

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide

Thinking



Collecting

Communicating

Prepared by

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Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide



Evaluation showcases your achievements and helps to make your program better. It can become one of the most rewarding aspects of your job because it is where you see the results of your work.

This site takes you step-by-step through the process of designing an evaluation so you can assess whether your project or program has met its objectives and achieved its desired outcomes.

Evaluating your program may seem like a daunting prospect. The key to the process is planning and the best people to undertake this task are the people that know the program best – you and your team.

How to....

The evaluation process has been broken down into four key stages – Thinking, Planning, Collecting and Communicating.

At each stage you will find a number of steps to complete, along with worksheets, examples and a checklist. You should read through the steps, complete the worksheets, and then use the checklist to confirm that you are ready to move on to the next stage.

Throughout the process you will also find a number of points where you can opt to contract out your evaluation. These points will link you to a Contracting page to assist you in this process.

Please continue to the Thinking page to begin your evaluation.

Thinking

Steps 1-3 start the process by helping you to think about what you want to get out of your evaluation.

Page 1

Planning

Steps 4-7 assist you in developing an Evaluation Plan that will guide all your evaluation activities.

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Collecting

Steps 8-10 will help you to collect the information you need, develop your budget and timelines and consider the relevant ethical issues surrounding your evaluation.

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Thinking

Thinking

It is important to clearly define why you are doing your evaluation and what you want to end up with at its conclusion. Take the time to think through the first two steps as they will impact on the work you undertake.

Open the Thinking Worksheet and print or save the document.

Step 1 – Describe your purpose

Evaluations can be carried out for a range of reasons and it is important to be clear about exactly why you are undertaking yours.

Are you interested in the impact of your program (outcome or summative evaluation)?

Do you want to know if it can be improved (performance or formative evaluation)?

Or maybe you want to do a mix of both?

Do you want to evaluate your whole program or only a specific element?

Keep in mind that it is better to evaluate part of a program well than the whole program poorly.

In the first column on the worksheet, write down your evaluation purpose/s. Why are you doing this evaluation? What do you want to get out of it?

Purposes may include one or more of the following:

- To report achievements
- To contribute to evidence about what works
- To inform strategic planning
- To argue for project expansion
- To improve project delivery
- To analyse funding distribution and impact
- To argue for program funding

Step 2 – Identify your end products

Thinking

The products that you can generate from your evaluation are limited only by your imagination. Be creative.

Recent examples from DPCD include a colour brochure for Men's Sheds, a newsletter article for Rural Women, a policy workshop for Caroline Springs, a report to the community for the Aboriginal COAG Partnership as well as comprehensive internal reports for program improvement.

In the second column of your table, write down who the evaluation is aimed at. The audience may include:

- Program participants
- General public
- Project team
- Stakeholders
- Senior management
- Funding bodies
- Policy & research community

In the third column of your table, write down the best product to reach your audience. Match your product to your purpose and your audience - there is no need to generate a 300 page report if all you require is a short newsletter article or a workshop.

Some products that may help you reach your audience include (though are not limited to):

- Program participants - Newsletters, brochures, electronic responses, report cards
- General public - Newspaper or magazine articles, postcards, websites
- Project team - Workshops, internal reports, performance indicators
- Stakeholders - Seminars, reports, DVDs, data summary sheets
- Senior management - Recommendations, briefings, presentations
- Funding bodies – Formal reports, summary reports, key findings
- Policy & research community - Journal articles, online articles, conference presentation

Step 3 – Consider your budget and timeline

In the final rows of your table, insert the overall budget and timeline for your evaluation. This will be developed in more detail later in the process, but it's a good idea to have these details clear in your mind from the start.

Don't worry if your budget is not big - there are still activities that can be undertaken - but you will need to carefully consider your product.

If you are at the beginning of your program, it is a good rule of thumb to allocate 10% of your program budget to evaluation, though this will obviously vary from program to program.

Thinking

By this stage you will have completed the Thinking Worksheet, establishing the reason for your evaluation, the end product and outlining your budget and timeline.

Now complete the Thinking Checklist, before moving on to Planning.

Planning



The importance of having an Evaluation Plan (or Evaluation Framework) cannot be overstated. Many evaluations fail when, without a plan, they go off track and fail to answer the most important questions.

An Evaluation Plan simply sets out the information that you need to determine if your program’s objectives have been met, together with the methods that you are going to use to collect this information. Ideally, your Evaluation Plan should be prepared when you are establishing your program, though it is also possible to prepare it later in the process.

Steps 4-7 will help you to write an Evaluation Plan. We encourage you to plan your evaluation in-house as you know your program’s information needs best.

If you decide you need the assistance of a contractor, your first opt-out point is after Step 5. At this point you will have defined your evaluation questions and will be able to provide clear guidance to your contractor.

The best way to generate your Evaluation Plan is to hold a workshop with your program team and work through each of the steps below.

Begin by opening the Evaluation Plan Template and saving or printing the document.

Step 4 – Define your objectives

In most cases the overall purpose of evaluation is to test whether the program has met its objectives (i.e. increased participation, improved planning, etc).

Write down your program’s objectives in the first column of the Evaluation Plan. Or, if you are evaluating only part of your program, write down some specific objectives related to that part.

