

- A measurement approach

1.3.1 Management approaches to measuring cost effectiveness

You will need to explain and evidence how you manage your resources in order to ensure that your performance requirements are the primary drivers of the activities that you deliver and, as a consequence, the costs that you incur. Typically, this part of the assessment will broadly require you to demonstrate:

Procurement processes -- capacity to manage and minimise costs through effective procurement processes in order to achieve best price for key services and resources.

Performance management processes -- capacity to learn from past performance to ensure that factors likely to have a significant effect on costs are addressed through effective cost control and mitigation strategies; and

Cost management processes -- capacity to identify and categorise your key costs across your portfolio of activities and demonstrate an understanding of how different types of costs change in response to different contexts and different types of interventions. You will also need to demonstrate your capacity to manage costs to ensure that best price and best value are achieved throughout the delivery of activities. You should be able to demonstrate a range of cost management and cost reduction strategies, for example, by forming partnerships that enable you to leverage additional resources for your activities or to share resources in order to reduce overheads.

Through the use of management processes such as those summarised above, you should be able to describe and ideally quantify the cost savings and efficiency gains that you have been able to achieve in the course of delivering best value for money.

1.3.2 Measurement approaches to measuring cost-effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness analysis is the most common method for measuring cost-effectiveness. This involves quantifying the average cost for a unit of activity, which is then presented as a 'unit cost'. Unit costs can be calculated for:

- Inputs, e.g. cost per day for each workshop facilitator employed on the project;
- Outputs, e.g. cost per community workshop conducted; or cost per workshop participant; and
- Outcomes, e.g. cost per girl achieving a full cycle of primary education as a results of the project.

The primary purpose of calculating unit costs is to enable you to compare them with 'benchmarks'. A unit cost benchmark represents a reference point or standard against which the cost-effectiveness of your activities and results can be assessed. It is important to note that benchmarks need to be sufficiently comparable to ensure that the analysis of cost-effectiveness is accurate and reliable. In other words, we need to ensure that we are comparing 'apples with apples'.

A significant drawback in using cost-effectiveness analysis as a measurement method is that it is frequently difficult to find unit cost data of activities that are sufficiently similar in terms of their nature and context. However, some organisations may be able to establish their own internal unit cost benchmarks in order to compare differences in unit costs for activities and results delivered across different parts of their portfolios and programmes.

1.4 Bringing management and measurement approaches together

The approaches and methods mentioned above should enable grantees to evidence and demonstrate different elements of the value for money assessment. It is important that you are able to explain 'how' you achieve cost-effective delivery, but is also important that wherever possible you quantify these achievements. Using both approaches will enable you to credibly demonstrate your capacity to identify and track unit costs ub relation to the activities and results that you have delivered.

The diagram below illustrates the interplay between performance requirements, cost drivers, the costs incurred and best value, which you will need to demonstrate and evidence as part of your value for money assessment.

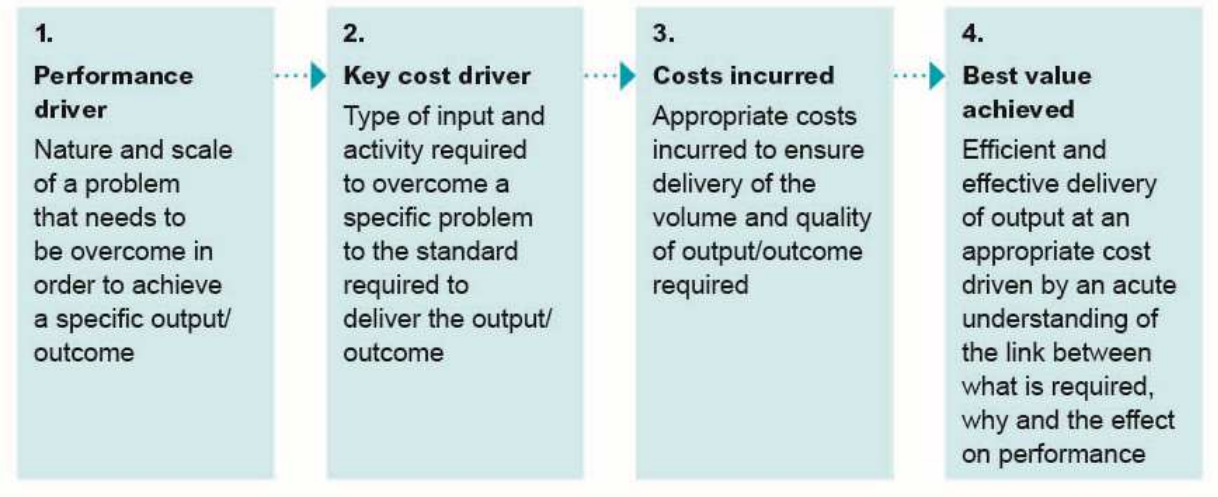



Figure 1: Combing management and measurement approaches to assessing articulating value for money