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| **Project / Programme Evaluation - Quality Assessment Grid** |

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| **Evaluation title** |  | | | |
| **Evaluation managed by** |  | | **Type of evaluation** |  |
| **CRIS ref. of the Eval contract** |  | | **Evaluation ref** |  |
| **EUD/Unit in charge** |  | | **Evaluation Manager** |  |
| **Evaluation Team Leader** |  | | **Evaluation Contractor** |  |
| **Evaluation expert(s)** |  | | | |
| **Evaluation dates** | **Start :** |  | **End :** |  |
| **DAC Sector** |  | | | |
| **Report date** |  | | | |
| **Project title** |  | | | |
| **CRIS reference(s)** |  | | | |

**Legend**: *very weak* = criteria mostly not fulfilled or absent  *weak* = criteria partially fulfilled  *good* = criteria mostly fulfilled  *very good* = criteria entirely fulfilled  *excellent* = criteria entirely fulfilled in a clear and original way

| **In relation to the criteria and sub-criteria below, the evaluation report is:** | *Very weak* | *Weak* | *Good* | *Very good* | *Excellent* |
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| **1. Meeting needs:** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Does the report describe precisely what is to be evaluated, including the intervention logic? | | | | | |
| • Does the report cover the requested period, and clearly includes the target groups and socio-geographical areas linked to the project / programme? | | | | | |
| • Has the evolution of the project / programme been taken into account in the evaluation process? | | | | | |
| • Does the evaluation deal with and respond to all ToR requests? If not, are justifications given? | | | | | |
| **2. Appropriate design :** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Does the report explain how the evaluation design takes into account the project / programme rationale, cause-effect relationships, impacts, policy context, stakeholders' interests, etc.? | | | | | |
| • Is the evaluation method clearly and adequately described in enough detail? | | | | | |
| • Are there well-defined indicators selected in order to provide evidence about the project / programme and its context? | | | | | |
| • Does the report point out the limitations, risks and potential biases associated with the evaluation method? | | | | | |
| **3. Reliable data :** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Is the data collection approach explained and is it coherent with the overall evaluation design? | | | | | |
| • Have data collection limitations and biases been explained and discussed? | | | | | |
| • Are the sources of information clearly identified in the report? | | | | | |
| • Are the data collection tools (samples, focus groups, etc.) applied in accordance with standards? | | | | | |
| • Have the collected data been cross-checked? | | | | | |
| **4. Sound analysis :** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Is the analysis based on the collected data? | | | | | |
| • Does the analysis focus well on the most relevant cause/effect assumptions underlying the intervention logic? | | | | | |
| • Is the context taken into account adequately in the analysis? | | | | | |
| • Are inputs from the most important stakeholders used in a balanced way? | | | | | |
| • Are the limitations of the analysis identified, discussed and presented in the report, as well as the contradictions with available knowledge, if there are any? | | | | | |
| **5. Credible findings :** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Are the findings derived from the qualitative and quantitative data and analyses? | | | | | |
| • Is there a discussion whether the findings can be generalised? | | | | | |
| • Are interpretations and extrapolations justified and supported by sound arguments? | | | | | |
| **6. Valid conclusions :** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Are the conclusions coherent and logically linked to the findings? | | | | | |
| • Does the report draw overall conclusions on each of the five DAC criteria? | | | | | |
| • Are conclusions free of personal or partisan considerations? | | | | | |
| **7. Useful recommendations :** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Are the recommendations consistent with the conclusions? | | | | | |
| • Are recommendations operational, realistic and sufficiently explicit to provide guidelines for taking action? | | | | | |
| • Are the recommendations drafted for the different target stakeholders of the evaluation? | | | | | |
| • When necessary, have the recommendations been clustered and prioritised? | | | | | |
| **8.Clear report :** |  |  |  |  |  |
| • Does the report include a relevant and concise executive summary? | | | | | |
| • Is the report well-structured and adapted to its various audiences? | | | | | |
| • Are specialised concepts clearly defined and not used more than necessary? Is there a list of acronyms? | | | | | |
| • Is the length of the various chapters and annexes well balanced? | | | | | |
|  | ***Very weak*** | ***Weak*** | ***Good*** | ***Very good*** | ***Excellent*** |
| **Considering the 8 previous criteria what is the overall quality of the report?** |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Comments on meeting needs (1):** |
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| **Comments on appropriate design (2):** |
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| **Comments on reliable data (3):** |
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| **Comments on sound analysis (4):** |
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| **Comments on credible findings (5):** |
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| **Comments on valid conclusions (6):** |
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| **Comments on useful recommendations (7):** |
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| **Comments on clear report (8):** |
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| **Comments on the overall quality of the report** |
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**Guidelines for filling in the quality assessment grid**

Filling in the quality assessment grid consists in rating all sub-criteria separately in order to provide an overview of the quality of the report in terms of its validity and reliability, and to provide a basis for overall quality assessment of the report.

