Handbook of Management of Evaluations of the Spanish Cooperation

Learning to improve

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Foreword

Spanish Cooperation made a concerted effort to enhance the quality of Official Development Assistance during the period 2005-2008. To that end, it has acquired a series of planning, monitoring and evaluation tools with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of assistance to combat poverty.

Evaluation and monitoring are key elements in the development cooperation policy cycle because they allow for the establishment of an ongoing improvement system providing essential feedback for the planning and management of development actions. A solid evaluation system must therefore be in place enabling actors to conduct useful quality evaluations.

One of the responsibilities of the Evaluation Division of the Directorate-General of Development Policy Planning and Evaluation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation's Secretary of State for International Cooperation is to strengthen Spanish Cooperation's evaluation system and it therefore provides all those involved in this process with a Spanish Cooperation Management and Evaluation Handbook. This instrument allows for the design and coordination of the study and communication and incorporation of lessons learned from an evaluation into the planning and management of development actions.

The Handbook of Management of Evaluations of the Spanish Cooperation is the fruit of a collaborative effort between the Directorate-General of Development Policy Planning and Evaluation and the Regional Development Institute (IDR) of Seville University and of the comments and active participation of a support structure featuring field professionals from the cooperation sector and public and private institutions which contributed significantly to the document. A warm thanks to all.

"Learning for Improvement" is not just the title of this Handbook for the Evaluation of the Spanish Cooperation. It is also the expression of a commitment made by the actors of Spanish Cooperation who are striving to provide Official Development Assistance with the greatest possible quality and effectiveness in order that it may contribute to the purpose for which development assistance was created in the first place – to eradicate poverty.

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Presentation

This Handbook was put together by the Evaluation Division of the Directorate-General of Development Policy Planning and Evaluation (hereafter DGPOLDE) and the Institute for Regional Development (IDR) within the framework of the Collaboration Agreement concluded between these two entities to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system of Spanish Cooperation Policy.

Many advances have been made in the development cooperation system, specifically within the area of evaluation, since Article 19(4) the The International Cooperation Law, No. 23/98 of 7th July (LCID) defined the powers of the Secretary of State for International Cooperation and for Latin America noting that it "shall evaluate development cooperation policy and the on-going and concluded programmes and projects operating with State funding, from their conception until final results are achieved".

Recently, the Master Plan for the Spanish Cooperation 2005-2008 (hereafter MP 2005-2008) included evaluation in Chapter 8 entitled "The Quality of Aid " as a mechanism which, together with planning and monitoring, contributes to enhancing the quality of aid, stressing its importance in the Spanish development cooperation system. To ensure suitable management of the evaluation process, the MP encourages the actors of Spanish Cooperation to "use the Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Methodology which will be reviewed and supplemented with practical handbooks for the implementation of the evaluations" (MAEC, 2005: 116).

In response to this challenge, DGPOLDE is leading a process whereby is to consolidate the institutionalisation of the evaluation process and establish the bases so that, together with monitoring and planning, it comprises a comprehensive, organised and coordinated system capable of improving the management of the interventions and, by virtue of its own experience, can enrich the planning of Cooperation Policy.

The results of this effort have given rise to a set of theoretical and practical tools which are complementary. On the one hand, Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Methodology which is being updated in accordance with this comprehensive approach, incorporates lessons learned and recent advances in evaluation applied to the instruments and characteristics of Spanish Cooperation and serves as the theoretical framework for the evaluations. On the other hand, Spanish Cooperation Monitoring Protocols, a set of procedural guidelines supporting the monitoring of strategies and operational instruments of Spanish Cooperation, ensure its integration and organisation in the overall system. And lastly we have the Handbook of Management of Evaluations of the Spanish Cooperation, the tool presented here.

These tools have been developed following a participatory process through the constitution of a network of evaluation and development cooperation professionals who have contributed input to enrich the work.

The aim of the Evaluation Management Handbook is to serve as a guide to facilitate the management of the evaluations by identifying the stages which should be followed to successfully discharge and lead an evaluation process of a development cooperation intervention.

Far from being a rigid framework for action, this Handbook seeks to help the many cooperation participants to manage their evaluations with the support of a flexible tool meeting their different needs, interests and intervention contexts but in accordance with some important shared methodological guidelines.

The points covered in the Handbook should be improved and enriched in the future thanks to the experience acquired by cooperation professionals. Insofar as the involvement and participatory spirit contributing to the development of this Handbook is maintained, it will be a "living tool" at the service of the ongoing enhancement process contributing of the quality and effectiveness of Spanish Cooperation Policy.

Introduction to the Handbook

The Handbook Management of Evaluations of the Spanish Cooperation is a practical tool intended to facilitate the work of the professionals who manage cooperation evaluations. The aim is to strengthen the mechanisms whereby to conduct high-quality, systematic and participatory evaluations focused on the incorporation of their results in the planning cycle.

It is a general proposal which seeks to be of use to the greatest number of actors and interventions of Spanish Cooperation and to that end offers specific instructions to facilitate its adaptation to each context and draws comparisons between the different formats and levels of planning of the Spanish Cooperation System.

> It is a handbook targeting evaluation managers and not evaluators themselves and therefore addresses issues related with the organisation of evaluation work and not with the techniques and methodologies involved in its elaboration.

The Handbook has been organised in two parts.

Part I, "The evaluation of Development Cooperation Policy", provides a brief presentation of the institutional framework of Cooperation Policy evaluation and defines some background concepts and issues related to the evaluation of development assistance viewed as a process which follows a time line commencing with the emergence of the rationale behind and the design of the evaluation, continues with its implementation and concludes with the dissemination of its results and the integration of lessons learned and recommendations thus closing the learning circle and the ongoing improvement of Spanish Cooperation Policy (see **Figure 1)**.

Figure 1. The evaluation cycle
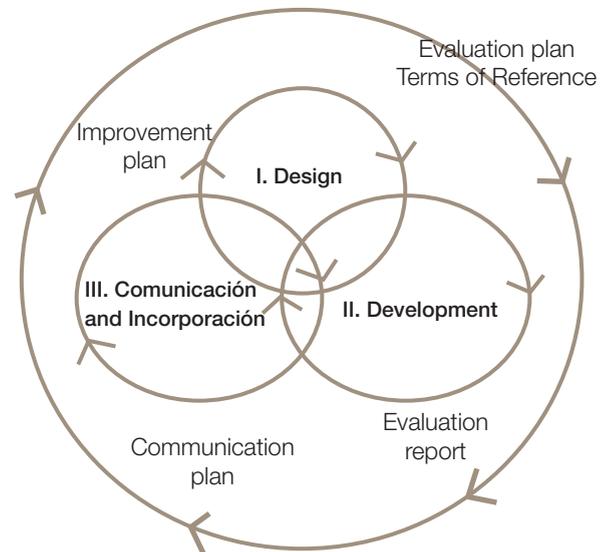
Source: Adapted from DGPOLDE

Part II of the Handbook which introduces the evaluation cycle is organised in three phases. **Phase I, "Designing the evaluation"**, takes a look at the most salient aspects to be considered when conducting an evaluation. It also underscores the importance of creating a forum allowing for participation of the different actors (Reference Group) to support and facilitate the evaluation process.

The main duties to be undertaken by the manager of a Spanish Cooperation evaluation are addressed in **Phase II, "Developing the evaluation study"**, which pays special attention to supervising the quality of work undertaken and to empowering the participation forum (Reference Group).

Phase III of the evaluation cycle, **"Communicating results and integrating lessons learned"**, describes the factors determining the usefulness of the evaluation, highlights the importance of identifying the target audience of the evaluation, the latter's different interests and the most suitable channels and instruments to communicate the results to each of the members of that target audience.

The approach adopted throughout this Handbook is that of accompanying the evaluation process conducted by outside teams not involved in managing the intervention under evaluation (external evaluation) or by personnel linked to the said intervention, with or without outside technical assistance (mixed evaluation or self-evaluation respectively), with reference to its internalisation or to the hiring of specialised services to guide the work done by the organisation entrusted with the evaluation.

> In this second part the reader will encounter a different style of writing characterised by a more personal tone which lets users of this Handbook know that this is a practical tool which will "accompany" them throughout the entire evaluation process.

Moreover, special emphasis has been placed on clarifying concepts and on their didactic and sequential format while stressing the importance of proposing feasible evaluations which, in addition to being useful and indeed used, can also be easily integrated into Spanish Cooperation management .

Given that this Handbook is intended to be practical, it has been conceived as an open instrument to be used by professionals of Spanish Cooperation who will guide its ongoing update and improvement based on their real experiences of applying it to specific interventions and actions and in response to the principles underlying the new Spanish Cooperation evaluation philosophy.

> And lastly, we would point out that this Handbook forms part of a broader set of tools including those developed simultaneously with this one and which have already been presented: Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Methodology and Monitoring Protocols.

> With this set of tools adapted to different professional profiles and roles and to evaluable interventions, our aim is to provide Spanish Cooperation professionals with a "rucksack" in which they can deposit those which meet their needs and which support the duties and tasks necessary for cooperation policy evaluation.

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1. With this objective in mind, the term "intervention" has been used throughout the document to generally refer to any of the strategic planning levels, operational instruments or to any other type of cooperation action or group of actions which may be evaluated.

PART I

Evaluation of the Development Cooperation Policy

1. Introduction: Institutional framework

1.1. Context: the International Development Agenda

Spanish Cooperation Policy is in tune with important international consensus regarding how to reduce world poverty accepted by an increasing number of countries and civil society organisations both in the North and South. This consensus has taken the form of an International Development Agenda based mostly on the definition of the objectives necessary to achieve sustainable development (Millennium Development Goals, hereafter MDG). In this context, monitoring and evaluation are fundamental tools to enhance the quality of aid and achieve the MDGs.

The MDGs are the expression of a commitment made by developed and poor countries to join forces and, by 2015 at the latest, achieve the 8 goals and 18 targets established to advance along the path to development and to reduce poverty worldwide. Achievement of the MDGs has become the main Cooperation Policy guideline for developed countries and should therefore play the same essential role in its evaluation.

The shared agenda based on the MDGs is bolstered by an overarching agreement on how to move forward in their achievement, the Partnership for Development Strategy", based on the principles of ownership, managing for results and coordination.

These principles are constantly being reviewed by agreement amongst countries at international summits. The most recent example was at the Paris Declaration (2005)[2], where five renewed principles were established to serve as the basis for greater aid effectiveness: Ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability.

The proper monitoring and enforcement of these principles in the planning, execution and evaluation of ac-

tions will align Spanish Cooperation Policy with the rest of the countries in the ongoing process of enhancing the effectiveness of development aid.

1.2. Regulatory framework and strategic planning levels

The approval of the International Development Cooperation Act (Spanish acronym LCID) in 1998 marked the commencement of a reform process targeting instruments of Spanish Cooperation (master plans and annual plans, sector and geographical strategies) and was instrumental in improving project management mechanisms, the construction of a systematic evaluation methodology and the reinforcement of advisory bodies and State coordination.

The Act lays down two types of priorities (geographical and sector) for the purpose of concentrating aid on the least economically and socially developed countries and, within the latter, on the most disadvantaged sectors. These priorities can be seen in **Figure 2**, the Spanish Cooperation Policy planning structure.

The Master Plans are the major planning pillars. In the framework of the Master Plan (MP 2005-2008), poverty eradication is defined as the main objective and the commitment to increase the amount of resources allocated for aid together with raising the level of quality and effectiveness of cooperation is reflected. This is in accordance with the principle of alignment with existing international consensus regarding development aid.

The sector priorities are developed by means of specific strategies laid down in the Sector Strategy Papers (Spanish acronym DES) drawn up to facilitate their consistent and coordinated integration into the intervention plans of the different actors of Spanish Cooperation thus enhancing the coherence and complementarity of their actions.

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2. http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/56/34580968.pdf).

Figure 2. Spanish Cooperation Policy planning levels
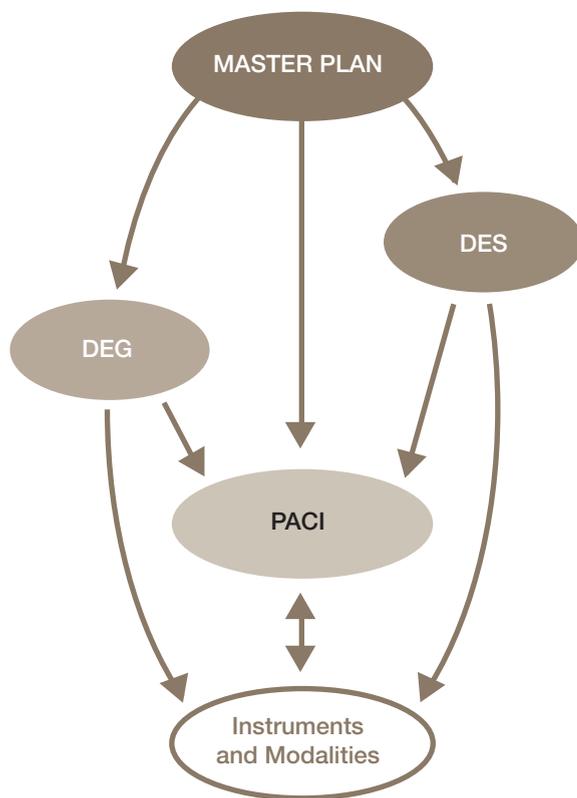
Source: DGPOLDE

The Geographical Strategy Papers (Spanish acronym DEP) are drawn up for the purpose of selecting Spanish Cooperation strategic priorities and coordinating interventions carried out in priority areas and countries defined in the LCID and the Master Plan.

The objectives, priorities and resources allocated for Cooperation Policy are established on a yearly basis in the Annual International Cooperation Plans (Spanish acronym PACI) which likewise define the budgetary framework of actions. The PACI have a theme-based structure such that each one adopts one of the major objectives of the Master Plan as a general aim around which a series of guidelines, goals and indicators are laid down.

1.3. Operational instruments

The strategic planning documents are implemented through the instruments conceived to organise and distribute aid. Following is a brief definition of these instruments which, together with the strategic planning documents already presented, are the focus of Spanish Cooperation evaluations[3]:

■ **The project**

A project is "a self-contained set of investments, activities, policies and/or official or not-official measures designed to achieve a specific development objective within a determined period of time in a defined geographical region and for a predefined group of beneficiaries, which continues to produce assets and/or render services after external support has been removed and whose effects remain once its execution has finalised". Spanish Cooperation project management methodology – MAEC, 2001:11).

■ **Technical cooperation for development**

Article 10 of the LCID defines this instrument as "any modality of assistance targeting the training of a recipient country's human resources, improving its level of instruction, training, qualification and technical and productive capacity in the institutional, administrative, economic, health-care, social, cultural, educational, scientific or technological fields.

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3. Several documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC) (1998, 2001, 2005) have been used as a reference in their definition.

■ **Microcredit fund**

This is defined in the MP 2005-2008 as an instrument for the provision of micro-financial services in developing countries with a view to combating poverty.

■ **The development assistance fund (fad)**

Credits awarded by the Development Assistance Fund (FAD) are defined in the MP 2005-2008 as an instrument through which Spain offers funding grants partially tied to the acquisition of goods and services produced by Spanish companies to Governments, institutions or companies in developing countries.

■ **Debt-related actions**

These mainly consist of actions focusing on the alleviation of debt which developing countries have with Spain. Debt operations should be undertaken in coordination with international financial institutions and go hand-in-hand with polices which get at the root causes of the over-indebtedness of recipient countries.

■ **Food aid**

Food aid is the transfer of resources to certain countries or sectors in the form of food which is either donated or sold with a minimum 25% subsidy or in the form of monetary donations or credits (with a repayment term of at least 3 years) "linked" to the purchase of food (Shaw and Clay, 1993:1).

■ **Humanitarian action**

Humanitarian action is defined as "a varied set of actions to aid disaster victims (caused by natural disasters or armed conflict) focused on alleviating suffering, ensuring subsistence, protecting fundamental rights and defending dignity and, on certain occasions, on counteracting the socioeconomic destructuring process of communities and preparing them to face natural disasters" (Pérez de Armiño, 2000).

■ **Education for development and social awareness**

Article 13 of the LCID defines education for development and social awareness-raising as an ongoing educational process promoting the understanding of the economic, political, social and cultural interrelations between North and South and likewise promotes values and positions related to solidarity and social justice seeking channels of action to achieve human and sustainable development.

■ **Budget support**

The MP 2005-2008 defines budget support as any form of financial support for the recipient country's public budget although, strictly speaking, it should support the management of the government through its national poverty reduction strategy or other development scheme.

■ **Sector-wide approaches**

In accordance with the MP 2005-2008, the Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAPs) is a process whereby to ensure that the financial resources which a government or external cooperation allocate to a sector respond to a single policy, action plan and spending plan given that they have been drawn up by the government of the recipient country which manages them.

1.4. Actors

A large number of public and private agents take part in Spanish Cooperation Policy and these need to coordinate their actions with those of other donor countries, international organisations and with the government and civil society of the partner countries. All of these play a fundamental role in evaluation processes as will be seen further on and must be identified from the outset of any evaluation.

In Spain,[4] the general course of action and basic guidelines of Cooperation Policy are proposed by the Government but must be approved by and are subject to the control of the Congress of Deputies which has a Commission for International Development Cooperation in place for that specific purpose and undertakes this duty by means of debate and the issuing of an opinion on the Master Plan and the PACI and through requests for appearances before Parliament or the formulation of parliamentary queries.

The General State Administration (Spanish acronym AGE) is responsible for managing external and international cooperation policy in accordance with these guidelines. It expends the bulk of Official Development Assistance (hereafter ODA) mostly through three Ministries: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade. Of these, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Spanish acronym MAEC), through the Secretary of State for International Cooperation (Spanish acronym SECI), is responsible for managing International Development Cooperation Policy and for coordinating the bodies of the AGE when undertaking actions in this area.

The SECI plans, executes and evaluates Cooperation Policy through the following bodies:

■ Directorate-General of Development Policy Planning and Evaluation (DGPOLDE)

Attached to the SECI, this body is responsible for ensuring the coherence of Spanish Cooperation's monitoring and evaluation system. In this connection, it is in charge of designing and strengthening a comprehensive evaluation system and is likewise responsible for fostering know-how and the culture of evaluation among the different actors. To this end, it must develop the necessary methodological tools, programme annual evaluations and coordinate and monitor the evaluations conducted at each level of the aid system in collaboration with the different actors. It must also guarantee dissemination of evaluation results and issue recommendations in order to improve upon the planning of future interventions and the processes developed by the different actors. In the discharge of these duties, the DGPOLDE directly promotes three groups of monitoring and evaluation interventions: the strategic evaluations included in the Annual Evaluation Plan, monitoring of the PACI and the evaluation of projects and agreements carried out by Development non-governmental organisations (DNGOs).

■ Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID)

Also under the auspices of the SECI, this is the main implementing body of Spanish Cooperation Policy. It is responsible for the design, implementation and management of development cooperation projects and programmes be this directly with the recipient countries (bilateral cooperation) or through international organisations and the EU (multilateral cooperation). In the sphere of bilateral cooperation, the Agency works either directly financing programmes and projects or indirectly by way of awarding subsidies to DNGOs which lend humanitarian and emergency aid. It also manages the Microcredit Fund and the Scholarship Programmes. It is represented abroad through a large structure currently comprised of 44 Technical Cooperation Offices (Spanish acronym OTC), 17 cultural centres and 6 training centres located in those countries where Spanish Cooperation is carrying out its main projects.

The Autonomous Communities and Local Governments comprise Spain's decentralised cooperation, one of the most emblematic elements of Spanish Cooperation. These are an important source of funding channelling their aid in support of programmes and projects carried out by other agents and, on some oc-

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4. A detailed explanation of the actors of Spanish Cooperation Policy can be found in the International Cooperation Act, Law 23/1998 and in the Master Plan of the Spanish Cooperation 2005-2008. This section was drafted based on the contents of these two documents.

casions, they carry out actions directly themselves in sectors where they have expertise.

In addition to the foregoing, the following actors also form part of Spanish Cooperation:

■ Development non-governmental organisations (DNGOs)

DNGOs are defined as "those entities governed by private law which are legally constituted and non-profit and whose expressed objectives, in accordance with their bylaws, are to engage in activities related to the principles and objectives of international development cooperation". In addition to working directly with the populations of developing countries and their social organisations, their proximity to the society allows them to do important work in mobilising and organising the civil society with a view to promoting solidarity among citizens and the latter's participation in Cooperation Policy[5].

■ Universities

As an institution endowed with highly qualified technical and human resources and as a forum for awareness-raising and education of the Spanish society when it comes to development, the university plays a key role in Cooperation Policy by implementing its own projects and employing different associative formulae for the purpose of, inter alia, providing technical support to other actors in fields relating to research, specialised consulting or the training of professionals.

■ Companies and Entrepreneurial organisations

Acknowledged as actors contributing to development cooperation in Article 31 of the LCID, Companies and Entrepreneurial organisations are well positioned to strengthen the private sector in developing countries and to bolster their economic and business fabric by generating employment and wealth with a view to promoting sustainable economic growth and a fair distribution of wealth. To that end, they engage in a broad set of actions ranging from human resources training and technological transfer to the creation and development of infrastructures and social services and the promotion of business associationism.

■ Trade unions

As defenders and promoters of Workers' Rights, a prerequisite for the achievement of economic, social and cultural rights of the population, trade unions can play an important role in democratic consolidation processes in developing countries. Their development cooperation efforts mostly consist of interventions in the field of social economy as an alternative to unemployment, in vocational training and in programmes intended to further enhance women's increased presence in the labour market. They are also well situated to raise the awareness of Spanish workers as to the development problems faced by countries in the south.

All of these actors are represented in the following Spanish Cooperation Consultative and Coordinating Bodies:

■ Development Cooperation Council

This is the AGE's advisory and participatory body as per the definition of international development cooperation policy. It includes representatives of civil society social and cooperation agents together with representatives of the AGE[6].

■ The Inter-territorial Commission for Development Cooperation

This is an advisory and coordination body for the purpose of reaching consensus and collaboration among

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5. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gives DNGOs a three-pronged function in achieving the MDGs: to take part in the design of strategies to combat poverty and build cooperation policies both in the countries of origin and countries of destination of aid; to lend humanitarian aid services and combat poverty as managers of ODA; and to promote compliance with commitments acquired in achieving the MDGs.

6. The Council is attached to the MAEC through the SECI and is regulated by Article 22 of the International Cooperation Law, No. 23/98 of 7th July, and Royal Decree 2217/2004 of 26 November on the powers, duties, makeup and organisation of the Development Cooperation Council.

the public administrations (AGE, Autonomous Communities, Local Governments) undertaking development cooperation interventions[7].

■ **The Interministerial Commission for International Cooperation**

The LCID establishes the Interministerial Commission for International Cooperation as the AGE's inter-departmental technical coordination body in the sphere of development cooperation. This coordination is vital in maximising the effectiveness of aid in a system such as Spain's where the managerial powers of the different cooperation instruments correspond to different ministerial departments.

In addition to the aforementioned actors, coordination of cooperation actions must also take agents from other countries into consideration and these include:

■ **International Organisations**

These channel multilateral and Spanish aid essential to meeting the global challenge of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. International organisations may be financial and non-financial institutions. Among the former we find institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), while the main non-financial institutions include the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the latter attached to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

■ **Actors from aid recipient countries**

Through the participation of actors from developing countries in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policy, the Spanish aid system seeks an active commitment with States, companies, organisations and the civil society of recipient countries with a view to progressively decreasing their dependence on aid and turning responsibility over to these actors when it comes to taking financial decisions and managing cooperation. This process calls for a concerted effort to build the institutional, social and human capacity of the recipient countries.

As will be seen further on, any of these actors may take the initiative to launch an evaluation process.

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7. It is regulated by Article 23 of the International Development Cooperation Act and by Royal Decree 22/2000 of 14 January.

2. Issues to be addressed prior to the evaluation cycle

2.1. What is entailed in the evaluation of Development Cooperation Policy?

As with all public actions, Development Cooperation Policy seeks to have an impact on the society by acting on the needs and problems detected with a view to altering that reality. To that end, a set of objectives are defined and instruments implemented to facilitate the achievement of the former. The evaluation analyses all of the stages of the policy from the intervention's conception to the manifestation of its impacts as shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3. Spanish Cooperation's comprehensive approach to evaluation
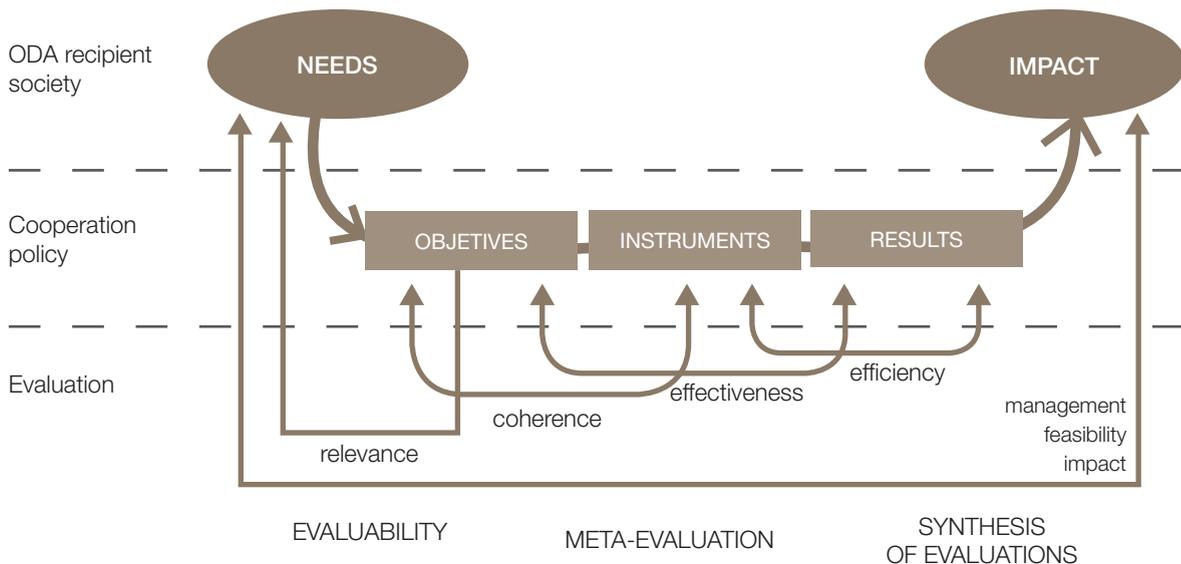
Source: Adapted from IDR (2000).

The Master Plan has taken the DAC's definition of evaluation as its point of reference given that it is the most widespread and commonly accepted in the ambit of development cooperation where evaluation is taken to mean " The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, Implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision– making process of both recipients and donors.". (DAC, 1995a, p. 178).

From this definition it can be deduced that the overarching objective of an evaluation is to increase the quality of the aid by assessing its design, application, results and the effects of the Cooperation Policy. Moreover, in Spanish Cooperation, evaluation is conceived as a tool whose purpose is to improve planning, strengthen the capacity of the entities involved in the management of the interventions and facilitate the participation of and agreement among all stakeholders.

