Creative Communications for Evaluation Dissemination

A report on the current practices of evaluation dissemination within the EC/DG DEVCO & non-EU institutions

This report is prepared by the
Evaluation Support Service of the DG DEVCO 04

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International Cooperation and Development

"Dissemination of evaluation results is an integral part of the evaluation process. The evaluation manager, in coordination with the key users, systematically prepares for each evaluation a plan for communication and follow-up. It covers the audience (key users and stakeholders), the communication channels (ie: email, PCM platform, Capacity 4 Dev web platform, social media, seminars,...) and the reporting formats (ie: summary, management brief, video, ...)."

EU DEVCO Evaluation Matters, 2014

"We need to produce knowledge in a way that is palatable, easy to digest, and conducive to supporting action and policies that respond to people's needs."

OSCAR GARCIA, director of the Independent Evaluation Office of the UNDP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFDB	African Development Bank
DFID ICAI	Independent Commission of Aid Impact of the Department for International Development – GOV.UK
DG DEVCO	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations
EC	European Commission
ESS	Evaluation Support Service
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
FPI	Service for Foreign Policy Instruments
GCF	Global Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IDEV	Independent Development Evaluation of the African Development Bank
IED	Independent Evaluation Department of the Asian Development Bank
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group of World Bank Group
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PCM	Project Cycle Management
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
TOR	Terms of References
UN	Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Evaluation Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

SUMMARY

Despite a clear message within its evaluation policy (Evaluation Matters, 2014), the practice of producing specific communication products to disseminate results of intervention-level evaluations is far from being consolidated in DEVCO.

This study analysed the websites and the social media pages of 94 EU Delegations over the last few years and found evidence of only three communication products used to disseminate evaluation results. Two further products were recently produced by the Unit 04 to disseminate results of strategic evaluations. Evidence in recent months indicates that more focus is being given to dissemination of evaluation results however, it is too early to predict a positive and upward trend.

On the contrary, the practice of disseminating evaluation results is comparatively more established in other international organisations and institutions active in the development field and the study found evidence of such practices in 17 of these bodies.

The most widely used dissemination products are videos (produced by 12 out of the 17 institutions consulted), evaluation infographics (10 institutions), evaluation briefs (9 institutions), "creative" reports (8 institutions), blogs (7 institutions), podcasts (6 institutions), and webinars (5 institutions).

Through analysing a large number of evaluation dissemination products produced recently and information collated from interviews with relevant institutions, this study produced a series of five "How-to guidelines" on the most frequently used dissemination products (Videos, Infographics, Evaluation Briefs, Podcasts and Blogs) to improve and support evaluation dissemination practice.

By drawing lessons from the dissemination practices of other institutions, this report issues a series of recommendations for DEVCO's attention to operationalise the provision defined by Evaluation Matters. The study mentions the importance of investing in a strong culture of knowledge; to support this with more systematic communication strategies, corporate guidelines, and tools, as well as incentive systems for Evaluation Managers. Furthermore, the study suggests that it would be beneficial to monitor any progress made with the dissemination of evaluation results over the years to come. In addition, a study could be developed on knowledge brokering within DEVCO to understand how and in what ways the 'evaluation knowledge' is currently being used to influence change.

This study should ideally be followed up with two activities that link and respond to some of the concerns raised in the frame of the ongoing reflections on the future of intervention-level evaluations in DEVCO. The activities include a regular communication campaign to encourage EU Delegations (EUDs) to put the considerable knowledge produced during the evaluation process to full use; and the setting up of a working panel to identify and develop further tools (such as templates etc.) to support the work of evaluation managers in their effort to disseminate evaluation results.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) is responsible for designing European international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world. The Evaluation Support Service (ESS) of DG DEVCO was formed in 2017 as an external Technical Assistance facility to promote a culture of accountability and learning through robust evaluations at DEVCO and EU Delegations.

This study was conducted in the first semester of 2020 to examine and document the current situation regarding how the knowledge generated from evaluation of the international development and co-operation interventions is being translated and disseminated to a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure 'evaluations influence change', in line with DG DEVCO's Evaluation Policy (Evaluation Matters, 2014). Related to this, the study captures examples of good dissemination practice within DG DEVCO and non-EU institutions as well as recommendations which could help to improve future evaluation dissemination activities.

OECD-DAC defines evaluation as the 'systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results.' (OECD, 2010). This assessment of what worked or what works is proved to be more useful when the information deriving from the evaluation is transmitted in a timely and meaningful format to the relevant stakeholders, using appropriate communicable channels. Dissemination, or the practice of communicating and promoting the active use of evaluations and its findings helps to achieve the intended purpose of an evaluation. The World Bank states that an evaluation is not complete until its dissemination is complete, (World Bank, 2009). At DEVCO both the knowledge translation and knowledge brokering are referenced highly in its Evaluation Policy:

"Dissemination of evaluation results is an integral part of the evaluation process. The evaluation manager, in coordination with the key users, systematically prepares for each evaluation a plan for communication and follow-up. It covers the audience (key users and stakeholders), the communication channels (i.e.: email, PCM platform, Capacity 4 Dev web platform, social media, seminars,...) and the reporting formats (i.e.: summary, management brief, video, ...)." (EU DEVCO Evaluation Matters, 2014).

BACKGROUND

This study follows on from an internal analysis on the quality of project and programme Evaluation Reports within DG DEVCO, completed in June 2019 by the ESS. The report concluded that whilst there are signs that some EU Delegations have started to explore the practice of disseminating evaluation results, it is evident that it is not yet being done in a systematic way and evaluation results are rarely shared beyond EU and partner institutions. The extent to which dissemination activities of evaluation results are backed by a specific communication strategy or plan was unknown at the time of the study. The current study therefore aims to develop this discussion on evaluation dissemination further and offer recommendations on how DEVCO can improve in this area.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in two phases, (i) gather examples of good practices and lessons learnt and (ii) develop simple how-to-guidelines to support Evaluation Managers[1] and the wider evaluation community in disseminating the evaluation results. The results presented in this report are drawn from

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1   The Evaluation Manager is the staff of the Contracting Authority / EU Delegation managing the evaluation contract. In most cases this person is the Operational manager of the Action(s) under evaluation.

the findings of the following:

▶ **Literature review** on dissemination, knowledge translation and brokering, EU strategic documents and reports from other non-EU institutions.
▶ **Online mapping of knowledge products** to identify existing evaluation dissemination channels and products.
▶ **Online Survey and interviews** with the EU Evaluation Managers and representatives of 12 non-EU institutions and NGOs to gather detailed insights into the resources and management processes. (see Annex-1 for a detailed methodology and list of institutions consulted).

Five 'How-to' guidelines for disseminating evaluation results were produced and published on Capacity4Dev[1] , to improve and support evaluation dissemination practice.

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1   Capacity4Dev is the European Commission's knowledge-sharing platform for International Cooperation and Development.

CHALLENGES FACED

Evaluation dissemination products in DEVCO are not systematically gathered and presented; as a result, their identification represented a challenge. As a result of this and of the high staff turnover rate, the study team might have missed some communication products.

The analysis of dissemination practices, initially planned to be made on a sample basis, during implementation was widened up to all Delegations; non-EU institutions and NGOs were added to the initial scope of the study to widen up the coverage of present practices and stimulate cross-fertilisation of ideas and learning.

FINDINGS

This report presents both DG DEVCO and non-EU institutions' practices of disseminating evaluation results through the realisation of knowledge products which differ from the "traditional" written format of evaluation reports. The study found some good examples of translation of evaluation knowledge into reporting formats[1] such as videos (71%, 12 out of 17 institutions consulted), evaluation infographics (59%, 10 out of 17 institutions consulted), evaluation briefs (53%, 9 out of 17 institutions), "creative" reports (47%, 8 out of 17 institutions), blogs (41%, 7 out of 17 institutions), podcasts (35%, 6 out of 17 institutions), and webinars (29%, 5 out of 17 institutions).

Figure 1: Use of creative communication products for dissemination of evaluation
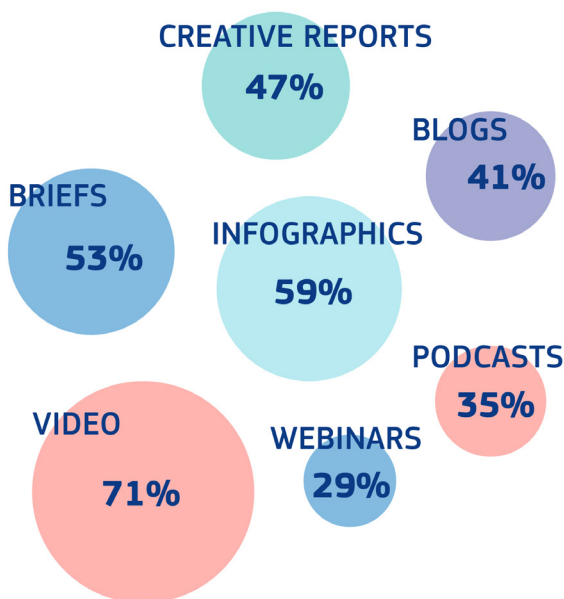
DISSEMINATION PRODUCTS

Below is a brief description of the dissemination products while a detailed analysis together with the lessons and how-to-guides are available in the next chapters of the report.

