

SESSION 11

ESS - The Evaluation Support Service

An updated version will be provided after February 2023 's training .



The Evaluation Support Service

- The ESS supports INTPA D4 to provide methodological support on evaluations to INTPA Delegations and headquarters' Units, and carries out analytical work to reinforce the uptake and use of information produced by evaluations.

ESS Team

Core team

- Karen McHUGH, *Team Leader and Senior Evaluation Expert*
- Michaël POTAR, *Evaluation Expert*
- Hur HASSNAIN, *Senior Evaluation Expert*
- Matteo BOCCI, *Senior Evaluation Expert*
- Saskia VAN CRUGTEN, *Senior Evaluation Expert*
- Anwar al Shami, *Evaluation expert*
- Lorenzo Rorro, *Junior expert*

Methodological support:

EVAL Handbook

ToR (Strategic and Intervention level, and BS)

Budget support evaluations

Guidance notes (EU added value; dissemination..)

Forms of support (since March 2017):

- online/telephone
- onsite events in Delegations and HQs,
- non IT support EVAL module,
- Evaluation Correspondent Network,
- Capacity 4 Development,
- Webinars

Typical questions answered through helpdesk@evaluationsupport.eu

- ✓ Please comment on the objectives of my evaluation.
- ✓ Can you review the proposed Terms of Reference?
- ✓ Could you review my Evaluation Questions?
- ✓ Whom should I involve in my reference group?
- ✓ What are the ideal profiles for my evaluators?
- ✓ How can I judge the quality of the methodology and tools proposed by contractors?

Average response time:
less than a working day !
Satisfaction rate: 99% !

evaluation PROMOTING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY &
support LEARNING THROUGH ROBUST EVALUATIONS AT
service DEVCO AND EU DELEGATIONS

The Evaluation Support Service



EVERYTHING STARTS WITH GOOD PLANNING...

It is impossible to evaluate all interventions; therefore, those to be evaluated are to be **carefully selected**.

Have you considered discussing your selection criteria (OEP) with us?



EVALUATION MUST BE USEFUL TO YOUR WORK

It is not a box-ticking exercise. **What do you want to achieve** with your evaluation?

Even before writing your Terms of Reference we are here to help you in defining its scope, focus and type; a simple phone call may help.



ARE THE OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF YOUR EVALUATION CLEAR?

What are your key **evaluation questions**? Are the **resources** and **evaluators' profiles** consistent with the evaluation scope?

70% of the complex requests we receive are to revise a draft ToR, and rightly so! A good evaluation starts with clear and unambiguous ToR, and **resources must be consistent with the evaluation scope**.

Looking for an expert review and revision of your ToR? Share your draft with us.



IS THE METHODOLOGY PROPOSED BY THE EVALUATORS GOOD FOR MY EVALUATION?

One size does not fit all, and we know this for a fact: a methodology that is good for one evaluation could be inappropriate for another. Sometimes a small change can make a big difference in terms of quality... and quality matters!

IS THE EVALUATION REPORT GOOD?

Is your evaluation report based on sound **evidence**, are **conclusions derived from findings** and do **recommendations follow from conclusions**?

This analysis can be tricky, but you can rely on us: after your revision, send us your report for a critical friend's advice.

WHAT ABOUT DISSEMINATION OF THE EVALUATION RESULTS?

Evaluations provide an ideal opportunity to **communicate about the results of our cooperation** work to a wide audience; this important step is sometimes overlooked.

Since preparing your ToR, you may want to involve us for an opinion on the dissemination strategy for your evaluation: products, messages, channels...

SEMINARS, WEBINARS, ONSITE SUPPORT

We regularly co-animate the **regional seminars** on Monitoring and Evaluation organised by DEVCO Unit "Results and Evaluation" and we offer **webinars** on different evaluation topics. Contact us to find out about upcoming dates for your diary. You and your colleagues may also want to have **dedicated on-site support** on specific themes, such as evaluation in hard-to-reach areas or others.

Get in touch with us to explore possible options.



Quality assurance - a pilot initiative

- Commitment of EUDs/units: to send to ESS for all their evaluations for review the **3 key deliverables (ToR, Inception Report, Draft Final Report)**
- D4 commitment via ESS: response **within 4 working days (analysis + scoring grid)** - BS assessments may take a little longer
- EUDs/units will proceed to **the next step after QA "green light"**

Quality test: checklists

Version date: 28-sept-21



European Commission, DG INTPA Evaluation Support Service

Quality Assurance for Inception Report

Evaluation Title	Type here
Review Date	Type here
Review Version of document (V1, V2,...)	Type here
Eval Module reference (if known)	Type here
Reviewed by (ESS staff/consultant name)	Type here

Legend: scores and their meaning

Scale	Explanation
Fully compliant	The criterion was fully met (or exceeded)
Minor shortcomings	The criterion was met with only minor shortcomings.
Some shortcomings	The criterion was partially met with some shortcomings.
Major shortcomings	There were major shortcomings
Non-relevant	Criteria is ignored in scoring grid and related averages

1. CLARITY OF THE REPORT

SCORE

1.1	Is easily readable, and understandable (it is free of jargon, written in plain English or French, has logical use of chapters, appropriate use of tables, graphs and diagrams).	Select from list
1.2	Appropriate page length (20 to 30 pages in total)	Select from list
1.3	The annexes contain – at the least – the original TORs, the evaluation matrix, a bibliography and a list of consultees.	Select from list

Section score

2. INTRODUCTION

SCORE

2.1	The report provides appropriate description to the context of the evaluation, its objectives and focus	Select from list
2.2	It explains the timing of the evaluation and its expected outputs and use.	Select from list
2.3	Any departures from the original TOR are adequately explained and justified.	Select from list

Section score

5. RISKS AND ETHICS

5.1	The IR explains how the evaluation avoids harm; attains informed consent; ensures confidentiality and demonstrates contextual sensitivity
5.2	The IR contains a section describing actual or potential conflict of interest affecting the evaluation team and an appropriate mitigation strategy is explained.

Section score

6. WORKPLAN

6.1	A sufficiently detailed free text description of the work plan is provided in the IR
6.2	The workplan is provided in Gantt format

Section score

OVERALL SCORE

Category
1 Clarity of the report
2 Introduction
3 Finalised Evaluation Questions with judgement criteria and indicators
4 Methodology of the evaluation
5 Risk and Ethics
6 Workplan

Passing Criteria: for a document to pass the QA check, the average of the section scores must be Very satisfactory or Satisfactory. AND no section score should be scored Very Unsatisfactory.

Some lessons learned - 1

- The QA support from the ESS seems to be **effective in improving** certain segments of the evaluation process, mainly the **ToR** stage.
- **Quality control of the inception report is a key step** to prevent quality defects later in the evaluation process.
- **Without quality of the inception report: almost impossible to improve the rest** of the evaluation deliverables.

Some lessons learned - 2

- The **quality** of inception, interim and final reports is largely **influenced by the actual skills** of the evaluation teams **in evaluation methodology**.
- Quality assurance is not always well understood by evaluation managers. **If some deliverables are not quality controlled**, a significant **quality gap** can appear **in the final report**.