



Health
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HEALTH CANADA

MID-PROJECT and FINAL EVALUATION REPORT ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Name of Program/Policy/Initiative Evaluated: _____	
Branch: _____	
Assessment: Mid-Project	Assessment: Final Evaluation Report
Date: _____	Date: _____
Reviewer(s): _____	Reviewer(s): _____
Assessment Result/Recommendation (please check the one that applies):	Recommendation (please check the one that applies):
Criteria Met <input type="checkbox"/> (Refer to the specific notations made in Guide)	Approved <input type="checkbox"/>
Revise <input type="checkbox"/> (Refer to <i>Improvements Suggested</i> for recommended revisions)	Revise <input type="checkbox"/> (Refer to <i>Improvements Suggested</i> for recommended revisions)
Referred for EC-FEA Discussion/Action <input type="checkbox"/>	

EVERGREEN DOCUMENT



Departmental Performance Measurement and Evaluation Directorate /
Direction de la mesure et de l'évaluation du rendement du Ministère
Chief Financial Officer Branch /
Direction générale du contrôleur ministériel

Canada 

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The table below identifies the elements and the criteria by which evaluation reports will be assessed.

Issues/Requirements	Criteria	Assessment (Met, Not Assessed, Needs improvement)		Comments	Comments
		Mid-Project	Final Report	Mid-Project	Final Report
1 Executive Summary					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Briefly present the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of the policy, program, initiative or function evaluated; • why the evaluation was done; • who the client and intended audience of the evaluation are; • the methods and study limitations; • the key evaluation questions; and • the main evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. <p>(Suggestion: The executive summary should be about 3 pages.)</p>				
2. Background and Context					
2.1 Description	○ The policy, program, initiative or function evaluated is clearly described, including the logic of cause-and-effect links between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and external factors contributing to success or failure – i.e. policy or program theory and assumptions.				
	○ The description of program reach (intended beneficiaries) is clearly described. How, for example, will Canadians benefit?				
	○ The program resources are clearly described so that the reader can understand how program monies are allocated and have been spent.				
2.2 Evaluation Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The report provides the reader with appropriate context for the evaluation by clearly explaining or describing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why the evaluation was conducted and why “now”; • the objectives and scope for the evaluation (e.g., national regional); • how the results will be used, and in particular what decisions they are intended to support; • the client, audience and key stakeholders for the evaluation; • the timing of the evaluation work 				

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluation issues/questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are clear and answerable • relate to/are a good fit with the decisions (<i>e.g. Government priorities</i>) the evaluation is to support • consider the issues relevant to key stakeholders(<i>e.g. Canadians</i>) • fall with the area of evaluation enquiry i.e, relevance and performance ○ The evaluation questions outlined must address each of the 5 <i>core issues in assessing 'value for money'</i> (i.e., outlined in Assessment Guide, Annex A) 				
3. Methods					
3.1 Evaluation Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The design of the evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes review of literature and highlights of relevant methods/ benchmarks to compare performance (if appropriate) • is described to the extent that the study can be replicated (<i>e.g., the relationship between the data collection and the analysis is described clearly</i>) ○ The evaluation design is appropriate for the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose outlined for the evaluation • evaluation questions • the availability and quality of performance data, • the time frame required to be useful for decision-making, and • resources available 				
3.2 Data/Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performance measures/indicators, including baseline measures used are clearly outlined in a summary table format (<i>e.g., using an Evaluation Information Summary Table presented in the Evaluation Report ANNEX section</i>) 				

Issues/Requirements	Criteria	Assessment (Met, Not Assessed, Needs improvement)		Comments	Comments
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data Collection approach is appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • methods, instruments, sample size, sampling strategy is described in sufficient detail to make an assessment about the study rigour and limitations to reliability and validity • supports the analysis used (<i>e.g., sample size, sample strategy, significance tests, response rates meet established statistical requirements for the analysis selected</i>) 				
3.3 Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analytical approaches used are credible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on sound research standards and practices, • meet the evaluation standards/requirements of third party review 				
3.4 Multiple Lines of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The evaluation methods rely on more than more than one line of evidence (<i>e.g., file or document review, key informant interviews, surveys, quantitative outcome measures</i>) 				
3.5 Ethical/Human Subject Protection Issues and Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where applicable, research protocols governing human subjects are adhered to, especially in controversial areas (<i>e.g., sexual behaviour, mental illness, marginalized populations</i>). <i>This also applies to polling and other opinion-based research that may be used for this evaluation.</i> 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anonymity/confidentiality issues and protocol for protection (<i>e.g., data management, reporting and the release of information protocols</i>) are described. 				
3.6 Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The limitations and trade-offs of the methods, data sources and data analysis used in the evaluation are outlined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presented in terms of bias, reliability, and potential impact on study findings 				