Videos is the most popular way to share evaluation findings. They are an engaging way to present information, allowing both images and voices of key stakeholders involved in the evaluation process to be included. 12 out of 17 institutions consulted (71%) have produced videos for disseminating the evaluation findings.

Infographics are another widely used format to communicate evaluation findings in a visual and immediate way, with much lower costs required compared to videos. 10 out of 17 institutions consulted (59%) produce infographics as a creative communication tool for the dissemination of its evaluation results.

Evaluation Briefs are also a popular format to share evaluation results as a whole or insights on a learning issue. They can offer a succinct and schematic summary of the key messages coming from an evaluation to a less technical audience. They also enable the highlights of the evaluation results to be presented to those who are unlikely to read the full evaluation report. Some organisations use Evaluation Briefs to produce Press Releases or posts in printed media such as newspapers and cartoon/comic scripts. For example, Save the Children produced a comic strip to communicate results to children (the main beneficiaries of their intervention), (Save the Children, 2019). In total, 9 out of 17 institutions consulted (53%) produce evaluation briefs for disseminating evaluation results.

Creative Evaluation reports offer readers a more interactive experience compared to the traditional reporting format. This could include an interactive PDF or a report which contains more colourful and visual images e.g. photos and graphs/charts than usual to increase engagement and interest for the reader. 8 out of 17 institutions consulted (47%) produce creative evaluations reports to share evaluation findings.

Blogs (short for weblogs), can be written by Evaluators or commissioners to share their views about

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[1]	Reporting formats are referenced as 'products' in the rest of this report.

or to solely promote the findings or recommendations of an evaluation. Blogs are typically written in an informal and conversational style making them accessible to a wider audience. The discussion included in the blog is usually targeted towards a specific online audience. 7 out of 17 institutions consulted (41%) publish blogs on their websites or on external platforms to share their evaluation findings or to emphasise on a learning issue in a conversational style.

Podcasts present another interesting and innovative way to share lessons learnt from an evaluation through an audio presentation. This is a relatively inexpensive method of communication which requires less technical skills to produce in comparison with the production of videos and infographics. Like videos, podcasts make it possible to give a voice to the key stakeholders involved in an evaluation process. 6 out of 17 institutions consulted (35%) produce podcasts to promote their evaluation findings.

Webinars are online events used to engage a group of people for discussion. They can be used to present evaluation findings, hold question and answer sessions and conduct interactive polls and Focus Group Discussions. This platform has become more popular in the evaluation field during the Covid-19 outbreak both for gathering data and the dissemination of evaluation results. 5 out of 17 institutions consulted (29%) produce webinars to share their evaluation findings.

The gathering of dissemination products and communication strategies was completed alongside interviews which made it possible to obtain useful information about the different products, which is presented in the next section.

ANALYSIS OF THE DISSEMINATION PRODUCTS

Figure 2 summarises some key features of the dissemination products described above (based on interview consultations), together with an indication of the resources required for their production.

Figure 2: Key characteristics of the different evaluation dissemination products.

CHARACTERISTICS	VIDEO	PODCASTS	INFO-GRAPHICS	BRIEFS	BLOGS	WEBINARS	CREATIVE REPORTS
Visual	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audio	✓	✓				✓	
Convey key messages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Amplify voices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wide audience reach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Non-technical language	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Time required	1-12 weeks	1 week	2 weeks (av.)	Variable	1-2 weeks	Variable	Variable
Expertise	In-house/ video expert	In-house/ comms expert	In-house/ comms expert	In-house/ comms expert	In-house/ comms expert	In-house/ consultant	In-house/ comms expert
Length	3-15'	3-30'	2-4 pages	2-4 pages	1-1,500 words	30' - 3 hours	Variable
Cost	€2-15,000	€600 (av.)	Max. €2,500	Max. €1,000	In-house prod.	Platform only	€2,000 (av.)
Popularity	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium

DISSEMINATION AT DEVCO

Similar knowledge products are being created for evaluation dissemination purposes both within DEVCO and within non-EU institutions. However, the quantity of products produced within DEVCO available for the purpose of this study was very limited (a total of 5 products from 94 EU delegations). This suggests that there is an opportunity for increasing the practice of dissemination of evaluation findings.

Since 2018, the dissemination phase has been included in the DEVCO Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) templates for intervention-level evaluations[1] as a fifth optional phase; however, only 8.5% of the ToRs[2] reviewed included a dissemination phase. Furthermore, there is no existing mechanism to document or record the dissemination products and activities within DEVCO knowledge management systems. Although the Dissemination of evaluation results is clearly referenced in the EU Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Managers lack strong incentives for the translation and brokering of evaluation knowledge.

1   Previously known as Project and Programme evaluation..

2   ToR of Intervention-level evaluations managed in DEVCO's EVAL module between June and December 2019.

Table 1 shows the only DEVCO evaluation dissemination products identified during the study.

The two infographics were used to present the results of a strategic evaluation and an External Evaluation. The key messages were decided by the Evaluation Manager while external graphic designers were hired to produce the infographics.

Two 'creative' reports were produced to provide the readers with more interactive experience. One report was produced by DEVCO while the other was from partners in Pakistan with dissemination in mind (large use of pictures, graphics etc.).

Only one video for evaluation was found during the study. However, further analysis reveals that some recent evaluation ToRs include provision for the realisation of videos to disseminate evaluation results. This practice –if expanded– would align with what seems to be a trend in the extra-EU institutions and NGOs considered in the present study.

Besides what is reported above, DEVCO has knowledge or and has recently produced other forms of knowledge products such as Briefs, Blogs, Podcasts and Webinars which could easily be used to disseminate evaluation findings:

Briefs: While conducting our analysis we entered

Table 1: DEVCO evaluation dissemination products identified during the study

COMMUNICATION PRODUCT	PRODUCED BY	TYPE
Results of the 'Strategic evaluation of the EU's regional development cooperation with Latin America (2009-2017)'	DEVCO Unit 04	Infographic
Leaflet presenting the Results of the External Evaluation of European Union's Cooperation with Myanmar	DEVCO Unit 04	Infographic
Strategic Evaluation of the European support for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building (CPPB) – 2012-2017	DEVCO Unit 04	Creative report
'A multi-dimensional Outcome Harvest' (from partners in Pakistan)	EUD partners in Pakistan	Creative report
Evaluation of the Road Preservation Project in Ivory Coast	EUD Ivory Coast	Video

in contact with some very interesting examples of effective communication strategies, which are not based on evaluation. One of them is the case of DEVCO's SWITCH-Asia Programme, which, based on regular interactions with grantees and the Delegations, includes the production of articles, news stories, human interest stories and a comprehensive regional social media campaign, impact sheets, country profiles fiches, briefing and brochures.

Beyond developing a whole communication strategy for the programme, the SWITCH-Asia Facility also assisted grantees in integrating correctly the EU Communications and Visibility Guidelines (developed by DEVCO in 2018) and it progressively engaged with all EU Delegations in the regions (at different levels, from projects managers to Heads of Cooperation and Heads of Delegation) in jointly communicating about the programme's activities and achievements, through events and social media. This represents quite a unique case of joint collaboration in terms of dissemination between DEVCO HQ, Delegations, implementers of programme's components and grantees.

Blogs and Podcasts : Although not focused on sharing the evaluation findings, the DEVCO/ESS initiated a series of blogs and podcasts under its Evaluation in Crisis (#EvalCrisis) initiative. In these, the ESS gathered thought leaders in evaluation around the world to present how they are adapting their evaluations during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Webinars: The DEVCO/ESS led a successful webinar series for a lunchtime conference on 'Evaluation in Hard to Reach Areas'.

Several challenges were identified during the study which will need to be explored further:

▸ There is currently no common policy or corporate guidelines for the publication of intervention level evaluation reports.
▸ There are no templates for the formulation of dissemination products – this would save time and allow Evaluation managers to focus on identifying key messages and the target audience.

▸ The incentive systems for the Evaluation Managers to participate actively in knowledge translation and brokering are not aligned with the EU Evaluation Policy. This relates to dissemination budget, training and staff time for communication and dissemination of evaluation results.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Different communication channels are used to disseminate evaluation results; the most popular ones seem to be:

▸ Social media:
  ▸ Twitter
  ▸ Facebook
  ▸ LinkedIn
  ▸ YouTube
  ▸ Instagram
▸ Evaluation-specific websites
▸ Radio and TV
▸ National and Local Newspapers

Table 2 reports the links to social media and websites of evaluation departments of different institutions considered during this study.

Radio/Newspapers are the communication channels where evaluation findings could be more widely distributed amongst people in rural and remote communities. This platform has however been less utilised for evaluation dissemination comparatively. The reason could be that the evaluation commissioners have limited control over these platforms. Only two non-EU institutions consulted could share that they have shared evaluation findings through radio and newspapers.