This definition leads one to view evaluation as a process forming a vital part of the comprehensive cycle of public development policy (expressed in **Figure 4**) which, along with monitoring, provides feedback for the planning process allowing for the progressive and ongoing enhancement of the quality of ODA. Therefore, a fundamental task associated with evaluation is the effective use and application of its conclusions and recommendations thus making it a true learning instrument contributing to the improvement of the evaluated activity or of similar activities, "a vital aspect in the management and planning of development aid in ongoing actions and to furnish guidelines for the future". (MAEC, 2005: 115).

Figure 4. The planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle
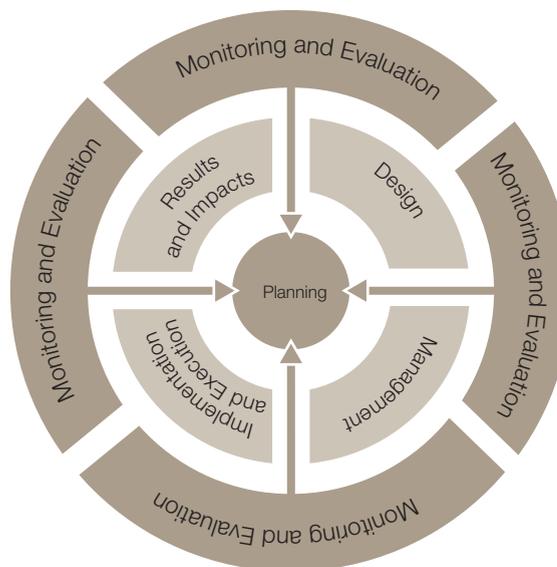
Source: Created in-house

Evaluation should not be considered as the last step to be implemented once the intervention has drawn to a close but rather forms an integral part of the process as from the conception and design stage. It is therefore necessary to set up a suitable monitoring system to provide information at regular intervals to stay abreast as to how actions are developing and what effects they are having.

2.2. What is the philosophy underpinning Spanish Cooperation evaluation?

If evaluation is to be effectively integrated into the Cooperation Policy planning cycle and generate the learning processes needed to enhance the quality of aid, four principles constituting what is known as the "Spanish Cooperation evaluation philosophy" must be observed: These are: participation, learning and incorporation of lessons learned, usefulness and transparency (**Figure 5**) which, when all is said and done, will determine the quality of the aid.

Figure 5. Spanish Cooperation's evaluation principles
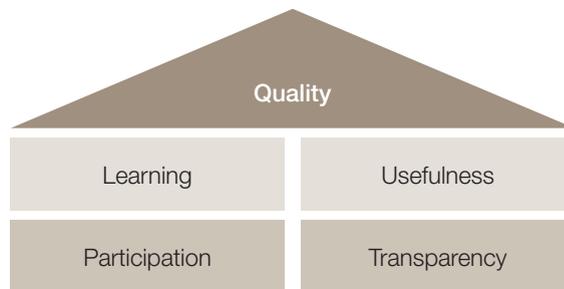
Source: Created in-house

■ Participation

The evaluation must provide channels for participation so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to assess the design, application and results of the Cooperation Policy (planners, managers, political representatives, organisations, evaluated counterparts, beneficiaries, etc.). This sets the stage for agreement and consensus in public decision-making processes regarding development cooperation.

■ Learning and incorporation of lessons learned

The purpose of the evaluation is not to penalise but rather to learn with a view to incorporating those elements featuring the largest or best achievements into management and planning thus closing the cycle of the effective transfer of best practices.

■ Usefulness

The process and results of the evaluation should be useful for managers, planners, decision-makers and the society at large. In order to ensure the usefulness of the evaluation, the Spanish Cooperation monitoring and evaluation system must have the necessary guidelines and controls in place to promote its quality and standardisation.

■ Transparency

The evaluation should ensure the transparency of the planning, management and implementation of Cooperation Policy and safeguard that of the evaluation process itself while favouring accountability and responding to the need for information of all the actors involved in the interventions. To that end, these stakeholders must have access to information concerning the procedures applied, the allocation of resources and the results of the interventions.

In the final analysis, and having regard to the definition of the established principles, the high-order objective of evaluation, i.e. enhancing aid **quality** by improving its degree of effectiveness, shall be deemed achieved insofar as this process is participatory, impartial, transparent, learning-centred and generates useful results to improve the management and planning of interventions.

In accordance with the evaluation principles put forward and considering the particularities of international cooperation as the focus of evaluation, the methodological concerns that these entail and the established regulatory framework, we hold that an evaluation approach characterised by the following factors should be applied:

- **A comprehensive results-oriented approach.** As opposed to the traditional concept of evaluation as the last stage in the planning process, we defend a comprehensive and integrating approach. The evaluation, regardless of when it is conducted, covers all of the stages of the intervention from its design to results and impacts, the latter being the ultimate references of the evaluation. And this process must not lose sight of the socio-political context of the intervention and its evaluation.

- **A pluralistic and participatory approach.** The evaluation of public development cooperation policy is seen as a dialogue which should spark the active participation of the stakeholders, both public and from the third sector in donor and recipient countries alike, defining what information is needed, when, how and what for.

- **An analytical, learning-oriented and conclusive approach**. Monitoring and evaluation should link together those aspects of international cooperation having to do with management, implementation and results, while shedding light on the causal relationships and interrelations among these, in order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of development aid.

- **A strategy based on the use of results.** The different levels of the planning of Spanish Development Cooperation are evaluated so that the results may be used. The evaluation should therefore produce useful information for all stakeholders, especially recipients, strengthening the learning process and the incorporation of lessons learned into the design and implementation of the policy.

Within this comprehensive approach the evaluation is conceived as a methodology of systematic analysis applied to determine the merit or worth of the formulation and design, implementation and management and of the results and impact of Spanish Cooperation interventions.

In this sense, evaluation becomes a tool focused on planning and management given that its aims include: enhancement of decision-making processes through feedback mechanisms; accountability to citizens for actions taken stressing responsibility as part of the democratisation process and participation in the taking of decisions; and contribution to the training, learning and capacity-building of the organisations and institutions participating in the evaluation process allowing for the incorporation of best practices and lessons learned into Spanish Cooperation Policy.

2.3. What is monitoring and how does it differ from evaluation?

Monitoring is the systematic compiling of information on the development and implementation of an intervention. A good monitoring system should enable one to:

■ Obtain information with the necessary quality, aggregation, organisation and structure so that the intervention may be evaluated at the beginning, mid point and end.

■ Identify the critical points in the implementation of interventions allowing for the detection of problems and alerting those responsible while facilitating decision-making as concerns the corrective measures which need to be taken.

■ Know who is doing what and how and define the procedures which have been institutionalised for the management, application and adaptation of the in-

terventions and for the coordination of actions at all levels in the case of strategic instruments.

Together with planning and evaluation, monitoring forms part of the comprehensive cycle of Cooperation Policy. It links the two given that it generates the information needed for feedback and learning processes conducted in the evaluation and which serve to improve the planning and management of the interventions. Hence, monitoring is at the service of management and evaluation. Any relevant information on the intervention which is not collected and standardised during the design and implementation stages will hinder the decision-making process and will prove costly, in terms of time and money, because it will have to be compiled ex-post.

As shown in **Figure 6**, monitoring should be useful for those actors of the cooperation system responsible for the management, planning and evaluation of actions. However, the generation of structured information means that other actors can likewise benefit (especially

Figure 6. The usefulness of monitoring
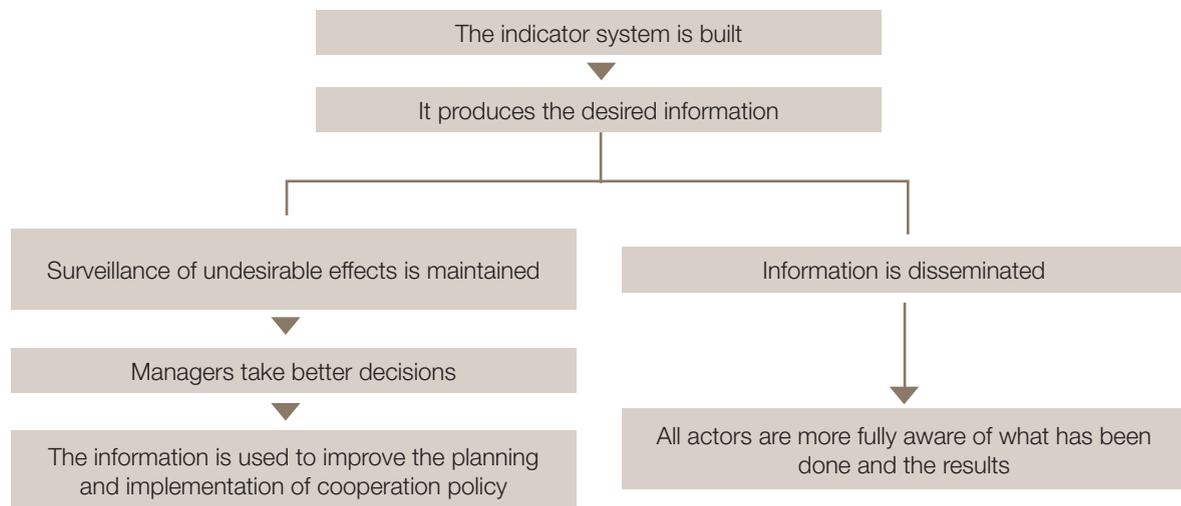
Source: Adapted from the European Commission, 1999, Vol. 2

beneficiaries, organisations and governments of recipient countries as well as the political representatives and the civil society of the donor countries) from knowing what is being done, how it is being done and with what results, thus paving the way for participation and legitimising and making Cooperation Policy transparent.

Figure 7 illustrates some of the fundamental differences between monitoring and evaluation. As opposed to evaluation (whose aim is to make a critical judgement on the validity of the intervention) monitoring simply informs individually on each one of its elements, showing the pace of implementation with regard to that envisaged or in comparison with accepted standards and making projections of the feasibility of the action in terms of time, quality and cost. Another difference has to do with the close relationship between monitoring and intervention management meaning that this task must necessarily be undertaken by personnel within the same organisation implementing the intervention as opposed to evaluation which may be conducted externally. In order that the monitoring system be integrated into

While there is no one single universal monitoring system model covering all types of interventions, there are a series of characteristics which all information systems must comply with. They must:

■ be reliable and effective so as to contribute to enhanced intervention implementation;

■ consider the information needs of all participants and cover all areas and levels of planning;

■ be consistently integrated into the organisational structures of the different bodies involved in the interventions;

■ be provided with the necessary resources (financial, material and human) to ensure quality and timeliness.

In conjunction with this Handbook, the DGPOLDE and the IDR have compiled a set of Monitoring Protocols outlining the procedure to be followed in compiling and standardising the information needed to improve management and facilitate the evaluation. There one will find a set of procedural guidelines supporting the strategy monitoring process (sector and geographical) and Spanish Cooperation operational instruments (projects) to ensure their integration and organisation in the overall monitoring and evaluation system.

Figure 7. The differences between monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation	Monitoring
■ Is conducted at a specific point in time.	■ Is ongoing.
■ Issues critical judgements regarding the validity, appropriateness and usefulness of the intervention.	■ Provides isolated information regarding the progress of the intervention's different elements.
■ Can be conducted internally or by external evaluators.	■ In principle, it must be done internally by intervention managers.
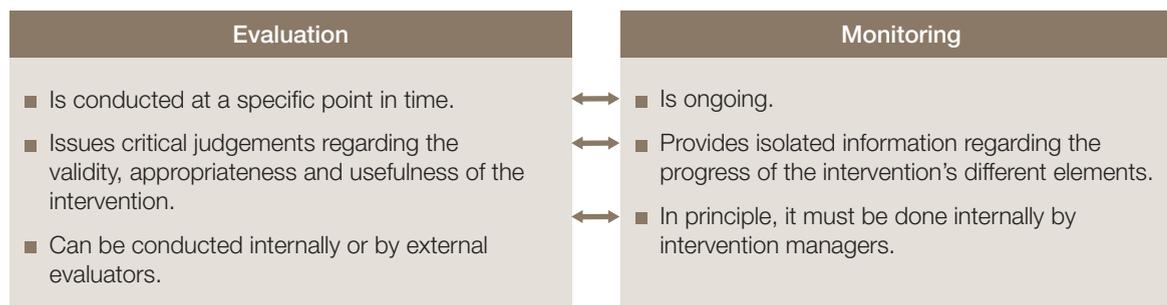
Source: Adapted from IDR (2000).

2.4. What are the differences between promoting, managing and conducting an evaluation?

During the evaluation process, three different roles which can be played by the different actors of development cooperation may be identified. Each actor's role may vary from one evaluation to the next or even during the course of the same evaluation process.

■ **Promoters of the evaluation**

Those responsible for the rationale underlying the evaluation or who must comply with an evaluation mandate. Promoters are typically responsible for funding although, as the reader will see further on, they are not necessarily the ones managing or financing the intervention.

■ **Evaluation managers**

These are the ones responsible for making sure that the evaluation process proceeds as planned by motivating and leading the design of the evaluation and coordinating and supervising the progress and implementation of the evaluation study and the quality of the process. They are likewise responsible for communicating results, conclusions and recommendations. They therefore must have the expertise and skills needed to participate in the design and management of evaluation activities.

■ **Evaluators**

Those entrusted with implementing the evaluation study. They may be internal (involved in the design, implementation or management of the intervention) or external, i.e. not involved in the intervention itself.

■ **Key informants**

People or organisations which hold relevant information for the evaluation and, just as the rest of the actors, have information needs regarding the process as potential users or stakeholders. The participation of these agents in the evaluation process is crucial in order to ensure the ownership of results and satisfaction of needs.

In practice…

■ Evaluation managers may also be the managers of the intervention under scrutiny. This is the case, for example, of the evaluations which DNGOs must conduct on projects subsidised by the AECID.

■ It is also possible for an entity to be the manager of the evaluation which it itself has promoted. This is the case with the evaluations that the DGPOLDE conducts annually within the framework of its Evaluations Plan.

2.5. Who promotes the evaluation of Spanish Cooperation and why?

The DGPOLDE is the unit entrusted with strengthening and coordinating the Spanish Cooperation monitoring and evaluation system. The duties related with the evaluation conducted by the DGPOLDE are set out in Figure 8.

Figure 8. DGPOLDE evaluation division functions

- Scheduling of the evaluation to be conducted (Evaluations Plan). These evaluation (called strategic evaluations) are selected based on their relevance and on planning priorities and may be theme-based, geographical or sector and include an assessment of instruments, programmes and projects.

- Coordination and monitoring of the evaluations in collaboration with the actors of the interventions under scrutiny.

- Issuing of recommendations to those responsible with a view to improving interventions.

- Dissemination and sharing of evaluation results, publication of evaluation reports and organisation of seminars for the sharing of lessons learned.

- Development of methodological tools for the evaluation of Spanish Cooperation.

- Participation in the OECD's DAC evaluation network and other international networks.

- Coordination and exchange of international cooperation evaluation information with the different bodies of Spanish Cooperation, especially the Autonomous Communities and Local Governments.

- Strengthening of the Spanish Cooperation evaluation system and promotion of awareness and of the culture of evaluation among all actors of Spanish Cooperation through courses, seminars, workshops and other dissemination and training mechanisms.

- Safeguard the quality and coherence of the intervention monitoring and evaluation system in the area of development cooperation.

Source:. Article 16(1) of Royal Decree 755/2005 of 24 June and www.maec.es

The rest of the actors of development cooperation are likewise promoters of evaluations. **Figure 9** shows some examples:

Figure 9. Evaluation promoters in the Spanish Cooperation system

AECID	In accordance with the Master Plan, the AECID must include an evaluation plan in the programming of its interventions: projects and sector and regional programmes.
Other Ministries	These may conduct and manage their own evaluation processes of the instruments they manage.
Autonomous Communities and Local Governments	Regional laws, regulatory orders and specific ordinances pertaining to their Cooperation Policy typically provide for compulsory evaluations and the submission of periodic monitoring and evaluation reports.
DNGOs	These are typically obliged to submit monitoring and evaluation reports to the governmental administration in question on actions which have been granted public funding.
Counterparts from partner countries and beneficiaries	While not common practice, the agreements on ownership, alignment and mutual accountability which have been adopted at international fora establish the right of beneficiaries and organisations from the South to demand evaluations focusing on improving the quality of aid and its effective impact on poverty using Joint Committees or other mechanisms for that purpose.
Other international donors	Joint evaluations are becoming increasingly popular owing to their advantages in terms of procedural harmonisation, evaluation legitimacy and cost reduction.

Source: MAEC, 2005.

The initiative may originate from other actors not listed in **Figure 9**, such as the Cooperation Council or Parliament who would forward their proposals directly to the SECI. In other words, as has already been mentioned, the initiative to conduct an evaluation may come from any of the cooperation system actors. Now, with due consideration for each group's differing needs for information, it is possible that evaluations of operational instruments arise, for example, from the AECID and from the DNGOs while evaluations of a sector, geographical or thematic nature or of programmes are initiated at the DGPOLDE or from the responsible parties in the country.

2.6. Can an evaluation be conducted? Evaluation or assessment of evaluability

Before taking the decision to evaluate a particular intervention, it is advisable to conduct or commission an evaluation of evaluability with a view to determining the degree to which it is evaluable and whether the conditions are appropriate to conduct the evaluation. This assessment must be made prior to embarking upon any evaluation given that it affects the latter's scope, quality and usefulness.

However, an evaluability assessment must go further than simply establishing the suitability on non-suitability of evaluating the intervention. If it is determined that the intervention is not evaluable, the recommendations made in the evaluability analysis should help prepare the intervention to be evaluated.

Regardless of the moment at which the evaluation is to be conducted, its scope and results are limited by the following factors:

■ **Quality of planning**

During the evaluation process, the "top down" reasoning logic which guides planning is inverted becoming a "bottom up" approach which starts with specific actions and proceeds to the specific and general objectives pursued. Therefore, the more flawed the planning (objectives inadequately defined, poorly established causal relationships between actions and objectives, etc.), the more difficulties will be encountered in conducting the evaluation.

■ **Existence and availability of information**

A lack of sufficient, high-quality information and, worse yet, a lack of systematised, standardised and reliable intervention data, is oftentimes the main obstacle faced by the evaluation team. It must be assumed that the lack of an optimal monitoring system translates into a more costly evaluation in terms of time and money and may even make it impossible to carry out. It is therefore vital to analyse the characteristics and operation of the monitoring system which has been designed to gather information while the interventions are being implemented.

■ **Involvement of the actors and the socio-political context**

The involvement of politicians, managers and technicians in the evaluation process and the participation of the counterparts and beneficiaries is indispensable in the evaluation of an intervention. It is important to know whether a favourable climate of cooperation and understanding exists between evaluators and those being evaluated facilitating the ensuing development of the evaluation and ensuring its usefulness; the effective involvement of counterparts is likewise important and is undoubtedly conditioned by the socio-political context in which the intervention and its evaluation are undertaken.

The assessment of these elements reveals the degree to which a cooperation strategy or instrument is evaluable and will serve as the basis to prepare the intervention for evaluation because it offers inputs on how to correct those elements which can compromise the scope of the intended evaluation. **The steps which should be followed in conducting an evaluability analysis are explained in the section of the Handbook which presents the evaluation cycle.**

2.7. What types of evaluations can be managed and conducted?

En el ámbito de la Different types of evaluations can be conducted in the sphere of Spanish Cooperation depending on the variable chosen for their classification. The following are some of the most common: priority content of the evaluation, moment at which it is conducted; the agent conducting it, the actor promoting it; and based on the theme and object to be evaluated. The following have been compiled as a guide in **Figure 10**[8].

TYPES OF EVALUATION	
Content	**Moment in time**
☐ Design	☐ Ex-ante
☐ Process	☐ Mid-term
☐ Results	☐ Final and Ex-post
☐ Impact	☐ Evaluability
☐ Meta-evaluation	

Agent				
Manager-Evaluator	☐ Internal	**Promoter**	☐ Individual
	☐ External		☐ Joint
	☐ Mixed		

Theme and objective				
Strategies	☐ Geographical	**Operational instruments**	☐ Projects
	☐ Sector		☐ Agreements
	☐ Cross-cutting priorities		☐ FAD credits
	☐ Master Plan		☐ Microcredits
			☐ Humanitarian aid
			☐ Other...

Source: Created in-house

8. Another typology of evaluation traditionally considered within the scope of evaluations is that which draws a distinction between summative and formative evaluations looking to the end purpose of the evaluation. From this standpoint, evaluations which focus on judging the intervention for the purpose of deciding whether to continue or enlarge it are called summative (Scriven in IDR, 2000: 14) while those which focus mainly on learning with a view to improving the intervention are called formative (Scriven in IDR, 2000: 15). This second option is the basis of the approach taken to Spanish Cooperation evaluation.

A. Content-based evaluations

The following types of evaluations may be managed based on the content of the evaluations or the intervention stages to be analysed:

■ Design evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to analyse the rationality and coherence of the intervention, substantiate the quality and authenticity of the diagnosis conducted, verify the existence of clearly defined objectives, analyse whether the latter coincide with the problems detected and examine the logic of the intervention model designed. The coherence analysis can be conducted internally or relative to other policies and actions having an impact in the same territories and on the same groups and sectors and likewise to the intervention's major planning scheme.

■ Evaluation of process or management

The goal in this case is to assess the way in which ODA is managed and applied in its different formats and levels of planning. This consists of an analysis of the capacity of the intervention planning and management centres by looking at the intervention's design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and by examining the involvement and coordination of the management centres, donors and recipients in these tasks defining the role of each, the suitability of the organisation and the sufficiency of resources.

■ Evaluation of results

Here the main objective is to analyse and assess the degree to which the most immediate and direct objectives established may be achieved, are being achieved or have been achieved (effectiveness) and to examine the cost of their achievement in terms of time and human, material and monetary resources (efficiency).

■ Impact evaluation

The aim is to assess the most general and least immediate effects of the intervention on the needs of its beneficiaries. This is a complex analysis which delves into the cause and effect relationship between the intervention and the actual changes (net effect), isolating these from the effects produced by interventions other than the one under scrutiny and from the evolution of the context itself.

As opposed to the traditional concept of evaluation as the last stage in the planning process focusing mainly on the assessment of results, **the comprehensive evaluation approach** adopted by Spanish Cooperation considers evaluation from the very beginning of the conception and design of actions with the specific characteristic of not being limited to simply assessing effects once actions have concluded.

From this perspective, the design, process, results and impact can all be evaluated at any time: prior to the implementation of the intervention, during implementation or once actions have concluded.

B. Evaluations based on the moment in which they are conducted

Depending on when evaluations are conducted during the life cycle of the evaluation, a distinction may be drawn between ex-ante, mid-term and ex-post evaluation.

■ Ex ante evaluation

The ex-ante evaluation is conducted prior to the implementation of the intervention, the main objective being to analyse its correspondence to the needs for which it was created and its likelihood of success. It also looks at the internal coherence of the planning scheme, the functionality of the management and implementation mechanisms proposed, the suitability of the monitor-

ing system designed to gather information and the programme's foreseeable results and impact. In short, a prospective evaluation.

■ **Mid-term evaluation**

Evaluation conducted at the "half-way point" in the implementation of the intervention. It is a critical assessment of the information gathered on the performance of the actions to determine the relevance of the objectives proposed, the quality of the management and monitoring system being applied, the way in which the proposed objectives are being achieved and, in general, the validity of the intervention, explaining any divergence from what was originally expected and forecasting the final results of the intervention.

The mid-term evaluation is not to be confused with monitoring. As mentioned earlier, the difference between the two is that monitoring provides isolated information on the different elements of the intervention (coherence with other interventions, execution and implementation of actions, level of participation of the target population and evolution of the socioeconomic context, to name a few), while evaluation considers all of the variables in a unified manner in order to issue a critical judgement on its merits and achievements.

■ **Ex-post evaluation**

Conducted once the intervention has concluded. Its aim is to deliver a judgement on the success or failure of the intervention, the appropriateness of the strategy designed, its degree of flexibility and ability to adapt to an ever-changing reality, its effectiveness and efficiency, adaptation of the management and monitoring mechanisms applied and the results and impact achieved. Owing to the fact that a period of time must elapse after the conclusion of the intervention to allow the most indirect impacts and effects to emerge, a distinction is typically drawn between the **final evaluation** (conducted immediately upon conclusion of the intervention) and the **ex-post evaluation** (conducted at a later date).

These are retrospective evaluations.

The fact is that ex-ante, mid-term and ex-post evaluations are not different types of evaluations but are rather a way of classifying them based on when they are conducted. However, it is not uncommon to associate the point in time when the evaluation is conducted with the stage of the intervention and erroneously conclude that ex-ante evaluations only assess the design of the intervention, that mid-term evaluations exclusively study the process and the results being achieved and that ex-post evaluations focus on results and final impacts.

It is true that ex-ante evaluations typically focus attention on assessing the appropriateness of the diagnosis and the strategy's internal and external coherence. But aspects related with the management or expected results of the intervention may also be assessed at this point in time even though it has not yet begun.

Following this same logic an mid-term evaluation, in addition to the management process, may look at the quality of the intervention's design, review expected results and objectives (once having made a critical assessment of what has been accomplished up to that point in time) and analyse the evolution of the context. Consequently, at the conclusion of the programmed activities, an ex-post evaluation can be done where, together with the results obtained, the design and implementation of the intervention is analysed.

Therefore, the criteria whereby evaluations are classified based on the moment at which they are conducted and their content are not mutually exclusive. *Ex-ante, mid-term* and ex-post evaluations can cover all the types of evaluation envisaged in the content-based classification (design, process, results and impact). Hence, the perspective whereby the evaluation is classified according to its content broadens the interpretation of the evaluation as a phase independent of the intervention and defines it as a "philosophy" or "culture" which should pervade each and every one of stages of the life-cycle.

In summary, evaluation design and planning should be developed from the very beginning of the interven-

tion so that it may contribute to enhancing learning processes and institutional capacity-building. In other words, one should already be thinking about evaluation when planning (just as one should be thinking about planning when evaluating). Hence, planning and evaluation are interrelated processes which must be undertaken simultaneously.

C. Evaluations based on the evaluator.

Depending on the relationship between the intervention's managing entities and the evaluators, a distinction may be drawn between internal or self-evaluations, external evaluations and mixed evaluations (assisted internal).

■ Internal or self-evaluations

These are evaluations conducted by personnel attached to the managing organisation of the intervention being evaluated, regardless of whether or not such personnel comprise a proper evaluation unit, without engaging external specialists.

■ External evaluations

Conducted by personnel not affiliated with the managing entity or the party responsible for the intervention; a model which is compulsory for many regulatory evaluations [9].

■ Mixed (assisted internal evaluations)

Conducted by personnel who are involved in the intervention along with external technical assistance to guide the process or carry out the evaluation work in the field.

An external evaluation contributes to greater independence and credibility owing to the presumed objectivity of the external team in contrast to an internal evaluation where the involvement of the evaluators in the planning and/or management of the intervention could be interpreted as a bias towards a more favourable evaluation.

However, this line between objectivity and subjectivity and independence and credibility has become blurred over the last several years, empirical evidence showing the benefits of an evaluation conducted by technical personnel of the organisation who are familiar with the main cultural and organisational elements and who have a clear idea of the purpose of the evaluation and its context thus ensuring a more seamless adaptation of the evaluation process to the reality being evaluated. Furthermore, when the evaluation unit is independent of the planning and management of the intervention, credibility rises.