If you do not have clearly defined objectives, you need to spend more time planning your program before you consider evaluation. The Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium website may assist you in clarifying your program objectives.

Evaluation Plan			
Objectives	Questions	Information Required	Data Source
Better and more timely planning and delivery of community services and infrastructure in community X through partnership model.			
Increased level of community participation in general activities and governance.			

Do not move on until you have a list of objectives - you will not be able to undertake any evaluation without them.

Step 5 – Establish your evaluation questions

Once you have entered your objectives into the template, the next step is to consider all the questions that you will need to answer to determine if each of your objectives have been met.

For each objective, brainstorm your questions with your team, considering questions related to:

- What happened?
- Were the activities successful?
- What could be done better?
- What lessons were learned?

Be specific. The questions in the example below may also help to prompt you.

When generating your questions think about what you would like to know, but also consider whether you really need to know this information to assess your work, or if it is just an interesting question. Write the questions in the second column of your Evaluation Plan.



Evaluation Plan			
Objectives	Questions	Information Required	Data Source
Better and more timely planning and delivery of community services and infrastructure in community X through partnership model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the model? • Who was involved? • Was the diversity of the community represented? • What was delivered? • What was delivered differently because of the model? • Has capacity been built to make the model sustainable? • What lessons were learnt? • Could this model be generalised to other areas? 		
Increased level of community participation in general activities and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in general activities? ▪ Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in governance? 		

Once your team is happy with this column, you will have a set of research questions for your evaluation. You will be able to refer back to these to keep you on track throughout your evaluation.

Having established your research questions, this is the first point where you can seek assistance from a contractor. Refer to the Contracting page for further advice and then continue to read through the remaining six steps to understand the process.

Step 6 – Identify the information you require

Once your evaluation questions are written you can consider what information you will need to answer each of your questions.

In the third column, write down the information required.

For example:



Evaluation Plan			
Objectives	Questions	Information Required	Data Source
Better and more timely planning and delivery of community services and infrastructure in community X through partnership model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the model? • Who was involved? • Was the diversity of the community represented? • What was delivered? • What was delivered differently because of the model? • Has capacity been built to make the model sustainable? • What lessons were learnt? • Could this model be generalised to other areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the model • List of partners over time • Significant organisations not involved in the partnership • Audit of services/ infrastructure delivered • Partners assessment of what happened differently because of the model • Partners assessment of the capacity that has been built and sustainability • Partners assessment of lessons • High level strategic opinion about the applicability of the findings to other areas 	
Increased level of community participation in general activities and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in general activities? ▪ Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in governance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of participants ▪ Age groups, CALD, indigenous etc ▪ Number of participants ▪ Age groups, CALD, indigenous etc 	

Step 7 – Review your Evaluation Plan

Take a moment to review your Evaluation Plan and ensure that you have established a good set of questions.

If you are evaluating your program as a whole (rather than just one element), it's a good rule of thumb to check your Evaluation Plan includes some questions on outcomes, achievements and improved processes.



Outcomes	What impact did your program have of the community?	Questions such as... Have literacy levels improved? Did people transition to permanent work? Are more people involved? Is a better governance structure in place?
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Achievements	What did your program deliver?	Questions such as... How many training programs were run? How many participants were involved? What infrastructure has been built? Who contributed resources?
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Improved Processes	Did your approach work?	Questions such as... Was this a good model for delivering this program? Has the model improved how your organisation runs? Were cost savings or efficiencies generated? What was the relative cost and benefit of this model?
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Circulate your plan to your staff, management, steering committee, etc to ensure that everyone agrees with the scope.

Your evaluation plan should be reviewed regularly over the life of your program to ensure you are on track and that your evaluation questions remain relevant. You will need to **revise and update your evaluation plan** if your program objectives change or you modify your activities. This may happen because of a change in your organisation's priorities or as a result of evaluation findings that lead you to make program improvements. Updating your plan will involve bringing your team back together to go back over the steps outlined in this guide.

By this stage your Evaluation Plan will be near completion.

Now complete the Planning Checklist , before moving on to Collecting.

Collecting



You are now ready to consider your methods for collecting the information outlined in your plan. There are numerous ways that you can do this and being creative can get you the most interesting material.

For instance, Neighbourhood Houses have used a combination of focus groups, a census and an internet based achievement reporting tool to discover that:

- 3 million people participate in classes annually;
- participation can lead to employment, further education and involvement in the community; and
- there are cost benefits associated with the program.

Step 8 – Identify or create your data sources

To complete your Evaluation Plan you need to select the best method for each of the information requirements listed in your Evaluation Plan. You should also use a mix of data sources.

When selecting the best method for each item, you need to consider three questions:

1. Do you already collect this data or do you need to create a new data source?
2. Who is best able to provide the information you require?
3. Can you afford the costs associated with the method you select?

The best methods for measuring outcomes are those that measure before and after your intervention, or that compare two similar communities where only one receives the intervention (a randomized control trial). These types of evaluation methods, however, are expensive and you will need the help of a university to run them.