While no specific cases were found regarding the use of Community Radios broadcasts to share evaluation findings, in some contexts they remain an effective means for communication, interaction and participatory planning; this was the case for instance in Colombia, where radio broadcasts were used as a way to support the peace building process. (Casanova et al, 2019).

Table 2: Social media and websites links of evaluation departments considered in this study

ORGANISATION	TWITTER	FACEBOOK	WEBSITES
OECD	@oecd_evalnet		oecd.org/dac/evaluation/
World Bank	@worldbank_ieg		ieg.worldbankgroup.org/
IFAD	@IFADeval		ifad.org/en/evaluation
Asian Development Bank	@adbevaluation	facebook.com/adbevaluation/?eid=ARBh2PZnb-WjzqFaY235GmiJvo7Nn-kiO5Y2YXD5b5csikB1w-FJlTtsz9RreUOK805IZ-qKLnjfUgLa5ydC	adb.org/site/evaluation/main
African Development Bank	@evaluationafdb		idev.afdb.org/
Global Environment Facility	@gefieo_tweets		gefieo.org/
Global Climate Fund (GCF) Evaluation	@GCF_Eval		ieu.greenclimate.fund/about-the-ieu/newsletter-and-annual-report
UNEG	@un_evaluation	https://www.facebook.com/groups/ECG2017/	unevaluation.org/
UNFPA	@unfpa_eval		unfpa.org/evaluation#
UNDP	@UNDP_Evaluation	https://www.facebook.com/ieoundp	undp.org/evaluation/
USAID	@USAIDlearning		usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/060418_2017_Evaluations_508.pdf
DFID ICAI	@icai_uk		icai.independent.gov.uk/

CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to identify examples of good dissemination practice and produce guidelines based on practical experience to contribute towards the development of a harmonized strategy of disseminating evaluation results in DEVCO and beyond. The overall analysis of the dissemination practices highlight the fact that DEVCO has invested in establishing a culture of knowledge by establishing policy and guidance around dissemination of evaluation results (and this is included as an optional fifth phase in the evaluation ToR Template). However, more efforts are needed to further promote this culture by aligning the policies and guidance with systems, human and financial resources, and incentives.

The dissemination of evaluation results using creative dissemination products is becoming increasingly popular in the evaluation field for its better uptake and utilisation. The study highlights diversified list of reporting formats to showcase evaluation results as well as various channels used to share the products with different target audiences. The products identified through this study with reference to their popularity were videos, infographics, evaluation briefs, creative reports, blogs, podcasts, webinars, newspapers, and radio programmes.

It is evident that DEVCO is producing similar products to share evaluation results to that of the wider evaluation community. However, there is still room for further improvements to increase the quantity of products developed and ultimately ensure that evidence deriving from evaluations is put to the most efficient and influential use. Although Dissemination has been included in the DEVCO Evaluation ToR from 2018, the fact that it is not a compulsory phase means that dissemination practices are not carried out for all evaluations as a priority.

With regards to the production of creative communication products for evaluation dissemination, it emerged that there is limited incentive systems available for the Evaluation Managers to participate actively in knowledge translation and brokering in line with DEVCO's Evaluation Matters (2014). This relates to dissemination budget, training and staff time for communication and dissemination of evaluation results.

In the majority of cases, Evaluation Managers at the EUDs do not have the necessary communication skills and would therefore appreciate greater support from Focal points in communications (in the EUD) and from the COMM unit in HQ during the dissemination phase. Furthermore, in the EC-DEVCO, there is currently no systematic structure or template/s available for the formulation of creative communication products that would allow Evaluation Managers to save time and focus better on identifying key messages and target audiences.

The bottom line conclusion is that to improve the gathering, dissemination and use of evaluation knowledge further within DEVCO there is need for a more collaborative effort to create a culture of knowledge by aligning the EU Evaluation Policy and guidance with systems, human and financial resources and incentives. This report is a first step towards realising this by identifying the gap and providing good practice examples from within DEVCO and around the evaluation knowledge management world. It identifies a need for a 'sharing experience' platform, or a more conscious effort to ensure that those working on evaluations are fully aware of the potential and influence which evaluation findings can achieve if a well-planned dissemination phase is prioritised. Better internal communication is vital to ensure the sharing of ideas, skills, and learning – as is external communications and keeping up to date with good dissemination practice happening in the wider evaluation space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- DEVCO should continue to demonstrate a commitment to translating evaluation knowledge as per the Evaluation Matters 2014 and consider investing in a stronger culture of knowledge with more systematic communication strategy, corporate guidelines, and incentive systems for Evaluation Managers.
- Incentives are not sufficiently in place, such as recognizing dissemination and communication work in the evaluation cycle, planning for Evaluation Manager's time, budgeting, and strong signals from management emphasizing the importance of dissemination for learning – this translates at the policy level by making the 5th phase of the common DEVCO / NEAR / FPI evaluation TOR template mandatory (with possible exceptions).
- More efforts are required to support Evaluation Managers at the EUDs during the dissemination phase of evaluation. To this purpose, the creation of templates and guidelines to facilitate the production of knowledge products could increase the willingness to prioritise dissemination activities – this also includes protocols to follow regarding sensitive or negative results.
- DEVCO could consider investing in an online platform where evaluation teams can share experiences of dissemination practice. Various dissemination products could be stored for future reference, making the search for good examples easier; it is worth exploring the opportunities that the integration of EVAL into OPSYS will provide
- DEVCO could introduce a systematic monitoring and evaluation of communication activities to measure and evaluate the effectiveness and impact made.
- A dedicated team of communication specialists could be allocated for dissemination evaluation findings through various communication channels.
- DEVCO could explore the experience to date in involving EUDs and partners in the countries in communicating evaluation results and ways in which this could be improved.
- DEVCO could explore carrying out an audience engagement mapping to assess what products are most useful for what audience – the results can be used as a reference point.
- DEVCO could explore carrying out a similar study for 'knowledge brokering' to assess how and in what ways the 'evaluation knowledge' is currently being used to influence change. This will inform the implementation of Evaluation Matters and specific guidelines for promoting evidence may be produced.

Transferable lessons which DEVCO can consider from non-EU organisations:

- Many organisations have teams who are dedicated to the assessment and sharing of evaluation knowledge to produce high quality knowledge products. Having a dedicated team helps to ensure that evidence from evaluations is timely, useful, and influential.
- Some organisations have a communications package that could be replicated – for example, the Independent Evaluation Office for the Global Environment Facility has articulated in its strategy the commitment to facilitate evaluation utilisation using communications and knowledge management. The evaluation report is accompanied by an executive summary, an evaluation brief with infographics (translated into various languages), a presentation, a feature on the Evaluation Office dedicated website and the community of practice, a newsflash email announcement, and a social media package, including a video.
- The definition of key communication messages should be an iterative and collaborative process from the very onset of an evaluation process and communication data could be gathered throughout the evaluation lifecycle especially the field phase.

- It is important to be strategic about communication and dissemination work taking into consideration, key audiences, communication tactics, roles and responsibilities and available resources. It will be useful to develop a communication and dissemination strategy for evaluation knowledge products.

ANNEX 1: HOW-TO-GUIDELINES

Delving into the collection of dissemination products shared by EU Delegations and the non-EU institutions, five communication products were identified. Some of these were found as the most popular methods of disseminating evaluation results/key messages and others identified as products which have the potential to bring added value and ultimately increase the effectiveness of the evaluation results.
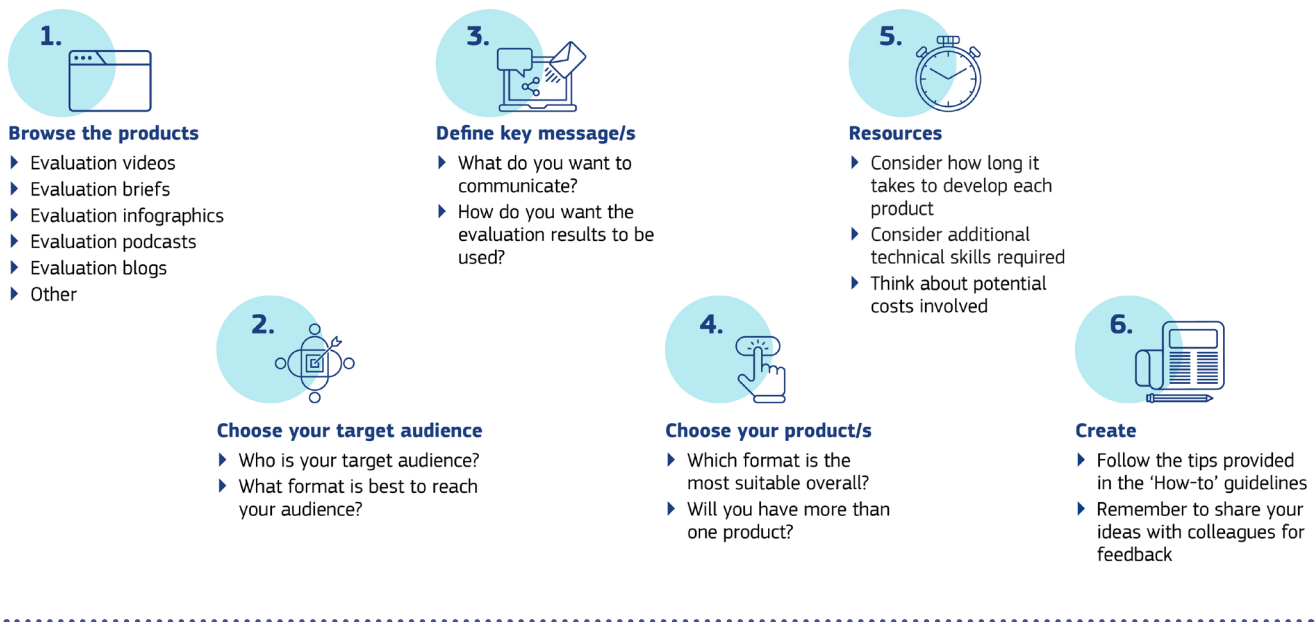
This section comprises five simple 'how-to' guidelines for the following communication products:

▶ Videos
▶ Infographics
▶ Evaluation Briefs
▶ Podcasts
▶ Blogs

They are meant to provide practical and immediate advice for colleagues in the Delegations, the Headquarters and in the wider external evaluation community. The guidelines include an overview of practical considerations e.g. benefits of use, costs and technical skills involved, links to useful external resources as well as a section showcasing good communication product examples

The following pages present the finalised 'how-to' guidelines

Figure 3: Steps to consider when selecting products

1. Browse the products
▶ Evaluation videos
▶ Evaluation briefs
▶ Evaluation infographics
▶ Evaluation podcasts
▶ Evaluation blogs
▶ Other

2. Choose your target audience
▶ Who is your target audience?
▶ What format is best to reach your audience?

3. Define key message/s
▶ What do you want to communicate?
▶ How do you want the evaluation results to be used?

4. Choose your product/s
▶ Which format is the most suitable overall?
▶ Will you have more than one product?

5. Resources
▶ Consider how long it takes to develop each product
▶ Consider additional technical skills required
▶ Think about potential costs involved

6. Create
▶ Follow the tips provided in the 'How-to' guidelines
▶ Remember to share your ideas with colleagues for feedback

Creative Communications for Evaluation Dissemination

How-to Guide:

Video

This How-to Guide is prepared by the
Evaluation Support Service of the DG DEVCO 04

Brussels, July 2020

INTRODUCTION

Video is an engaging way of sharing your evaluation findings. The DEVCO/ESS study to understand the different ways in which evaluation results are communicated reveals that 12 out of the 17 institutions consulted use video to disseminate their evaluations. It requires preparation in terms of budgeting and planning, as well as in terms of reflecting on the story you want to tell. Whose story will it be? Is it an account of programme success or an evaluative journey? These guidelines provide you with practical tips, examples, and references to additional resources to communicate the learning from your evaluation.

WHY VIDEO?

Video provides a great way of engaging your audience visually. It enables you to:

▶ Convey key messages faster
▶ Amplify voices & faces of stakeholders
▶ Reach a wider audience base
▶ Represent an overview of evaluation results in a visual format'

WHO IS IT FOR?

Target audiences could include:

▶ Government officials
▶ The public in Europe/Global
▶ Evaluators/technical experts
▶ EU Delegation colleagues
▶ Different EU institutions
▶ Civil Society
▶ Implementing partners
▶ Academia
▶ Research Think Tanks

WHERE TO MAKE IT?

Videos are usually produced locally with remote interviews as relevant.

▶ Videos can be produced with local support.
▶ Consider including budget for local communications capacity in the evaluation ToR.

HOW MUCH TIME?

The production time of a video is relatively short and can either take days or a few weeks. It all depends on the scope and length of the video, the key messages the video wants to convey and to whom.

NB: Production time is likely to be longer if you choose to include images/video content collected over the entire evaluation cycle.

HOW MUCH MONEY?

The study found that the average cost to produce one video is around 9000€. However, the cost depends on the length and quality of the video you are making. Please find some examples and their associated costs below.

WHERE TO START?

Have a read through the Communication & Visibility Manual for European External Action (2018), look out for existing templates or create your own.

Need inspiration? Have a look at the useful resources from the wider evaluation community on .

TIPS TO GUIDE YOUR EVALUATION VIDEO PLANNING

1

Decide on target audience & purpose

Who do you want to see the evaluation video? What do you want to communicate? How do you want the evaluation results to be used?

2

Agree on the video length

Find the right balance between keeping your audience engaged and conveying your key messages. Most videos have a length of 3-5 minutes.

3

Share the communications guidelines

Share EC Communication & Visibility Manual with the evaluation team and consultants involved in the video production; they are bound to abide by the rules described in the manual, including branding, disclaimers, visual identity, approval etc.

4

Capture material throughout the process

You can invite video producers/photographers to join some of the evaluation activities to gather images and footage and to work on defining the key messages together.

5

Video as data collection tool

Making video part of the fieldwork enables dissemination earlier in the evaluation cycle and allows for editing time. Data collection methods include participatory videos and video diaries.

6

Respect image rights and obtain consent

If images or footage identify a person, their voice or other recognizable attributes consent forms are needed. Ensure that video producers/photographers are aware of the need to request and obtain consent before publication and include this provision in the evaluation ToR.

7

Think about crosscutting issues

Cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change and human rights addressed in your evaluation should also be mentioned in your video. Ensure a balanced gender representation – avoid gender biases and let the video reflect the sensitivity approaches used in the evaluation.

8

Choose your dissemination channels

There are various online platforms such as EuropeAid YouTube account, website, and other social media channels where your evaluation video can be shared. Choose the right channel for your target audience and make sure that you are aware of processes to follow for each channel.

9

You are not alone!

Share your idea(s) and videos with colleagues and the Communications focal point if you work in EU Delegations. Contact the Communication Unit of DG DEVCO and The Evaluation Support Service for more advice and publishing on the Cap4Dev web site.

PLANNING

EVALUATION VIDEO - EXAMPLES

EU Delegation to Côte d'Ivoire

L'UE soutient le transport routier en Côte d'Ivoire

Description: This video is about an evaluation of the Road Preservation Project in Côte d'Ivoire
Duration: 2 versions (3' and 15')
Cost: €15.000
Production time: +/- 3 months
Produced by: Contractor & local expertise
Language: French

International Fund for Agricultural Development

Strategy and Programme Evaluations

Description: Highlights from IFAD's 2017 Nicaragua Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation for the preparation of the next phase.
Duration: 5'38''
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: Depending on scope and video length.
Produced by: IFAD headquarters
Language: English

African Development Bank

AfDB support to Agricultural Value Chain Development: lessons for the feed Africa Strategy

Description: This video is about IDEV's evaluation of AfDB's support for agricultural value chains development in Africa.
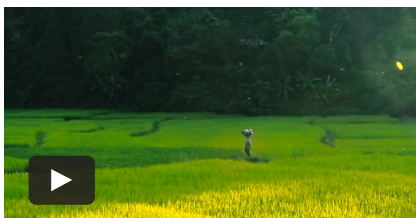Duration: 12'22''
Cost: +/- €10.000
Production time: 3 weeks
Produced by: Internally
Language: English

Global Environment Facility

Biodiversity Evaluation 2018 (India)

Description: The video presents the results of the evaluation of GEF Biodiversity Mainstreaming Program in India highlighting the challenges.
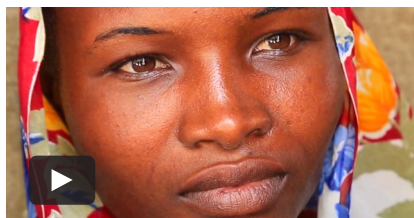Duration: 3'
Cost:: Produced in-house
Production time: Produced in-house
Produced by: Some videos are prepared internally (footage and minimal editing by evaluation task team leaders); some are done with the help of professional video-editors
Language: English

World Food Programme

Corporate Emergency Response in Northeast Nigeria (2016-2018)

Description: Together with improving WFP performance, this video report aims to provide insights to WFP's Nigeria country office as it starts to implement its first country strategic plan, covering the period 2019–2022.
Duration: 4'
Cost: 2000 $
Production time: 8 days
Produced by: local expertise & headquarters
Language: English

InsightShare

Women's Economic Empowerment – UN Women

Description: As part of an external evaluation of the Women's Economic Empowerment, global portfolio of UN Women, this video analyses and provides conclusions about the six videos recorded by rural women in Moldova, alongside local civil servants.
Duration: 6'
Cost: about €5.500
Production time: 2 weeks
Produced by: InsightShare and evaluators Impact Ready
Language: English

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON EVALUATION VIDEOS

1

Videos for reporting

This blog describes how you can use video to communicate your evaluation findings.

2

Evaluation learning Videos

This blog discusses the use of video as an evaluation learning tool, the author reflects on the filming of an evaluation project conducted in the Philippines and the key factors which enabled the success of the video.

3

Value Added of videos

In this blog, the added-value of video is discussed; from conceptualization, co-design and production through to the editing and dissemination phases. The lessons learnt can help to guide future video projects.