The foregoing observations are corroborated by international trends in development cooperation. As a result, the Master Plan embraces a system based on mixed evaluations while "always respecting the principles of impartiality and independence" (MAEC 2005:116) undoubtedly contributing to the strengthening of the Spanish Cooperation monitoring and evaluation system and the institutionalisation and standardisation of evaluation culture in the planning and administration of ODA.

Another of the advantages to consider when deciding whether to opt for an internal or mixed evaluation is the full-time status of the team and the ownership of the learning throughout the process (experience which is reinvested in the organisation) allowing for a broader array of possibilities in the use of evaluation results thus fostering the introduction of improvements in the interventions.

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9. An external evaluation may be managed by the entity responsible for the intervention or by the organisation's evaluation unit. However, as laid down in Sweden's Cooperation Agency evaluation handbook, an independent external evaluation in the strict sense is one where the drafting of the evaluation questionnaire and the engagement of the evaluation team is undertaken by technicians unaffiliated with the intervention in order to reduce any bias in favour of any particular group of stakeholders (SIDA 2004:18).

D. Evaluations based on promoting entities

By reason of the number of entities promoting evaluations, a distinction is drawn between:

■ **Individual evaluations**

Those promoted by a single entity.

■ **Joint evaluations**

Those promoted by a group of entities co-participating during all or part of the evaluation cycle.

The trend set at international development aid fora points towards collaboration and the joining of forces between donors and towards alignment with the development processes of the recipient countries. It is in this context, where development goals can only be achieved through partnership, that joint evaluations come into play.

Joint evaluations are those conducted within the framework of a partnership, i.e. those conducted by more than one cooperation organisation, donor or recipient. The design of the evaluation, coordination of the work and the communication and incorporation of recommendations is done on a shared basis[10].

The design and implementation of a joint evaluation may be more complex, slow and costly than an individual one. First of all because it may be hard to find another donor interested in the evaluation with which to form a partnership. Secondly, the members of the partnership may have different procedures and political objectives meaning that aspects relating to the drafting of the questionnaire and the terms of reference, selec-

tion of an evaluation team acceptable to all members of the partnership, agreements on cost and responsibility sharing, review of the evaluation report, etc. increase the amount of time needed and the complexity of the negotiation process between the parties and the organisation of the evaluation work, especially when there are many participants. In these cases, a single institution or a small number of partners are made responsible for managing the evaluation.

However, as pointed out by the DAC Evaluation Network, benefits may also be greater in terms of lessons learned, Cooperation Policy improvements and ownership of results because joint evaluations:

■ Offer an opportunity for harmonisation and alignment of evaluation processes, encouraging the learning of evaluation models and best practices from other actors.

■ Reduce the number of evaluations conducted translating into lower transaction costs (cost-sharing) and requests for information in the ODA recipient countries (avoiding duplication of efforts).

■ Foster participation, mutual capacity-building and understanding among the members of the partnership.

■ Increase the acceptance and legitimacy of the results and recommendations.

The following indications may help in deciding on the appropriateness and relevance of launching a joint evaluation process:

■ When there is a shared interest in the objective of the evaluation, for example the evaluation of an intervention co-funded by more than one donor, or in the case of a theme-based evaluation.

■ When there is a will to harmonise and align the work programme with other donors or with the partner country[11].

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10. The situation could arise where an entity promotes an evaluation individually but receives specific support from another or others during one of its stages. This could be called a collaborative evaluation. We must likewise be careful not to confuse joint evaluations, managed by more than one donor or by donors and institutions of the recipient county, with participatory evaluations where the involvement of all actors in the evaluation process is fostered. In fact, from a methodological perspective, a joint evaluation is not necessarily participatory.

11. This was the sentiment expressed by the representatives of decentralised cooperation who attended the seminar on cooperation project evaluation organised by the Inter-territorial Commission held in Cáceres (16/06/06).

■ When there are similar or complementary actions under way in the same territory or targeting the same group or sector.

■ When the objective of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of global development objectives (sector or thematic in a given country) and not to simply focus on the objectives of a single intervention.

■ When a sufficient and appropriate critical mass of small interventions must be generated to make the evaluation feasible.

Figure 11 presents some of the elements to consider when deciding whether to opt for an individual or joint evaluation.

Figure 11. Individual evaluations v. joint evaluations[12]

Individual evaluation	Joint evaluation
> Intervention funded by a single entity	> Intervention funded by more than one entity
> The aim of the evaluation is to assess the objectives of a specific intervention	> The aim of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of global development objectives (sector or thematic in a specific country)
> Evaluation results are needed quickly	> More time is available to conduct the evaluation
> There are no other organisations interested in the evaluation	> There are other organisations which have shared interests in the evaluation
> There are no other organisations sharing the same development philosophy, organisational culture or evaluation procedures	> There are other organisations with the same development philosophy, organisational culture and evaluation procedures
> There are no other donor organisations in the geographical vicinity	> There are other donor organisations in the geographical vicinity

Source: DAC, 2000: 7-8 and http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork

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12. The DAC has put together a handbook on how to manage this type of evaluation which is now being translated by the SECI for distribution to Spanish Cooperation agents.

E. Theme and object-based evaluations

Based on the level of planning under evaluation, a distinction is drawn between:

■ **Strategies**

> The objective here is a policy, plan or general action strategy, i.e. a set of guidelines and principles to guide the undertaking of a set of more operational-type interventions in a particular territory, sector or during a specific period of time[13].

> Attention is focused on fields related to the strategic coherence of the intervention in the aid system: its relevance, harmonisation with other donors, alignment with the development strategies of the recipient countries, ownership of development processes and contribution to the achievement of the MDGs.

> These can be conducted using the results of more operational interventions integrated into the strategy as inputs.

> Lessons learned are more general and may be extrapolated to other contexts and transferred to general policies.

■ **Operational instruments**

> These focus on more operational-type interventions through which Spanish ODA is channelled.

> They look into aspects related to the execution of the intervention itself (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, etc.) but also analyse external coherence with broader planning frameworks.

> Lessons learned are more concrete and may serve as feedback for management of the intervention itself or become best practices transferable to other interventions or to the planning of future ones.

F. Evaluation of evaluations: meta-evaluation

In addition to the types of evaluation mentioned in the foregoing, we must likewise consider that the evaluation itself may be evaluated through what is known as meta-evaluation. Meta-evaluations focus on analysing the technical and methodological quality of the evaluation process offering constructive criticism on the evaluation strategies employed, their suitability with regard to the object evaluated and the purposes and interests served. Hence, meta-evaluations fulfil two functions: the first is normative (describe what the evaluation should be) and the other is positive (describe the evaluations as they are). The main elements which should be considered in assessing the quality of the evaluation are presented in greater detail in the section of this Handbook focusing on the evaluation cycle (Phase II).

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13. According to the current structure of Spanish Cooperation Policy, the first group includes geographical strategies, the second sector strategies and the third the PACI or POG.

PART II

The evaluation cycle:
The road to be covered

PART II
The evaluation cycle

PART II
The evaluation cycle: The road to be covered

As mentioned in the foregoing, Spanish Cooperation conceives evaluation as one more component of the comprehensive planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle of its Cooperation Policy. This means that the information gathered during the monitoring of actions at the implementation stage serves as the basis for evaluation whose results, in turn, should be used to guide the planning of new interventions.

As shown in **Figure 12**, evaluation is a process which begins at the same time that the rationale behind the evaluation of development intervention arises and concludes with the dissemination of its results among the stakeholders and the incorporation of recommendations and lessons learned. Work results at each of the phases are compiled in the form of documents which guide the development of the evaluation process and its final application (ToR, Work Plan, Evaluation Report, Communication Plan and Improvement Plan).

This part of the Handbook presents the different phases of this process and, within each of these, the stages which need to be covered to complete the management road of a Spanish Cooperation evaluation. At this point, a direct narrative style is used to underscore the practical nature of the Handbook and its aim to serve as a guide throughout the evaluation management process.

When managing an evaluation you must bear in mind that, while this general scheme fits most evaluations of Spanish Cooperation interventions, your specific case may very well have certain particularities calling for a specific evaluation process design which is tailored to your needs, to the context in which the work is carried out and to the particular intervention under scrutiny. Therefore, while the sequence presented follows a logical time line, it must be considered flexible. In other words:

Figure 12. Phases and stages of the evaluation road

"Design of the evaluation"
⬇
"Implementation of the evaluation study"
⬇
"Communication of evaluation results and incorporation of lessons learned"

Elements to consider when implementing the evaluation process
EVALUATION PLAN - ToR

Conditioning factors during evaluation implementation
WORK PLAN and EVALUATION REPORT

Instructions for the dissemination of evaluation results
COMMUNICATION PLAN

Instructions for the incorporation of lessons learned
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Source: DGPOLDE

■ Some stages can be conducted simultaneously.

■ You may have to go back and redefine some elements.

■ The sequence may differ depending upon the position held by the managing entity of the evaluation within the cooperation system and the intervention to be evaluated.

The next three sections of this Part focus on the activities which should be undertaken at each of the stages comprising the three phases of evaluation management. Different colours have been used to facilitate their identification. Practical tools have also been included and instructions are provided for the development of the outputs which should be generated at each phase.

Figure 13. Road of the evaluation
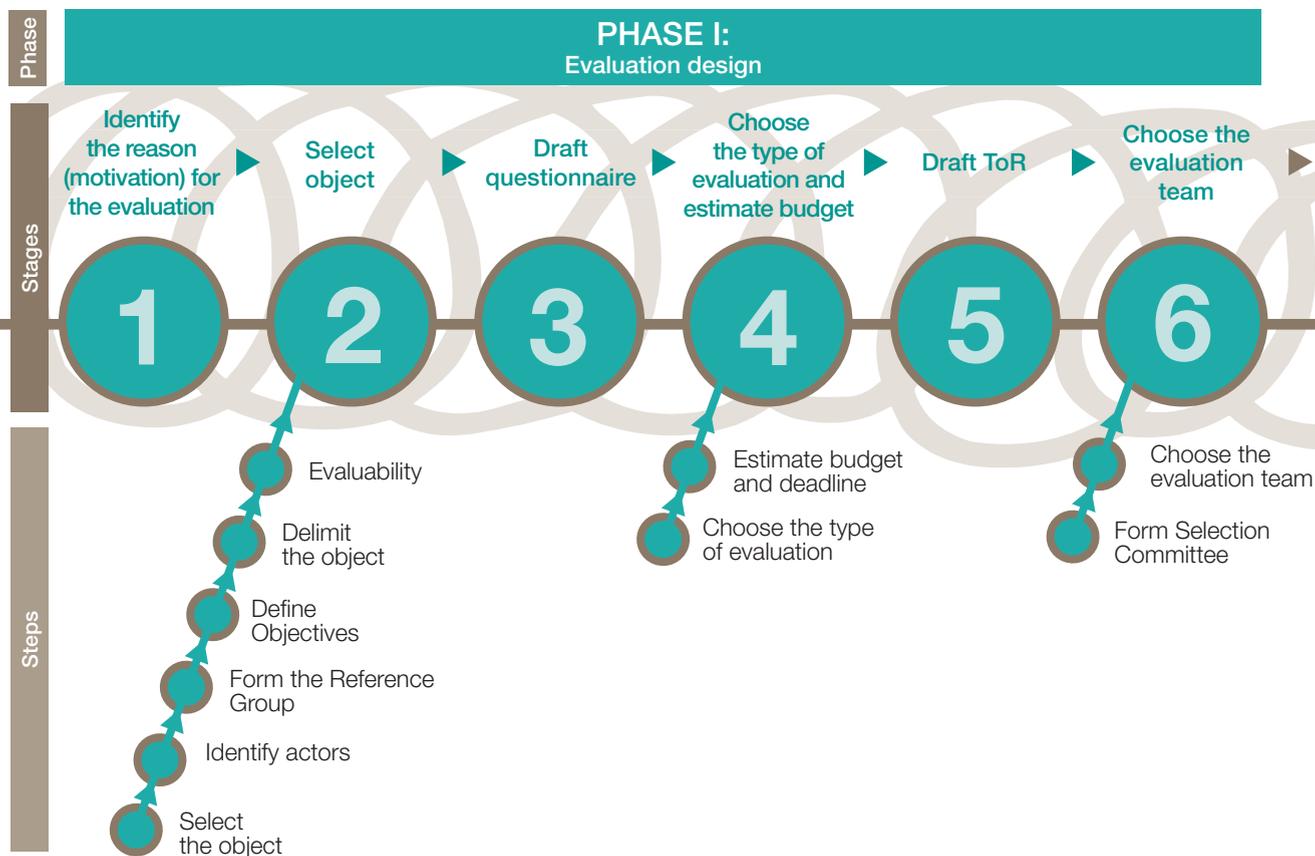
We begin with a description of phase 1 where activities are proposed for the **preparation** and **design** of the evaluation. Next we look at the main elements which should be kept in mind throughout the **evaluation study itself**, phase 2 of the evaluation road. And we conclude with a presentation of the most relevant variables in the **communication of evaluation results** and the subsequent **incorporation of recommendations and lessons learned** to improve the intervention evaluated, the third and last phase.

At the conclusion of each stage, a checklist is offered to help determine whether the objectives of the proposed activities have indeed been achieved.

Figure 13 presents an overview of the entire road with a brief reference to the most relevant activities of each of the stages.

PHASE II:	PHASE III:
Implementation of the evaluation study	Communication of results and incorporation of lessons learned

Establish the final Work Plan

Manage the implementation of the Work Plan

Communicate the results of the evaluation

Incorporate lessons learned from the experience

7

8

9

10

Final report

Fieldwork

Office study

Analyse media and communication channels

Detect usefulness for stakeholders

It is important to bear in mind that the development intervention evaluation proposal set out in this Handbook is a structured sequential process which can be applied with a certain degree of flexibility depending on the characteristics of the object of the evaluation or the needs of the stakeholders. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the evaluation process is integrated into the broader cycle of Spanish Cooperation Policy meaning that the usefulness of the lessons learned from the evaluation depends on the latter meeting the requirements (in terms of time and format) of the actors taking part in it. Therefore, in addition to adapting the results of the evaluation to the expectations of these actors, you must make sure that the process progresses according to a time line which meets their needs.

Figure 14 illustrates an example which could serve as a model in the design of an evaluation time line.

Figure 14. Example of a time line designed for a large-scale evaluation

		YEAR 1												YEAR 2									
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
1	Rationale underlying the evaluation	■																					
2	Object, RG and objectives of the evaluation	■	■	■																			
3	Drafting of questionnaire			■																			
4	Selection of the type of evaluation			■																			
5	Drafting of the ToR			■	■																		
6	Selection of the evaluation team				■	■	■																
7	Final Work Plan						■																
8	Implementation of the Work Plan							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
9	Communication of results															■	■	■					
10	Incorporation of lessons learned																				■	■	■

Source: Adapted from DFID (2005).

PART II

Phase 1:
Designing the Evaluation

Phase I: Designing the Evaluation

The evaluation must be carefully planned. Before implementation, we must identify the rationale underlying the decision to evaluate, delimit the object of the evaluation, analyse the different interests involved and create an organisational support structure in order to monitor the evaluation process. Once these points have been clarified, they must be recorded in the form of a document, i.e. the Terms of Reference (ToR) or technical specifications document which will serve as a point of reference in choosing the team which will actually conduct the evaluation study.

In this section you will find a detailed list of all of these steps along with explanations regarding the most relevant aspects which need to be considered in order to design a participatory evaluation with methodological rigour, a well-defined system and guarantee of quality. You will find answers to questions such as the ones posed in **Figure 15**.

Figure 15. What I need to know before conducting the evaluation study

Why do we evaluate?

What is to be evaluated?

What do we want to know about the intervention?

What techniques are to be implemented?

When is the evaluation conducted?

Who participates in the evaluation?

Who is the evaluation addressed to?

How do we evaluate?

"If you don't know what you're looking for you'll never understand what you find"

What resources do we have at our disposal?

What techniques are to be implemented?

Who is going to conduct the evaluation?

What aspects are to be evaluated?

Source: Created in-house

Phase 1 is broken down into seven stages each of which corresponds to the steps which should be followed in the design of your evaluation. To help you approach each one, a key question is posed which should be at the forefront at all times. Then, some basic concepts are defined and practical tools or advice proposed which can help in seeking answers to these questions.

(1) — (2) — (3) — (4) — (5) — (6) — (7) — (8) — (9) — (10)

Stage 1. The rationale behind the evaluation: why do we evaluate?

The evaluation design should begin by identifying who is behind the evaluation and why. In other words, we need to identify who defines the purpose of the evaluation because this will have a bearing on the questions which the evaluation process must answer.

Figure 16 illustrates some of the factors underlying the need for Spanish Cooperation actors to implement an evaluation. Many of these may be shared by several actors but each one must circumscribe these according to their responsibility and level of planning. These motivating factors or rationales define the general purpose of the evaluation and normally refer to strategic issues related to the intervention under scrutiny and to the latter's suitability as an international cooperation action, either with the aim of promoting learning or for the purpose of accountability.

The initiative to evaluate may arise from your own institution or from other groups of actors linked to the intervention, each with their own motivating factors. If your organisation has been assigned to manage the evaluation process or has offered to do it voluntarily, you should reflect on the key aspects underlying the decision to evaluate.

When the initiative to evaluate is rooted in a regulatory mandate, the rationale is typically specified in the regulation itself. **Figure 17** presents a regulatory framework outline designed to regulate compulsory evaluations for the different levels of planning and intervention of Spanish Cooperation. The main actors promoting this type of evaluation are from the DGPOLDE as the unit responsible for ensuring and coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of Spanish Cooperation, and the public organisations and institutions which fund or co-fund coop-

Figure 16. General purpose of the evaluation

☑ Support the decision-making process

☑ Increase the Quality of Aid

☑ Facilitate the transfer of best practices

☑ Enhance the lessons learned

☑ Improve management

☑ Foster participation

☑ Foster alignment

☑ Develop capacities

☑ Promote coordination and harmonisation

☑ Legitimate the intervention

☑ Increase transparency

☑ Guide planning

☑ Correct deviations

Source: Created in-house

eration activities (a list of these was presented in Part I of this Handbook).

We would note that even in the case of compulsory evaluations, in addition to complying with regulatory requirements, the evaluation should satisfy the need for information of other groups of actors and involve them in a joint assessment process of the intervention taking advantage of the synergies created upon commencing the evaluation process. To this end, we recommend carrying out actions to foster the participation of key actors because this is the time to define the purpose of the evaluation. However, participation may also be opened at a later stage during which the objectives of the evaluation are reviewed and the questionnaire is drafted (proposed as Stage 2 in this Handbook)[14].

In the final analysis, purpose boils down to why the evaluation is being conducted, what the rationale behind it is and how it will be used (UNEG, 2005:11) and is closely related to its **uses** and **expected usefulness** by the actors of the intervention who are the potential users of the results obtained. Hence, once the rationale behind the evaluation has been identified, its general purpose needs to be defined, i.e. what you want to learn and expectations in terms of conclusions and recommendations.

Figure 17. Regulatory framework governing Spanish Cooperation evaluations

Entity	DGPOLDE	AECID / OTC	Other Ministries (AGE)
Level of planning	Regulatory framework		
☐ Master Plan ☐ Sector strategies ☐ Geographical strategies ☐ Operational plans ☐ Annual plans (PACI) ☐ Bilateral projects ☐ Conventions and multilateral funds	☐ International Cooperation Law, No. 23/98 of 7th July ☐ Royal Decree 755/2005 of 24 June (Article 16.1)		

Entity	Aut. Communities	Local Governments	DNGOs
Level of planning	Regulatory framework		
☐ DNGO projects	☐ General Grants Act, Law 38/2003 of 17 November and RD 887/2006 of 21 July.		
☐ DNGO agreements	☐ Order AEC/1303/2005 of 27 April (grants to DNGOs) ☐ Order AEC/1304/2005 of 27 April (grants for open and permanent calls for proposals)		
☐ Interventions and projects	☐ Municipal ordinances for the awarding of grants to DNGOs ☐ Regional Laws and Orders		

Sources: Created in-house (DGPOLDE / IDR).

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14. Where the Reference Group is presented, the participatory platform par excellence.

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1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

In practice...

By way of example, the following general purpose was set out by the DGPOLDE in the Technical Specifications for the Evaluation of the Microcredit Fund (Spanish acronym FCM):

- To gain insight into the adaptation of the instrument to the objective and priority of Spanish International Cooperation Policy, i.e. combating poverty. The aim is to discover whether the FCM is suitably designed and implemented to fulfil the objective of Spanish Cooperation in the area of microcredits as part of an action designed to promote the development of the productive fabric and protect vulnerable groups and within the framework of the cross-cutting priorities laid down in the Master Plan 2005-2008 with a special focus on gender equality.

- To gain insight into the adaptation of the instrument to the needs and conditions of the Spanish Cooperation target countries and its contribution to the different degrees of development of each country's micro-finance sector under the objective of meeting the needs of the impoverished sector of the population.

- To gain insight into the instrument's effectiveness having regard to fostering micro-finance services supporting micro-entrepreneur development and the effect it has on the living standards of the end clients in reducing poverty.

- To gain insight into the instrument's efficiency in terms of the management and implementation of resources based on an analysis of the institutional procedures and mechanisms which shed light on the success factors and limitations of the FCM as a Cooperation tool and the complementarity between the instrument and other Spanish Cooperation actions.

The purpose of the evaluation must be clearly and accurately defined, bearing in mind the main needs for information of the envisaged users. The general purposes need to be stipulated at this stage but can be fine-tuned in the definition of the evaluation's specific objectives as will be seen in greater detail at the following stage.

By the end of this Stage, the following should be identified:

- The origin of the evaluation initiative.
- The general purpose of the evaluation.
- The potential uses and users of the evaluation.

Stage 2. Select and delimit the object of the evaluation: what is to be evaluated? Define objectives and assess evaluability

Once having identified the rationale behind the evaluation and established its overall purpose, you must now decide what intervention or group of interventions you are going to evaluate (**object of the evaluation**). You will also have to identify the main actors or groups of actors taking part in the evaluation and create a forum to facilitate their participation in the process (**Reference Group**) in order to, based on their needs and expected usefulness, determine the **evaluation objectives**.

Once you have identified the evaluation objectives, you can delimit their scope by determining the concrete dimensions of the intervention(s) you want to evaluate (**delimit the object**) and assess the appropriateness and feasibility of its evaluation (**evaluability analysis**).

2.1 Select the object: what is to be evaluated?

The object of the evaluation is the intervention or set of interventions to be evaluated. The selection, then, is a matter of deciding what is to be evaluated: a strategy, a plan, a programme, a specific instrument or project[15], or you can decide to evaluate all of the interventions which meet certain requirements and/or are particularly significant in light, for example, of their innovative nature or their potential to extrapolate lessons learned to other contexts, sectors or territories.

The object of the evaluation can also sometimes be chosen based on a reduced budget and the limited scope of some interventions calls for a group evaluation of interventions which share objectives, a territory, group or sector.

The most important recommendation is to establish an **Evaluation Plan** which at least includes the following elements:

- The general purpose of the Evaluation Plan.

- The criteria to be used in choosing which interventions will be included in the Evaluation Plan: the territory of the intervention, sector of action, instrument applied and others.

- The selection procedure which can be done internally in your entity or unit or with the help of other actors.

- The budget available to conduct the evaluations.

- The frequency of the Evaluation Plan which can be annual or multi-annual.

- A tentative evaluation proposal (for example, a minimum number or range can be established) and the time line which should be established based on the planning cycles of the interventions and the magnitude and number of interventions to be evaluated.

- The procedure envisaged to monitor the Evaluation Plan.

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15. Remember that the main strategic references and operational instruments of Spanish Cooperation Policy were already set out in Chapter 2 of this Handbook. The former should be viewed as a set of guidelines and principles guiding the application of the latter which are more operational-type interventions.

- The assignment of responsibilities as concerns the implementation, validation and quality control of the evaluations.

Lastly, bear in mind that if the object of the evaluation is already predetermined, as evaluation manager you will not be able to choose it.

2.2. Identify the actors involved in the intervention

The underlying rationale and general purpose of the evaluation established at Stage 1 should now be more clearly delimited to the point of defining the objectives of your evaluation. To that end you should begin by identifying the actors involved in the intervention and conduct a preliminary analysis of their main interests and the likelihood of their taking part in the evaluation process.

In addition to the intervention's managing and planning units, there are other groups of actors involved in the intervention which should participate in the evaluation process. The following classification summarises the main groups of actors based on the role they play in the interventions and is accompanied by some key points which should be considered when deciding how each should take part in the evaluation process:

■ Counterparts from the partner country

Partner country institutions constitute the first group of actors which should be taken on board owing to the role of responsibility these should play in promoting their own development. Consultation with local partners to determine their need for information and the way in which they will participate in the evaluation process is vital in guaranteeing the usefulness of the evaluation and that their familiarity with the context of the intervention feeds the evaluation process.

■ Beneficiaries or those mainly affected by the intervention

The importance attributed to the participation of this group of actors in the evaluation process calls for their involvement from the very outset even if it is felt that the evaluation is not going to completely satisfy their demand for information.

■ Funding and / or management institutions

All of the institutions responsible for funding and/or the implementation of the interventions(s) must be identified and involved in the evaluation process. These institutions are vital to the definition of the objectives and in terms of facilitating access to the documentation needed to conduct the study. Identification of their needs for information is a key element in the usefulness of the evaluation.

■ Other donors

In cases of joint interventions or in coordination with other donors, it is especially important to note what these entities expect to get from the evaluation. If they are asked, you could also look into the possibility of having these agents collaborate in the evaluation and prevent unnecessary duplication of efforts.

■ Other stakeholders

There are some groups which could be affected by the evaluation even if they do not actively participate in it and do not belong to any of the aforementioned groups and these should likewise be informed of the evaluation and have the opportunity to express their interests.

However, the participation of many actors in the evaluation process can lead to higher costs and time constraints and you could even end up designing an overly

ambitious evaluation which may be difficult to finance thus running the risk of reducing the quality of the results obtained. During this initial analysis it is therefore important to define participation priorities based on criteria relating, for example, to the relevance of each one to the goals of the evaluation, their willingness to participate, the resources needed to include them in the evaluation process or those which they can contribute, etc.

We propose the following checklist (**Figure 18**) which will help with this preliminary identification of actors involved in the intervention:

In the first column you identify the institution(s) representing each group of actors in the intervention subject to evaluation and in the second column you indicate how or to what degree they expect to take part in the evaluation.

The third column is used to describe the relevance of each actor in the process based on the criteria we proposed or on other criteria deemed appropriate for your evaluation and the last is to assign a priority to each one based on their participation in the process.

Figure 18. Identification of actors involved

ACTORS	Actor and institution	Participation expectations	Relevance to the process	Priority (from 1 to 4)
Counterparts from the partner country				
Intervention beneficiaries				
Other donors				
Other stakeholders				
Decision-makers, technicians and managers				
Manager institution				

Source: Created in-house based on Stuffelbeam (1987)

1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

2.3. Constitute the evaluation Reference Group

As already pointed out, a forum must be established to allow for the participation of beneficiaries, local partners or other actors in the design of the evaluation so that their needs are also reflected in its objectives. In this connection we propose the creation of a working group or Reference Group representing the groups of actors most relevant to the evaluation.