There are alternative methods, though, that can be just as good for collecting the information you need. These include:

- Achievement Audits
- Key Stakeholder Interviews / Individual Interviews
- Focus Groups / Group Interviews
- A Census
- Literature Reviews
- Data Sources / Indicators
- Partnership Tools
- Surveys

All programs should have a way of regularly recording their achievements – an achievement audit (see Collecting Methods page). These can be developed in-house, are cheap to run and you will be amazed at the information you can generate that may otherwise be forgotten over time or lost as your staff change.

The Collecting Methods page provides more detail on each of these research methods, including when they are best used, examples of the information that each can generate and further advice on how to use each tool.

The example below shows how you may match up your information requirements with collection methods.



Evaluation Plan			
Objectives	Questions	Information Required	Data Source
Better and more timely planning and delivery of community services and infrastructure in community X through partnership model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the model? • Who was involved? • Was the diversity of the community represented? • What was delivered? • What was delivered differently because of the model? • Has capacity been built to make the model sustainable? • What lessons were learnt? • Could this model be generalised to other areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the model • List of partners over time • Significant organisations not involved in the partnership • Audit of services/ infrastructure delivered • Partners assessment of what happened differently because of the model • Partners assessment of the capacity that has been built and sustainability • Partners assessment of lessons • High level strategic opinion about the applicability of the findings to other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project application • Bi-monthly reports • Stakeholder interviews • Achievement audit • Stakeholder interviews • Stakeholder interviews • Stakeholder interviews • Workshop on evaluation results
Increased level of community participation in general activities and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in general activities? ▪ Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in governance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of participants ▪ Age groups, CALD, indigenous etc ▪ Number of participants ▪ Age groups, CALD, indigenous etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment forms • Achievement audit • Pre and post population indicators • Bi-monthly reports • Achievement tool • Pre and post population indicators

In this example, the program would need to establish six new evaluation activities:

- A bi-monthly report, six monthly achievement audit and a community survey at the program outset, and
- Stakeholder interviews, internal workshops and a community survey at project completion.

Be careful of using **Case Studies** as a research method. If you draw conclusions from a case study you can make serious errors. For instance, you may have a program that has failed in 10 sites but succeeded in the single site of your case study, leading you to conclude that the program was an overall success. Case studies can be useful communication tools though, helping to highlight your achievements and illustrate your results. For instance, Community ITC has developed a series of case studies to tell a story about their work.

This is the second point where you can seek assistance from a contractor. Refer to the Contracting page for further advice and then continue to read through the remaining three steps to understand the process.

Once you have chosen appropriate tools, add them to the final column of your Evaluation Plan. Keep in mind that any new tools you develop will need to be piloted to ensure they will generate the information you need. Collecting Worksheet 1 provides some guidelines on piloting your research tools.

Your Evaluation Plan is now complete.

Step 9 – Overlay your timelines and budget

Once your Evaluation Plan is complete you can overlay your timelines and budget. This involves further developing the timeline and budget you established in the Thinking section, so that you have a table indicating when each evaluation activity occurs and the costs and staff involved.

Collecting Worksheet 2 will assist you to prepare this information.

In your budget, don't forget to include the costs involved in producing products such as published reports and workshops.



Collecting

Step 10 – Consider Privacy and Ethical Issues

Collecting

Whether you are designing, conducting or funding a piece of evaluation research you have a responsibility (and legal obligation) to ensure that it is conducted in an ethical way. The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NS) outlines Australia's ethics standards.

There are five important principles to consider when conducting research involving humans:

Respect for individuals and groups

You must respect the autonomy of individuals to make decisions for themselves, including consenting to research (or not), and use of information about them. You must explore and respect the beliefs, customs and cultural practices of relevant parties (in particular note the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research). You must respect privacy and confidentiality and comply with the Information Privacy Act, the Commonwealth Privacy Act and the Health Records Act (if relevant).

Benefits must justify any risk

You must maximise benefits and minimise risks of your research. Benefits include ensuring that the research is used to improve things, while risks include: **harm** – eg. physical or psychological harm, devaluation in personal worth, social, economic or legal harms; **discomfort** - eg. anxiety induced by an interview or minor physical discomfort; and **inconvenience** - eg. filling in a form or completing a research task. Reflecting on risks and benefits requires you to consider the welfare of participants as well as the broader social and cultural implications of the research.

Justice and equity

You must consider who receives the benefits of research and who bears the burden of being researched. For instance, one group may be 'over-researched' because they are easy to access, while others may be rarely researched because they are considered 'too difficult'. Ensure that all people are treated fairly in your research procedures.

Integrity

You must ensure your research is a legitimate search for knowledge that follows recognised principles of conduct. Research should be conducted by qualified and competent professionals and there should be a commitment to disseminating the findings.

Research Merit

You must ensure your research will contribute to knowledge. Make sure that the research question can not be answered using existing data and that the best method is being used. In assessing merit, respect for the well-being and dignity of people take precedence over benefits to knowledge.

Your research proposal may first need to be reviewed by a **Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)**. This process can take several months and should be factored into your planning.