4

Participatory Video

InsightShare have produced several communications about the power of Participatory Video as a tool to engage communities and stakeholders in evaluation, and collect data from the perspective of beneficiaries.

‣ Journal Article
‣ Participatory Video Most Significant Change (PVMSC) Guide

READ ON

Photo by Jacob Owen on Unsplash

A simple hand-held device like a GoPro or even a mobile phone can be enough recording equipment and works very well for participatory video.

Find more guidance on disseminating evaluation results here.
Design by Saskia Brand (lotusillustrations.nl).

European
Commission

Creative Communications for Evaluation Dissemination

How-to Guide:

Podcast

This How-to Guide is prepared by the
Evaluation Support Service of the DG DEVCO 04

Brussels, July 2020

International
Cooperation and
Development

INTRODUCTION

Podcasts are an increasingly popular way to communicate evaluation results. The DEVCO/ ESS study to understand the different ways in which evaluation results are communicated reveals that 6 out of the 18 institutions consulted use podcasts to disseminate their evaluations. Podcasts can be engaging; they are easy to share and provide convenient access to knowledge. These guidelines provide you with practical tips, examples, and references to additional resources to get you started on evaluation podcasts.

WHY PODCASTS?

Podcasts provide a great way of engaging your audience and presenting information in an audible format. This enables you to:

▸ convey key messages quickly and directly,
▸ amplify voices of participants, stakeholders, and evaluation experts
▸ reach a wider audience base
▸ personalize the evaluation "story telling" with special effects/music

WHO IS IT FOR?

Target audiences could include:

▸ The wider public in Europe, in the partner countries and beyond
▸ Different EU institutions
▸ Civil Society
▸ Academia, research, Think Tanks
▸ Media

WHERE TO MAKE IT?

Podcasts can be produced from any location, provided you have a recording device and, in case of remote interviews, access to internet and an online platform with recording options (e.g. Skype /Zoom/GoToMeeting/WebEx.)

The technical skill to make a podcast can quickly be mastered.

HOW MUCH TIME?

The production time of a podcast is usually relatively short – it takes around one week provided you can dedicate the required time for editing. While editing time depends on the complexity and length of the podcast, with a bit of practice a 20 minute podcast can be fully edited in 1.5 days.

HOW MUCH MONEY?

The production of a podcast need not be expensive provided that you can use a PC or phone for recording, do your own editing, and access free tools such as:

▸ Audacity, GarageBand , Anchor & Music Maker for audio editing
▸ Youtube's Audio library, Free Music Archive for music & sound effects

Hosting can also be free on your organizational website or at Sticher or Apple podcasts.

WHERE TO START?

Have a read through the Communication & Visibility Manual for European External Action (2018), look out for existing templates for a podcast script or create your own.

Need inspiration? Have a look at the useful resources from the wider evaluation community on page 5.

TIPS TO GUIDE YOUR EVALUATION PODCAST PLANNING

1

Decide on target audience & purpose

What do you want to communicate? Who do you want to listen your evaluation podcast? How do you want the evaluation results to be used?

2

Agree on the podcast length

Find the right balance between keeping your audience engaged and conveying key messages – the ideal duration time is no longer than 20 minutes.

3

Share the communications guidelines

Share EC Communication & Visibility Manual with the evaluation team and consultants involved in the podcast production; they are bound to abide by the rules described in the manual, including branding, disclaimers, visual identity, approval etc.

4

Record sound while collecting data

Incorporating audio recordings into the fieldwork enables dissemination outputs to be shared earlier in the evaluation cycle and allows more time to edit the content before it is shared externally. Examples include audio recordings of interviews/FGDs.

5

Capture material during the evaluation

Ask the evaluation team to capture sound recordings/interviews during different evaluation activities (with consent from participants) which can be incorporated into the podcast towards the end of the process.

6

Respect image rights and obtain consent

If images identify a person, consent forms are needed. Ensure that podcast producers /evaluation team are aware of the need to request and obtain consent before publication and include this provision in the evaluation ToR.

7

Think about crosscutting issues

Cross-cutting issues like gender, climate change, and human rights addressed in your evaluation should also be mentioned in your podcast. Ensure a balanced gender representation, avoid gender biases and let the podcast reflect the sensitivity approaches used in the evaluation.

8

Choose your dissemination channels

There are various online platforms such as Sticher, Apple podcasts. Spotify, Anchor, the Europe Aid website, and other social media channels where your evaluation podcast can be shared. Choose the right channel for your target audience and make sure that you are aware of processes to follow for each channel.

9

You are not alone!

Share your idea(s) and blogs with colleagues and the Communications focal point if you work in EU Delegations. Contact the Communication Unit of DG DEVCO and The Evaluation Support Service for more advice and publishing on the Capacity4Dev website.

PLANNING

EVALUATION PODCAST – EXAMPLES

International Fund for Agricultural Development
ROOTS

Description: Series on the impact of IFAD-funded projects around the world, including personal stories and emphasis on the importance of evaluations.
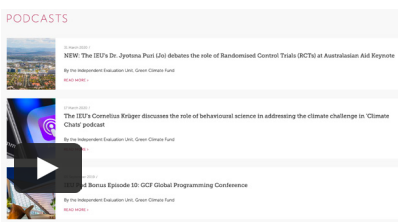Duration: Between 3'20'' and 5'
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: Variable
Produced by: IOE evaluators
Languages: Multiple
Series: Yes – Roots

Green Climate Fund
Indepent Evaluation Unit (IEU)

Description: Showcasing the work of the GCF to a global audience, through curated lectures and speakers from workshops and events related to climate, development and evaluations.
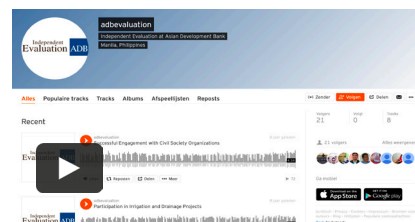Duration: 25' to 1'30''
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: 1 week
Produced by: GCF Headquarters
Language: English
Series: Yes

Asian Development Bank
Independent Evaluation Department

Description: Series to share insights about the evaluations and the lessons learnt. Topics include project sustainability, the importance of communication, and successful engagement with CSOs
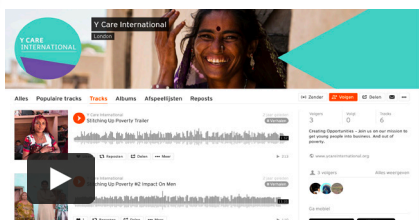Duration: 3'30'' and 4'30''
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: varied
Produced by: IED Headquarters
Language: English
Full series: Yes – 8 episodes

Y CARE International
Stitching up Poverty

Description: Series examining the impact of a project aimed at educating women and girls in rural villages in Sindh province in Pakistan, made up of stories collected from the region using Sprockler tool.
Duration: around 12'
Cost: £550 / episode with use of free tools
Production time: 1 week
Produced by: team & consultant
Language: English
Series: yes- 5 episodes

Oxfam
Impact Evaluation of Cash for Work activities in the Za'atari camp in Jordan

Description: Evidence and learning from the impact evaluation of Cash for Work interventions in the Za'atari camp in Jordan, comprising evaluation findings & recommendations.
Duration: 30'
Cost: Produced in-house, using skype and in-house editing software
Production time: 1 week
Produced by: Oxfam GB HQ
Language: English
Series: Oxfam in Depth/Real_Geek

Overseas Development Institute
When disasters and conflict collide

Description: Series exploring how policies and programmes can best respond to conflict fragile and conflict affected contexts, borne from a two-year research project with G.I.Z.
Duration: 24' to 32'
Cost: Produced in-house using free tools
Production time: variable
Produced by: ODI headquarters
Language: English
Series: Yes – 3 episodes

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON EVALUATION PODCAST

1 **Podcasts**
- This blog describes how to write podcast intros and outros which captivate your audience. There are also useful links for voice-talent options, royalty-free music options and sound effects.
- This blog includes useful links for podcast editing software, tips on how to choose the best microphone and it also guides you through the recording and editing process.
- This blog includes advice on choosing a name, show and episode format, cover art creation, intro & outro music, equipment selection, audio recording & editing, submission to Apple Podcasts (iTunes) and promotion tips

2 **A checklist to ensure optimum sound quality:**
- **Wear headphones** to prevent the sound of the speakers being picked up and re-recorded.
- **Microphone**: A headset is ok, but ultimately you want a microphone that can be at an optimum distance from the speaker's mouth – preferably a bit above or below to avoid the direct force of the breathing and popping of the "B" and "P" sounds.
- **Room**: As much as possible, try to record in a quiet room with no airconditioning, windows shut, and soft furnishings to absorb sound; avoid echoey rooms..
- **Laptop**: If using a laptop for the recording remember to take it off charge as this can create a background buzz.
- **Stay clear from the mic!** Avoid the microphone rubbing on clothes or face and waving their arms/banging or tapping the table out of shear excitement for making brilliant points!
- **Internet connection**: If using the internet ensure that all background applications which require the use of the internet are shut down on the laptop/computer to enable the best connection possible with no interference. Plugging to an Ethernet cable beats WiFi.
- **Do a test!** It is always good practice to do a microphone/recording test prior to calling in.

