

Quality Standard for External Evaluations

Source: Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Dutch Government

Validity	
1.1.1	The problem definition concisely formulates the criteria on which the subject is to be evaluated. The evaluation questions arise from the problem definition.
1.1.2	Unambiguous description of the benchmark criteria - such as effectiveness - that are applied in the evaluation.
1.2.1	List, description and parameters of the operational population of component activities (type, target group, location, period, organisation, financial scope, etc.) to which the evaluation results relate.
1.2.2	Relevant policy-related background information and principles, and an account of the institutional setting in which the subject of the evaluation operates.
1.3.1	Description of the policy theory including the assumptions about the causal and final relationships underlying the interventions evaluated and about the input/output/outcome hierarchy.
1.3.2	Degree to which the indicators defined at the various result levels can be considered specific, measurable and time-related.
1.4.1	Degree of care with which the information sources have been selected; accuracy and transparency with which data from these sources have been analysed and processed.
1.4.2	Degree to which the conclusions are actually underpinned by the evaluation results.
Reliability	
2.1.1	Accurate identification and justification of the methods and techniques applied in the evaluation.
2.1.2	Degree to which data have been checked, and a range of different sources/methods used for collecting data about the same characteristics and phenomena.
2.2.1	Degree to which the conclusions drawn from the sample evaluated or case studies conducted apply to the entire evaluation population.
2.2.2	Identification and explanation of any shortcomings in the evaluation and limitations on the general applicability of the findings and conclusions.
2.3.1	Degree to which the selection and content of the information sources consulted, particularly documentation and respondents, were independent of parties with an interest in the evaluation, e.g. contracting authorities, implementing agencies and beneficiaries.
2.3.2	Degree to which the evaluators operated and reported independently from parties with an interest in the evaluation, e.g. contracting authorities, implementing agencies and beneficiaries.
2.4.1	Account and explanation of the progress of the evaluation, including modifications to the original design.
2.4.2	Checks on the design and/or conduct of the evaluation by a supervisory or steering group within or outside the organisation(s).
Usefulness	
3.1.1	Clarity of the stated aim of the evaluation (external to the evaluation itself), for which the evaluation results will be, or have been, used.
3.1.2	Degree of clarity and completeness with which the essence of the evaluation (especially its main findings) are reflected in the evaluation report and its summary.
3.2.1	Extent to which the conclusions fully answer all the evaluation questions.
3.2.2	Practical feasibility of the recommendations presented and the degree to which they lie within the capacity of the parties responsible, especially those that commissioned the evaluation.