Issues/Requirements	Criteria	Assessment (Met, Not Assessed, Needs improvement)		Comments	Comments
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4. Key Findings and Conclusions					
4.1 Evaluation Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluation issues/questions are adequately addressed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study findings and conclusions address the 5 core issues to be addressed in Evaluations (i.e., relevance and performance-, effectiveness, efficiency and economy) of the Program/initiative • If <u>all</u> 5 core issues are not addressed a clear explanation as to why this did not occur (i.e., is noted in the conclusion section and executive summary section of the report. 				
4.2 Objectivity and Accuracy	○ Findings are presented, testable, and accurately reflect/do not go beyond what the evidence will support .				
	○ Balanced perspective – reflects the range of the observations and other evaluation input received				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The findings are sufficiently detailed to help readers draw substantiated inferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • results of interviews, surveys, etc... are consistently supported, noting the percentage relative to the sample size for the result outlined (e.g., 70% of survey participants (n=400) reported) • range, intensity and frequency of responses are noted 				
	○ The conclusions fit the entire analysis.				
4.3 Clarity and Conciseness	○ Used plain language -- avoided specialized technical language.				
	○ Report is not overloaded with details. Detailed information and analyses are included in technical appendices.				

Issues/Requirements	Criteria	Assessment (Met, Not Assessed, Needs improvement)		Comments	Comments
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4.4 Evidence-based Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The findings are substantiated by evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • findings/sources from the literature are identified and cited • findings for evaluation questions rely on synthesis of 2 or more lines of evidence • findings are analyzed compared, and cited to confirm/refute the findings for each evaluation question 				
5. Recommendations					
5.1 Evidence-based Recommendations	○ The recommendations are supported by, linked to and flow logically from the data, analysis, findings and conclusions.				
	○ The recommendations address key issues that are substantiated by evidence (i.e. they are not unprioritized “shopping lists”).				
	○ To the extent possible, an assessment of the potential impact (on the policy, program, etc. evaluated) of implementing a recommendation is provided.				
	○ The recommendations include proposed timing for management action and some indication of quantity and quality – e.g. a simple statement that “funding should be increased” or “consultations should be expanded” without some objective “benchmark” that provides an idea of “by how much”, and what “sufficient” or “good enough” could look like would be insufficient.				
	○ The recommendations are practical and realistically attainable.				
6. Document Length					
6.1 Length of report	○ To help bring better focus to the “truly important”, the main body of the evaluation report should be limited, where possible, to approximately 25 pages. Other information could be provided in appendices and annexes.				

ANNEX A

Core Issues to be Addressed in Evaluations

Evaluations that are intended to count toward the coverage requirements of the TBS/Health Canada Evaluation Policy need to address value for money by including clear, valid conclusions about *relevance* and the *performance* of programs. To address ‘value for money’, evaluations are required to assess all 5 core issues identified below¹. A sample of corresponding evaluation questions for each of the core issues are also provided below as added guidance.

Core Issues	
Relevance	
Issue #1: ‘Continued Need’ for Program	Assessment of the extent to which the Program continues to address a demonstrable need and is responsive to the needs of Canadians
Issue #2: Alignment with Government Priorities	Assessment of the linkages between Program objectives and i) Federal government priorities and ii) Departmental strategic outcomes
Issue #3: Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities	Assessment of the role and responsibilities for the Federal government in delivering the program
Performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy)	
Issue #4: Achievement of Expected Outcomes	Assessment of progress toward expected outcomes (incl. immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes noted in the logic model) with reference to performance targets and program reach, design, including linkage and contribution of outputs to outcomes.
Issue #5: Demonstration of Efficiency and Economy	Assessment of resource utilization in relation to the production of outputs and progress toward expected outcomes (i.e, minimizing the use of resources; extent to which resources are used such that a greater level of output is produced at the same or lower cost)

¹ Taken from- *Directive on Evaluation Function*, Treasury Board of Canada, April 2009

**Sample Evaluation Questions
for each Core Issue**

Relevance:

Evaluation Question #1	<p>1 a) Does the Program/initiative continue to address a demonstrable need?</p> <p>1 b) Is the Program responsive to the needs of Canadians? <i>(i.e., Issue #1 - Continued Need for Program)</i></p>
Evaluation Question #2	<p>What is the level of alignment between the program objectives and i) Federal government priorities and ii) Departmental strategic outcomes? <i>(i.e., Issue #2 - Alignment with Government Priorities)</i></p>
Evaluation Question #3	<p>Are the current roles and responsibilities for the federal government in delivering the Program/Initiative appropriate or Is there an opportunity for realignment?</p> <p>What activities or programs should or could be transferred in whole or in part to other sectors? <i>(i.e., Issue #3 - Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities)</i></p>

Performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy)

Evaluation Question #4	<p>4 a) Was the Program implemented as intended?</p> <p>4 b) Is the Program achieving the outcomes expected (i.e., as outlined in the Performance Measurement Strategy/Logic model)? <i>(i.e., Issue #4 - Achievement of Expected Outcomes/Effectiveness)</i></p>
Evaluation Question # 5	<p>5 a) How could Program efficiency be improved? or Could the services be delivered in another way, or the same services at lower costs? <i>(i.e., Issue #5 - Efficiency)</i></p> <p>5 b) Is the resultant package of programs and activities affordable? <u>If not</u>, what programs or activities could be abandoned <i>(i.e., Issue #5 - Economy)</i></p>

References

Guide for the Review of Evaluation Reports, A Basic Guide, Centre for Excellence for Evaluation, Treasury Board Secretariat, January 2004

Directive on Evaluation Function, Treasury Board of Canada, April 2009

Evaluation Policy, Treasury Board of Canada, April 2009

Health Canada Evaluation Policy 2010

Peer and expert panel review guides developed by the Departmental Performance Measurement and Evaluation Directorate, CFOB

Principles for the Evaluation of Programs by Federal Departments and Agencies, Treasury Board Secretariat, 1983

“Program Evaluation Review Criteria”, *Performance Improvement 2001: Evaluation Activities of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*, United States Department of Health and Human Services, August 2001

HEALTH CANADA MID-PROJECT and FINAL EVALUATION REPORT ASSESSMENT GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Both the Treasury Board and Health Canada evaluation policies (2009) require embedding evaluation into the on-going management responsibilities and practices of managers. Evaluations can be commissioned at different organizational levels of the Department and for a variety of purposes. Regardless of the purpose and how and where an evaluation is conducted, however, it must meet the standards articulated in the Health Canada Evaluation Policy (“the Policy”).

The Health Canada Evaluation Policy requires evaluation information on the ongoing relevance and performance of direct program spending that is:

- available to Ministers, departments and central agencies and used to support evidence-based decision-making on policy, expenditure management and program improvements, and
- available to Parliament and Canadians to support government accountability for results achieved by policies and programs.

The Evaluation Policy requires that evaluations of all ‘direct spending’ programs: examine the relevance and performance of the program/initiative and are subject to Executive Committee on Finance, Evaluation and Accountability (EC-FEA) oversight.²

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT ASSESSMENT GUIDE

The purpose of this Assessment Guide is to promote compliance with the evaluation standards set out in the Policy. In line with the Departmental Performance Measurement and Evaluation Directorate (DPMED) stewardship function, this guide will help managers better meet their evaluation responsibilities. The following desired outcomes are expected: improved quality and rigour of evaluation reports produced by or for Health Canada; improved management and accountability; improved Health Canada programs, policies and function; and the improved health of Canadians.

² ‘Direct Program Spending’ refers to the portion of total budgetary spending that excludes public debt charges and major transfers to persons and to other levels of government. Direct program spending includes operating and capital spending and grants and contributions (as specified in the Public Accounts). Health Canada Policy on Evaluation 2010.

APPLICATION

This Assessment Guide applies to evaluation studies falling within the purview of EC-FEA. The Guide will be used to ensure that *all* Final Evaluation Reports submitted to EC-FEA for approval meet the evaluation standards articulated in the Health Canada Evaluation Policy.

The Guide can also be used by managers, or evaluators/contractors conducting evaluation related work at Health Canada, to improve the quality and timely provision of evaluation evidence.

It is recognized that the entire guide does not necessarily apply to every evaluation and that some elements are more important than others in any given evaluation, depending on the objectives and audience/clients of the evaluation study. Also, evaluations are probably not all perfect, particularly given that Health Canada's evaluation function is evolving. Thus, this Guide should be applied in the spirit of continuous learning and improvement – i.e. to help improve management and the quality of evaluations in Health Canada, not to find fault. If an evaluation does not meet the requirements of the guide, identified deficiencies are assessed based on the “risk” they pose to the integrity of important findings, conclusions and recommendations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Evaluators and managers should use these criteria to assess their work prior to submitting evaluation studies for approval – for example, by assistant deputy ministers, regional directors general or EC-FEA.

The Departmental Performance Measurement and Evaluation Directorate, CFOB, will use this assessment guide to ensure that reports submitted to EC-FEA for approval meet the evaluation standards articulated in Appendix D of the Health Canada Evaluation Policy.

MONITORING

The Departmental Performance Measurement and Evaluation Directorate, CFOB, will monitor the application of this assessment guide and its success in meeting intended objectives.

ENQUIRIES

Enquiries about this assessment guide should be directed to:

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