READ ON

TIPS

1

BE PREPARED
Sharing the questions you would like to use in the podcast recording in advance can help to guide the conversation. Use a **semi-guided loose script** so that the podcast sounds natural rather than over-rehearsed. The views represented need to remain impartial.

2

HAVE A TEST SESSION
It is advisable to make sure you set time aside to check the sound quality of your recording equipment and internet connection if this is relevant. To ensure optimum sound quality when recording **use the checklist above.**

3

USE MULTIPLE VOICES
Consider including **multiple voices** (2-4) to keep the listeners interested. Including voices from external institutions can also help to demonstrate authenticity.

Find more guidance on disseminating evaluation results here.
Design by Saskia Brand (lotusillustrations.nl).

European Commission

Creative Communications for
Evaluation Dissemination

How-to Guide:

Infographics

This How-to Guide is prepared by the
Evaluation Support Service of the DG DEVCO 04

Brussels, July 2020

International
Cooperation and
Development

INTRODUCTION

Infographics provide an increasingly popular way of sharing your evaluation findings. The DEVCO/ESS study to understand the different ways in which evaluation results are communicated reveals that 11 out of the 18 institutions consulted use infographics to disseminate their evaluations. Infographics are relatively low cost and do not require particular planning at the start of the evaluation process. What they do require is the definition of clear key messages that convey a story. These guidelines provide you with practical tips, examples, and references to additional resources to communicate the learning from your evaluation.

WHY AN INFOGRAPHIC?

Infographics provide a great way of engaging your audience visually. This enables you to:

‣ Convey key messages faster
‣ Reach a wider audience base
‣ Represent an overview of evaluation results in an illustrative format – the combination of data and graphic art is a powerful and captivating way to present your information

WHO IS IT FOR?

Target audiences could include:

‣ The wider public in Europe, in partner countries and beyond
‣ Different EU institutions
‣ Evaluators/technical experts
‣ Civil Society
‣ Media

WHERE TO MAKE IT?

Evaluation infographics can be produced either locally or by consultants at their headquarters.

HOW MUCH TIME?

The average production time of an evaluation infographic is relatively short – usually taking around two weeks. However, it all depends on the scope and quantity of key messages which you want to convey.

HOW MUCH MONEY?

The study found that the average cost to produce one Infographic is around €1,500.

Note that the cost depends on the scope and the quality of the infographic you are making and whether necessary capacity is available in-house or needs to be hired. Consider including budget for local communications capacity in the evaluation ToR.

There are free online tools available which can reduce production costs such as Canva, Piktochart and Visme.

WHERE TO START?

To start with, have a read through the Communication and Visibility Manual for European External Action (2018) or look out for existing templates (widely used by the institutions contacted for the study) or create your own.

Need inspiration? Have a look at the useful resources from the wider evaluation community in the Read On Section.

TIPS TO GUIDE YOUR EVALUATION INFOGRAPHIC PLANNING

1

Decide on purpose & target audience

Who do you want to see the evaluation infographic? What do you want to communicate? How do you want the evaluation results to be used?

2

Define messages that tell a story

Remember that your infographic needs to be eye-catching as well as clear. Do not overload it with too much text and make sure the figures tell a story.

3

Consider using evaluation data

Data captured during the evaluation fieldwork and/or project monitoring or ROM can be translated into visuals for your infographic. Look at tools such as PowerBI and Tableau.

4

Share the communications guidelines

The EC Communication and Visibility Manual is to be shared with the evaluation team and any consultants involved in the infographic production; they are bound to abide by the rules described in the manual, including branding, disclaimers, visual identity, approval etc..

5

Respect image rights and obtain consent

If any image used to produce the infographic identifies a person, or any other recognizable attributes consent forms should be obtained from the person concerned. Ensure that infographic designers are aware of the need to request and obtain consent and include this provision in the evaluation ToR.

6

Think about crosscutting issues

Cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change and human rights addressed in your evaluation should also be mentioned in your infographic. Ensure a balanced gender representation – avoid gender biases and let the infographic reflect the sensitivity approaches used in the evaluation.

7

Choose your dissemination channels

There are various online platforms such as EuropeAid YouTube account, website, and other social media channels where your evaluation infographic can be shared. Choose the right channel for your target audience and make sure that you are aware of processes to follow for each channel.

8

You are not alone!

Share your idea(s) and infographic with colleagues and the Communications focal point if you work in EU Delegations. Contact the Communication Unit of DG DEVCO and The Evaluation Support Service for more advice and publishing on the Capacity4Dev website.

PLANNING

EVALUATION INFOGRAPHICS - EXAMPLES

European Union - DG DEVCO

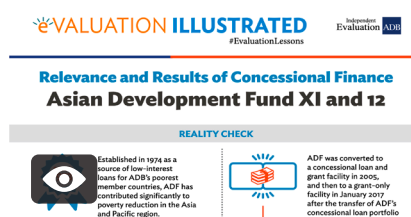*Evaluation of the EU's Regional Development Cooperation with Latin America (2009-2017)*

Description: Key lessons & recommendations from an independent evaluation of the European Union (EU) regional development cooperation with Latin America in 2009-2017.

Cost: €1,500

Production time: 3 days

Produced by: Graphic designer

Language: English

African Development Bank

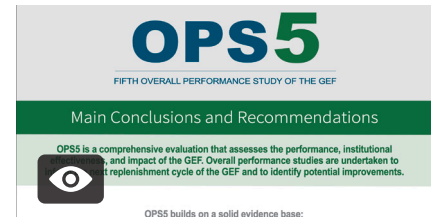*Relevance and Results of Concessional Finance – Asian development Fund XI*

Description: Overview of an evaluation to assess the relevance and result of concessional finance. It presents the challenges which were faced and recommendations to overcome them in the future.

Cost: $1,000 to 2,000

Production time: Variable

Produced by: Headquarters

Language: English

GEF - Independent Evaluation Office

Fifth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS5)

Description: Overview of a comprehensive evaluation assessing the performance, institutional effectiveness, and impact of the GEF. The results aim to inform the next cycle of the GEF and to identify potential improvements.

Cost: Produced in-house

Production time: 5 days

Produced by: Headquarters

Language: English
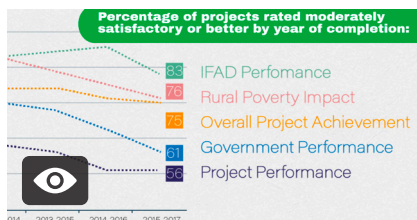
IFAD

Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations

Description: Overview of IFAD's 2019 Annual Report on Results and Impact of Operations including strengths, areas for improvement, key findings and recommendations to programme practice.

Cost::Produced in-house

Production time: 6 days

Produced by: Headquarters

Language: English

UNFPA

*Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNFPA Supplies Programme (2013-2020)*

Description: A colourful representation of the main findings from UNFPA's Mid-Term Evaluation of the Supplies Programme. It presents successes of the programme and highlights areas for improvement.

Cost: $2,500

Production time: 30 days (with report and brief)

Produced by: Local consultant

Language: English
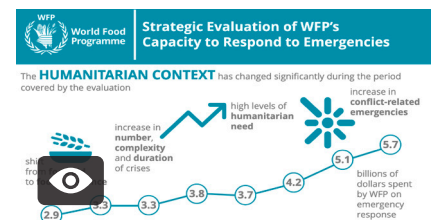
World Food Program

Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Capacity to Respond to Emergencies

Description: A summary of the Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Capacity to Respond to Emergencies. It presents how the Humanitarian context has changed, an overview of the evaluation respondents, conclusions and recommendations.

Cost: Produced in-house

Production time: 5 days

Produced by: Headquarters

Language: English

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON EVALUATION VIDEOS

1 Infographic planning

▸ This blog describes how you can create your own infographics in under an hour.

▸ In this blog you can read how to make your evaluation results go viral through producing infographics.

▸ This blog describes 5 steps for translating evaluation findings into Infographics.

▸ This digital toolkit provides an introduction to data visualizations to help better communicate research findings including how to present your data, basic design concepts, and tools that can help improve workflow. Although it is not specific to evaluations it can be adapted.

▸ In this blog you can read about how to use infographic icons

▸ This blog contains some design ideas to engage readers

▸ This handout provides a list of Dos and Don'ts for Data visualization

2 Data visualization

In this blog Visme have presented 25 of the best data visualizations produced in 2019. A great source of inspiration!

3 Free online courses

There are several courses online which can be accessed to improve your data visualization and infographic skills:

▸ The Power of Infographics in Research Dissemination – The Open University (course duration =7 hours)

▸ Design and make infographics – Coursera (course duration = 14 hours)

READ ON

Photo by Kobu Agency on Unsplash

Sketching is always a great start to sort your ideas – it helps you to focus on your message without being distracted by technology.

Find more guidance on disseminating evaluation results here.

Design by Saskia Brand (lotusillustrations.nl).