The rating uses a five-level scale as follows:

very weak = criteria mostly not fulfilled or absent

weak = criteria partially fulfilled

good = criteria mostly fulfilled

very good = criteria entirely fulfilled

excellent = criteria entirely fulfilled in a clear and original way

**1. Meeting requirements**

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| Meeting the requirements includes the necessity for both a correspondence with the needs expressed in the Terms of Reference and relevance of the scope of the evaluation in terms of the period, the persons and the areas encompassed in the report. |

a) This sub-criterion covers several points. The project / programme under evaluation (hereafter “the intervention”) has to be clearly identified. In particular, the report should describe the logic of cause-and-effect links between inputs, activities, outputs, and further intended effects. These elements should be summarised in a logical framework which has to be analysed and interpreted. The evaluation report also has to provide information about the context, and especially the external factors contributing to the success or failure of the intervention. If there are discrepancies between the intervention actually implemented and what was initially decided upon, it has to be clearly stated.

b) This sub-criterion concerns the scope of the evaluation. It depends on the project itself but also on the Terms of Reference (ToR). The scope of the evaluation encompasses the areas to be addressed by the evaluation. The limits of the scope have to be defined according to the logic of intervention.

c) The project has probably evolved during the period considered by the evaluation and it is of primary importance to consider any change that has occurred at the level of the overall strategy, the objectives, the activities implemented, the budget, etc. during the evaluation process.

d) ToR of the evaluation presents the requirements the study should meet. The report has to respond to and deal with everything that has been asked in the ToR. It is not possible to assess this item without the ToR.

**2. Appropriate design**

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| This criterion relates to the technical qualities of the evaluation. The evaluation design is the result of a range of methodological choices derived from evaluation questions. It is important that every methodological choice be explained and justified in the report. |

a) The design of an evaluation should take account of several elements: (i) the rationale of the project and its cause-and-effect relations; (ii) the policy context of the project (elements that should be described according to criteria 1.); (iii) the impacts of the project; and (iv) the interests of the various stakeholders of the evaluation (including evaluation managers, direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, decision makers, etc). The way the evaluation team has taken these elements into account while building the evaluation process has to be explained clearly in the report.

b) The evaluation process as well as the method and the tools used in the evaluation process have to be clearly described. The report has to present the strengths and weaknesses of the methods and tools.

c) The indicators have to be identified and chosen in order to make it possible to provide evidence regarding the five DAC criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability). The indicators have to be relevant for the project itself as well as for the context of the project.

d) The report also has to present clearly the limitations, risks and biases of the method applied, of the tools used and of the whole evaluation process. Tools should be described in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses and limitations should be discussed in order to justify the options taken for solving the problems encountered.

**3. Reliable data**

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| Evaluators use existing data (secondary data) or primary data which they have collected for the purpose of the evaluation. In the latter case, the method applied to collect and process data is a key factor in assessing its reliability and, ultimately, its validity. |

a) The methodological approach as well as the choice of data collection tools should be clearly presented and consistent with the design of the whole evaluation process. The data collection approach should be in line with the purpose of the evaluation and should make it possible to meet the requirements of the ToR.

b) There should be enough information to identify and assess the reliability and adequacy of the sources of information chosen.

c) If the data collection involves the selection of case studies, the gathering of focus groups or the drawing of a sample for a questionnaire survey, for instance, then the relevant step should be taken on the basis of a typology or in line with established criteria. The choice of the data selection sources should be clearly presented in the report, together with the reasons why they have been selected.

d) In order to achieve reliability, the data gathered should be verified and the various information sources cross-checked. This means that the evaluation team has to compare similar data from different sources in order to check the correspondence between the findings.

e) The report has to present the limitations and biases of the data collection tools. Tools should be described in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses and limitations should be discussed in order to justify the options taken for solving the problems encountered.