You will find that the active participation of these actors in the design phase of the evaluation will not only provide greater precision and depth of information required by the process but will also give greater credibility and acceptance of the ensuing results, a key element to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations with a view to enhancing the overall quality of aid policy. Moreover, further on you will see how the effectiveness of the evaluation improves if participation is maintained throughout the evaluation.

Providing that you ensure a minimum level of coordination between your unit as manager of the evaluation, the evaluation team and the key informants, you can practically be assured of a participatory evaluation without the need to create a specific formal body for that purpose. However this section presents a higher level proposal. Here we describe the nature and functions of a formal structure to support the management of the evaluation process, the **Reference Group**, capable of responding to the most complex evaluations which require more ambitious participation fora.

The Reference Group will provide you with a coordination and communication channel to facilitate and encourage the participation of the key actors throughout the entire evaluation process. Remember that the ultimate objective of participation is to enhance the quality and usefulness of the evaluation thanks to ownership of its results by the actors involved in the intervention.

The duties of the Reference Group extend to all phases of the evaluation and not only to the design phase which we are focusing on now. Following is a list of some of the most important duties:

■ To facilitate the participation of the actors involved in the design of the evaluation: identify information needs, define objectives and delimit the scope of the evaluation.

■ To approve evaluation planning documents: Evaluation Plan, Work Plan and Communication Plan.

■ To provide inputs and participate in the drafting of the Terms of Reference for the engagement of technical assistance services for the evaluation.

■ To provide the evaluation team with access to all of the intervention's relevant information and documentation and to the key agents and informants who should participate in interviews, discussion groups and to any other information gathering technique.

■ To supervise the quality of the process and the documents and reports generated to enrich them with its contributions and make sure that its interests and demands for information in the intervention are met.

■ To disseminate evaluation results, especially among the organisations and entities of its group of interest.

From these duties it can be deduced that the members of the Reference Group must be highly technical, be directly involved in the intervention and be firmly committed and dedicated.

While as the party responsible for the management of the evaluation you must coordinate the activity of the Reference Group, the latter's operation should be based on a series of commitments and agreements between its members. When you establish the basis

on which to define these agreements, you must always make sure that the operation of the Group allows all of the key agents selected to participate on an equal footing. To do this we recommend that you define some operational mechanism (number of meetings to be held, meeting dynamics, review of mid-term reports, etc.) by mutual consensus among all of its members.

This is not to say that each actor cannot be assigned different roles. Therefore, not only your organisation but others can be given responsibility for the organisation and operation of the Reference Group.

In order to ensure proper compliance with the duties of the Reference Group, at least four meetings need to be scheduled:

- **Kickoff meeting.** The Reference Group should be formally constituted at this first session and agreement reached on its operating rules. The main objective, however, is to discuss and analyse the demands for information of each member with a view to reaching consensus on **the key questions which the evaluation must answer**.

- **At the commencement of the study.** The evaluation team is presented to the Reference Group at this meeting and the Work Plan and methodological proposal underpinning the evaluation is reviewed.

- **Mid-term meeting(s).** A second meeting (or as many as deemed necessary) is required during the implementation phase of the evaluation to supervise the draft report or other preliminary products so that

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In practice...

- There is a general consensus regarding the importance of gradually incorporating local partners' and beneficiaries' demands for information to ensure the success and quality of the evaluation process. However, it is not uncommon to observe how evaluations fail to heed these demands and focus their attention on the agents calling for the evaluations, mainly donors.

- Therefore, when defining the makeup and operational rules of the Reference Group, it is essential to include formulae to prevent bias in terms of the participation of these actors in the evaluation and to reinforce their role as receivers of specific results and not only as key informants.

- An example of such formulae could be to furnish economic support for the expenses deriving from the participation of these groups in the Reference Group, to schedule Group meetings at the places where the interventions are being implemented or to create channels of communication and decision-making mechanisms which do not require face-to-face meetings in order to facilitate the participation of these actors.

| 1 | **2** | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

members have access to preliminary results and thus have the opportunity to make the observations and contributions deemed appropriate in accordance with their expectations.

■ Final meeting. The purpose of this last session is to present the final evaluation report, to launch the Communication Plan and prepare the incorporation of the attendant recommendations.

Remember that, although the Reference Group has touched upon some of the duties it will discharge during the rest of the evaluation process, its main role during this stage is to make sure that the needs of the key agents are properly reflected in the objectives of the evaluation which it must define.

2.4. Define evaluation objectives: what is the purpose of the evaluation?

In addition to the demands for information from the agent or regulatory body calling for the evaluation and your own demands as evaluation manager, you can and should define the evaluation objectives based on the information needs of the other agents involved in the intervention.

If formed in accordance with the foregoing instructions, the Reference Group will be the forum through which to channel all of these demands for information and to discuss with the stakeholders how to transfer these demands to the evaluation through the definition of objectives.

In practice...

By way of example, evaluation of the adult literacy and basic education programme in Honduras and Nicaragua was conducted using the following specific objectives:

■ Establish the relevance of the design.

■ Estimate coverage.

■ Determine whether the Programme has been effective in facilitating access to basic education and literacy.

■ Establish the degree to which the improvement in the quality of the education system was attributable to the Programme.

■ Substantiate the degree of participation and involvement of the counterpart institutions and the level of compliance with reform and funding commitments made.

■ Determine the suitability of resource management.

■ Estimate the Programme's impact on the beneficiary population.

■ Analyse the Programme's coherence with the objectives laid down in the LCID, the MP 2001-2004, the Spanish Cooperation Strategy on Education and the Regional Cooperation Programme with Central America.

Source: Evaluation report of the adult literacy and basic education programme in Honduras and Nicaragua. (MAEC, 2005).

A clear definition of evaluation objectives is one of the most crucial steps which needs to be addressed during these initial stages of the evaluation design. A well defined objective will help with the subsequent formulation of the questionnaire and will make it easier for the external evaluators to carry out a study which meets their needs as well as those of the rest of the stakeholders (SIDA, 2005:59).

Also remember that, insofar as the objectives accurately reflect the demands of the actors involved, you are ensuring the effective use of the results generated by the evaluation. We therefore **recommend that you draft the objectives bearing in mind how the information generated by the evaluation will be used**. For example, you can use specification formulae such as "*...to determine the effectiveness and impact of the intervention*" or "*...to determine the effectiveness of the intervention*" (SIDA, 2005:60).

2.5. Delimit the object of the evaluation: What dimensions of the target are to be evaluated?

Now that you know exactly what intervention or set of interventions is going to be evaluated and have defined the objectives of the evaluation, you must delimit the scope; in other words, specify what dimension of the object you want to look at.

In view of the fact that the Reference Group was recently formed to foster the participation of the key actors, agreement should be reached concerning the specification of the object with due consideration for the interests of the most representative groups.

The most important dimensions of the intervention which must be specified have to do with the institution(s) responsible for its management and implementation, sector scope, geographical area, time frame and the beneficiary groups to be included in the evaluation.

■ Institutional and regulatory dimension

Organisations involved (international, from the donor or beneficiary country), regulatory framework and levels of planning which need to be considered in the evaluation.

■ Sector dimension

Sectors affected by the intervention, prioritised thematic areas and their ties with those arising from the policy of the beneficiary country or of other donor organisations.

■ Geographical dimension

Territory of the intervention with due consideration for the variables of its context.

■ Time dimension

Period of time during which the intervention will be analysed and assessed. We would note that the starting and ending dates of the intervention may not coincide with the priority interest of the evaluation which may focus on a period or stage of particular interest.

■ Beneficiaries

Groups benefitting directly or indirectly from the intervention. Groups which have not been designated as beneficiaries of the intervention but are either positively or negatively affected must also be considered.

It is important to set priorities and clearly delimit the scope of the evaluation because this will help to focus

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

the evaluation's resources and efforts on those aspects which are of priority interest for the actors.

To this end, a careful review of the intervention's reference documents is needed: programming, management, monitoring, and budgetary documents amongst others. Given that these documents will be scrutinised by the evaluators and the Reference Group members throughout the evaluation process, we would suggest drawing up a documentation matrix from the outset together with a list of documents and a summary of the main content of each one and a reference so that they may be readily accessed (e.g. a web page address or entity through which they may be requested).

Figure 19. Documentation matrix corresponding to the intervention under evaluation

Document	Main content	Location
Document outlining intervention formulation		
Diagnostic or feasibility studies related to the intervention		
Regulations (orders, resolutions, etc.)		
Budgetary frameworks		
Intervention's annual operational plans		
Poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) of the partner country		
Master Plan of the Spanish Cooperation		
Sector or geographical strategy documents (DES, DEP)		
Annual International Cooperation Plans (PACI)		
Documents of the Joint Committee with the partner country		
Reports		
Specific studies		
Monitoring reports		
Previous evaluation reports		
Other evaluations of the sector or similar topic		
Studies on the sector, territory or population which is the target of the intervention		

Source: Created in-house

Figure 19 shows a model matrix and some examples which may be useful in documenting the evaluation of a development intervention.

This process will help you gain a deeper insight into the intervention whose evaluation you are managing and give you a "snapshot" or objective description of the object of the evaluation and the elements delimiting its scope.

This should be a brief description of the intervention as a whole and include: the overarching planning framework (DES, DEP, PACI, etc.), a brief reference to the social, political and economic context in which the intervention is carried out, the beginning and ending dates, global budget and an outline of the intervention's internal planning logic (objectives, activities, results and phases).

This information will help you draft the ToR where you should include a brief history of the intervention and its background.

2.6. Evaluability assessment: Is the evaluation indeed possible?

Once you have identified the information needs and defined the objectives of the evaluation, you must address the degree to which the object of the evaluation is evaluable. To this end, you will need to analyse those factors which, as was explained in Part I of this Handbook, can be evaluation catalysts either neutralising or empowering the process: planning quality, the existence and availability of information, the involvement of the actors and the socio-political context.

Depending on the intervention under scrutiny, the evaluability analysis can be more or less complex which is why a preliminary assessment of these factors will help you to decide whether it can be conducted internally or if it must be outsourced to experts. Naturally, the depth of the evaluability analysis will also be contingent upon the time factor and the availability of resources.

Figure 20 Illustrates the elements which should be reviewed.

Figure 20. Elements affecting evaluability

Evaluability analysis		
Planning thoroughness: diagnosis, objectives and strategies	**Existence and availability of information**	**Involvement of actors and the socio-political context**
Relevance of the diagnosis: assessment of the definition of the problems and their interrelationships Definition of the objectives Internal coherence of the proposed strategy	Availability of information Existence of a monitoring system Definition of indicators	Involvement in and attitude of the actors towards the evaluation Allocation of resources for the evaluation (human, financial and time) Socio-political context.

Source: Adapted from IDR (2000).

Evaluability analysis starts with an assessment of the diagnosis conducted. It should also check for the existence of clearly defined and measurable objectives, analyse the intervention's relevance to the problems detected and examine the logic of the intervention model. The criteria presented in **Figure 21** can be used as a benchmark to assess these elements.

Figure 21. Criteria whereby to judge planning quality when conducting an evaluability assessment

Planning quality	Assessment		
	Yes	No	Needs improvement
Definition of problems			
Are they explicitly, clear, well-defined and measurable?			
Have those affected been specified? (target population)			
Are the cause-effect relationships plausible?			
Definition of objectives			
Are the objectives clearly formulated?			
Have they been quantified or are they measurable?			
Do objectives meet the needs and problems identified?			
Internal coherence of the strategy			
Are the relationships between goals and the means to attain them plausible?			
To what degree does each level of objectives contribute to the achievement of those of the next higher level?			
Do the goals-means relationships match those of the cause-effect?			

We must then analyse the suitability of the monitoring systems designed to collect the information related to intervention planning while paying special attention to the designation of responsibilities for the gathering of information, to the system proposed for its standardisation and to the indicators defined. **Figure 22** presents some of the variables to assess these aspects.

Figure 22. Criteria whereby to judge the quality of information

Existence and availability of information	Assessment		
	Sí	No	Needs improvement
Availability of information			
Has sufficient information on the intervention and its context been generated for the evaluation?			
Has it been found and is it easily accessible?			
Is the gathering of the information costly in terms of time and money?			
Monitoring system and indicators			
Have mechanisms been envisaged for the gathering and standardisation of information? (monitoring system)			
Has the timing of the information gathering been established?			
Have those responsible for the gathering of the information been identified?			
Have the indicators corresponding to the main areas of the intervention been defined?			
Are indicators useful, reliable, accessible, easy to interpret and comparable?			
Have baseline indicators been defined?			
Have information sources been specified?			

And lastly, the evaluation's degree of acceptance by the main actors needs to be known as does the latter's' attitude towards it and their potential involvement in the process while bearing the limitations of limited resources or the socio-political and institutional context in mind. **Figure 23** presents a set of questions which can be used for this purpose.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

Figure 23. Criteria whereby to judge the potential involvement of actors and the socio-political context

Involvement of actors and the socio-political context	Assessment		
	Yes	No	Needs improvement
Involvement of actors			
Do actors perceive the usefulness of the evaluation?			
Do technicians and local counterparts have a favourable attitude towards the evaluation?			
Is the communication between the main actors of the intervention fluid?			
Allocation of resources			
Is the available budget a factor which could limit the evaluation?			
Is available time a factor which could limit the evaluation?			
Are there enough technical means available?			
Socio-political context			
Does a culture of evaluation prevail?			
Could the socio-political situation of the local counterpart have a bearing on the evaluation?			
Are there lobbies which could interfere with the independence of the evaluation?			

You should not overlook the fact that the evaluation is conducted within a political context which has a bearing on the process from the moment that the motivation to evaluate is generated until its results are communicated and recommen-

In practice...

When deemed necessary and resources are available, the evaluability analysis can be conducted before proceeding with the intervention evaluation process with the help of an external team which can be engaged for this purpose.

An intermediate solution would be to include the evaluability analysis in the ToR and have it conducted by the team entrusted to conduct the evaluation study.

dations incorporated. In the sphere of development cooperation, this aspect is even more important because complex, changing and potentially unstable socio-political situations may come into play.

Figure 24, intended to support the analysis process, describes interventions with high and low evaluability potential based mainly on the quality of their planning.

Figure 24. Evaluability and quality of the planning of the intervention under scrutiny

Interventions with high evaluability potential	Interventions with low evaluability potential
■ Designed according to a theoretical planning model (e.g. the Logical Framework Approach)	■ Are not based on any planning model
■ Have clear and specific objectives	■ Have ambiguous and general objectives
■ Have a detailed implementation plan	■ Do not have a detailed implementation plan
■ Have defined the target population	■ Have not defined the target population
■ Have an operational management and information system	■ Do not have a suitable management and information system
■ Have only a single source of funding	■ Have more than a single source of funding

Source: Adapted from IDR (2000).

By the end of this Stage, the following should be delimited:

- ■ The object of your evaluation, i.e. the intervention or group of interventions you intend to evaluate.
- ■ A list of actors involved in the intervention and their main expectations and likelihood of participating in the evaluation process.
- ■ A Reference Group or other type of support structure to facilitate and empower the participation of the actors in the evaluation process.
- ■ The objectives of the evaluation defined according to the need for information of the agents involved in the intervention under scrutiny.
- ■ The scope of the evaluation, i.e. the dimensions of the object to be evaluated: institutional, sector, geographical, time and target population.
- ■ Whether the object of your evaluation is evaluable and, in any case, how to prepare the intervention to be evaluated.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Stage 3. Define evaluation questions: What do you want to know about the intervention?

So far you have established the object of the evaluation which you are going to conduct and, after consultation with the main actors involved in the intervention, you have included their interests in the definition of the objectives of the evaluation and have delimited its scope. Now you must transform these objectives into questions which the evaluators will be called on to answer.

You must take great care in drafting the questions of the evaluation because, although in principle you do not need to raise more questions than those required to respond to the objectives you have defined, bear in mind that if you restrict questions too much you will encounter difficulties in meeting the information needs of all of the actors. Remember that you will not readily obtain answers to questions which have not been expressly formulated at the beginning.

The criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and feasibility will provide a good starting point in defining the evaluation questions. These criteria, recommended by the DAC and adopted by the majority of those involved in the international aid system, serve as parameters allowing you to judge the success or failure of the intervention. Grouping questions in accordance with these criteria will make it easier for you to transform the objectives of the evaluation into questions which evaluators will answer. Following is a list of these criteria (MAEC; 45 to 54).

■ Relevance

The evaluation of relevance consists in assessing the adaptation of the evaluation results and objectives to the context in which you are working. This analysis looks at the quality of the diagnosis underpinning the intervention and judges how closely it matches the needs observed among the target population.

■ Efficiency

Analysis of the efficiency of development cooperation projects and actions refers to the study and assessment of the results obtained in comparison with the resources employed.

■ Effectiveness

Evaluation of the effectiveness of development aid attempts to measure and assess the degree to which initially established objectives have been achieved; in other words, it is a judgement of the intervention based on its focus on results.

■ Impact

Evaluation of impact identifies the effects caused by the intervention, be these positive or negative, expected or unexpected, direct or indirect, collateral or intentional. Impact analysis focuses on determining the net effects attributable to the action.

■ Viability

Judgement of viability assesses continuity over time of the positive effects generated through the intervention once the aid is withdrawn. Within the sphere of cooperation, this concept is closely linked to the enhancement of key development factors and ownership of the

process by aid recipients and it would be safe to say that it is directly associated with favourable evaluations of the preceding criteria.

While an evaluation based on these five criteria would surely cover most of the needs for information of all of the actors it is possible that, in a particular evaluation context, you may have to include complementary criteria in your evaluation. The most important are as follows[16].

■ Coherence

This is checked on two levels: Internally to assess the matching of intervention purposes with the instruments proposed to achieve them and their adaptation to prevailing problems, and externally to analyse the compatibility of the intervention with other strategies and programmes with which synergies or complementarity could exist.

■ Ownership

Assesses the degree to which the institutions of the partner countries exercise effective leadership over development policies and strategies thus implying the coordination of donor action.

■ Alignment

Analysis in this regard should reflect the commitment of donors to provide aid with due consideration for and taking part in the development strategies, management systems and established procedures in place in the recipient countries.

■ Harmonisation

Assesses coordination among international donors to prevent the dispersion of their actions, to take advantage of the comparative advantage of each and to build a more stable and predictable aid programme for the partner country while harmonising and simplifying procedures wherever possible.

■ Participation

Analysis of participation focuses on identifying the agents involved at the different planning and evaluation stages while assessing their influence on decision making.

■ Coverage

Evaluation of coverage focuses on analysing the beneficiary groups and assessing the adaptation of aid to planned recipients, delving deeper into those factors causing possible bias towards certain groups or barriers to access.

Bear in mind that not all of these criteria are applicable to all evaluations. Here we are referring to general categories of analysis which could be useful in structuring your questionnaire, the end product featuring specific connotations depending on each intervention and evaluation to be conducted.

The advantage of having a set of pre-established criteria with which to group questions is that it facilitates the transfer, comparison and aggregation of the results of the different evaluations thus improving the global operability of the Spanish Cooperation monitoring and evaluation system. Remember, however, that if the questions of your evaluation do not completely adapt to the criteria proposed, you should be open to the possibility of incorporating other new questions.

Figure 25 presents some of the most common questions typically raised in an evaluation and their relationship with each of the criteria.

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16. Tool for drawing up geographical strategies, DGPOLDE. Public policy evaluation guide, IDR.

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Figure 25. Evaluation criteria and questions

RELEVANCE: Questions addressing the adaptation of the intervention to the context.
Does the intervention comply with the priorities and needs of the target population?
Have the priorities of the beneficiaries changed since the intervention was defined? If yes, has the intervention adapted to those changes?
Have the development priorities or the area of influence of the recipient country changed?
Have the priorities of Spanish Development Cooperation changed?

EFFICIENCY: Questions addressing the optimum allocation of project resources.
Have the budgets initially established in the document been adhered to?
Have time lines and deadlines been respected.
Has the transformation of resources into results been efficient?
To what extent did institutional collaboration and envisaged management mechanisms contribute to attaining the results of the intervention?

EFFECTIVENESS: Questions addressing the degree to which objectives were achieved.
Were all of the results initially envisaged achieved?
Was the specific objective of the intervention achieved?
Were there other effects not envisaged?
Did recipients encounter problems in gaining access to intervention activities?

IMPACT: Questions addressing the intervention's global effects.
Did the intervention contribute to achieving the global objective proposed?
Was there a positive impact on the direct beneficiaries identified?
Were there any non-envisaged positive impacts on beneficiaries?
Were there any non-envisaged negative impacts on beneficiaries?
Did any of the activities address the issue of awareness-raising concerning the object of the intervention in Spain and in the recipient country?

VIABILITY: Questions addressing the intervention's future sustainability.

Have the benefits of the intervention lingered even after external aid was removed?

Are the resources needed for the upkeep of activities still being generated?

Was there any positive influence on institutional capacity-building?

How were cross-cutting priorities addressed?

Did the most vulnerable groups benefit?

Was the issue of gender inequality addressed?

Was appropriate technological progress fostered?

Was the environment protected?

COHERENCE: Questions addressing the suitability of the intervention's internal structure and its complementarity with other interventions.

Did the problems identified coincide with the objectives proposed?

Was the structure of the intervention's objectives, results and activities properly defined?

Were the programmed activities suited to achieving the objectives of the intervention?

Does the intervention complement other strategies or programmes carried out by Spanish external action, Spanish Cooperation, other donors and the partner country in the same territory, sector or with the same target population?

Were possible synergies established between these programmes and the intervention taken advantage of?

OWNERSHIP: Questions addressing the leadership of the local partners.

To what degree did local institutions take part in the design of the intervention?

To what degree did local institutions take part in the implementation and management of the intervention?

To what degree did local institutions take part in the monitoring of the intervention?

To what degree did local institutions take part in the evaluation of the intervention?

To what degree did beneficiaries take part in the process as a whole?

ALIGNMENT: Questions addressing the assimilation of local strategies and procedures.

Were the intervention's budgetary and administrative procedures adapted to local institutions?

Was due consideration given to the partner country's development strategies and programmes?

Did the intervention include specific measures for local institutional capacity-building? If so, were these achieved?

How transparent were the intervention's implementing and donor organisations with local institutions and partners?

①　②　**③**　④　⑤　⑥　⑦　⑧　⑨　⑩

HARMONISATION: Questions addressing coordination among donors.

Were there any other managing authorities and donor organisations operating in the same territory, sector or with the same target population?

Were coordination mechanisms established with these entities? What type? What was their scope?

What was the result of this coordination?

PARTICIPATION: Questions addressing the role given to beneficiaries.

Have project participants been clearly defined? If so, how?

What actors have participated in each phase of the intervention and to what degree?

Have the established participation channels been effective?

Does the intervention include specific measures to empower beneficiaries and local organisations?

Has such empowerment been achieved?

COVERAGE: Questions addressing the groups served.

Have the actions undertaken reached all of the target groups?

Have mechanisms been created to help beneficiaries gain access to intervention services?

Are the groups served different from those identified in the design of the intervention?

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS: Other questions related to the intervention.

Was the formulation of the intervention correct according to the LFA?

Was the predefined indicator system useful?

Were verification sources properly identified?

Were data collection and analysis methods suitable?

Were the conclusions of the preliminary evaluation work useful?

Were external factors correctly identified?

Did those factors evolve as expected?

Was enough information produced for the evaluation?

Source: Adapted from the "Tabla de valoración del desempeño de la intervención", Metodología de evaluación de la cooperación española" (1998), p. 253-256. MAEC (1998) and "La evaluación de proyectos de cooperación internacional de Cruz Roja. Manual del Delegado/a" Cruz Roja Española (2000).

When you have the list of all of the questions reflecting your interests and those of the rest of the stakeholders and once these have been classified according to the different criteria, you must prioritise those which will be used in the evaluation. It is important to make this selection by consensus in the Reference Group or other participation structure which has been used. In prioritising the evaluation questions you must consider, inter alia, the uncertainty of the responses, their influence on the decision making process, the cost entailed in researching them and the available information in this connection (Cronbach en Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 1987: 155).

Figure 26 features a matrix with some of the criteria which could be useful in prioritising evaluation questions.

Figure 26. Evaluation question priority matrix

Evaluation questions	Criteria to prioritise evaluation questions			
	Degree of uncertainty	Influence	Necessary resources	Available information
Question 1	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low
Question 2	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low
Question n	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low	High/Medium/Low

Source: Cronbach en Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 1987: 155

If you have past experience in managing evaluations, you may be able to define some of these questions beforehand based on that experience allowing you to recognise the most suitable or recurrent interests for each evaluation context: for example, the moment chosen to conduct the evaluation, the type of intervention or the groups of actors involved.

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In practice...

- With a view to gathering the demands for information from the actors and determining the objectives and questions of the evaluation, you may want to organise a workshop at which each actor is given the opportunity to freely express his/her interests. Participatory techniques (brainstorming, cards, etc.) are very useful in this connection.

- Key actors identified for your evaluation may also be sent a sheet where they are asked about their rationale and needs for information. This is especially useful if local actors cannot be contacted directly through prior field visits.

SHEET REGARDING THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE EVALUATION AND NEED OF INFORMATION

"The evaluation process is launched when someone raises a question and is in need of answers. This need is determined by the way in which the person calling for the evaluation [*motivators*] perceives reality and by his/her interest in doing a good job for the organisation. Therefore, one of the criterion determining a good evaluation is whether the user obtains the information s/he needs to make the right decision". Carlsson, J; Köhlin, G and Ekbom, A, 1994, in MAEC (1998:95).

You are invited to participate in the planning of the following project: _____

Please fill out this sheet and return it by the **xx of xx**. In so doing, we suggest you call on all persons qualified to participate in this consultation process by virtue of being somehow affected by the evaluation or because you plan to involve them in the dissemination of the results and in the implementation and use of the final recommendations.

If you have any questions or doubts please contact **xx**. Thank you very much for your collaboration.

A. Logical summary of the intervention:

Title of the Project; Programme / Service to which it is attached; Objective; Indicators envisaged to assess the scope of the said objective; Mid-term results or achievements needed to fulfil the objective.

B. Rationale behind and information needed from the evaluation:

How do you think the evaluation can contribute to meeting your interests or needs for information? What interests, concerns or questions do you have about the project which the evaluation could respond to? List at least 1 and rank order them in terms of importance.

SHEET REGARDING THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE EVALUATION AND NEED OF INFORMATION

C. General approach of the evaluation and its implementation:

Do you have any suggestions as to how we should approach this evaluation process? For example, who it should target, who should supervise or participate in it, most suitable approach, etc.

D. Consultation and contact to monitor the process:

Who and what departments participated in filling out this sheet? Who and what departments were at least consulted?

Who was the person and department who drafted the responses to this sheet? Who is the contact person to work with us on future issues having to do with evaluation of the projects?

Source: Touza, I (2006). Procedimiento de Evaluación de Enterculturas.

And lastly, bear in mind that although we recommend you draft the evaluation questions in a clear and concise manner, they are not always completely identified when they are finally sent out. For this reason, you should urge the evaluation team to participate in detecting, clarifying and prioritising those which are of greatest interest among the stakeholders.