European Commission

Creative Communications for Evaluation Dissemination

How-to Guide:

Brief

This How-to Guide is prepared by the Evaluation Support Service of the DG DEVCO 04

Brussels, July 2020

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation brief is a way to share key findings through an attractive 2-4 page summary. The DEVCO/ESS study to understand the different ways in which evaluation results are communicated reveals that 9 out of the 18 institutions consulted use briefs to disseminate their evaluations. They are relatively easy to make and do not require important budget or preparation. Critical, though, is to make sure you provide enough context and adapt the language for your audience to understand the summary. These guidelines support your work with practical tips, examples, and references to additional resources to communicate the learning from your evaluation.

WHY A BRIEF?

Evaluation briefs enable you to provide your audience with a summary of your key messages in a short and concise format. It also enables you to:

▸ highlight the most important learning from the evaluation
▸ engage your audience visually – with eye catching graphics, icons and fonts
▸ Reach a wider audience base through the use of non-technical language
▸ Link to the full evaluation report for reader who would like to delve into more detail.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Target audiences could include:

▸ Evaluators/technical experts
▸ Different EU institutions
▸ Civil society
▸ Academia, research think tanks

WHERE TO MAKE IT?

Evaluation briefs can be produced anywhere by the evaluation teams, the evaluation manager or program/project manager.

HOW MUCH TIME?

The production time of an evaluation brief can take anywhere between a few days to several weeks. It all depends on the scope and length of the brief, the key messages you want it to convey and to whom. According to our survey, the average time to produce an evaluation brief is 2 weeks, depending on the complexity of findings.

NB: Production time is likely to be longer if you choose to include data visualizations/graphics which have not already been created.

HOW MUCH MONEY?

The study found that the average cost to produce one evaluation brief is around €1000.

However, the cost depends on the complexity and quality of the evaluation brief you are making. Please find some examples and their associated costs below.

WHERE TO START?

Have a read through the Communication & Visibility Manual for European External Action (2018), look out for existing templates or create your own.

Need inspiration? Have a look at the useful resources from the wider evaluation community on page 5.

TIPS TO GUIDE YOUR EVALUATION BRIEF PLANNING

1

Decide on target audience & purpose

Who do you want to see the evaluation brief? What do you want to communicate? How do you want the evaluation results to be used?

2

Agree on the document length

Find the right balance between keeping your audience engaged and conveying your key messages. Most briefs have a length of 2-4 pages.

3

Share the communications guidelines

Share EC Communication & Visibility Manual with the evaluation team and consultants involved in the brief production; they are bound to abide by the rules described in the manual, including branding, disclaimers, visual identity, approval etc.

4

Consider the required skills

When drafting the ToR, consider which specific skills are needed for your brief: e.g. the ability to simplify and translate complex messages or to produce graphics/data visualizations using the evaluations results.

5

Capture material throughout the process

You can invite photographers to join some of the evaluation activities to gather images which can be used in your evaluation brief.

6

Respect image rights and obtain consent

If images identify a person consent forms are needed. Ensure that photographers are aware of the need to request and obtain consent before publication and include this provision in the evaluation ToR.

7

Think about crosscutting issues

Cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change and human rights addressed in your evaluation should also be mentioned in your brief. Ensure a balanced gender representation – avoid gender biases and let the brief reflect the sensitivity approaches used in the evaluation.

8

Choose your dissemination channels

There are various online platforms such as EuropeAid YouTube account, website, and other social media channels where your evaluation brief can be shared. Choose the right channel for your target audience and make sure that you are aware of processes to follow for each channel.

9

You are not alone!

Share your idea(s) and briefs with colleagues and the Communications focal point if you work in EU Delegations. Contact the Communication Unit of DG DEVCO and The Evaluation Support Service for more advice and publishing on the Cap4Dev web site.

PLANNING

EVALUATION BRIEF - EXAMPLES

European Union-DG DEVCO
External Evaluation of European Union's Cooperation with Myanmar

Description: Brief of the evaluation of the EU's cooperation with Myanmar. A user-friendly layout helps to make this document easy to read.
Length: 3 pages
Cost: €1,500
Production time: 3 days
Produced by: graphic designer
Language: English

African Development Bank
Eswatini: Evaluation of the Bank's country strategy program (2009-2018)

Description: Findings from an evaluation of 14 projects. Includes the management response and various graphic elements.
Length: 4 pages
Cost: €400
Production time: 6 weeks
Produced by: IDEV headquarters
Language: English

Asian Development Bank
Relevance and Results of Concessional Finance: Asian Development Fund XI and XII

Description: Well presented key learnings from an evaluation about concessional finance, presenting recommendations, key messages and challenges.
Length: 2 pages
Cost: $1,000
Production time: 3-5 days
Produced by: IED headquarteers
Language: English

Green Climate Fund
Country Ownership Approach (COA)

Description: a summary of the GCF's plan to assess its Country Ownership Approach, comprising sections on context, scope, methodology and planned country visits.
Length: 2 pages
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: Produced in-house
Produced by: GCF headquarters
Language: English

Global Environment Facility
IEO BRIEF OPS6: Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF

Description: overview of the findings from GEF's periodic comprehensive evaluation. It includes background, context, key findings, and recommendations.
Length: 4 pages
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: Produced in-house
Produced by: Evaluation task team leader
Language: English

International Fund for Agricultural Development
Bringing financial services closer to rural populations in Sierra Leone (2019)

Description: Brief of IFAD's Sierra Leone country strategy and programme evaluation, comprising images taken in country, which help to make the document appealing to the reader.
Length: 2 pages
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: 5 days
Produced by: IFAD headquarters
Language: English

EXAMPLES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON EVALUATION BRIEFS

1 **Evaluation brief planning**

This video explains how to write summary documents (NB: it is not specific to evaluations but the guidance is still relevant and can be adapted).

2 **More examples**

▸ 3ie produces Impact Evaluation briefs to provide plain language overviews of project inter-ventions, impact evaluation, main findings and recommendations from 3ie-funded studies published in their report series

▸ You can also see examples of Evaluation briefs produced by the UNDP, UNICEF, the Millenium Challenge Corporation, SIDA and Oxfam.

3 **Design guidance**

▸ This blog describes how to use infographic icons

▸ This blog provides some design ideas to engage readers

▸ This handout provides a list of dos and don'ts of data visualization

Icons are a great way to enhance the legibility and attractiveness of you brief, but you need to know how to use them. See this blog for tips.

Find more guidance on disseminating evaluation results here.

Design by Saskia Brand (lotusillustrations.nl).

Creative Communications for Evaluation Dissemination

How-to Guide:

Blogs

This How-to Guide is prepared by the
Evaluation Support Service of the DG DEVCO 04

Brussels, July 2020

INTRODUCTION

A blog provides an accessible and user-friendly format to communicate your evaluation results. You can share findings from the evaluation as a whole or specific aspects such as key learning, recommendations or experience of using different methods and tools. All of these may incite your audience to read the full report. The DEVCO/ESS study to understand the different ways in which evaluation results are communicated reveals that 7 out of the 18 institutions consulted use blogs to disseminate their evaluations. Blogs do not require particular preparation in terms of budgeting and planning, but there are some writing principles to respect. These guidelines provide you with practical tips, examples, and references to additional resources to get you started on evaluation blogs.

WHY BLOGS?

Blogs provide a great way of engaging your audience and encourage them to read the full report. They also enable you to:

- Convey key messages faster
- Reach a wider audience base
- Provide a summary of the evaluation results in a non-formal way
- Present images and graphs from the report
- Present different perspectives, e.g. a blog can provide views from different stakeholders of the evaluation process.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Target audiences could include:

- Evaluators/technical experts
- Different EU institutions
- Print and electronic media

WHERE TO MAKE IT?

Evaluation blogs can be written locally by evaluation teams or at headquarters.

HOW MUCH TIME?

The average production time of an evaluation blog is relatively short – usually taking around one week (including time to incorporate feedback). However, it all depends on the scope and quantity of key messages which you want to convey. Also, if it is a blog written by multiple people it is likely to take longer than a blog written by one person.

HOW MUCH MONEY?

The study found that the average cost to produce one blog is normally free as it is produced internally. Please find some examples and their associated costs on page 4.

Note that the cost depends on the scope and the quality of the blog you are producing and whether there is in-house resources and capacity available to produce it or whether there is a need to hire a consultant.

WHERE TO START?

Have a read through the Communication & Visibility Manual for European External Action (2018), look out for existing templates or create your own.

Need inspiration? Have a look at the useful resources from the wider evaluation community on page 5.

TIPS TO GUIDE YOUR EVALUATION BLOG PLANNING

1

Decide on target audience & purpose

Who do you want to read the evaluation blog? What do you want to communicate? How do you want the evaluation results to be used?

2

Agree messages to convey

Blogs usually focus on a particular topic, rather than trying to highlight all of the evaluation findings in one go. It is good practice to summarise what you are going to talk about in the first paragraph and encourage the reader to read the rest of the post.

3

Share the communications guidelines

Share EC Communication & Visibility Manual with the evaluation team and consultants involved in the blog production; they are bound to abide by the rules described in the manual, including branding, disclaimers, visual identity, approval etc.