An evaluation or research activity can proceed without review by an HREC if:

Both

- (a) the activity is undertaken with the consent of the participants, providers or institutions involved;

or

is consistent with national Privacy Principle 2.1(a), which states:
'An organisation must not use or disclose personal information about an individual for a purpose (the secondary purpose [i.e. your evaluation purpose]) other than the primary purpose of collection'...

unless the following apply:

- (i) the secondary purpose is related to the primary purpose of collection and, if the personal information is sensitive information, directly related to the primary purpose;
- (ii) the individual would reasonably expect the organisation to use or disclose the information for the secondary purpose;

And

- (b) it is an activity where participants, including providers or institutions, are unlikely to suffer burden or harm (physical, mental, psychological, spiritual or social).

(National Health & Medical Research Council: Advice to Institutions, Human Research Ethics Committees and Health Care Professionals)

Collecting Worksheet 3 will help you to consider some of the most significant ethical issues in relation to your evaluation. **This advice DOES NOT replace examination of the NS and it is not a complete review of ethical issues.** You are advised to seek assistance from a reputable academic or evaluator to ensure your compliance with ethical standards and privacy legislation.

By this stage you will have completed Collecting Methods, Collecting Worksheet 1 (if you are using any new tools), Collecting Worksheet 2 and Collecting Worksheet 3. Your Evaluation Plan should be complete.

Now complete the Collecting Checklist, before moving on to Communicating.

Collecting

Communicating

Once you have undertaken your evaluation activities, you need to consider how you will ensure that your evaluation results are used.

Step 11 – Utilising your Findings

In completing the Thinking Worksheet you identified the audiences that are important for your evaluation. You now need to consider how you are going to make sure they see your products.

There are three questions you need to consider:

- Have you determined a process for examining the results internally?
- Have you determined a process for promoting your results externally?
- Have you considered ways your results can be held (in libraries, etc) so others can use them into the future?

At this stage we also encourage you to consider ways to return any information you have collected back to the participants. For example, if you surveyed the community, how will the community see the results? If you asked project staff to collect achievement information, how will they see the results of their efforts? Reporting back to the participants can encourage greater involvement in the future and help to improve your evaluation process.

The Neighbourhood House program, for instance, reports back the results of its online reporting system to the Houses that have participated. This provides the Houses with an insight into their sector (which they view very positively) as well providing extra motivation for completing future reports.

If you have decided to produce a publication, the Communicating Worksheet provides information about some of things you should consider in terms of promotion and distribution.

At this point you should have a completed the Communicating Worksheet and have a communication strategy in place.

Congratulations. Your evaluation plan is now complete.

Contracting

Bad experiences with contractors are largely the result of unclear expectations, undefined research questions and limited involvement between program staff and the contractor.

To prevent these problems, you should not contract out your evaluation until you have completed at least the first four steps of this planning process and have established a list of evaluation questions, your purpose, audience and end products.

The more complete your Evaluation Plan is, the more guidance can provide to your contractor.

You should also read through all of the evaluation steps to ensure that you have the knowledge to work successfully with your contractor. In addition, a Glossary of Key Terms has been developed to assist you with working with your contractor.

To get the most out of a contractor you need:

A clear quote

Be specific about what you expect from your contractor and include as much detail as possible in your request for quote document. If you need to seek advice on your methodology, you can request this in the quote. You can then revise your original quote to include the chosen method and send it back out for a re-quote.

A reputable evaluator

Can they meet deadlines? Are they willing to work closely with your organisation? Will they undertake quality research? Will they produce high quality and usable products for your organisation?

Involvement in the planning process

Develop your Evaluation Plan as much as possible before seeking a contractor and then work closely with your contractor to complete the plan. Always check the final Evaluation Plan carefully to ensure that it covers all of your requirements and confirm all the details about what will happen and what will be generated prior to commencing the evaluation.

Involvement throughout the evaluation process

You know your work, your processes and your requirements better than the contractor so it is important to remain involved throughout the process to provide direction for the contractor. Establish clear milestones at the points where you want to be involved in the process. In particular, set aside time to work on drafts to ensure that the structure and the focus meet your needs. Don't leave this until the end of the process.

Complete the Contracting Worksheet.

Tips for assessing tenders and quotes.

- Method -Do they offer a suitable methodology that will answer your questions?
- Product - Do they have experience in delivering the product that you are requesting?
- Timelines - Can they meet your timelines and have they identified opportunities for your involvement?
- People – Who will be undertaking your evaluation and do they have the skills to carry out the work? (Check that your evaluation is not going to be passed on to someone not included on the quote.)

At this point you should have completed the Contracting Worksheet and have established a detailed plan for working with your chosen contractor.

Now return to Planning or Collecting and continue reading through the rest of the steps so that you will have a good knowledge of the process your contractor will help you to undertake.



DPCD Evaluations

A successful evaluation is one that answers your evaluation questions using robust data. As your evaluation questions are determined from your objectives, a successful evaluation will tell you if your program has met its objectives. It will allow you to examine the impact of your program (if focussed on outcomes) or redesign your program to make it better (if focused on performance). The results of a thorough evaluation should be reported back to your stakeholders for wider discussion or dissemination of lessons you have learned. The following are some examples of successful DPCD evaluations that have been released publicly to show progress and disseminate findings.

Caroline Springs Partnership

The partnership approach adopted in Caroline Springs is a model for success in community development. This report indicates that it has resulted in a well-planned community that can provide services, not only to its residents, but to those across the Shire of Melton.