By the end of this Stage, the following should be delimited:

- The evaluation questions defined following a consultation process with the main actors related with the intervention including selection and prioritisation.
- A matrix classifying these questions based on the evaluation criteria.

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Stage 4. Selection of the type of evaluation to conduct and its budget

During this initial design phase you should also choose the type of evaluation you are going to conduct and estimate its budget as well as the deadlines governing the evaluation process. This section provides some guidelines to help you make the right decisions.

4.1 Choosing the type of evaluation

As presented in Part I of this Handbook, Spanish Cooperation can conduct a number of different types of evaluations offering different ways to judge an intervention. In choosing the evaluation which best suits your needs, you must consider the context of the evaluation with due consideration for each of the classification criteria.

In some cases the choice will be very clear (for example, choosing between an ex-ante, mid-term or ex-post evaluation simply depends on the moment when the object in question is evaluated) or may be predetermined by some regulation or by the promoters of the evaluation (for example, the AECID requires DNGOs to conduct external evaluations for its co-funded projects).

In other cases, especially when the type of evaluation is based on its content, the choice may require a more thorough reflection. The evaluation questions which you just prioritised at the preceding stage are a good benchmark in determining, in this case, the type of evaluation you should conduct because you should opt for the evaluation model best suited to respond to them.

Figure 27 is a summary of the main elements you will have to consider in choosing the type of evaluation to conduct based on each of the classification parameters.

Figure 27. Elements to assess the selection of each type of evaluation

According to evaluation content:	
Design Process or management Results Impacts	The comprehensive approach which is recommended for evaluations suggests addressing questions referring to the design, process and results of evaluations but the pre-eminence of one type or another will result from the prioritised evaluation questions.
Meta-evaluation	This type of evaluation typically focuses on the previous evaluation experiences of your entity. It can provide insight into the evaluation strategies which are being applied and enhance the quality of evaluations and is therefore useful in consolidating an evaluation policy when evaluation culture is just beginning to emerge.

According to the agent behind the evaluation	
Individual Joint	You will have an easier time conducting a joint evaluation under the following circumstances Shared interest in the object of the evaluation. Partnerships between actors or donors involved in the intervention under scrutiny. The same territory, group or sector as other interventions. The need to generate a sufficient and relevant critical mass of interventions. The desire to improve the harmonisation and alignment of your work programme.
According to the person conducting the evaluation:	
Internal (self-evaluation) External Mixed (assisted internal)	An internal evaluation is recommended insofar as the following conditions are met: Evidence as to the need to have internal teams. The aim being learning or accountability. Prior training and experience in evaluation. Organisation personnel have the time to do the evaluation. If you opt for an external evaluation, you should first consider the possibility of conducting a quality evaluation within appropriate time and cost parameters.
According to the point in time when the evaluation is conducted:	
Ex-antes Mid-term Ex-post	This typology, determined by the point in time of the object of the evaluation, may be affected by regulatory requirements.
Evaluability analysis	In view of the fact that one of the objectives of this analysis is to improve the evaluability of the object selected, this is especially recommended when there are doubts concerning: The quantity and quality of the available information. Quality of the planning. Collaboration of the stakeholders.
According to the theme and object of the evaluation:	
Strategies Operational instruments	This typology is determined by the object of the evaluation selected (Stage 2). If an evaluation plan has been considered, it will depend on the criteria you have established to choose which interventions to evaluate.

Source: Created in-house

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Within each of the five classifying variables used, you should choose the option which best fits your intervention and the prevailing evaluation context by assessing the elements presented in the right-hand column and bearing in mind the considerations in this connection made in Part I of the Handbook. Remember that the classification is not exclusive and you may, for example, request an individual and mixed evaluation at an intermediate point in the implementation of the intervention focusing on the process.

4.2 Budget estimate and evaluation deadlines

If you are going to conduct the evaluation internally, you will have to draw up a budget. In the case of external evaluations, the design of your evaluation will be more complete if you draw up an estimate budget to serve as a reference for evaluators when they submit their proposals.

There are three elements which justify a larger or smaller evaluation budget: the nature and scope of the work required, the characteristics of the intervention under evaluation and the aim of the evaluation.

Bear in mind that a good evaluation needs qualified evaluators who must use suitable information compiling and analysis techniques. In no case should budget restrictions be a factor limiting the quality of your evaluation. If resources are limited, the best alternative is to restrict the scope of the evaluation.

It is typical to allocate between 1% and 5% of the intervention budget to the evaluation depending on whether it is routine or innovative and its potential contribution to the learning process.

It is generally advisable to establish some basic categories so that evaluators can break down their proposal budgets. For example, a budget item for the compiling of information, field work and the drafting and submission of the evaluation report. Remember that the two most important evaluation budget items have to do with fieldwork and evaluators' fees (price/hour).

In practice...

When calculating the budget and deadlines for the evaluation process you should take stock of the advantages associated with each of the decisions you have taken up to this point in the design of your evaluation and reconsider these in light of their cost. For example you will find that participatory processes, while offering big advantages in terms of the quality and usefulness of the evaluation, take up quite a bit of time and resources.

In order to establish evaluation deadlines a priori you should consider that Phases I (design) and III (communication of results and the incorporation of lessons learned) are, to a large degree, contingent upon administrative proceedings and participation requirements of other actors.

You should base your estimate of the time needed for Phase II (developing the evaluation study) on comparable prior experiences or consult with experts if you do not have experience in this connection. You also have the option of leaving this open and waiting for the evaluators to present their proposals.

In any case, remember that evaluation deadlines must be consistent with their ultimate goal: to supply inputs for the planning process and therefore the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned should be available with sufficient lead time so they may be communicated and disseminated among the different stakeholders.

By the end of this Stage, the following should be delimited:

- The type of evaluation to be conducted.
- An estimated evaluation budget.
- The time frame within which the evaluation process will be conducted.

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Stage 5. How to prepare to conduct the evaluation: Drafting of the ToR

The decisions taken at each of the preceding stages have provided you with the information you need to design your evaluation. At this stage you should set out that information in a framework planning document known as the Terms of Reference (ToR)[17] which will be your work plan if you are conducting an internal evaluation or, as the case may be, to engage an external team of evaluators.

Well drafted ToR prevent misunderstandings and help evaluators because these are the main points of reference they have to understand exactly what sort of eval-

uation is called for. In light of their importance, all actors involved in the evaluation process should agree on the content of the ToR. Therefore, prior to their publication they should be forwarded to the Reference Group, or other reference group which has been created, for review, consensus and approval.

The drafting of the ToR basically consists of organising and standardising the information having to do with the decisions taken to date to design the evaluation. **Figure 28** serves as a reminder of these elements:

Figure 28. Stages and results of the evaluation design

Stage	Elements established
1. Rationale behind the evaluation. Why do we evaluate?	Rationale behind the evaluation. General purpose of the evaluation.
2. Choose the object of the evaluation, define its objectives and analyse its evaluability. What is to be evaluated? What actors are involved in the evaluation? What is the evaluation for? Is it possible to conduct the evaluation?	Selection of the object to be evaluated. Identification of the actors involved. Evaluation Reference Group Objectives of the evaluation Scope of the evaluation Evaluability of the object
3. Drafting of the evaluation questions. What do you want to learn from the intervention?	Evaluation questions. Evaluation criteria
4. Evaluation typology, budget and deadlines. What type of evaluation are you going to conduct? What is the budget? What is the time frame for implementation?	Type of evaluation. Evaluation budget and time frames.

Source: Created in-house

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17. In the case of outsourced evaluations this is also typically referred to as the technical specifications document. This Handbook uses the term ToR to generically refer to the document serving as the basis for the planning of the evaluation study.

This information should be transferred to the ToR following a logical, clear and precise structure so as to help the evaluation teams prepare their work proposals. Bear in mind that there is no one single ToR model; a different one may be drawn up for each intervention, evaluation and evaluation managing unit.

Figure 29 shows how the ToR may be structured and could serve as a guide in developing the model which best meets your needs[18].

Figure 29. Checklist for ToR content and structure proposal

Structure of the ToR	Control of content:
Title	Name of the evaluation: name of the intervention subject to evaluation and the type of evaluation.
Introduction	Why evaluate and what is the evaluation for (rationale, objectives or general purpose, users, evaluation uses and expectations, expected recommendations), brief reference to the object of the evaluation and typology of the evaluation requested.
Background of the intervention	Planning framework of the intervention, commencement and conclusion dates, budget and intervention logic (objectives, activities, results and phases), target population, counterparts and a brief reference to the institutional and socio-economic context of the intervention.
Scope of the evaluation and stakeholders	Dimensions of the intervention under evaluation: geographical, institutional, temporal, social, thematic and sector. List of stakeholders, members of the evaluation Reference Group and managing unit (defining their participation in the evaluation process). Documentation matrix: available documents and information.
Questions, criteria and type of evaluation	Specific objectives of the evaluation (questions of the evaluation). Evaluation criteria: definition, prioritisation and complementarity. Type of evaluation requested.

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18. By way of example, ANNEX I presents the ToR model used by the DGPOLDE (2006).

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Figure 29. Checklist for ToR content and structure proposal

Structure of the ToR	Control of content:
Methodology, Work Plan and report structure	Methodology and techniques required (to compile and analyse information and to present and disseminate results). Work Plan request: phases, deadlines and products you would like to receive. These are typically divided into office study and fieldwork with an indication of whether meetings should be scheduled for the sharing of preliminary results and the tools required. Basic evaluation report structure, format, No of copies, approximate length.
Profile requested of the evaluation team	Professional qualifications, training and professional experience (in the subject area, in evaluation and in cooperation).
Evaluation requierements and authors	Authors of the report. Ethical and professional performance of the evaluators: anonymity and confidentiality; liability; integrity, independence; impact; equivalence certification; reports.
Time frame of the evaluation	Commencement and conclusion date. Timetable for the submission of products. Sharing of results.
Estimated budget	Budget available to conduct the evaluation.
Submission of the technical proposal and assessment criteria	Characteristics, structure and requirements which the technical proposal must fulfil. Deadline for submission. Proposal assessment criteria.

Source: Adapted from DGPOLDE.

A large proportion of the content proposed in **Figure 29** for the ToR has already been sufficiently explained in the description of earlier stages. However, we suggest keeping the following points and clarifications in mind:

■ The **general proposal or objectives** intended by the evaluation with an indication, if relevant, of the regulatory framework laying down the need to conduct the evaluation or the rationale behind the evaluation process. This justification of why the evaluation is being conducted will allow the evaluation teams to contextualise the process and its frame of reference.

■ In the introduction, when drafting the section on the **uses** of the evaluation, we suggest stipulating who the main **users** are with an indication of their degree of involvement and participation in the evaluation. If a Reference Group has been formed, we advise noting this in the ToR. You must also describe the role and duties you will undertake in the process as the evaluation's managing entity.

■ Intervention background information should include a brief **history of the intervention under scrutiny** with a description of its legal framework, the general planning hierarchy it fits into, beginning and ending dates, the budget allocated to the intervention and a brief overview of the planning logic (objectives, activities and expected results, phases planned and actually undertaken, beginning and ending dates and the budget allocated for each one with an indication of where the intervention is on its time line). This should also include a brief reference to the socio-economic context of the intervention and the characteristics of the target group.

■ In the section focusing on the scope of the evaluation, the geographical, institutional, temporal, social and thematic or **sector dimensions** of the intervention which are to be reviewed in the evaluation should be established. The ToR should clearly establish the coverage of the object of the evaluation, i.e. the scope of the evaluation must be delimited as defined in Stage 2.

■ Moreover, a list **of available documents and information** (documentation matrix) should figure in the section focusing on the scope of the evaluation: programme documents, available reports, preliminary evaluations, intervention indicators, existing databases, etc. This is important because it allows the evaluation team to adjust its methodology and Work Plan.

■ Do not forget that in the section focusing on questions, criteria and type of evaluation, it is important to establish the **questions** which the evaluation must respond to, the number being limited in order to focus the evaluation on the most relevant ones thus ensuring greater quality in the work process and its results.

■ Although we recommend letting the team of evaluators take their own decisions as stipulated in their proposal and in accordance with the evaluation requested, you may propose specific **methodological guidelines** in the ToR or suggest the use of certain information collection and analysis techniques (for example, if you want to poll beneficiaries). In any case, the methodology used should have an impact on gender issues and permit under-represented or difficult to access groups of actors or beneficiaries to participate in the evaluation.

■ The ToR should include specifications on the **envisaged duration** of the evaluation and the products expected. A Work Plan should be requested from the evaluation team with a detailed time line of the phases suggested for the implementation of the evaluation study and delivery of the rest of the products. We would also recommend some instruc-

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tions concerning delivery of the final report (content structure, format, number of copies, style, graphic media, language and approximate length expected). You may also want to request a preliminary report for review and comment by the members of the Reference Group. And lastly, you should request a plan for the sharing, communication and dissemination of the evaluation results specifying the media to be used (multimedia presentations, workshops, seminars or working groups and others).

■ Once the **profile of the evaluation team** is defined, you will have to determine the professional experience and expertise deemed necessary and in this connection we recommend requesting a list of similar previous work. You should also specify whether you want to use consultants from the recipient countries, ensure gender balance in the makeup of the team and define the working language. You should likewise call for the appointment of a person who will be held ultimately responsible for the work and who will serve as the spokesperson for the evaluation team. These considerations are equally valid if you have proposed an internal evaluation. If you have chosen a mixed evaluation, in this section you should clearly establish how you envisage the structural operation of the internal and external evaluation teams.

■ When the **evaluation requirements** have been established, you must clearly define who the owner of the evaluation and its ensuing report is. You should also include a reference to the requirements **on the independence and ethical behaviour** of the evaluators to avoid any sort of conflict of interest when key actors and informants are approached during the course of the evaluation work.

■ If you request an itemised list of the main **evaluation budget** items, you can separately assess the alternatives offered for each. In this regard, the disaggregation of the investment envisaged for fieldwork is essential because this will give you an idea of the proposal's likelihood of applying a participatory focus to the evaluation.

■ When establishing the **deadline for the reception of proposals**, you should consider that the evaluation teams need time if they are to put together high-quality proposals and that the time required is directly proportional to the complexity of the evaluation proposed.

■ The most common proposal **scoring parameters** are the technical quality of the proposed methodology, the qualifications and experience of the evaluation team and the economic proposal to conduct the evaluation. These and any others contemplated should be clearly written into the ToR to guide the evaluators' proposals and to guarantee the transparency of the entire evaluation process. The following section, focusing on the last stage of the evaluation design providing a few guidelines on the application of the criteria on which selection of the evaluation team is based, may help in defining these.

■ The ToR should also reflect the **quality criteria** to be used in judging the evaluation work (process and results).

Once the ToR have been drafted, make sure that they at least reflect the purpose and describe the process and outputs of the evaluation designed. Following is a checklist which will help you to review the content of the ToR (**Figure 30**).

Figure 30. ToR checklist.

	Yes	Needs improvement	No
Would anyone reading the ToR be able to identify the object, objectives, scope, type of evaluation, users and format of the report(s) requested?			
Are the evaluation questions and criteria clearly stated?			
Have the products to be prepared and their delivery deadlines been specified?			
Have the minimum requirements demanded of the evaluation team been defined?			

The ToR document must be sent to the members of the Reference Group (or other participatory structure constituted for the evaluation) for review and comment thus ensuring that the terms of reference meet the needs for information already identified. Once agreement is reached, the document can be considered finalised.

By the end of this Stage, you should have the following:

■ A document which clearly and accurately specifies the nature and content of the evaluation which is validated by those taking part in the evaluation process.

■ If your organisation is going to conduct the evaluation internally, this document will serve as your Work Plan.

■ If you are going to outsource it or conduct a mixed evaluation, this document contains the Terms of Reference which will guide the evaluation teams when putting together their proposals.

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Stage 6. Selection of the evaluation team

In this last stage, your task is to choose the most suitable team to conduct the evaluation study you have just designed. The steps presented here are for an external or mixed evaluation model. In other words, implying the engagement of an external team of evaluators to undertake all or part of the work. However, if you have opted for an internal evaluation, this section will likewise guide you in your selection of the technicians who will form part of the evaluation team within your organisation.

You will also need to properly apply the criteria which will allow you to select the most suitable proposal and which you already defined when you compiled your ToR. In this section you will find some guidelines to help you apply these criteria. We also suggest the creation of a Selection Committee to take charge of assessing each of the proposals received based on these criteria.

6.1 Selection Committee

The duties of the Selection Committee include the analysis and assessment of the different proposals received to conduct the evaluation. In so doing, it must correctly apply the defined selection criteria and choose the proposal which best adapts to the evaluation process you have designed.

You can turn to your Reference Group when putting together the Selection Committee but it could also be very useful to bring independent evaluation experts and other groups of actors not represented on the Reference Group on board. Bear in mind that this selection process must ensure the legitimacy and credibility of the team you engage to conduct the evaluation and the creation of a participatory Selection Committee, together with transparency in the definition of the proposal assessment criteria, are the key elements guaranteeing this objective.

6.2 Parameters for scoring proposals

The criteria to be followed in selecting the evaluation proposal which best meets your needs are laid down in the ToR. Following are some suggestions to help you correctly apply the most common criteria: technical quality of the proposed methodology, qualifications and experience of the evaluation team and the economic proposal.

■ Technical quality of the proposed methodology

Examination of the quality and reliability of the methodology should be one of the main elements considered in choosing the evaluation team. This assessment must consider the ability of each proposal to answer the evaluation questions laid down in the Terms of Reference.

Owing to the complexity of issuing a values judgement on the quality of the proposed methodology, you may want to consult with or incorporate experts into the Selection Committee.

When assessing the fieldwork techniques which the evaluators propose to use, you should make sure that the techniques, tools and instruments minimise the work load put on collaborating beneficiaries and key

Figure 31. Control table to check the suitability of the proposed methodology and its adaptation to the target.

	Yes	No	Needs improvement
Does the evaluation team have or plan to develop the technical and organisational capacity needed to apply the proposed methodology?			
Can evaluators guarantee an adequate response to the evaluation questions?			
Do they have the expertise needed to meet expectations in terms of the recommendations expected from the evaluation?			
Is there enough time and money for the methodology and techniques proposed? (if evaluation deadlines and budget were left open)			
Are there other alternatives which, with fewer resources, offer comparable or superior information in terms of quantity and quality?			

informants. It is also important to assess the appropriateness of the time frame for the application of these instruments based on the availability of collaborating persons, units and entities.

The control table set out in **Figure 31** will help you assess the technical quality of the methodology proposed by each evaluator.

■ Experience and qualifications of the evaluation team

There are an increasing number of organisations specialising in evaluation (consulting agencies, universities, research centres and independent experts) and the choice of one or another entity or team will have implications in terms of the results of the work. Consideration of the following factors will help you to take the best decision for your evaluation:

> **Makeup of the teams.** The makeup of cooperation intervention evaluation teams has typically been polarised by the selection of development cooperation specialists or specialists in methodology and evaluation techniques. You should consider that, providing that evaluators possess adequate knowledge and evaluation skills, it is very important for the evaluation team to be able to understand and have insight into the problems of international cooperation and the specific problems of your intervention.

> **Local personnel.** Evaluation promoters and managers increasingly favour the engagement of local entities or the integration of professionals from the recipient countries in the evaluation teams. This trend is consistent with the principles of ownership, empowerment and local capacity-building promoted at international cooperation

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fora. In any case, it goes without saying that their greater familiarity with the context of the problems dealt with in the intervention, together with better adaptation and understanding of the reality being evaluated, gives these professionals an important edge over evaluators from donor countries.

> **The involvement of the evaluation team** in the work proposed is just one more element enabling you to assess its suitability. This will be evident from observing the number of team members, their profile (junior or senior), duties and each member's dedication.

■ Economic proposal

While the economic proposal submitted by the evaluators should not be given the same weight as the other two criteria, it does take on relative importance when compared with the other economic offers. misma importancia que los otros dos criterios, sí toma mayor sentido cuando se hace desde un punto de vista relativo, en comparación con el conjunto de ofertas económicas.

In practice...

The OECD's DAC makes the following observations with regard to the conditions which members of the evaluation team should meet:

■ They should be sensitive to beliefs, local uses and customs, religious practices, gender roles, disabilities, age and ethnic group and must consider the implications of these characteristics throughout the implementation of the evaluation.

■ They should ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process and are responsible for ensuring that evaluation activities are independent, impartial and accurate.

■ They must respect people's right to furnish confidential information by protecting their anonymity as provided for by law or as requested by the informant.

(DAC 2006: 6 and 7)

The United Nations Evaluation Group has included the expertise evaluators should have in its evaluation standards. These include:

■ being able to demonstrate their experience and degree of expertise in the design and management of evaluations including those involving several actors; the design and conducting of surveys; social science research; and the planning, monitoring and management of projects, programmes and/or policies;

■ possessing technical-methodological experience and/or knowledge including specific skills in data collection and analysis in areas such as human rights, gender, results-based management and participatory approaches;

■ possessing the personal skills needed for evaluation: teamwork and cooperation, the ability to assemble different actors, communication, capacity for analysis and synthesis and negotiating skills.

By the end of this Stage you should have:

- Appointed the Selection Committee which will take charge of assessing the proposals submitted by the external evaluation teams.
- Selected the team entrusted with conducting the evaluation.

PART II

Phase 2:
Implementing the evaluation study

Phase II: Implementing the evaluation study

Upon completion of Phase I you will have decided and planned the evaluation process and following the Stage just described you will have selected the team and the most suitable proposal for the evaluation which you have designed. Now we are at phase II where you must co-ordinate the implementation of the evaluation study with the evaluation team.

Your duties as evaluation manager can be divided into two stages: establish the final Work Plan and supervise its implementation. Furthermore, you must be constantly aware of your responsibility as concerns two key factors which will determine the success or failure of the evaluation: ensure the participation of all stakeholders while guaranteeing fluid communication and supervise work quality.

Figure 32 is a graphic representation of this second phase of the evaluation process. As you can see, the different steps comprising each Stage and the outputs which will be generated are represented as well. Fostering participation and quality control are represented as cross-cutting duties which should be carried out continuously.

Figure 32. Implementing the evaluation study

Supervise process and output quality	Stage 7: Establish the final Work Plan		Foster participation and ensure flow of information
	Initial meeting ➡ Final Work Plan		
	Stage 8: Manage the implementation of the Work Plan		
	Office study ➡ Preliminary report		
	Fieldwork ➡ Field report		
	Analysis and conclusions ➡ Final report		
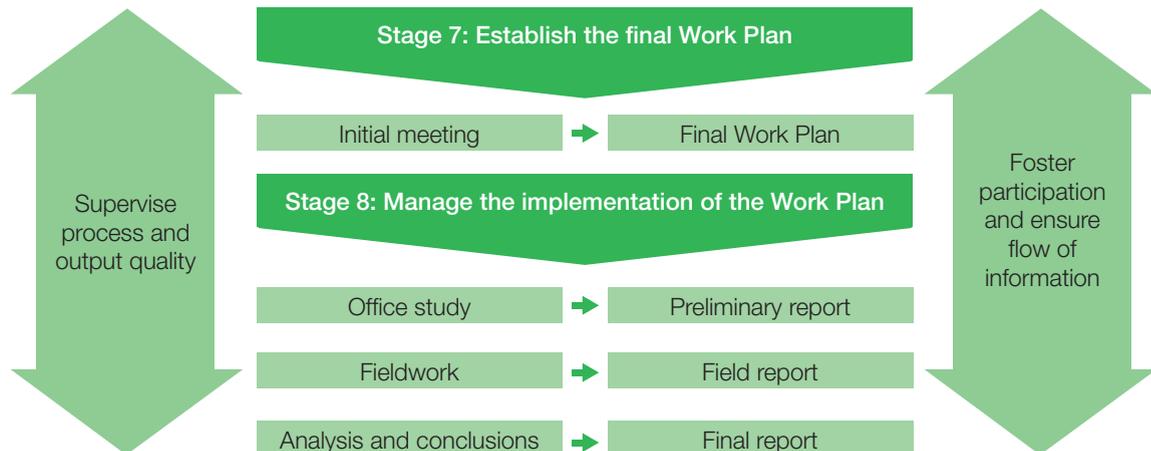
Source: Created in-house

Promote participation, ensure communication flows and process quality supervision

Owing to their importance in guaranteeing the success of the evaluation, these two cross-cutting elements require your attention throughout the evaluation process and will require the performance of the following tasks:

Promote participation and ensure communication flows

It is very important that participation be effective and balanced during this second Phase. Bear in mind that now is when most of the information is gathered and the evaluation's main products are compiled. This means that those involved in the intervention should be able to express their opinion and remain informed as to what is being done in the evaluation process and you should safeguard the independence of the process.

You should pay particular attention to local counterparts and institutions and to beneficiaries and, within the latter, under-represented groups. Typically these actors encounter greater difficulty getting involved and gaining access to the results of the evaluation despite the fact that their participation and opinions are very important.

In successive stages we will list the actions you will have to implement to ensure participation and guarantee the flow of communication. These will be marked with the symbol **(C)**. Here are some examples:

- Inform the Reference Group of any relevant event taking place during the implementation of the evaluation study.

- Pass the information being generated on to the rest of the stakeholders.

- When feasible, facilitate participation using novel IT and communication technologies.

- Whenever possible, schedule information meetings at the place where the intervention is being implemented.

- Make necessary information available to conduct the evaluation.

- Provide the evaluation team with all information related with the direct management of the project and its implementation.

- Make sure that evaluators furnish sufficient information on the principal milestones in the evaluation process such as, for example, problems which could lead to delays.

- Coordinate the flow of communication with the Reference Group.

Supervise process and its outputs quality

Based on the conditions laid down in the ToR and subsequently agreed to in the final Work Plan which will be addressed below, you should constantly check the quality of the evaluators' work making sure that the study is conducted in accordance with what has been agreed and that the products meet specifications and are submitted on time. This quality control should be carried out throughout the entire evaluation road. In the following Stages we present the actions which should be undertaken to verify the quality of this Phase and these will be marked with the symbol **(Q)**.

In order to implement this quality control you must check:

- That the work undertaken by the evaluation team indeed meets the expectations, needs and requirements of the key agents.

- The quality of the proposed methodology and its match to the type of evaluation and criteria laid down in the reference documents (technical and administrative specifications, if relevant).

- That completion of the consulting contract (in the case of an external evaluation) is in line with the timetable, personnel requirements and technical quality described in the technical and administrative specification document, if appropriate, or, in any case, with the terms of the contract.

- The accuracy and truthfulness of the information, sufficient access to information sources and relevant

documentation and the reliability and appropriateness of the instruments and methodologies used for its processing and analysis. In order to facilitate evaluation quality control and validity, you can ask the evaluation team to provide you with the sources of information used, especially primary sources, or the tools and instruments applied (questionnaires or interview scripts, etc.). You can thus check the validity of the information generated and its ability to respond to the evaluation questions.

- That the evaluators' performance adheres to what has been agreed and that their interactions with the actors takes place within a proper work climate with due respect for local culture, beliefs and interests.

- That reports and all other evaluation products are thorough, clear and easy to interpret and avoid values judgements where a clear and systematic causal relationship cannot be established between the object of the analysis, the information gathered and the conclusions and recommendations.

- The effectiveness and seamlessness of the communication and coordination mechanisms of all personnel involved (work meetings, revision and approval of the different documents, availability of the necessary information).