4

Include images, quotes and stories

A strong image, an interesting quote, a story or data visual from the report can make a big impact on the reader and provide a moving way to illustrate your key points.

5

Respect image rights and obtain consent

If images identify a person, consent forms are needed. Ensure that blog writers are aware of the need to request and obtain consent before publication and include this provision in the evaluation ToR.

6

Think about crosscutting issues

Cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change and human rights addressed in your evaluation should also be mentioned in your blog. Ensure a balanced gender representation, avoid gender biases and let the blog reflect the sensitivity approaches used in the evaluation.

7

Choose your dissemination channels

There are various online platforms such as the Europe Aid website, and other social media channels where your evaluation blog can be shared. Choose the right channel for your target audience and make sure that you are aware of processes to follow for each channel.

8

You are not alone!

Share your idea(s) and blogs with colleagues and the Communications focal point if you work in EU Delegations. Contact the Communication Unit of DG DEVCO and The Evaluation Support Service for more advice and publishing on the Capacity4Dev website.

PLANNING

EVALUATION BLOG - EXAMPLES

#EvalCrisis Blog - No 02 - Evaluation from space

European Union DG DEVCO/ESS

#EvalCrisis Blog Series – Evaluation during the Covid-19 Crisis

Description: describes the use of satellite data for remote evaluations with an example of a UNOPS rural electrification project in Sierra Leone.
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: 2 days
Produced by: DEVCO ESS team **Language**: English
Full series: #Evalcrisis Blog

[Contribution] Country ownership in times of international assistance

Green Climate Fund

Country ownership in times of international assistance.

Description: written to showcase the findings of the IEU's evaluation on the GCF's Country Ownership Approach (COA).
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: 2 weeks + 2 weeks to publish in news outlets.
Produced by: headquarters
Language: English

Creating Markets: A Special Challenge for Low-income Countries

IEG World Bank Group

Creating markets: A special challenge for low-income countries

Description: Blog within the 'Creating Markets' series uses findings from relevant IEG evaluations to provide lessons of experience and key takeaways regarding the World Bank Group's Creating Markets concept.
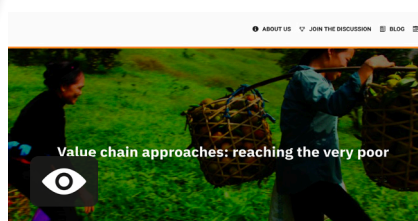**Cost**: Produced in-house
Production time: unknown
Produced by: Internally
Language: English
Full series: Creating Markets

Value chain approaches: reaching the very poor

International Fund for Agricultural Development

Value Chain approaches: reaching the very poor

Description: practical insights into how value chains can be improved. IFAD's IOE is part of EvalForward, a Community of Practice on Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development.
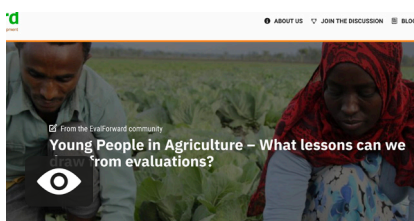**Cost**: Produced in-house
Production time: 4 days
Produced by: IOE IFAD
Language: English
Full series: EvalForward

Young People in Agriculture – What lessons can we draw from evaluations?

EvalForward

Young People in Agriculture – What lessons can we draw from evaluations?

Description: learning from a discussion with the EvalForward community on the growing disconnect between youth and the agriculture sector. It includes lessons from evaluations of related projects.
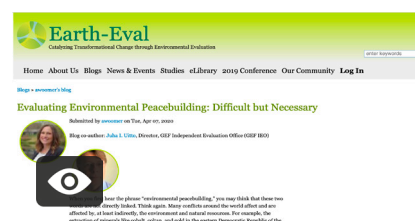**Cost**: Produced in-house
Production time: unknown
Produced by: EvalForward
Language: English
Full series: EvalForward

Evaluating Environmental Peacebuilding: Difficult but Necessary

GEF Independent Evaluation Office

Evaluating Environmental Peacebuilding: Difficult but Necessary

Description: published on the Earth-Eval website, these blogs are written/developed to promote evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons learnt, issues or recommendations.
Cost: Produced in-house
Production time: 3 hours
Produced by: GEF IEO staff and Eval-Earth community members
Language: English
Full series: EarthEval Blog

EXAMPLES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON EVALUATION BLOGS

1 **Blog planning**
- This web page describes 5 tips to help you create an effective blog.
- This guide describes how to start a successful blog.

2 **Evaluation blog examples**

You can have also look at the following blog series for some more inspiration:

- The BetterEvaluation blog – sharing information on global evaluation practices and programs.
- EvalCentral – a mix of blog posts from the global evaluation community.
- The RAND blog series features expert commentary and informed analysis on the latest world news, as well as research highlights on different policy issues.
- Oxfam's Real Geek blog series - includes learning discussions based on practical implementation of research and evaluation tools.

3 **Free online courses**

There are several courses online which can be accessed to improve your skills:

- 10 Free blogging tools that will make you a better blogger– Udemy (course duration =32 minutes)
- Design Your Own Blog – Learn how to update your blog layout, increase the functionality of your blog, create beautiful graphics and more! – BASS (course duration = 7 Day course)

READ ON

BLOG WRITING TIPS

1

WRITING STYLE – A blog should be **conversational**; imagine an audience outside the development or evaluation sector. Use short paragraphs and sentences and **avoid** unnecessarily **technical words**. A blog also provides an opportunity to represent a **personal view** on a topic so phrases like 'I believe' are more appropriate than referring to the organisation you work for.

2

KEEP THE AUDIENCE ENGAGED – Most people scan online content rather than reading it closely. Therefore, **use key words and headings,** links, and images to break the text.

Bullet points help to list details in a concise way. Links to further information can also be included via **hyperlinks** to avoid repeating information.

3

PROVIDE A DISCUSSION SPACE – Inviting readers to provide comments or questions at the end of a blog post is a great way to **initiate conversations** and hear from the wider evaluation community.

A blog is conducive to raising questions and admitting confusion about the topic being covered..

Find more guidance on disseminating evaluation results here.
Design by Saskia Brand (lotusillustrations.nl).

ANNEX 2: METHODOLOGY

PHASE 1

The main objective of phase 1 was to conduct a thorough mapping exercise to identify and gather existing evaluation dissemination products (through website and social media analysis as well as through direct contact with EMs of evaluations whose ToR made provision for dissemination products) and representatives of non-EU institutions who have experience in producing communication products related to evaluation results.

STEP 1:

Gather evaluation dissemination products developed by EUDs and Unit 04; this was done through accessing the websites and social media channels of 94 EU Delegations.

STEP 2:

Gather evaluation dissemination products developed by different EUDs.

STEP 3:

Review of DEVCO Evaluation ToRs uploaded in EVAL during the last 6 months (June –December 2019) to identify those making provision to produce specific dissemination products.

STEP 4:

Gather evaluation dissemination products developed by other international donors and agencies. During this phase, interviews were conducted with representatives from non-EU international organisations to discuss evaluation dissemination practice. The study team contacted: Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development- IFAD, World Food Programme, Overseas Development Institute, Green Climate Fund, Independent Evaluation Unit, UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA. All of the non-EU institutions who took part in this study regularly produce standard dissemination outputs based on results of their evaluations.

STEP 5:

Interview Evaluation Managers in DEVCO and other targeted institutions responsible to produce the dissemination products to identify lessons learnt and any related challenges identified regarding evaluation dissemination.

STEP 6:

Identify a suitable platform to share the dissemination products which will be produced during phase 2.

PHASE 2

The synthesis of information collected during phase 1 was used to inform the production of 5 how-to guidelines including useful references to support the work of Evaluation Managers and the wider evaluation community in disseminating evaluation results. The most popular communication products used by the internal and external evaluation community were selected based on findings from the analysis and a 'how-to' guidance document was produced for each product.

The activities required to complete phase 2 were structured into 3 steps:

STEP 1:

To develop 'how-to' guidelines and references to support the work of Evaluation Managers and the wider evaluation community in disseminating evaluation results.

STEP 2:

Publish outputs from step 1 on an easily accessible online platform (i.e., Capacity4Dev – a dedicated page for 'Evaluation dissemination' will be created for this purpose).

STEP 3:

Advertise the page for 'Evaluation dissemination' on DEVCO's Capacity4Dev website using different social media channels and webinars to encourage

continued use to improve and support evaluation dissemination practice both internally and externally. This activity is part of the follow up of the study and will be started as soon as the graphic layout of the products are available and published.

The preparation of this study (including the production of an interview grid and templates) was conducted by members of the ESS Core Team (Hur Hassnain and Alessandra Mantovan). Hur Hassnain ensured the coordination of the work and both him and Alessandra Mantovan conducted interviews with non -EU institutions which informed the analysis phase, conclusions and recommendations in the final report and the 'How-to' guidelines which are the main outputs of this study. A graphic Designer, Ms Saskia Brand produced the layout of the final printable report, an interactive PDF report and the preparation of an online template for web publication.

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PART IV