Strengthening Local Communities: Arts in Community Settings

Arts projects in community settings generate significant benefits for participants, artists and communities. This report demonstrates that these projects can be significant tools for engaging hard to reach populations, and can provide an avenue for these groups to explore issues and express them to others.

Men's Sheds

Men's Sheds are offering older men an opportunity to engage with their local community and share their skills and knowledge within an informal, supportive environment. This publication outlines some of the benefits for the men, their families and the local community.

Neighbourhood Houses Report and Census Brochure

Neighbourhood Houses have a significant impact on the social and human capital of participants. The report outlines the benefits of the Houses to both participants and communities, while the census results demonstrate the magnitude of community participation in Neighbourhood Houses, demonstrating that they are significant sites of community engagement.

Country Football Grounds Assistance Program

Water management planning in rural and regional communities is improving playing surfaces of local sportsgrounds and encouraging greater usage of facilities. This outcomes report outlines the results of some of water saving projects undertaken across the state.

Local Libraries

Almost half of the Victorian population belongs to their local library, borrowing a combined total of 50 million items each year. This one page brochure outlines the usage of public libraries in Victoria.

Commonwealth Games

The Commonwealth Games provided social, environmental and economic benefits to the state. This triple bottom line assessment considers the impact of the Games on the community and evaluates its success against government objectives.

Evaluation of Access for All Abilities

The Access for All Abilities program aims to provide sport and recreation opportunities that are inclusive of, and accessible to, people with disabilities. An evaluation undertaken in 2005 made a number of recommendations to improve the effectiveness of this program.



Further Resources

Evaluating Community Arts and Community Well Being provides a simple, step by step approach to evaluating arts based projects. This publication includes worksheets, templates of evaluation tools and guidelines for preparing your evaluation report.

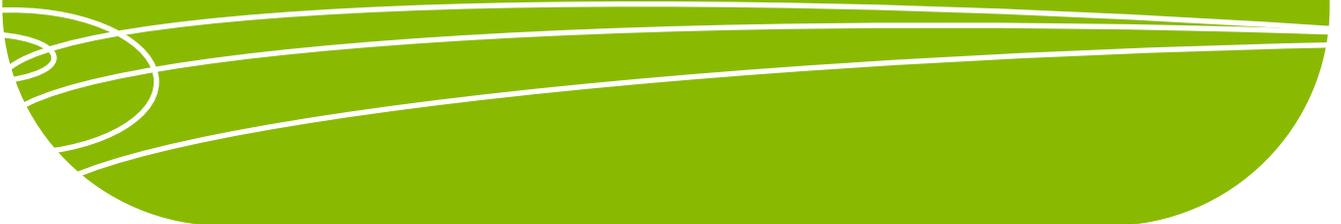
Engaging Queenslanders: Evaluating Community Engagement is designed to assist public officials to evaluate their community engagement activities. This resource provides a good guide to the evaluation process, though with a slightly more technical focus.

The Department of Treasury and Finance's **Guide to Evaluation: How to Plan and Conduct Effective Evaluation for Policy and Programs** provides a clear, brief guide to the evaluation process with a focus on the evaluation of policy.

The **Australian Evaluation Society** provides a variety of information for evaluation practitioners, including a list of consultants.



Evaluation
Step-by-Step Guide
Worksheets



Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Thinking Worksheet

In the table below:

1. List the purposes of your evaluation. These may include:
 - To report achievements
 - To contribute to evidence about what works
 - To inform strategic planning
 - To argue for project expansion
 - To improve project delivery
 - To analyse funding distribution and impact
2. List the audience interested in each purpose. For instance:
 - Program participants
 - General public
 - Project team
 - Stakeholders
 - Senior management
 - Funding bodies
 - Policy & research community
3. List the product that would suit each purpose and audience. Consider:
 - Newsletters or brochures
 - Magazine, newspaper or journal articles
 - Workshops, seminars or presentations
 - Recommendations or performance indicators
 - Reports, briefings or data summaries
4. In the final rows of the table, write in your overall evaluation budget and timeline.

What is the purpose of your evaluation?	Who is the audience?	How can you best communication with this audience?
Evaluation Budget		
Evaluation Timeline		

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Thinking Checklist

Before moving on have you....

Identified the purpose of your evaluation?

Have you considered evaluating the whole program or just part of the program?

Have you thought about whether you are measuring the impact of your program, the performance of your program, or a combination of both?

Identified your end products?

Have you matched your purpose to your audience?

Have you found suitable ways of communicating with your audience?

Considered your budget and timeline?

Have you considered the feasibility of your product/s given your budget and the time available?

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Evaluation Plan

Objectives	Questions What questions do you need to ask to determine that your objectives have been met?	Information Required What information do you require to answer each of these questions?	Data Source How will you collect this information?
Better and more timely planning and delivery of community services and infrastructure in community X through partnership model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the model? • Who was involved? • Was the diversity of the community represented? • What was delivered? • What was delivered differently because of the model? • Has capacity been built to make the model sustainable? • What lessons were learnt? • Could this model be generalised to other areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the model • List of partners over time • Significant organisations not involved in the partnership • Audit of services/ infrastructure delivered • Partners assessment of what happened differently because of the model • Partners assessment of the capacity that has been built and sustainability • Partners assessment of lessons • High level strategic opinion about the applicability of the findings to other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project application • Bi-monthly reports • Stakeholder interviews • Achievement audit • Stakeholder interviews • Stakeholder interviews • Stakeholder interviews • Stakeholder interviews • Workshop on evaluation results
Increased level of community participation in general activities and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in general activities? • Are more people from a range of backgrounds involved in governance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants - Age groups, CALD, indigenous etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment forms • Achievement audit • Pre and post population indicators • Bi-monthly reports • Achievement tool • Pre and post population indicators
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Planning Checklist

Before moving on have you....