In the following Stage, marking the starting point of this Phase II of the evaluation cycle, you must jointly establish the final Work Plan with the evaluation team selected.

①　②　③　④　⑤　⑥　**7**　⑧　⑨　⑩

Stage 7. Establish the final Work Plan

Once aware of the cross-cutting duties you must assume throughout all of this second Phase, you can begin this Stage whose main objective is to establish the Work Plan with the already-selected evaluation team.

The first step is to organise a meeting with this team to discuss the basis of the work to be done as per the ToR and the evaluation proposal chosen. The goal of this meeting is to compare the two documents in order to reach a shared understanding between what you want to learn from the evaluation and what can actually be achieved. The final result should be a mutual agreement on the evaluation process to be carried out which will be reflected in the final Work Plan[19]. The participation of the members of the Reference Group is important at this session.

Following are some of the points which should be covered at this first session together with the guidelines which should be followed so that the Work Plan you draw up meets your requirements.

■ Formally report the commencement of the evaluation

This is the time to inform those involved in the intervention that the study is about to begin thus setting the stage for their participation and involvement in the rest of the process.

■ Review substantial modifications which need to be included in the Work Plan

Substantial modifications affecting the requirements of your evaluation may have been made between the design of the evaluation and the drafting of the ToR and these must be taken into consideration when putting together the final Work Plan. Remember that changes in the proposal made by the evaluation team (based on the ToR) affecting either the content of the evaluation (objectives, criteria, questions, methodology) or human, time or economic resources, must be negotiated and their possible repercussions considered.

■ Discuss and adjust the proposed methodology and techniques

Regardless of whether you established specifications regarding the methodology and techniques to use or left this option open to the evaluators, you now have the opportunity to discuss with them the suitability of the alternative chosen to ensure a thorough and fair evaluation free of bias and meeting expectations.

You should assess the suitability of the information gathering and analysis techniques in guaranteeing the accuracy, validity and reliability of the results based on the questions and evaluation criteria established and which can now be reconsidered together with the evaluation team, prioritising the most relevant and eliminating those which cannot be achieved.

It is also important to take advantage of this point in time to reach agreements with them on their direct participation in information gathering and analysis duties by, for example, introducing the team during interviews, co-participating in the latter, forming part of working groups, etc.

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19. For evaluations with external technical assistance, even though from an administrative standpoint the Terms of Reference form the regulatory framework, at this point you should consider that the option selected be restricted to the technical and economic proposal chosen.

■ **Review the work calendar and submission dates.**

You should also set the work calendar with the evaluation team during this first meeting, providing details on the stages of the evaluation, its estimated duration and the delivery dates of the agreed outputs.

Typically, the work entails analysis of the documents available on the intervention, compiling of data, gathering of information in situ, analysis of the latter, drafting of the evaluation reports and submission of results. In line with the procedure established by the DGPOLDE, this Handbook classifies this work into three groups: office study, fieldwork and the compiling of the evaluation report[20].

Figure 33 serves as an example of the most common stages, tasks and products covered by an evaluation study.

Figure 33. Draft timeline for the Work Plan

Stages	Tasks	Deadlines												Deliverables
Office Study	Documentary analysis	■	■	■										Preliminary Report(s)
	Design of tools			■										
	Drafting of preliminary report(s)			■										
	Discussion in Reference Group.				■									
	Delivery of the final preliminary report				■									
Field Work	Field visits					■	■							Field Report
	Interviews with actors					■	■							
	Discussion groups					■	■							
	Drafting of the field report							■						
	Revision of the field report							■						
Evaluation Report	Compiling of the draft report								■	■				Draft and Final Report
	Discussion in Reference Group										■			
	Delivery of final report											■	■	
	Submission of results												■	

Source: Created in-house

①　②　③　④　⑤　⑥　**7**　⑧　⑨　⑩

During the design and review of the Work Plan and time line you should remember that the delivery of each output entails a series of tasks which all require a certain amount of time. Of these, special mention should be made of the manager's or managing team's review of the evaluation; the latter's remittal to the members of the Reference Group; the compiling of contributions to be done by the evaluation team and, where appropriate, their integration into the final document.

■ Define result dissemination mechanisms

Although the procedure for the dissemination and incorporation of evaluation results will be implemented during the following phase, we would advise taking advantage of this initial meeting to come to an agreement with the evaluation team on how to transmit to all agents the general lessons learned in the process and the mechanisms which will be put into action to guarantee feedback for planning and management. This will give evaluators greater insight into how their work will be used and will help them to better adapt it to their needs.

■ Establish coordination and communication mechanisms with the evaluation team

And lastly, do not forget that your relationship with the evaluators must be characterised by mutual respect and trust (UNEG, 2005:15) and this is achieved by establishing suitable coordination and communication mechanisms. In this connection, you must define the roles of each agent taking part in the implementation of the evaluation study and define the communication channels to be used and the contact persons to resolve any problems which could arise. When doing this, remember that issues will arise during the evaluation implementation process which were not envisaged at the outset and these will require adjustments and negotiation. That is why it is essential for both teams to remain open and flexible.

The result of all of these agreements should be reflected in the final Work Plan drafted based on the initial proposal submitted by the evaluation team and further developed in line with the ToR containing the design of the evaluation. This document must be submitted to the Reference Group for its final approval which is why we recommend that its members or their representatives take part in this initial meeting with the evaluation team.

By the end of this stage you must make sure that:

An agreement has been reached with the evaluation team on the conditions and terms of the implementation of the evaluation. This agreement must be reflected in the final Work Plan agreed to among the members of the evaluation Reference Group and must at least cover the following elements:

- Evaluation questions and criteria.

- The evaluation methodology and techniques to be applied.

- The products to be delivered.

- The work time line.

- The channels of communication and coordination with the evaluation team.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**

Stage 8. Manage the implementation of the Work Plan

During this Stage, a Work Plan will be put into action to implement the evaluation study, a task basically performed by the evaluators. As mentioned at the beginning of this Phase, you must constantly ensure the participation of all of the stakeholders involved in the evaluation and the quality of the process. Moreover, as evaluation manager, you will be playing a vital role in ensuring that the evaluators have access to the information they need to do their job.

Following is a description of the tasks of the evaluation team throughout the process along with some advice to help you fulfil your duties as evaluation manager.

8.1. Office Study

The office study is a preliminary detailed analysis, conducted by the evaluation team, of all of the information available on the intervention. As the evaluators sift through this documentation they will begin to plan and develop the tools and techniques they will later use to gather additional information in the field.

Following are the main tasks of the evaluation team:

Tasks of the evaluation team:

- Examine the existing documentation on the intervention: programme documents, databases, monitoring reports, preliminary studies, former evaluations, etc.

- Devise indicators to assess the main variables and aspects defining each question of the evaluation.

- Identify the evaluation's key informants.

- Identify the primary information or documentation to be requested from the entities and actors involved in the intervention under scrutiny.

- Design the tools and instruments needed to facilitate the standardised compiling of information and its analysis (sampling, questionnaires, interview scripts, case study selection, etc.).

- Submit requests for support or accompaniment at certain key moments in the process: letters of presentation, credentials, etc. This information may be remitted from the evaluation managing authority to facilitate the evaluation team's access.

Providing that provisions are made in the ToR or a later agreement was included in the Work Plan, the evaluation team must submit to you a **Preliminary (or mid-term) Evaluation Report** reflecting the results of this initial analysis and the methodological tools and indicators it will use to gather and process the rest of the information. This report will be considered a draft until it is submitted, agreed and approved, if relevant, by the Reference Group and all appropriate contributions and clarifications have been made.

As evaluation manager, you will be responsible for undertaking the following tasks:

TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY THE EVALUATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

■ **(C)** Verify whether the authorities of the partner country and the corresponding entities have been informed through proper channels of the commencement and scope of the evaluation; of the evaluation team's future fieldwork; of its conclusion date; and of the date by which final results should be submitted. (EuropeAid Co-operation Office, "Fase de terreno. Preparación". http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_es.htm).

■ **(C)** If deemed necessary, the evaluation manager or managing team could make a prospective visit in order to verify the preparation for the evaluators' future fieldwork mission with a view to making contact and informing in situ about the evaluation's objective and scope, establishing a preliminary future work agenda, assessing the concurrence of external factors which could affect the implementation of the evaluation, etc. This visit may be documented in a "practical guidelines handbook" intended for the evaluation team to provide the latter with informa-

tion on relevant aspects for consideration during fieldwork.

■ **(C)** Provide the evaluation team with access to the available information in the intervention under evaluation. In so doing, you may find it useful to turn to the documentation matrix you compiled for the design of the evaluation.

■ **(C)** Hold a meeting with the evaluation team where the latter will present the model for the Preliminary Report which they must submit once the office study has been completed.

■ **(Q)** Supervise the preliminary evaluation report and check that it at least contains: a list of key informants and how their participation or consultation services will be arranged and additional information requirements which the evaluation team will need satisfied during the course of the evaluation study. Among the latter we can identify the following: contact details of the entities and actors involved, basic data corresponding to other already evaluated cooperation projects or interventions, an interview and meeting agenda for encounters with key informants, etc.

■ **(Q)** Guarantee the participation of Reference Group members by inviting them after remitting the draft preliminary report. Submission of this draft by the evaluators facilitates the gathering of input and organisation of the fieldwork. It is especially important to take minutes of the content and progression of the meeting, noting the subjects discussed and agreements reached and to forward any contributions received to the evaluation team.

8.2. Fieldwork

During the fieldwork (which could be after or at the same time as the office study), the evaluation team travels to the venue of the intervention to gather information in situ. This is the time for evaluators to contact the key informants and directly receive the benefit of their perception and assessment of the intervention. This information supplements the documentary analysis and serves as the basis on which to judge and assess the intervention. Upon conclusion of the fieldwork and before leaving, it is important for the evaluators to schedule a final meeting with beneficiaries, local partners and representatives of the key informant groups to get them involved and to discuss with them the preliminary results and conclusions of the visit.

During fieldwork it is essential to organise participatory activities with counterparts, institutional representatives and beneficiary groups. Given that we are evaluating development cooperation interventions whose ultimate purpose is to have an impact on poverty reduction and to comply with the MDGs, it is especially important to measure the degree of satisfaction of beneficiaries by means of participatory techniques and tools.

Following are the most common tasks undertaken by an evaluation team during fieldwork:

Once again, if provided for in the ToR or if agreed at a subsequent negotiation meeting with the evaluators, the latter should draft and submit a **Fieldwork report** containing information on the objectives of the visits,

Task of the evaluation team:

- Engage key informants in consultation and interviews and, if relevant, polls or discussion groups.
- Analyse the results obtained from the information gathered.
- Return the product of the team's reflections after analysing the information gathered to beneficiaries, local partners and key informants.

the institutions and persons contacted, the main data compiled and a preliminary assessment of the information gathered.

As evaluation manager, you will be responsible for undertaking the following tasks:

①　②　③　④　⑤　⑥　⑦　**❽**　⑨　⑩

TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY THE EVALUATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

■ **(C)** During the days leading up to the arrival of the evaluation team, you can make prospection visits to the geographical area of the intervention for the purpose of preparing and finalising the evaluation team's meeting and interview agenda.

■ **(C)** Make sure that these prospection visits do not become a work burden for on-site agents. That is why it is important for you to select the entities and individuals you will visit. It is better not to interfere in the implementation of the participatory methodologies so as not to confuse the roles of the manager and the evaluator and to facilitate the objectivity of the resulting opinions.

■ **(C)** Introduce the evaluation team to the actors involved in the evaluation, especially the members of the Reference Group and those who will be interviewed during the process. You can do this personally or by means of letters of introduction, interviews or by organising field visits.

■ **(Q)** Review the report received from the evaluation team once the fieldwork has concluded and send it on to the Reference Group.

■ **(C)** Request and compile, as needed, the information which the evaluators were unable to obtain through their fieldwork.

■ **(C)** Make sure that they receive support in compiling information while conducting fieldwork. To this end we recommend that you:

> Remember that occasionally you will have to intervene directly with an actor to encourage him/her to provide the evaluators with the required information.

> Make sure that the techniques, tools and instruments they are planning to use are adapted to the culture, customs and expertise of the informants who will be interviewed.

> Assess the appropriateness of the moment the evaluators have chosen to compile information in terms of the availability of key informants.

> Try to devise the visit so that the evaluators' work interferes as little as possible with the tasks and activities of the key informants so that the gathering of information does not require a great effort on their part.

> Ensure that evaluators respect the right of individuals to furnish information confidentially.

8.3. Evaluation Report

The evaluation team must draft a final report with the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned during the implementation of this Stage. **Figure 34** illustrates DAC's definition of these four levels of evaluation results.

Figure 34. Levels of evaluation results

Findings / facts	Assertions based on documented facts about the evaluated intervention.
Conclusions	Success/failure factors of the intervention evaluated based on the data gathered and on analysis and interpretation by means of a transparent chain of statements.
Recommendations	Proposals arising from the evaluation conclusions for the purpose of improving the quality of the intervention evaluated by consolidating the latter's strengths and reducing its weaknesses.
Lessons learned	Generalisations based on the concrete evaluation experience applicable to broader situations highlighting strong and weak points in the preparation, design and implementation which affect the performance, results and impact of the intervention and identify good or bad practices.

Source: Adapted from DAC (2002).

As the arrows indicate, each of the levels of results presented in **Figure 34** entails a deeper degree of reflection based on the preceding level thus comprising a sequence of systematic reasoning and judgement of the evaluation. The evaluation team must compile a **final draft report** in accordance with the structure and content instructions agreed to in the ToR and the final Work Plan and base it on the results of this analysis clearly identifying and differentiating findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. Following is a checklist of the minimum content an evaluation report should include:

- **Executive summary** of the evaluation containing the essence of the information found in the report with special emphasis on the main results, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

- **Introduction** presenting the purpose of the evaluation, the questions and the main results.

- **Description of the intervention evaluated** highlighting its objectives and logical planning structure, a brief history and background, organisation and man-

agement, stakeholders and the social, economic, political and institutional context surrounding the intervention.

- **Analysis of the information compiled** responding to the previously established evaluation questions and criteria organised in accordance with the comprehensive evaluation approach proposed in this Handbook: **design, processes, results and impacts evaluation**.

- **Results** of the evaluation presenting the facts revealed in relation with the questions of the evaluation and the interpretation of those facts.

- **Conclusions** relating to the evaluation criteria established and quality standards.

- **Lessons learned**, taken from the general conclusions, identify best practices and can be extrapolated to other broader contexts of Cooperation Policy.

- **Recommendations** arising from the evaluation focusing on the improvement of the intervention evalu-

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10

ated in the form of specific instructions to enhance the design, implementation, management and/or results proceedings and impact of the actions.

- **Annexes** which should include the ToR, details of the methodology proposed, the information gathering tools applied and other elements which can facilitate understanding of the evaluation process.

The aim of the draft report, the step prior to the Final Report, is to allow you and the members of the Reference Group to make contributions thus ensuring that the evaluators have the necessary freedom and independence to judge the intervention in the light of verifiable facts and data, undertaking their work without repercussions for their professional development (UNEG, 2006:6).

The advantage of having this draft is that you can:

- "Prepare" the different actors in the event that the results found are not very encouraging (DFID, 2005:30).

- Promote acceptance of the recommendations and hence their effective incorporation.

- Expedite ownership of the lessons learned by the target population, entities and institutions.

Based on this draft, and once the evaluators have received your input and observations as well as those of the members of the Reference Group, they should draft the **final evaluation report** and deliver it on time and in due form in accordance with the ToR and the agreed final Work Plan.

In short, the main tasks which the evaluation team should undertake in compiling the Final Report are as follows:

Tasks of the evaluation team:

- Draft and deliver the draft evaluation report in line with pre-established structure and content specifications.

- Submit and discuss the draft evaluation report with the other stakeholders.

- Incorporate the inputs deemed relevant.

- Draft the final evaluation report.

As evaluation manager, you will undertake the following main tasks:

TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY THE EVALUATION MANAGEMENT UNIT

- **(C)** Receive the Draft Final Report and distribute it to the actors involved.

- **(C)** Organise a meeting, if deemed appropriate, between the members of the evaluation team and those of the Reference Group to introduce, review and/or discuss its content.

- **(C)** Channel the contributions and inputs of the actors and transfer them to the evaluation team.

- **(Q)** Receive the final report and substantiate its quality: check that it is in line with the agreed structure and content, that information needs are met and that recommendations coincide with the guidelines laid down in the ToR.

■ **(C)** Submit the final report to the Reference Group for approval.

■ **(C)** Transfer the final report to the body which requested the evaluation (promoter of the evaluation).

Criteria whereby to verify the technical quality of the Final Draft Report

To verify the quality of the final evaluation report you can check whether it meets the nine evaluation criteria proposed by the DGPOLDE (**Figure 35** and in greater detail in **Annex I)** and based on those of the European Commission which, in turn, adhere to the DAC evaluation standards.

Figure 35. Quality of the final evaluation report

Having regard to the following criteria, the report is considered:	Excellent	Very good	Good	Insufficient	Unacceptable
1. Compliance with requirements – responds to the evaluation questions: Does the evaluation adequately respond to the questions formulated in the ToR?					
2. Context analysis: Have the ultimate objectives of the intervention been studied, its achievements, results and global impacts, including its interactions with other policies and its unforeseen consequences?					
3. Justification for the methodology used: Is the evaluation methodology suitable? Is it tailored such that it furnishes the necessary information (with validity limits) to respond to the main questions on the evaluation?					
4. Reliability of the data: Were primary and secondary data collected or selected in a proper manner? Do they offer an adequate degree of reliability?					
5. Soundness of the analysis: Are the cause-effect relationships between the intervention and its consequences accounted for? Is there coherence and logical sequence between fact and assessment; assessment and conclusions; conclusions and recommendations? Were the steps of the analysis made explicit and their validity limits specified?					
6. Credibility of findings: Are results justified by data analysis? Are the findings made in the analysis reliable and balanced? Do they suitably reflect the reality depicted by the data and documented test elements, on the one hand, and the reality of the intervention as perceived by actors and beneficiaries, on the other?					

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Having regard to the following criteria, the report is considered:	Excellent	Very good	Good	Insufficient	Unacceptable
7. Validity of conclusions: Are the conclusions arising from the analysis supported by facts and analyses easily identifiable in the rest of the report preventing bias or personal feelings? Have limits and context been established in terms of the validity of the conclusions?					
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Have recommendations been formulated in a clear, concise manner? Are recommendations linked to conclusions and are they based on the analysis undertaken? Are they balanced and unbiased? Are they detailed enough to be specifically applied?					
9. Clarity of the report: Is the report easy to read and is it logically structured? Does it come with a brief summary accurately reflecting the content? Are there annexes focusing on specialised concepts and technical demonstrations clearly referenced throughout the text?					
With due consideration for the specific contextual limitations characterising this evaluation, the report is considered:					

Source: DGPOLDE. Adapted from EuropeAid Co-operation Office (http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_es.htm) and DAC (www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork)

And lastly, you must not wait to receive the final evaluation report to assess its quality. Remember that during this Stage you have already received some preliminary products from the evaluators, especially the preliminary evaluation report, the fieldwork report and the final draft report which can be reviewed in accordance with these quality criteria so that the evaluators can make any necessary corrections during the course of the implementation of the evaluation study. **By constantly verifying the quality of the process and its products, you can minimise the likelihood of inaccurate, insufficient or biased information being produced which fails to satisfy your expectations and avoid having to implement a contingency plan to resolve your differences with the evaluation team.**

As was indicated during the design phase of the evaluation, the criteria used to assess the work of the evaluators should be specified in the ToR. This enables the evaluation team to make an initial assessment of their work and results so as to better tailor them to your needs and requirements.

By the end of this stage you should have:

- The preliminary evaluation report (office study).
- The Fieldwork report.
- The draft evaluation report
- The final evaluation report

PART II

Phase 3:
Communicating results
and incorporating
lessons learned

Phase 3
Communication in the evaluation

Phase III: Communicating results and incorporating lessons learned

Upon completion of Phase II focused on the implementation of the evaluation study, the evaluation team submitted the results of its analysis in a final report which you received and this was approved by the Reference Group.

The aim now is to use these evaluation results correctly and this is one of the most important challenges you will face as the manager of a cooperation intervention evaluation.

Phase III, *Communicating of results and incorporating lessons learned*, closes the evaluation road with a series of activities designed to ensure that the results are received by all of the actors and that they satisfy the needs and demands expressed at the design Phase of the evaluation and increase the likelihood of the effective improvement of the intervention.

Before presenting the key aspects of this Phase, we would stress that the communication and dissemination of the evaluation results does not start now but should have been planned from the outset and promoted throughout the process in the form of ongoing feedback with the main stakeholders through the submission of preliminary findings and facilitating the incorporation of their input.

The following aspects should be considered to ensure that evaluation results are successfully used: their correlation to the demands for information raised by the actors, the quality of the communication strategy employed and the usefulness of the evaluation recommendations in sparking action ultimately resulting in the enhancement of Cooperation Policy.

■ **Correlation with demands raised**

A useful evaluation should at least respond to the questions it was designed to answer thus satisfying its underlying rationale and the aims of those who commissioned it and meeting the information needs of those who took part in the process. Therefore, the success of the evaluation is contingent upon the quality of its design and the degree to which it has been able to promote the participation of the actors and achieve results satisfying demands for information.

■ **Appropriateness of the communication strategy and the message**

If evaluation results are to be used, they must be accessible and easily understood by the interested actors and therefore a strategy should be implemented for the communication of results which not only considers the range of specific demands for information from these actors, but also differentiated messages and channels of communication.

■ **Suitability of the evaluation recommendations**

The best way an evaluation can promote improvement in Cooperation Policy is through its recommendations which can be incorporated into planning and spark ongoing improvement processes.

As evaluation manager you can facilitate the incorporation of recommendations insofar as you see that they

are proposed at the right time in a clear and specific manner making their implementation feasible. To this end, you need to establish an action plan designed to transform the lessons taken from the evaluation into a learning process which helps improve intervention planning and management.

In the preceding sections focusing on Phases I and II, useful instructions were suggested to help the evaluation to respond to the questions formulated by the stakeholders. During this Phase we deal with the key aspects which will help you design and implement an optimal communication strategy (Stage 9) and propose measures to ensure that learning generated through the evaluation is effectively applied to improving the planning and management of future cooperation interventions (Stage 10).

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ **9** ⑩

Stage 9. Communicating evaluation results

Once the implementation of the evaluation study has concluded, you must make sure that its products and results properly filter down to all actors and that the latter correctly interpret them in accordance with their needs and interests. Remember that the final objective is that these products and results be applied in their respective spheres of action in order to optimise use made of the evaluation and the benefits deriving therefrom.

If, during the evaluation design phase, the demands for information were indeed collected from the different groups of actors in line with the role played by each in the intervention (**Figure 17**) and they were made participants in the definition of the evaluation objectives, the likelihood of the usefulness of the results will now be greater.

You were also asked to define your expectations of the evaluation and this information will serve as the basis now at Stage 9 for the design of a results dissemination strategy or Communication Plan which will highlight the evaluation expectations of each of the actors (expected usefulness), specifying the most suitable channels of communication to enhance understanding and ownership. Following are the elements which should be considered in putting together the Communications Plan and the steps you will need to take to best implement it.

The ultimate success of the evaluation results dissemination strategy will not only depend upon how well you design and apply the Communications Plan during this Stage, but also on the efforts made to share the partial or preliminary evaluation results prior to this Phase[21].

You should keep two key elements in mind when designing the Communications Plan: proper identification of the expected usefulness of the evaluation by each group of actors and a good definition and use of the most appropriate channels and means of communication to deliver these results to them in the best possible way.

9.1. Identify usefulness expected by the different actors

If, during evaluation design, you properly identified the expected uses of the evaluation by each group of actors, it is very likely that now you will simply need to verify that the information gathered at that time is still valid in the light of the evaluation results and after the contacts made during the course of Phases I and II.

This section offers some general considerations regarding the expectations of each group which may help in verifying or specifying the analysis of the expected usefulness:

■ **Political decision-makers**

These actors are typically interested in information having to do with the results of the intervention which helps them to take decisions regarding approach modifications and whether to confirm or amend the strategic guidelines of new interventions or change the allocation of resources.

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21. By way of example, remember that we suggested undertaking results sharing activities upon conclusion of the evaluation team's fieldwork and the presentation of the draft evaluation report to the members of the Reference Group. One of the objectives of these activities (based on the participatory approach characterising the proposed evaluation processes) is to prepare the different groups of actors to receive and assimilate the evaluation results.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

■ Planners

Planners usually require general considerations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the design, implementation and results of each intervention in order to correct and improve the planning of new interventions. It is also important to give them information on lessons learned, best practices and success stories which they can subsequently apply to similar contexts.

■ Managers of the evaluated intervention

Managers usually depend on evaluation results to help them implement improvements in management, coordination with other actors or in their interactions with target group beneficiaries. They look for detailed information and have the expertise to interpret complex technical messages.

■ Funding institutions

These generally expect a rendering of accounts, i.e. a global and conclusive assessment of the intervention, especially in terms of the efficient use of resources.

■ Counterparts and local partners

Usually focus their interest on the potential of the evaluation and its results to promote their participation in the decision-making process, to build their capacity and to coordinate external aid.

■ The rest of the donor agencies

These are typically interested in carrying out similar or complementary experiences within the same territory and targeting the same group or sector or in extrapolating them to other contexts and therefore want to know the lessons learned and best practices arising from the evaluation.

■ Beneficiaries of the intervention

They normally expect the evaluation to enhance the transparency of management and heighten the effectiveness of the intervention. A concerted effort should be made to establish specific mechanisms for the purpose of communicating evaluation results to intervention beneficiaries given that they rarely receive any sort of compensation for their participation in the evaluation process (DFID, 2005:45) or any specific product tailored to their interests and problems.

■ The spanish civil society

Expects the evaluation to confer transparency on co-operation resource management and furnish information on the main activities and results achieved.

9.2. Means and channels of communication

Once you have verified the usefulness expected by each group of actors, and in the light of the products and results obtained from the evaluation, it is now time to think about the second key element of your Communication Plan: the most suitable communication mechanisms (means and channels).

The aim here should not be the production of multiple "a la carte" reports because this would increase the cost of the evaluation, but rather to identify the most suitable channels and messages for each of the groups of agents who are to receive the information.

Moreover, bear in mind that the use of specific communication mechanisms for certain groups of actors does not mean that any of them should be deprived

of a global presentation of the evaluation findings and thus have only a partial vision of the reality. The purpose of these mechanisms is simply to filter the information furnished to certain agents in order to avoid massive dissemination which could impede the interpretation, use and accessibility of the evaluation results.

Following are the means and channels of communication typically used to disseminate cooperation intervention evaluation results and, from among these and others deemed appropriate, you should choose the ones best adapted to the characteristics of the actors to whom you are delivering them.

WRITTEN PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

■ Evaluation report

It is becoming increasingly common for donor agencies and other actors to publish their evaluation reports[22]. This is the most tangible product of the evaluation and you should therefore make sure that it is drafted in clear language which is accessible to the recipients, avoiding overly technical terms and using graphic elements to facilitate comprehension and the swift identification and understanding of the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

■ Executive summary

The executive summary can be extremely useful because it offers the opportunity to adapt its content to the interests and needs for information of each of the key actors (DAC, 2001:11)[23]. It should be short and easily understandable but should not deprive its recipients of a global presentation of the evaluation results. It would also be a very good idea to publish the executive summary separately and translate it into at least the language of the partner country.