**4. Sound Analysis**

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| The analysis approach has to be relevant as regards the type of data collected, and has to follow the instructions given in the relevant technical manuals. These elements have to be clearly presented in the report. |

a) The data used in the analysis should be clearly identified. The coherence between the collected data and their analysis is an important factor in assessing the validity of the report.

b) The analysis should verify the most relevant cause-and-effect relationships and assess the assumptions underlying the intervention logic.

c) The context surrounding and influencing the project has to be described (Criterion 1.) and taken into account in the design of the evaluation (Criterion 2.). It is particularly important that the context be taken into account in the analysis because it helps in interpreting data correctly.

d) The evaluation encompasses a wide range of stakeholders: the evaluation managers, the evaluation team, the project designer, the project manager, the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, decision makers, etc. All of them are likely to provide inputs into the analysis, either formally or informally. In any case, their key inputs should be used and presented in a balanced and impartial way.

e) The report has to present limitations and biases of the analysis tools and techniques, as well as possible contradictions with available knowledge. Analysis tools should be described in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses and limitations should be discussed in order to justify the options taken for solving the problems encountered.

**5. Credible findings**

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| In order to be credible, findings have to logically follow and be justified by the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully presented explanatory hypotheses. |

a) Data has been collected and analysed with the aim of generating findings that help to conclude on the five DAC criteria. The coherence between what has been found in the analysis and what is presented in the findings is an important factor to assess the validity and reliability of the report. Findings have to logically follow and be justified by data, analysis and interpretations through carefully described logical reasoning.

b) Findings derive from the data provided by the different information sources (interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, etc.). The report has to assess whether they can apply to the project as a whole. It has to show clearly on which basis findings have been generalised.

c) The findings contain a part of interpretation and extrapolation that should be explained and verified.

**6. Valid conclusions**

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| Conclusions are more than results because they involve a judgement on the merits and worth of the project /programme. The quality of this value judgement is a condition for the quality of the evaluation as a whole. Value judgements need to be clearly presented in the report. |

a) Conclusions have to be based clearly on the findings. The process leading to the conclusions has to be presented in a transparent way, as does the validity of the conclusions.

b) The approach has to follow the five DAC evaluation criteria applying to projects: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Conclusions should be provided for each of these five criteria.

c) An important characteristic of external evaluations is that they should be independent. This is very important for the impartiality of the report. To be able to assess this sub-criterion, it is necessary to check whether conclusions are sufficiently explicit and whether controversial points are presented in a fair and balanced way.

**7. Useful recommendations**

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| Recommendations represent the core final messages of the report and the commissioning body will have to give a response to them. This is why it is of primary importance to have clear recommendations stated in enough detail to be implemented correctly. |

a) Recommendations should be based on the conclusions without being mixed with them. They should be written in a separate section mentioning how each recommendation is derived from conclusions.

b) Recommendations have to be explained in enough detail to be implemented correctly. Practical problems and constraints that were taken into account in the formulation of recommendations should be mentioned.

c) As mentioned in Criterion 4., the evaluation concerns several stakeholders and some of them will be responsible for putting the recommendations into practice. It should therefore be clear in the report who each recommendation is intended for. The formulation of the recommendations should be adapted for its intended use.

d) If some recommendations are more important than others, they should be prioritised. If a group of recommendations concerns the same stakeholder or the same area of actions, they should be clustered.

**8. Clear report**

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| The final report is one of the means through which stakeholders will use the evaluation and learn from it. The readability of the report will depend on the quality of its presentation. |

a) The report should include an executive summary, presenting at least the key findings, the main conclusions and recommendations in a balanced and impartial way. This executive summary should be clear enough to be read without the need to refer to the rest of the report.

b) The report should be well structured and signposted. It has to be readable for every relevant target reader. Tables and graphs should be used to enhance the readability of the report.

c) The evaluation team should avoid excessive use of specialised terms in the report because they are a barrier to understanding for most readers. It is also important to provide the readers with a list of acronyms.

d) The report has to deal with important issues but also with context presentation and with some details necessary for understanding the core messages. The evaluation team should ensure that there is enough balance between the lengths of sections dealing with the most important issues and the length of sections of minor importance. Balance should also be found between the length of the main report and its annexes.