Prepared your evaluation plan?

Have you included your objectives?

Have you established the questions your evaluation needs to answer?

Have you identified the information your evaluation needs to collect?

Does your plan include information on:

- Outcomes?
- Achievements?
- Improving processes?

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide



Collecting Methods

The table below outlines some of the most common evaluation methods. You need to select the best method for each of the information requirements listed in your Evaluation Plan, ensuring that you use a mix of data sources to evaluate your program.

If you have the expertise you can develop these tools in-house, if not, seek expert advice from an academic or contractor.

For each of your information requirements in your plan consider:

4. Do you already collect this data or do you need to create a new data source?
5. Who is best able to provide the information you require?
6. Can you afford the costs associated with the method you select?

Method	Use	Example	Additional Information
Achievement Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All programs should have some way of regularly documenting their achievements and these tools can be developed in-house. Used to regularly document what you have delivered including infrastructure, services, policy changes, participants, etc 	A Fairer Victoria has reported its achievements from the past three years to the community.	Community Support Fund Achievement Audit Tool
<p>Reviewing your achievements highlights significant events and allows you to trigger specific research to assess issues that arise. For instance, when the Aboriginal Policy and Planning Unit in Shepparton realised how many Indigenous people they had trained over a year, a survey was developed to examine the opportunities that training had created for those participants.</p>			
Individual interviews / Key Stakeholder Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when there is a relatively small number of people that can report on the outcomes or performance of your program. Useful when people may be reluctant to share their opinions in a group environment. 	The Aboriginal Policy and Planning Unit in Shepparton used interviews with participants and key stakeholders in their report to the community.	General Guidelines for Conducting Interviews, Free Management Library
Focus groups / Group Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when a group of similar people can comment on the outcomes or performance of your program though you must be sure that no-one's opinion will be silenced by being in a group. Allows participants to feed off each other and is a good way to get at the "culture" of a group of people. 	Two Community Arts Programs evaluated its success through focus groups of artists, participants and community organisations.	Using Focus Groups, The Health Communication Unit at the Health Promotion Unit, University of Toronto
Census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to count all events, activities, participants etc over a given period. 	Neighbourhood Houses counted all participants and volunteers in the over a week.	Neighbourhood Houses Census Tool
Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when you think your questions may have already been answered in other studies. Useful to ensure that your program is supported by research. 	Sport and Recreation Victoria used a literature review to investigate the links between ground conditions and injury risk.	

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Method	Use	Example	Additional Information
Data Sources / Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when you have an outcome that is measured regularly and where you are sure that your program impacts on that measure. 	Community Renewal's Draft Laverton Community and Statistical Profile demonstrates how indicators can be used.	Indicators of Community Strength Community Indicators Victoria Australian Bureau of Statistics
<p>Keep in mind that your program will not be the only influence on indicators and even a highly successful program may not necessarily impact on these measures. For instance, your program may create 30 new jobs, but if a major local industry closes unemployment indicators will rise.</p>			
Partnership tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when you are interested in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a partnership. Involves interviewing Steering Committee members in order to assess the process and make a map of the network. 	The Caroline Springs Partnership assessed its partnership and in particular the success of its broker.	TBA
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when you have a well defined sample that is easy to reach. Useful only when interviews would be too difficult, time consuming or lacking confidentiality. 	Sport and Recreation_Victoria used a survey to determine the success of the 'Warming Up for the Games' event.	Conducting Survey Research, The Health Communication Unit at the Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto Dillman, D.A. (2000) Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Method, J. Wiley: New York
<p>Surveys are one of the most difficult methods to get right and you will need the assistance of a researcher to ensure that you obtain: a representative and unbiased sample, a response rate of at least 70%, professionally developed questions, a pilot on a pre-sample and adherence to privacy legislation with regards to both your contact list and your ability to safeguard the confidentiality of your participants. Do not attempt to develop a survey without seeking professional advice.</p>			
Other Methods	<p>There are many other methods that can be used to collect information for your evaluation. Talk to research people in you organisation, other people that have completed evaluations and academics in your area for ideas on other methods to use. In addition, the Department of Sustainability and Environment provides a list of additional evaluation tools in 'The Engagement Planning Workbook' that you may find useful.</p>		

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Collecting Worksheet 1

All new research tools need to be piloted. This means that you test them on people to make sure they are easy to complete and that people understand the questions the way you intended. These guidelines will help you to pilot achievement audit tools or surveys that you have developed.

The best way to test a tool is to test it on someone who will ultimately fill it out. If you don't want those people to see it out until it is complete, someone from a similar type of program will do.

What to do ...

Print out two copies of your research tool – one for you and one for the person doing the test.