■ Informative leaflet

In order to broaden the dissemination coverage of your evaluation results you can publish and distribute leaflets focusing on the main aspects of the evaluation (typology, conclusions, recommendations). In view of the discretional nature typically characterising their distribution, do not forget to indicate in the leaflet how to obtain more detailed information.

■ News bulletins

Many agencies publish their own news bulletins and, if this is the case, these are a good alternative for the dissemination of the evaluation results. We also recommend that you include the products published in publication catalogue registries or information centres specialising in development.

■ Specialised journals

The last option we propose is to publish an article on the experience and results of your evaluation in a specialised journal. This alternative is an effective and economic way to reach out to the community of experts, academia and other specialised agents.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SEMINARS, CONFERENCES, MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

In many cases, oral reports are the best option to present the results of an evaluation. They are particularly useful in addressing certain target groups at any point in the evaluation: during its implementation to keep local partners informed as to progress being made; upon conclusion of the field visits to facilitate the sharing of results with beneficiaries and counterpart personnel; and at the end of the study in order to discuss results and recommendations or to transfer lessons learned from the experience. This is usually ef-

22. Today, all of the World Bank's evaluations are public and published, the Swedish agency (SIDA) has a series evaluation report publications and the same holds true for Spain with the reports commissioned by the DGPOLDE.

23. *Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability, Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness No 5. OECD. Paris. Cited at the OPE seminar.*

fective in transmitting results to actors who have little time to read lengthy reports.

NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

The Internet, intranet, e-mail, virtual discussion groups, digital media, etc. are low-cost channels of information and media with great distribution capacity which can be especially useful in disseminating evaluation results. A commonly used mechanism is to make your evaluation report accessible via a web page. It is also a good idea to e-mail all potential users when any evaluation product is published.

Publication of evaluation information in a digital database accessible via the Internet is a very powerful mechanism for the dissemination of your experience and results and also makes any type of consultation a great deal easier. Many agencies and organisations (including DAC) have specialised databases for this information (http://www.dac-evaluations-cad.org/abstracts_e.htm).

Moreover, the use of audiovisuals (documentary videos, multimedia presentations, etc.) will give you easer access to certain interest groups because this is an attractive format whereby the public can capture certain aspects which are difficult to pick up through a written report. These are particularly useful in giving actors in donor countries insight into the context in which the evaluation is taking place and in helping beneficiaries acquire a global understanding of its objectives, implementation and results.

OTHER MEDIA

And lastly, there are other tools for the presentation of evaluation results which, while not widely used, may be useful in certain contexts. For example, the publication of bilingual summaries of Reference Group meetings could help many specialised actors to acquire a deeper insight into some specific aspects having to do with participation and decision-making. Moreover, your evaluation experience can have important repercussions if you have the opportunity to present it at a seminar or international forum or if it is chosen as a case study at events such as these. Some organisations such as UNICEF and EuropeAid use case studies to train their work teams.

And finally, by way of example, **Figure 36** presents a proposal which will help you choose the communication mechanisms best adapted to each group of actors and the evaluation expectations you identified for each one.

Figure 36. Examples of communication mechanisms

GROUP OF ACTORS	USEFULNESS OF THE EVALUATION	COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS
POLITICAL DECISION-MAKERS	Facilitates decision making Legitimises interventions	Executive summaries Presentations
PLANNERS	Improved planning Identification of best practices	Evaluation report Presentations Databases
MANAGERS	Capacity building Facilitates management decision making Helps correct mistakes Enhances coordination and participation	In-house presentations Evaluation reports Participatory workshops
FUNDING INSTITUTIONS	Transparency Facilitates resource allocation decision making	Executive summaries Audiovisual material Presentations
LOCAL PARTNERS	Promotes their participation Capacity-building Aid coordination	Evaluation report Presentations
OTHER DONORS	Transfer of experiences Complementarity of actions	Executive summary of the report Presentations Internet and databases
BENEFICIARIES	Promotes their participation Capacity-building	Informative leaflets Presentations (workshops) Audiovisual material
SPANISH CIVIL SOCIETY	Transparency Information regarding development policy results	Audiovisual material Public presentations Informative leaflets

Source: Created in-house

Bear in mind that this table simply presents a proposal based on the experience and characteristics of each group of actors. When you design your Communication Plan, you will have to do so in accordance with the specific context of the evaluation, available resources and the nature and requirements of each actor involved.

In any case, the checklist proposed in **Figure 37** will help you check whether you have properly designed and implemented your evaluation result dissemination strategy.

Figure 37. Checklist

	Yes	Needs improvement	No
Have you thought about to whom, when and how to disseminate the evaluation results?			
Have you considered an array of media and channels of communication tailored to the needs and interests of each target audience?			
Is the message clear and does it answer the questions posed by the actors? Do they understand it and find it credible?			

Source: Stufellbeam (1987) and SIDA (2004)

By the end of this Stage, you should have:

■ Determined the strategy or Communication Plan which entails having identified:

> The audiences to which you want to send the results, conclusions and lessons learned from the evaluation.

> The message or messages you want to convey.

> The most suitable channels of communication for each audience.

> The moment at which the communication will be made.

■ Disseminated the results of your evaluation in line with the strategy designed.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ **10**

Stage 10. Incorporating lessons learned

At the same time that you are designing the Communications Plan to transmit the evaluation conclusions and results to each actor involved in the process, you should make sure that these translate into actions to improve the planning and management of future interventions. In this way you will close the comprehensive Cooperation Policy cycle.

You will have a dual responsibility at this final Stage of the evaluation process: to assist actors who have received the evaluation results to accurately interpret them and convert them into concrete actions aimed at improving the process and to pass this information on to the unit responsible for making sure that these actions are used to improve Cooperation Policy.

Figure 38 has been designed to support you in this process. It is an improvement sheet where you can register the evaluation recommendations with operational implications, your action proposal as evaluation manager, the actors who should take charge of implementing them, an improvement programme agreed with these actors and the corresponding follow up to the effective implementation of these improvements.

Figure 38. Improvement Plan sheet for the incorporation of recommendations

Improvement Plan: incorporation of lessons taken from the experience	
Recommendation of the evaluation	
Administrative recommendation	
Design	
Process	
Results and Impacts	
Other	
Receiving unit	
Response from the receiving unit	
Improvement action	

①　②　③　④　⑤　⑥　⑦　⑧　⑨　**10**

Deadline			
Follow-up	**Satisfactory** ☐	**Needs improvement** ☐	**Insufficient** ☐
	Date:		
	Evaluator:		
	Observations:		

Definitions

- **Evaluation recommendation.** This section should be a summary of the final report recommendation you intend to implement.

- **Administrative recommendation.** This section features the adaptation of the recommendation made by the evaluation managing unit and its transfer to the corresponding managing body for application. These administrative recommendations may refer to any of the following categories (with the possibility of adding others as required by the nature of the evaluation).

- **Receiving unit.** The managing body receiving the administrative recommendation and which is responsible for implementing it.

- **Response from the receiving unit.** This section includes the response of the receiving unit to the administrative recommendation, the said unit briefly addressing the degree to which, in the light of prevailing circumstances, it can act on the recommendations within its management cycle or in future management cycles. Here it is important to establish realistic objectives allowing for the construction of verifiable indicators to monitor progress and in some way measure the results or improvements achieved. This section should answer the question: What do I want and what am I able to achieve?

- **Improvement Plan.** In this section the management bodies succinctly describe how they plan to achieve the objectives proposed. In short, it must respond to the question: How can I get from my current situation to the target situation?

- **Follow-up.** In this section the unit ultimately responsible for the evaluation and the management bodies must jointly come up with a set of indicators whereby to monitor the achievement of the defined objectives. In short, it should answer the following questions: Are we doing (have we done) things properly? and, Have the recommendations implemented generated the expected improvements? An example of an indicator would be the number of recommendations satisfactorily incorporated out of the total number of recommendations set out in the improvement plan.

Source: DGPOLDE

The following steps should be taken during the course of Stage 10 to be able to fill in the sheets corresponding to each of the actors who can benefit from the evaluation recommendations:

■ We first of all advise you to analyse those report recommendations which require an operational response (Evaluation recommendation), to think about what specific actions this response implies (Administrative recommendations) and finally, to identify what actor or group of actors should be responsible for carrying them out (Receiving unit).

■ Then, once making sure that the actors identified have received the evaluation report and have adequately interpreted it, you should distribute the improvement sheet to each one with the corresponding recommendation and operational proposal. In the proposal you should indicate whether it refers to the design phase of the intervention, to its implementation and management process or the final results phase.

■ The sheet should have an open field where the receiving unit of the improvement action can express its opinion by challenging, clarifying or supplementing your operational proposal (Response of the receiving unit).

■ Based on your initial proposal responding to the evaluators' recommendation and the response of the receiving unit, you should invite and support the latter in the design of concrete actions to put these recommendations into practice (Improvement action). The receiving unit should also establish a time frame within which to undertake each action (Deadline).

■ Once the units receiving the evaluation recommendations have defined their improvement commitment and have reflected this on the improvement sheet, these should be sent to the unit responsible for co-ordination and monitored and you must make sure that the commitments agreed to with each actor are indeed fulfilled and translate into effective improvements in Cooperation Policy. To that end, the improvement sheet should have a field for the monitoring of each action proposed.

In practice:

■ To ensure that the receiving units translate evaluation recommendations into specific actions, we recommend that you design an incentive structure to motivate each actor.

■ Monitoring of the improvement sheets could itself be an incentive because it shows up those actors who have not implemented the improvements they are responsible for within the agreed time limit.

■ There are other ways to provide incentive for the implementation of improvements such as a positive assessment from funding institutions for those entities fulfilling the evaluation recommendations they were assigned or the establishment, within the intervention's budget, of an "effectiveness reserve clause" which would only be lifted once the entity has assumed all of its commitments.

Feedback seminar organised by the OPE. 30/03/04

In some cases, especially when evaluation recommendations give rise to multiple improvement actions, the information contained on the sheets targeting each actor may be transferred by the latter to a more detailed planning document called the *Improvement Plan*.

By the end of this Stage, you should have:

- Identified the evaluation recommendations requiring the definition and implementation of improvement actions.

- Identified the actors who should take responsibility for each of these recommendations and defined the corresponding improvement actions with them.

- Registered the information corresponding to each actor on the improvement sheets to facilitate the implementation of the process.

- Transferred the information contained on the improvement sheets to the unit responsible for monitoring the implementation of the actions established for each actor.

Final considerations

In Phase I we reviewed the principle milestones of evaluation design for the purpose of defining the relevant questions and criteria together with the rest of the stakeholders and establishing the Terms of Reference to guide the evaluation tasks.

In Phase II (developing of evaluation study) we stressed promoting the participation of the stakeholders and ongoing quality control as the main duties in terms of defining and managing the work plan.

Finally, in phase III, we stressed the importance of adapting the media and channels of communication to the different actors based on their needs for information and expectations and underscored the incorporation of lessons learned as a crucial element which the evaluation manager must promote.

Upon completion of all of the proposed stages, you will have concluded your evaluation in accordance with the comprehensive cycle model of Spanish Cooperation Policy according to which the evaluation is a tool at the service of planning and management and is instrumental in increasing the quality of aid based on learning from one's own experience.

The specific conditions of your evaluation may have demanded a greater or lesser degree of flexibility in terms of adhering to the indicated steps and stages but if your evaluation has been designed, implemented and used in accordance with the general guidelines proposed herein, it will have contributed to enhancing the quality of development cooperation interventions.

If we are to heighten the impact that development cooperation has on poverty reduction, we must carefully consider what it is we are doing, face facts head on and develop the capacity to learn how to improve. All actors should do their part in this process to increase the quality of aid defined as the effectiveness in achieving the commitments and goals laid down in the MDGs, the Paris Declaration and in other international commitments.

Hence, insight into the implementation of Cooperation Policy in the field and its systematic scrutiny with a participatory and pluralistic approach, should pave the way for joint reflection processes allowing for the convergence of efforts and resources allocated for cooperation towards satisfying the real needs of the populations of partner countries which, in the final analysis, is our ultimate goal.

Given the wealth and diversity of contexts and actors acting together in Cooperation Policy, we are convinced that each evaluation process guided by this document will give rise to lessons learned and best practices for future evaluations. Therefore, as stated in the prologue, we invite you to use your own experience to provide feedback and improve the contents of this Handbook using the coordination and communication mechanisms promoted by the DGPOLDE.

Glossary

This Glossary has been developed to facilitate understanding of the Handbook and includes the most commonly used monitoring and evaluation terms. With a view to promoting standard language, this Glossary is based on the Development Assistance Committee Glossary (DAC, 2002) and has been supplemented with other references (listed in the Bibliography) and adapted to the context of Spanish Cooperation and the contents of this Handbook. Some terms admit more than one definition.

A

- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Obligation to demonstrate that the intervention has been implemented in compliance with agreed rules and standards while reporting performance results. For evaluators, it connotes the responsibility to provide accurate, fair and credible monitoring reports and performance evaluations.

- **ACTIVITY.** Actions taken or work performed through which inputs are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

- **ACTORS INVOLVED.** Governments, agencies institutions, civil society entities, non-governmental organisations, universities, professional and business associations or private companies, among others, that directly or indirectly participate in the planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of development policy. Related terms: counterparts of the partner country; associates.

- **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION.** Transposition of the evaluation recommendations made by the intervention managers with the aim of making them operational and incorporating them, as the case may be, into the administrative procedures. The definition of administrative recommendations takes place prior to the definition of the improvement actions to be taken as a consequence of the evaluation or the design of an Improvement Plan.

- **AIMS OF THE EVALUATION (REASONS TO EVALUATE).** Reason(s) motivating evaluation promoters to conduct the evaluation. These could stem from a regulatory mandate or could have some other basis and are used to define the overall objective of the evaluation.

- **ALIGNMENT.** One of the five principles to enhance aid effectiveness adopted by the OECD countries in signing the Paris Declaration (2005) reflecting donors' commitment to deliver aid considering and participating in development strategies, management systems and established procedures in recipient countries.

- **ANALYTICAL TOOLS.** Methods used to process and interpret information during an evaluation.

- **EX-ANTE EVALUATION.** Evaluation conducted before implementing a development intervention

- **ASSESMENT OF RESULTS.** System whereby to evaluate the intervention's results based on declared objectives.

- **ASSUMPTIONS.** Hypotheses about factors or risks which could affect the progress or success of an intervention. This also includes the hypotheses concerning which judgements are made in the evaluation.

- **ATTRIBUTION.** The ascription of a causal link between observed (or expected to be observed) changes and a specific intervention. Note: Attribution refers to that which is to be credited for the observed changes or results achieved. It represents the extent to which observed development effects can be attributed to a specific intervention or to the performance of one or more partner taking account of other interventions, exogenous factors (foreseen or unforeseen) or external shocks.

- **AUDIT.** Control activity assessing compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

B

- **BACKGROUND OF THE INTERVENTION.** Brief summary of the intervention which should be included in the evaluation's ToR. This includes the legal framework and high-level planning within which the intervention is implemented, its commencement and ending dates, its stage of execution, allocated budget and a brief description of its internal planning structure (objectives, activities and expected results and stages planned). This should also include a brief reference to the socio-economic context of the intervention and the characteristics of the target group.

- **BACKGROUND STUDY.** Analysis describing the situation prior to the development intervention based on which progress can be measured or comparisons made. Baseline is a related term referring to the quantitative or qualitative assessment of the battery of indicators characterising the starting point of an intervention.

- **BENCHMARK.** Reference point, parameter or standard against which performance or achievements can be measured.

- **BENEFICIARIES.** Individuals, groups or organisations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention. Related terms: recipients, target group.

- **BENEFITS.** The worth or usefulness of the results of an intervention. These tend to be a programme's final objectives but we may also speak of benefits which are not the result of the programme per say.

C

- **CLUSTER EVALUATION.** Evaluation of a set of related interventions which is not a substitute for the evaluation of the individual intervention but rather complements them with an overall view, identifying common elements and best practices.

- **COMMUNICATION PLAN.** Planning document for the dissemination of the evaluation results among the actors involved.

- **CONCLUSIONS.** Conclusions highlight the factors of success and failure of the intervention evaluated based on the data collection and analyses and interpretation undertaken through a transparent chain of arguments. Special attention is paid to the results and impacts,, and more generally to any other strengths and weaknesses.

- **COHERENCE.** There are two levels of coherence: internal and external. Internal coherence assesses the matching of intervention's objectives with the instruments proposed to achieve them and their adaptation to problems. External coherence analyses the compatibility of the intervention with other strategies and programmes with which synergies or complementarity could exist.

- **CONTEXT OF THE INTERVENTION.** Elements of the intervention's environment (economic, political, legal, institutional, etc.) which could directly or indirectly affect it. In other words, the part of reality which makes up the external conditions of an intervention over which planners and managers have no direct control.

- **COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS.** Procedure whereby to evaluate the appropriateness of an intervention by weighing costs and benefits, including those for which there is no market or for which the market does not provide a satisfactory measure of economic value. This can be conducted before or after executing the intervention.

- **COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS.** Study of the relationship between the cost of the intervention and its results expressed in cost-per-unit terms of the result achieved. This is used when it is difficult to place a monetary value on results.

- **COUNTERFACTUAL.** The situation or condition which hypothetically may prevail for individuals, organisations or groups where there no development intervention. The purpose of contriving this hypothetical situation is to facilitate the evaluation of an intervention by determining its effectiveness and direct and attributable impacts.

- **COUNTERPART.** Governments, agencies, institutions, civil society organisations, Universities, professional and business associations and private companies of the aid recipient countries.

- **COVERAGE.** Measurement of the proportion of aid recipients of an intervention effectively benefiting from it. Evaluation of coverage focuses on analysing the real beneficiary groups of an intervention and assessing the latter's suitability to planned recipients, delving deeper into those factors causing possible bias towards certain groups or barriers to access which may have existed.

- **CREDIBILITY.** The principle underpinning the evaluation of the Cooperation Policy striving to achieve the greatest possible degree of objectivity, impartiality and rigor during the process and in terms of results so as to ensure its acceptance.

D

- **DATA COLLECTION TOOLS.** Methodologies, techniques and instruments used to identify information sources and collect data during an evaluation.

- **DESIGN EVALUATION.** The aim here is to analyse the appropriateness of the diagnosis conducted, check that there are clearly defined objectives, analyse the correspondence to the problems, analyse the logic behind the programmed intervention model both internally and in relation with other policies and interventions and assess the suitability of the proposed monitoring system.

- **DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION.** Set of actions, activities, measures, programs, plans and policies designed to achieve a specific development objective during a certain period of time and in a set geographical region or sector. In this Handbook the term intervention has been used generically to refer to strategic planning documents as well as operational instruments of Cooperation Policy.

- **DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.** Expected intentional impact contributing to generate physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental or any other sort of benefit to a society, community or group of individuals through one or more development interventions.

- **DISSEMINATION OF THE EVALUATION.** Process of familiarising the public with the process and the results of the evaluation.

- **DOCUMENTATION MATRIX.** Tool used to organise and present structured documents on the intervention which should be reviewed by the evaluation manager and submitted to the evaluation team.

E

- **ECONOMY.** The absence of waste in obtaining a given result achieved by allocating scarce resources which have alternative uses. Note: An activity or intervention is considered economic when the costs of the scarce resources used approximate the minimum needed to achieve planned objectives.

- **EFFECT.** Change, planned or not, due directly or indirectly to an intervention.

- **EFFECTIVENESS.** Degree to which the results-oriented objectives (implicit or explicit) of an intervention are achieved.

- **EFFICIENCY.** Assessment of the results achieved in comparison with the resources used. The aim is to determine whether the minimum amount of resources were used to achieve the results or whether more and better results could have been achieved with those same resources.

- **EVALUABILITY.** Extent to which an intervention can be evaluated or its scope determined. Evaluability should be determined before conducting any evaluation because it prepares the intervention for evaluation.

- **EVALUATION CRITERIA.** General categories of analysis whereby to judge the merit or worth of an intervention and which serve as a guide to structure the issues which the evaluation must address. The five evaluation criteria recommended by the DAC are: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. These criteria may be supplemented with others such as coherence, ownership, alignment, harmonisation, participation and coverage.

- **EVALUATION MANAGERS.** Individuals in charge of leading the design of the evaluation, coordinating the progress and development of the evaluation study, supervising the quality of the process and communicating its results, conclusions and recommendations. They are responsible for making sure that the evaluation process proceeds as planned.

- **EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP.** Formal structure supporting the management of the evaluation process which facilitates and encourages the participation of the stakeholders. Its structure can be more or less formal but it should at least count on the representation of the evaluation's management entity and the evaluation team.

- **EVALUATION OF OPERATIONAL INSTRUMENTS.** Evaluation of the instrument through which ODA is channelled. It looks into aspects related to the execution of the intervention itself (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, etc.) but also analyses outside coherence with broader planning frameworks.

- **EVALUATION OF PROCESS, IMPLEMENTATION OR MANAGEMENT.** . The aim here is to assess the way in which an intervention is managed and implemented. This consists of an analysis of the capacity of the intervention planning and management centres by looking at the intervention's design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and by examining the involvement and coordination of the management centres, donors and recipients in these tasks defining the role of each, the suitability of the organisation and the sufficiency of the resources.

- **EVALUATION QUESTIONS.** Questions which the evaluation should address. These arise directly from the objectives of the evaluation which, in turn, were defined based on stakeholder needs for information.

- **EVALUATION REPORT.** Contains the techniques and methods used for the gathering and analysis of data, the results of the evaluation, conclusions and recommendations. It may or may not be in written form (oral or multimedia presentation, for example).

- **EVALUATION STANDARDS.** Set of rules and reference parameters for the purpose of judging the quality of the evaluation process and of its outputs.

- **EVALUATION.** The systematic and objective assessment of the design, implementation, results and impact of an intervention through the application of a set of social science techniques.

- **EX-POST EVALUATION.** Evaluation conducted once the intervention has concluded.

- **EXTERNAL EVALUATION.** Evaluation conducted by entities and/or personnel not belonging to the donor or implementing organisations or the managers of the intervention.

F

- **FEEDBACK.** The transmission of findings generated through the evaluation process to parties for whom it is relevant and useful so as to facilitate learning. This may involve the collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons from experience.

- **FINDING.** Discovery or assertion based on data and facts gathered concerning the evaluated intervention(s).

G

■ **GEOGRAPHICAL DIMENSION OF THE INTERVENTION.** Territory in which the intervention is carried out and variables having a bearing on the context of its implementation.

H

■ **HARMONISATION.** One of the five principles to enhance aid effectiveness adopted by the OECD countries in signing the Paris Declaration (2005) reflecting a commitment to harmonisation among donor agencies to prevent the dispersion of their actions, to benefit from each one's comparative advantage and to build a more stable and predictable aid programme for the partner country.

I

■ **IMPACT.** Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

■ **IMPACT EVALUATION.** Evaluation of the most general and less immediate effects of the intervention which should delve into the causal relationship between the intervention and the actual changes (net effect), isolating these from the effects produced by interventions other than the one under scrutiny and from the evolution of the context.

■ **IMPACT ON INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** The degree to which an intervention improves or detracts from a country, region or institution's capacity to make more efficient, egalitarian and sustainable use of human, financial and natural resources.

■ **IMPACT.** Long-term, positive and negative, primary and secondary effects, intentional or not, produced directly, collaterally or caused by an initiative. Impact evaluation seeks to identify all of these effects and focuses on determining the net effects attributable to the initiative.

■ **IMPROVEMENT PLAN.** Planning document of improvement actions to be undertaken based on the evaluation. It should reflect the recommendations of the evaluation with operational implications and the action proposals made by the managing unit of the evaluation and give due consideration to the actors responsible for implementing these and the improvement programme finally agreed to with these actors. The proposals should include deadlines and needed resources.

■ **INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.** Evaluation not subject to any political influence or pressure from any organisation with the autonomy to conduct investigations and report on findings.

■ **INDICATOR.** Quantitative or qualitative expression of a variable which allows for the description of some aspect of the intervention and helps to assess achievements having regard to a benchmark.

- **INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION.** An evaluation initiated by a single entity, organisation or development agency.

- **INTERVENTION LIFECYCLE.** The period of time which encompasses from the intervention's inception and design to signs of its impact.

- **INPUTS.** Financial, human and material resources used in a development intervention.

- **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY.** The likelihood that a given organisation can manage and govern its own development.

- **INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF THE INTERVENTION.** Organisations involved (international, from the donor or beneficiary country) and levels of planning which need to be considered in the evaluation.

- **INTERIM EVALUATION.** Evaluation conducted at the "half-way point" in the implementation of the initiative.

- **INTERNAL OR SELF EVALUATION.** Evaluation conducted by personnel attached to the managing organisation of the intervention being evaluated regardless of whether or not such personnel comprise a proper evaluation unit.

J

- **JOINT EVALUATION.** Evaluation promoted, managed and co-funded by a group of entities (donors, parterns or cooperation agents) who co-participate during all or part of the evaluation cycle.

- **JUDGEMENT.** Assertion as to the merits or worth of an intervention based on a set of previously defined criteria or parameters related to the questions of the evaluation.

K

- **KEY INFORMANTS.** People or organisations which hold relevant information for the evaluation and, just as the rest of the actors, have information needs regarding the process as potential users or stakeholders of the evaluation.

L

- **LEARNING AND INCORPORATION OF LESSONS LEARNED.** Knowledge acquired through the study or experience. This is the main function of the evaluation whose aim is to incorporate those elements featuring the largest or best achievements into management and planning thus closing the cycle of the effective transfer of best practices.

- **LESSONS LEARNED.** Generalisations based on the evaluation experience which abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations highlighting strong and weak points in the preparation, design and implementation which affect the performance, outcome and impact of the intervention and which identify good or bad practices.

- **LOGIC OF THE INTERVENTION.** Sequence explaining the way in which objectives should be achieved, identifying causal relationships and underlying assumptions.

- **LOGICAL FRAMEWORK (LOGFRAME).** Tool used to design interventions encompassing the identification of inputs, outputs, effects, outcomes and their causal relationships, indicators and the assumptions of risks which could have a bearing on success or failure.

M

- **MID-TERM EVALUATION.** Evaluation conducted at the "half-way point" in the implementation of the intervention

- **MIXED (INTERNAL ASSISTED) EVALUATION.** Evaluation conducted by the personnel of the managing entity of the intervention with the support of an external team or of technical assistance to guide the process and/or carry out the evaluation work in the field.

- **META-EVALUATION.** The evaluation of one or several evaluations. Meta-evaluations analyse the technical and methodological quality of the evaluation process and assess the professional performance of the evaluators.

- **MONITORING AND EVALUATION UNIT.** Department or team entrusted with coordinating, managing and/or monitoring and evaluating in the institution.

- **MONITORING.** The ongoing and systematic process of data gathering to substantiate what has been accomplished and its results, both physical and financial terms. It provides the information necessary to enhance the management and application of the intervention and is indispensable for evaluation.