Find a quiet room and ask the person to complete the tool **out loud**. This means that they should read out the questions and then talk through their thought processes as they answer each question.

For example:

They could read out:

“Question 1. Why was it blue?”

Then say,

“I'm not sure why it was depressed. I don't know how to answer. I'll write down ...”

Or,

“I'm not sure what this question is talking about – do they mean the thing from the previous question? ... I'll guess it does, so I'll write down”

DO NOT INTERRUPT.

Let the person work through the whole tool unassisted. Even if they ask for clarification, do not offer assistance. If they need clarification then this is a good indication that your tool will need to be changed.

While they are going through this process, your role is to indicate on your copy of the tool where:

- your questions were too hard or where the person did not have enough information to answer;
- your meaning was not clear and the person got confused;
- your intention was misunderstood (ie. you meant the colour blue though your respondent read it as 'depressed').

Once they have completed the entire tool you can then discuss the problems they encountered and how the questions could be improved.

You should update your tool with the information you discover and then continue to test on other people until you feel confident that the tool is easy to use and is collecting the information you require.

Piloting will vastly improve the information you collect and it is worth taking the time to do it carefully. Even the most experienced researchers are surprised at what piloting reveals.

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Collecting Worksheet 2

These instructions, together with the example, will help you to develop a clear summary of your timelines and budget using the template on the following page.

1. Establish the length of time your evaluation will take and mark it on the timeline at the top of the chart.
2. On the left hand side list your evaluation tools, one per line.
3. Mark on the chart when each of your evaluation activities will be carried out and the staff and costs involved.
4. Include a reserve amount to cover new evaluation activities generated by your achievement audit. For instance, when an achievement audit by the Aboriginal Policy and Planning Unit in Shepparton demonstrated the number of Indigenous people they had trained over a year, they decided to survey the participants to get more information about the opportunities generated.
5. Enter the outputs that you will be generating, when they are due and the costs involved.
6. You should now be able to clearly see the timeline of activities, staff and costs over the life of the evaluation.

	Yr0	Yr1	Yr2
Evaluation Tools			
Achievement Audit	X	X	X
		Officer to compile	Officer to compile
Population Survey	X		X
	\$7000		\$7000
Partnership Evaluation	X		X
	Officer to run		Officer to run \$1500 analysis
Reserve		\$10,000	\$10,000
Reports		Interim Report Contractor \$2000	Final Report Contractor \$2000
TOTALS	\$7000 + in-kind	\$12,000 + in-kind	\$20,500 + in-kind

\$39,500 + in kind over 2 years



Collecting Worksheet 3

The [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) (NS) outlines Australia ethical standards for research and this should be reviewed as your primary source of information about ethics. The questions on this worksheet are designed to trigger consideration of some of the most significant ethical issues in relation to your project. **This worksheet DOES NOT replace examination of the NS and is not a complete review of ethical issues.** You are advised to seek assistance from a reputable academic or evaluator to ensure your compliance with ethical standards and privacy legislation.

1. Have you determined if your evaluation is exempt from formal review using the definition provided by the in Step 10?

If you are not exempt from review, seek professional assistance.

If you are exempt from review continue to work through this worksheet.

2. Are the people doing your research reputable?

(see the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research)

Is the person undertaking the evaluation qualified and experienced to do so?

Is the person undertaking the evaluation familiar with current codes of conduct in relation to research and research ethics?

3. Have you reduced the burden on your participants?

Have you considered less intrusive or inconvenient approaches to answering your evaluation question (such as the use of secondary data or information already in the public domain)?

Have you acted to reduce even minor burdens on, and risks to, participants? Are you sure their involvement will not be upsetting?

Does the design and conduct of the evaluation display sensitivity to the likely personal concerns and relevant cultural understandings of participants?

Have you considered if the results of the research, when released will cause harm to a group (i.e. by stigmatising them)?

4. Have you considered privacy and confidentiality?

(See the Information Privacy Act, the Commonwealth Privacy Act and the Health Records Act.)

Have you considered the level of confidentiality you will be offering participants and ensured you have the processes to both maintain this level of confidentiality and inform participants.

Have you ensured that individual information you collect is anonymous and that no sensitive material is identified (including names, addresses, sensitive topics, etc)?

If you need to collect sensitive information you must consider putting your proposal through a formal Human Research Ethics Committee.

Have you considered how to protect privacy/confidentiality when recruiting participants?

Have you ensured that any contact lists used were established specifically for this purpose – ie. the people identified on the list having specifically agreed to being contacted for research purposes.

The use of contact lists based on membership lists, subscriber lists or service records, for example, is a breach of Privacy Legislation if those on the list did not agree to their information being used in this way.

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



5. Have you considered how you will explain your research to the participants?

Have you considered how you will ensure that information collected will only be used for the purposes explained to the participants?

You will need to explain

- The purpose of the study
- that involvement is voluntary
- the risks and benefits
- exactly what you require from participants (type of information, time commitment etc)
- how the information provided will be used
- that participation in the evaluation will not prejudice people's access to the service/program.

6. Have you a process for obtaining consent?

Informed consent can only occur if participants understand that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time. They need to have all relevant information from which to make a judgement conveyed in a manner suitable for them (see NS 2.2 & 2.3).

- Consider whether the information is accessible/ appropriate for the likely participants in terms of mode of delivery, age, language proficiency, cultural appropriateness etc).
- How will you document consent? Will this be 'implied' by the return of an anonymous survey, or do you need to record it in some manner?
- Where an existing relationship between a participant and those conducting the evaluation exists, special care must always be taken to ensure that the relationship does not compromise informed consent through real or implied pressure. In some cases cultural sensitivities might dictate that recruitment would be more appropriately done by someone with an existing relationship (see NS 4.3).
- Even with the consent of a guardian or parent you should respect right of the participant to not participate or to withdraw at any time (see NS 4.2).

Have you established a process for obtaining (and documenting if necessary) consent?

If participants are likely to be in dependant or unequal relationships with the evaluators (e.g. clients) have special measures been put in place to ensure that consent remains voluntary?

Have you considered the issues involved when you require consent of parents/ guardians?

7. How will you secure, store and dispose of data?

Have you decided who will have access to evaluation information and how access will be regulated?

Have you considered how this evaluation information will be stored securely (i.e. in a locked cabinet or password protected computer)?

Do you have plans for the appropriate retention and disposal of data?

8. Have you considered how you will disseminate the results?

See **Communicating**



Collecting Checklist

Before moving on have you....

Identified or created your data sources?

Have you checked the information you already have and what you need to collect?

Have you selected a range of different methods for collecting information?

Have you thought about whether you will be reaching a representative group with your data sources?

Have you considered if your tools will be measuring what you want them to measure?

Do you have plans in place to pilot any new tools?

Established your timelines and budget?

Considered the ethical and privacy issues?

Have you determined whether or not you require a formal ethics review?

If you do NOT require a formal review, have you considered ethical and privacy issues and established strategies to address these issues?

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Communicating Worksheet

These questions will help you to think about how people are going to access the results of your evaluation.

If you have produced a publication...

Have you organised an ISBN number for your publication?

Have you lodged a copy with the State and National Library Legal Deposit Units?

Are you going to launch your publication?

Is a media release required?

Have you ensured that your publication is accessible for people with disabilities?

Have you considered sending a copy of your publication to:

- Stakeholders?
- Local Government CEOs?
- Peak bodies?
- Community sector?
- Commonwealth Departments?
- State Government Departments?
- Your local library?

Have you thought about how people in your organisation will learn about your evaluation?

- Your organisation's website?
- Your organisation's intranet?
- Your organisation's newsletter/bulletin board?
- Your organisation's library?
- Staff seminars?
- Flyers?

Have you prepared a summary for website promotion including key search phrases?

community strength
community capacity building
community participation
citizen participation
community involvement
local area data
partnerships

social capital
community networks
governance
disadvantage
social indicators
social inclusion
liveability

community building
social policy
civic participation
community well being
community engagement
accessibility
sustainability

Have you considered promoting your document online at:

- Community Builders?
- Infoxchange?
- PASCAL Observatory?
- Informit?

Could you present your work at a conference?

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Glossary of Key Terms

Baseline Data	Data collected prior to the commencement of your intervention. This data provides a point of comparison for later assessments, allowing you to see the impact of your intervention.
Evaluation Framework	A plan that guides your evaluation process. Also known as Evaluation Plan .
Formative Evaluation	A form of evaluation that focuses on processes and what can be done to improve the operation of projects and programs. Also known as Performance Evaluation .
Impacts	The changes in the community as a result of a project or program. Also known as Outcomes .
Indicators	Summary measures of key social, economic or environmental phenomena.
Outputs	The deliverables of a project or program. Also known as Achievements .
Pilot	A trial undertaken prior to the launch of a tool to test its accuracy and usability.
Program Logic	A description of how a program operates, connecting inputs, activities and outputs.
Qualitative Data	Information regarding quality, usually expressed in words.
Quantitative Data	Information regarding quantity, usually expressed in numbers.
Reliability	The consistency of results produced when the application of a research tool is repeated.
Sample	A small group selected from the target population.
Summative Evaluation	A form of evaluation that focuses on the outcomes and achievements of the projects or programs. Also known as Outcome Evaluation .
Validity	The ability of a research tool to measure what it intends to measure.
Variable	A characteristic that varies and that can act as a measure for objects or people (ie. age).

Evaluation Step-by-Step Guide Worksheet



Contracting Worksheet

Read through each of the items below and check them off as you complete them. This will help to ensure that you get the most out of your contractor.

Have you read through the entire evaluation process outlined in the Step-by-Step Guide?

Have you and your team developed your Evaluation Plan as far as you are able to?

Have you prepared a clear and specific request for quote document for contractors that includes:

1. Clearly defined evaluation questions?
2. Your Evaluation Plan as an attachment?
3. Your evaluation methodology or a request for advice on methodology?
4. Your end products including as much detail and direction as possible?
5. Clear milestones outlining deliverables, timeframes and any points throughout the process where you will be involved?

Are you confident that you will be able to work closely with your chosen contractor?

Have you checked the final Evaluation Plan with your contractor to ensure it contains all of your requirements?

Have you confirmed with your contractor what tasks will be undertaken and what products will be produced?

Have you set aside time to work on draft reports?