- **MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY.** A commitment between recipients and donors to promote the responsible use of aid resources: partner countries commit to strengthen the role of Parliament and reinforce participatory approaches in the planning and evaluation of development strategies; donors commit to provide transparent and comprehensive information on the aid and to conduct joint evaluations on its effectiveness.

O

- **OBJECTIVES TREE.** A graphic representation which describes the means-to-ends relationship of the strategy proposed in an intervention.

- **OPERATIONAL INSTRUMENTS.** Interventions through which Official Development Assistance is channelled.

- **OWNERSHIP.** One of the five principles to enhance aid effectiveness adopted by the OECD countries in signing the Paris Declaration (2005) according to which partner countries should exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies implying coordinated action on the part of donors.

P

- **PARTICIPATION.** Process whereby stakeholders can take part in the design, implementation and execution of the intervention and its evaluation.

- **PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT.** Development must necessarily involve the civil society in the decision making process and in the management of local and outside resources.

- **PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION.** Evaluation in which representatives of the agencies and stakeholders (including beneficiaries) work jointly in its design, implementation and interpretation.

- **PARTNERSHIP.** Group of entities which join together to achieve shared objectives in the planning of an intervention or its evaluation.

- **PERFORMANCE.** The degree to which a development intervention or an agency in charge of implementing it adheres to specific criteria/rules/guidelines or obtains results in accordance with objectives or established plans.

- **PLANNING.** Process whereby the needs and problems of a territory, group or sector are identified, the objectives established and the actions to be undertaken to bring about the desired changes defined.

- **PURPOSE (aim/but).** The publicly declared objectives of the development intervention.

- **PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION (REASONS TO EVALUATE).** Reason(s) motivating promoters of the evaluation to put it into practice. These could stem from a regulatory mandate or could have some other basis and are used to define the overall objective of the evaluation.

- **PROJECT OR PROGRAM OBJECTIVE.** Physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental or any other sort of result to which the project is expected to contribute.

- **PROBLEM TREE.** A graphic representation which describes the cause-effect relationships of problems.

- **PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT.** Management of all phases of the project's lifecycle from its design to the manifestation of its impacts.

- **PROMOTERS OF THE EVALUATION.** Those responsible for the rationale behind the evaluation or who must comply with an evaluation mandate. Promoters are typically responsible for funding although those promoting the evaluation are not necessarily the ones managing or financing the intervention.

Q

- **QUALITY ASSURANCE.** All of the activity whose aim is to assess and improve the merit or worth of a development intervention or its compliance with established standards. This term may also refer to the evaluation of the quality of a set of interventions and the latter's effectiveness in terms of development.

- **QUALITY.** The overarching objective of evaluation is to enhance the quality of aid. This will be achieved insofar as the aid is participatory, impartial, transparent, legitimises the Cooperation Policy, focuses on learning and generates useful results with a view to improving the management and planning of the interventions.

R

- **REACH.** The target population of an intervention. Note: the target group of an intervention may or may not coincide with those who actually benefit, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Related term: beneficiary.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS.** Proposals stemming from the evaluation conclusions for the purpose of improving the intervention evaluated by consolidating the latter's strengths and reducing its weaknesses.

- **RELEVANCE.** The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements, the country needs, global priorities, donor's policies and the socio-political context in which the intervention is carried out.

- **RELIABILITY.** The degree to which data, the procedure used to collect the latter and the results of the evaluation can be trusted.

- **RESULT CHAIN.** The causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary steps or stages to achieve the desired objectives starting with the inputs, proceeding to activities and outputs and culminating in outcomes, impacts and feedback. In some agencies, reach (or "scope") is part of the result chain. Related terms: assumptions, results framework.

- **RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT (RBM).** Approach used to assess the success or failure of development policies based on the results obtained in the recipient countries. This replaces the traditional approach which measures aid effectiveness based on number of projects and funds spent.

- **RESULTS.** The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.

- **RISK ANALYSIS.** An analysis or assesment of factors (called "assumptions" in the logframe) which affect or could affect the succesful achievement of an intervention's objectives. This provides a detailed look at the undesirable and negative consequences which a development intervention could have on human life, health, property or the environment. It is a systematic process furnishing information on these undesirable consequences entailing the quantification of the likelihood that the identified risks will emerge and their expected repercussions felt.

■ **SCORING CRITERIA.** Parameters to assess the evaluation proposals received by the managing unit at the call for proposals stage. These criteria must be clearly defined and strictly applied to ensure transparency. The most common are the technical quality of the proposed methodology, the qualifications and experience of the evaluation team and the economic proposal to conduct the evaluation.

■ **SECTOR DIMENSION OF THE INTERVENTION.** Sectors affected by the intervention, prioritised thematic areas and their ties with those arising from the policy of the recipient country or of other donor organisations.

■ **SELECTION COMMITTEE.** The group responsible for analysing and assessing the different proposals pre-selected by the evaluators during the call for proposals stage. It should select the proposal which best adapts to the evaluation designed by applying the previously established scoring criteria.

■ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION.** Goals pursued through the evaluation. These are defined with due consideration of the need for information of all of the actors involved in the evaluation.

■ **STAKEHOLDERS.** Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals which have a direct or indirect interest in the intervention or its evaluation.

■ **STRATEGY EVALUATION.** The aim here is to evaluate a policy, plan or general action strategy, focusing attention on the intervention strategy being consistent with the aid system: its relevance, harmonisation with other donors, alignment with the local development strategies of the recipient countries, ownership of development processes and contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

■ **STRATEGY.** Set of guidelines and principles to guide the application, in a particular territory, sector or period of time, of a set of more operational interventions. The cause and effect relationship between resources, activities, results and objectives is also known as intervention strategy.

■ **SUMMARY EVALUATION.** The aim here is to furnish information on the worth of the intervention paying particular attention to the taking of specific decisions such as those regarding its reformulation or continuity.

■ **SUSTAINABILITY.** Continuation of the benefits of an intervention after its conclusion. Situation in which net advantages are liable to withstand risks over time.

T

■ **TARGET GROUP.** The specific individuals, groups or organisations for whose benefit the development intervention is undertaken.

■ **TARGET OF THE EVALUATION.** Intervention(s) which are evaluated. This could be a strategy, an operational instrument or a group of interventions meeting certain requirements or which are especially significant owing to their innovative nature or their potential as learning instruments.

- **TERMS OF REFERENCE.** Document presenting the decisions taken in the design of the evaluation: purpose, scope and objectives, criteria, questions and recommended methodology to conduct the evaluation study, profile requested for the evaluation team, resources and time allocated and reporting requirements concerning, etc. These are the main references governing the evaluation team's work.

- **THEMATIC EVALUATION.** Evaluation of a pre-determined set of development interventions sharing a specific development priority (cross-cutting).

- **TIME DIMENSION OF THE INTERVENTION.** Period of the intervention subject to analysis and assessment. The starting and ending dates of the intervention may not coincide with the priority interest of the evaluation which could focus on a period or stage of particular interest.

- **TRAINING EVALUATION.** Evaluation whose aim is to improve the intervention and raise the awareness of those involved in its design, management and implementation.

- **TRANSPARENCY.** The evaluation should ensure the transparency of the planning, management and implementation of the intervention process and safeguard that of the evaluation process itself while responding to the need for information of all the actors involved in the interventions.

U

- **UNIDAD DE SEGUIMIENTO Y EVALUACIÓN.** USEFULNESS. Validity of the evaluation results so that they can be applied by managers, planners, decision-makers and the society at large. To ensure the usefulness of the evaluation, the latter must meet the demands set out by the actors involved, an appropriate communication strategy must be deployed and recommendations must be feasible.

V

- **VIABILITY.** Likelihood that an intervention will actually be conducted. In the area of cooperation, this term also includes the concept of sustainability, i.e. the continuity over time of the positive effects generated through the intervention once the aid is withdrawn. It is linked to the enhancement of key development factors and to the ownership of the process by aid recipients.

W

- **WORK PLAN.** Programme of activities to be conducted during the implementation phase of the evaluation study reflecting the different stages, deadlines and products to be delivered at the end of each. The Work Plan is the result of an agreement between the evaluation managers and the evaluators based on the ToR and the technical proposal.

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Annex I. Criteria whereby to assess the quality of the evaluation report

Evaluation Division. DGPOLDE

FINAL REPORT QUALITY ASSESSMENT[24]:

In order to validate an evaluation report, its quality must be assessed. The following structure and assessment criteria should be used in order to gain a critical, systematic and the most objective idea possible of the quality and usefulness of the information presented.

What is it about?

The evaluation of the final report verifies that the evaluation has respected the established report guidelines (in form and content) and meets the needs for information of the users it targets.

What does it intend to do?

- Verify that the external evaluation team has adequately met the demands of the commissioning service.
- Distinguish between valid and well established conclusions and recommendations and those which are not so solid and should therefore be used with caution.
- Check the standardisation of the process so that the evaluation can "withstand" the criticisms which will inevitably result from the judgements issued on successes and failures.

Quality criteria

The nine criteria described below are taken from international standards with which they are compatible and blend with the criteria being used by the DGPOLDE Evaluation Division to assess final evaluation reports. Following is a detailed explanation of how to award a quality score in accordance with different criteria. The assessment has five categories: excellent, very good, good, insufficient and unacceptable.

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24. These assessment criteria are based on the ones used by the European Commission and include DAC evaluation standards and the criteria being used by the Evaluation Division of DGPOLDE.

Criterion 1: Compliance with requirements – responds to the evaluation questions

This criterion assesses adherence to the terms of reference. In other words, a good report is one which adequately fulfils the requirements laid down in the terms of reference and satisfactorily answers the evaluation questions. The report is expected to provide a good general overview of how the announced objectives were met and to clarify the logic of the intervention.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	The questions posed not only cover the requirements laid down in the ToR but also put the evaluation in a much more general framework, linking it to the basis of development policy, external cooperation and to all other Community or national policy.	☐
Very good	The evaluation report provides a good general overview of how the announced objectives were met and clarifies the logic of the intervention. The evaluation report has surpassed the requirements laid down in the ToR covering other subjects of interest.	☐
Good	The requirements formulated in the ToR were adequately fulfilled. The evaluation questions were satisfactorily covered.	☐
Insufficient	Certain ToR questions were insufficiently or only partly addressed.	☐
Unacceptable	Too many of the ToR questions were left unaddressed or were only partially addressed.	☐

Criterion 2: Context analysis

This criterion assesses whether the report focuses on the intervention as a whole including its temporal, geographical and regulatory dimensions and whether it analyses the context surrounding the intervention, i.e. the institutional, political economic and social situation and both the foreseen and unforeseen interactions with other related policies and their consequences.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	In addition to complying with the requirements for a "Very good" rating, the report provides a systematic and detailed study of the unexpected effects.	☐
Very good	In addition to complying with that established in the next lower rating, the evaluation takes an interest in the interactions with other Community policies, interventions of other donors and the policies of the State or associated States. Unforeseen effects were dealt with.	☐
Good	The report covers the intervention as a whole including its temporal, geographical and regulatory dimensions. The main foreseen and unforeseen effects were identified.	☐
Insufficient	One of the three dimensions of the intervention and/or an important effect is inadequately or poorly covered.	☐
Unacceptable	Several dimensions of the intervention and/or several important effects are inadequately or poorly covered.	☐

Criterion 3: Justification for the methodology used

This criterion assesses whether the tools and methodology used are clearly explained and whether they have indeed been applied throughout the process. The methodological choices made must meet the requirements laid down in the ToR. The limits inherent to the evaluation method should also be clearly defined and arguments should be presented as to why certain options were chosen over others.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	Surpasses the "Very good" level; the evaluators present a critique of the method used and of their methodological choices. The risks which would have been encountered had other methodological options been adopted are indicated.	☐
Very good	The limits inherent to the evaluation method were clearly expressed and the options chosen over other possible options were debated and defended.	☐
Good	The evaluation method is clearly explained. This method has indeed been followed throughout the process. The methodological choices made did meet the requirements laid down in the ToR.	☐
Insufficient	Upon reading the evaluation report, the methodological choices seem to have been made without explanation or defence.	☐
Unacceptable	Complete lack of evaluation methodology or the methodologies chosen are not appropriate for the results sought.	☐

Criterion 4: Reliability of the data

This criterion does not judge the intrinsic validity of the available data but rather the way in which the evaluation team obtained and used that data. The evaluation team is expected to identify the sources of quantitative and qualitative data and explain and justify the reliability of the data. To this end, it must clearly explain the collection tools used which, in turn, must be adapted to the information sought.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	All bias arising from information furnished is analysed and corrected my means of recognised techniques.	☐
Very good	Data have been systematically crossed-referenced by means of independent and separate collection sources or tools. Validity limits and data collection tools were clearly explained.	☐
Good	Sources of quantitative and qualitative data are identified. The evaluation team verified and discussed the reliability of the data. A clear explanation was given concerning the collection tools used which are adapted to the information sought.	☐
Insufficient	The quantitative and qualitative information furnished is unreliable with regard to the question posed. The data collection tools are debatable (for example, insufficient sample size or poorly done case studies).	☐
Unacceptable	Certain data are clearly erroneous. Collection tools were incorrectly applied or furnish biased or unusable information.	☐

Criterion 5: Soundness of the analysis

A sound analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data should be done by closely following the recognised and appropriate steps depending on the type of data analysed. The cause-effect relationships between the intervention and its consequences must be clearly explained and there must be coherence and a logical sequence between evidence and assessment; assessment and conclusions; and between conclusions and recommendations. We would recommend that the steps of the analysis be explained and its validity limits specified.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	All bias (through the 3 elements) were systematically examined and these were presented together with their consequences for the analysis validity limits.	☐
Very good	The steps of the analysis were explained and their validity limits specified. The underlying causal assumptions were likewise explained. The validity limits of comparisons made were indicated.	☐
Good	The quantitative and qualitative data was analysed by closely following the recognised and appropriate steps depending on the type of data analysed. The cause-effect relationships between the intervention and its consequences were explained. Comparisons were likewise explained (for example: before/after, beneficiaries/non-beneficiaries, with/without).	☐
Insufficient	One of the three elements (analysis approach, causal relationships, comparisons) was poorly covered or two of the elements were not sufficiently covered.	☐
Unacceptable	Two of the three elements are poorly covered.	☐

Criterion 6: Credibility of findings

The findings made in the analysis are expected to be reliable and balanced. The findings should suitably reflect the reality drawn by the data and documented test elements, on the one hand, and the reality of the intervention as perceived by actors and beneficiaries, on the other. The effects of the evaluated intervention should be isolated from external factors and from contextual restrictions.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	The imbalances between the internal and external validity of findings are systematically analysed and their consequences for the evaluation are explained. Contextual factors were isolated and their influence demonstrated. The bias arising from the selection of the interpretative premises and extrapolations made are analysed and their consequences explained.	☐
Very good	The limits of the interpretative premises and the extrapolations made are explained and discussed. The effects of the evaluated intervention are isolated from external factors and from contextual restrictions. Both the internal validity (absence of analysis bias) and external validity (findings can be generalised) are satisfactory.	☐
Good	Analysis findings appear reliable and balanced, especially considering the context in which the intervention was evaluated. The interpretative assumptions and extrapolations made are acceptable. The findings suitably reflect the reality drawn by the data and documented test elements, on the one hand, and the reality of the intervention as perceived by actors and beneficiaries, on the other.	☐
Insufficient	The analyses appear unbalanced. The context is not explained. The extrapolations and generalisations of the analysis are not appropriate.	☐
Unacceptable	The analysis appears to have very low credibility. The text makes unfounded assertions. The extrapolations and generalisations of the analysis are not appropriate.	☐

Criterion 7: Validity of conclusions

This criterion does not judge the intrinsic value of the conclusions but rather the way in which they were reached. In accordance with this criterion the conclusions must be rooted in the analysis, must be supported by facts and analyses easily identifiable in the rest of the report and must avoid bias or personal feelings. They should also indicate the limits and context of the validity of the conclusions.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	Conclusions are set out in a hierarchy. They are related with the overall intervention evaluated and consider the relationships between this intervention and the context in which it is situated, especially other public programmes or policies close by.	☐
Very good	The conclusions concerning the context within which the analysis was conducted is discussed. The validity limits of the conclusions are explained and discussed.	☐
Good	The conclusions are taken from the analysis. Conclusions are supported by facts and analysis which is easily identifiable in the rest of the report. The limits and context of conclusion validity have been indicated.	☐
Insufficient	Conclusion are made based on a premature generalisation of some analysis conducted. The conclusion's validity limits have not been established.	☐
Unacceptable	Conclusions are not backed by relevant or thorough analysis. They are rather based on non-verified data. They are biased because they reflect the evaluator's prejudices more than they do the analysis of the facts.	☐

Criterion 8: Usefulness of the recommendations

Recommendations should be formulated in a clear and concise manner, should derive from the conclusions and be based on balanced and unbiased analyses. They should also be detailed enough so as to be specifically applicable by the different actors responsible for the evaluated intervention.

Assessment	Description	✔
Excellent	In addition to meeting the requirements for a "Very good" rating, recommendations are verified and their validity limits indicated.	☐
Very good	In addition to complying with the requirements for a "good" rating, recommendations are hierarchised and presented in the form of options and possible actions.	☐
Good	Recommendations are a logical consequence of the conclusions. Moreover, they are impartial.	☐
Insufficient	Recommendations are not very clear or are nothing more than evidence without any value added. Their operability is questionable. Their ties to the conclusions are not clear.	☐
Unacceptable	Recommendations are unrelated to conclusions. They are biased because they put greater weight on the viewpoints of certain actors or beneficiaries or the preconceived ideas of the evaluation team.	☐

Criterion 9: Clarity of the report		
A clear report is one that is easy to read and follows a logical structure. A brief summary should be an accurate reflection of the report. Annexes should be provided focusing on specialised concepts and technical demonstrations clearly referenced throughout the text. The report should be brief, concise and easily readable and the structure of the report should be readily recognisable. The report should clearly describe the intervention evaluated, its context and the evaluation findings and the information furnished should be readily understandable.		
Assessment	**Description**	✔
Excellent	The reports is read "like a novel" and its structure follows irrefutable logic. The summary is operational in itself.	☐
Very good	The report is brief, concise and reads seamlessly. The structure of the report is easy to recognise. The summary is clear and presents the main conclusions and recommendations in a balanced and impartial manner.	☐
Good	The report is easy to read and logically structured. Its brief summary accurately reflects the content. There are annexes focusing on specialised concepts and technical demonstrations clearly referenced throughout the text.	☐
Insufficient	The report is difficult to read and/or its structure is complex. The cross references are difficult to understand or complicate reading. The summary is too long and is not a faithful reflection of the report.	☐
Unacceptable	There is no summary. The report is unreadable and/or has a disorderly structure. It does not have a conclusions chapter (or recommendations).	☐

Recommendations for the use of the criteria

- Have the context in mind when using the assessment criteria instead of applying the latter in an absolute and isolated manner. In a given situation, it is both possible and useful to specify the quality criteria in consideration of specific requests and/or restrictions.

- Write a qualitative synthesis of the nine criteria as a general evaluation of the report quality. Another less suitable option would be to assign a weighted score to each criterion and calculate a weighted average score.

- Do not wait for the final draft report to undertake the quality guarantee. The quality assurance process should get under way from the outset. Specifically, quality controls can be done on two other important sub-products: the preliminary (or mid-term) reports and the final report.

- Attach the quality criteria to the ToR as an annex.

- Have the person responsible for the evaluation check the quality and then try to get a second person to verify it.

How should the assessment document be structured?

The three main sections which an evaluation report assessment document should have are as follows:

I. Background

Briefly and clearly explain the context of the report under assessment as well as any unforeseen event or element which should be considered in validating the report.

II. General assessment of document sections

- Explain the quality of the document presentation and format.
- Comment on the contents of the document section by section based on the ToR.

III. Assessment by quality criteria

Present the assessment of the document for each of the established criteria. The following categories have been established to score each criterion: excellent / very good / good / insufficient / unacceptable.

Annex II. ToR model used by DGPOLDE

Contents:

0. Title: Name of the evaluation: name of the intervention subject to evaluation and the type of evaluation.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS – TERMS OF REFERENCE – FOR THE MID-TERM / FINAL EVALUATION OF THE ["PROGRAMME, PROJECT, POLICY ..."]

1. Introduction.

2. Background of the intervention.

3. Scope of the evaluation and actors involved.

4. Evaluation questions and levels of analysis.

5. Evaluation criteria.

6. Methodology and Work Plan.

7. Structure and presentation. Evaluation reports.

8. Evaluation team.

9. Evaluation premises, author and publication.

10. Time frame of the evaluation.

12. Submission of the technical proposal and assessment criteria.

1. Introduction

Why do we evaluate?

■ **Evaluation unit:** Brief reference to the unit or intervention which is the target of the evaluation

■ **Justification rationale behind** the evaluation: Why is this intervention being evaluated?

■ Define the general **objectives** of the evaluation: What do we generally want to learn from this evaluation?

■ Define the **type** of evaluation: ex–ante/mid-term/ex-post, of a programme/country/ project/instrument/…

■ Use and expectations of the evaluation: establish the points concerning which you expect **recommendations** and the use (**usefulness of the evaluation**) that will be made of the evaluation results.

2. Background of the intervention

■ Give a clear detailed description of the **intervention's history** (programme, sector, area, instrument): the planning framework of the intervention; the logic of the intervention, i.e. general and specific objectives, activities, results and phases, beginning and ending dates; components; budget; counterparts; direct and indirect beneficiary groups; institutional context and a brief reference to the socio-economic context in which the intervention is taking place.

3. Scope of the evaluation and stakeholders

- **Delimit** the scope of the study: Geographical, institutional, temporal and thematic or sector dimensions of the intervention under evaluation (project, programme).

- **Identify** the documents and sources of information which the evaluation team will have access to. Draw up a documentation matrix in order to compile available documents and information.

- **Participation:** Identify the agents involved in the intervention under scrutiny and in the evaluation itself, considering the members of the Reference Group and the evaluation managing unit as involved in the intervention. Define what role they will play during the evaluation process.

4. Evaluation questions and levels of analysis

- Key questions and specific objectives of the evaluation.

- Specify the **levels of analysis** to be approached in the study. Develop the **topics and areas** on which the study will focus, specifying, if relevant, the subtopics considered relevant for evaluation analysis (questions on intervention design, on processes or on results). This will depend on the type of evaluation and the levels of analysis previously defined and the degree of disaggregation expected from the study.

5. Evaluation criteria

- Depending on the **evaluation** questions and levels of analysis defined, the evaluation **criteria** considered in the analysis are defined. You may consider the definition of development cooperation evaluation criteria in addition to others considered relevant once analysing the evaluation questions. These criteria should be **defined, prioritised and supplemented** in each case. The criteria should be the product of the evaluation questions.

6. Methodology and work plan

- Methodology and techniques required (to compile and analyse information for the presentation and dissemination of results).

- Work Plan request: phases, deadlines and products you would like to receive.

- Generally work is divided into an office phase and fieldwork phase and the type of tasks evaluators are expected to do in each is established: set of **data collection and processing tools**, identification and interview of key informants at headquarters and preparation of fieldwork. During the fieldwork phase **meetings for the sharing of preliminary results** should be scheduled with the organisations involved in the intervention, including the authorities and counterpart institutions of the country in question.

- Arrangements are made for a **final draft report** to be delivered by a certain date which is then discussed by all of the parties until a final report is obtained.

7. Structure and presentation of evaluation reports

- You establish a **guideline structure** which the evaluation reports should follow, especially the final evaluation report.

The final evaluation report shall not exceed XX pages. Attached to this report is an executive summary of a maximum XX pages. A summary sheet of the evaluation must also be presented following the format laid down by the OECD's DAC for that latter institution's inventory of evaluations.

After submitting the final report in electronic format and once it has been approved, the team will submit XXX hard copies of the final version of the final report and XXX CD's of the document in electronic format.

8. Evaluation team

■ Definition of the number of members of the evaluation team, member profile, professional qualifications (academic degrees, professional experience in the sector, in international cooperation, in evaluation...). A team coordinator should always be appointed. This person will be ultimately responsible for the work and will act as the contact person with the evaluation managing unit.

■ In the case of a mixed or semi-mixed evaluation, a clear explanation should appear in this section of how the team structure should operate.

9. Evaluation requirements, author and publication

■ Establish the **basic requirements concerning ethical and professional behaviour** for the evaluation team which could be as follows:

  ▪ Anonymity and confidentiality. The evaluation must respect the right of individuals to provide information in an anonymous and confidential manner.

▪ Responsibility. Any disagreement or difference of opinion arising between the members of the team or between the latter and those responsible for the programme regarding conclusions and/or recommendations should be mentioned in the report. All assertions made shall be considered by team consensus unless mention is made in the report of the disagreement of certain members.

▪ Integrity. The evaluators are responsible for raising issues not specifically mentioned in the technical specifications as necessary to obtain a more complete analysis of the intervention.

▪ Independence. The evaluation team must guarantee that they have no vested interest in the intervention under evaluation and are not tied to its management or any of its elements.

▪ Incidents. If problems arise during the fieldwork or during any other phases of the evaluation, these should be immediately reported to the DGPOLDE. If they are not reported, the existence of the said problems may in no way be used to justify failure to obtain the results established by the DGPOLDE in the technical specifications.

▪ Validation of the information. The evaluation team is responsible for ensuring the veracity of the information compiled for the reports and will be held ultimately liable for the information presented in the evaluation report.

▪ Evaluation reports. Dissemination of the information compiled and of the final report is the prerogative of the DGPOLDE.

▪ Submission of reports. In the case of the late submission of reports or reports whose quality is clearly inferior to that agreed to with this Directorate-General, the penalties envisaged in the General Administrative Conditions shall be applied.

- In any case, the DGPOLDE reserves the right to steer the evaluation and/or decide on its different aspects.

- Any author's royalties shall belong to the evaluation managing unit or contracting entity.

10. Time frame of the evaluation

- The commencement and termination dates of the evaluation and the calendar for the submission of products, submission of the final report and the result sharing activities must be established.

- A budget must be drawn up for the evaluation and figure in the corresponding Administrative Conditions.

11. Submission of the technical proposal and assessment criteria

- The characteristics that the technical proposal must have for tender submission must be stipulated.

- References to the assessment criteria of the quality of the proposal are included.

Acronyms List

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation	
AGE	General State Administration	
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	
DEGs	Geographical Strategy Papers	
DESs	Sector Strategy Papers	
DFID	UK Department for International Development	
DGPOLDE	*Directorate-General of Development Policy Planning and Evaluation*	
DNGOs	Development Non-Governmental Organisations	
EU	European Union	
FAD	Development Assistance Fund	
FCM	Microcredit Fund	
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank	
IDR	Regional Development Institute	
IMF	International Monetary Fund	
LCID	International Cooperation Law, No. 23/98 of 7th July	
MAEC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	
RG	Reference Group	
MDG	Millenium Development Goals	

MP	Master Plan for the Spanish Cooperation 2005-2008
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPE	Planning and Evaluation Office (current DGPOLDE)
OTC	Technical Cooperation Offices
PACI	Annual International Cooperation Plan
POG	Operational General Plan
PRSPs	Poverty reduction strategy papers
RBM	Results-based Management
SECI	Secretary of State for International Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SWAPs	Sector-Wide Approaches
ToR	Terms of References
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
WB	Word Bank