How to Perform Evaluations

Getting Started

GETTING STARTED

PERFORMANCE REVIEW BRANCH

No. 1

March 2000

About this Series…

Evaluations are a key contributor to CIDA's performance measurement and reporting system.

These guides describe the Agency's expectations for delivery to help ensure effective, consistent work practices.

Bringing a Focus to…

USING THIS GUIDE

This Guide describes the steps that are taken to initiate an evaluation after management makes the decision to proceed. First, terms of reference (TORs) are prepared by CIDA's evaluation manager and then an evaluator is selected.

We address:

Terms of Reference

☑ Basic questions and answers

☑ Preparing TORs

☑ Essential elements

Evaluator Selection

☑ Competitive selection

☑ What to look for

☑ Entering into a contract

This Guide serves as a companion piece to the *CIDA Evaluation Guide*

Canada

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

TORs Identify

☑ Strategic objectives

☑ Expected results

☑ Scope and focus

☑ Deliverables

☑ Scheduling

☑ Projected costs

Some Basics About TORs

Why are TORs prepared?

TORs offer the first substantive overview of the evaluation, articulating management's initial requirements and expectations for the evaluation. They guide the process until the evaluation workplan takes over as the primary control document.

TORs describe:

☑ What is being evaluated
☑ Why the evaluation is being carried out
☑ Broad parameters for conducting the evaluation

Who prepares TORs?

TORs are typically prepared by CIDA's evaluation manager and approved by the responsibility centre manager.

How are TORs used?

☑ To help manage the evaluation and for internal administration
☑ To inform evaluator selection and contracting
☑ To develop the evaluation workplan

How long should TORs be?

The length of TORs is typically a function of the value and complexity of the evaluation.

Before You Start

You should have a good understanding of:

1) Reasons for the evaluation
2) Issues to be addressed
3) Available resources
4) Cost magnitude
5) Expertise required, and
6) Time frame

How to Prepare Terms of Reference

Setting the Foundations

Bringing a focus to Results–Based Management and
CIDA's Framework of Results and Key Success Factors.

TORs are to reflect RBM's focus on the achievement of results, incorporating the Agency's results–based objectives, principles and practices. Results are to be measured against the factors set out in CIDA's *Framework of Results and Key Success Factors*.

TORs are expected to address a number of essential elements. These are described below. Elaboration can be found in the *CIDA Evaluation Guide*.

Title: A good title is one that is short, descriptive and easily remembered. An easily pronounceable acronym facilitates communications.

Investment Profile: The strategic objectives, rationale and development context should be explained. What results are expected to be achieved? What progress towards expected results have been realized? Identify linkages to poverty reduction, the Agency's programming priorities and the meeting of local needs.

Reasons for Evaluation: Why is the evaluation being done? What is expected to be achieved? What factors influenced the decision to proceed? What value added is expected?

Scope and Focus: Scope provides a indication of what the evaluation is expected to address, identifying broad issues. The focus of the evaluation is described by listing specific questions that are central and significant to these broad issues.

Stakeholder Involvement: What emphasis is to be brought to stakeholder participation? Active involvement in planning and design; information collection; reporting; and results sharing is expected.

Accountabilities and Responsibilities: The TOR should identify how the evaluation is to be structured – identifying who is responsible for doing what.

Evaluation Process: How is the evaluation to be carried out? The TOR should provide a level of information that is adequate to direct and inform the evaluation workplan.

Deliverables: TORs should describe management's requirements for the:
1) evaluation workplan; 2) final evaluation report. Scheduling can be determined by setting dates for the submission of deliverables.

Evaluator Qualifications: The TOR should identify management's requirements, specifying experience, expertise and demonstrated performance.

Internal Cost Projection: The estimated cost should be broken–down between the amount allocated to professional fees and out–of–pocket expenses. A 'level of effort' analysis may be prepared.

CHECKLIST

Does your TOR…

☑ Allow for timely transmittal of valuable information to CIDA management for strategic decision–making?

☑ Accurately describe the expectations and rationale for the program/project being evaluated?

☑ Clearly state why the evaluation is being carried out and what is expected to be accomplished?

☑ Describe the organization and process for carrying out the evaluation?

☑ Communicate expectations for stakeholder participation?

☑ Set qualifications for evaluators?

☑ Establish expectations for deliverables, work scheduling and costs?

Important

If decisions are made to change parameters during an evaluation, TORs are revised so CIDA's evaluation manager and the evaluator retain a clear and mutual understanding of expectations.

SELECTING AN EVALUATOR

Evaluator Selection Involves

Deciding on the selection process

⌘

Assessing the candidates

⌘

Making the selection

⌘

Contract negotiations

⌘

Contract approval

⌘

"…a work environment where individuals accept that their accountability includes delivering on results"

Once the TORs are approved, CIDA's evaluation manager can then proceed to the next step in the evaluation process – the selection of the evaluator.

Here we discuss: 1) what is expected from evaluators? 2) how they are selected? and 3) the contracting process.

Expectations of Evaluators

It is critical that the evaluator selected has the time and ability to deliver on management's expectations.

Ultimately, success is determined by:

☑ A professional result that demonstrates the evaluator's expertise, integrity, impartiality and independence.

☑ The production of timely, useful and accurate information with strategic added value that contributes to informed problem–solving and decision–making.

Throughout the project, the evaluator is expected to perform in conformity with ethical standards. Unless ethical standards are respected, the credibility and quality of an evaluation may be jeopardized.

Selection Process

Usually, CIDA contracts out evaluations to an individual, a firm or an evaluation team put together by Agency staff. Evaluation managers are expected to contract competitively. The Agency is committed to using processes that provide transparency, fairness and equality of opportunity.

The following processes for consultant selection are considered competitive:

☑ Proposal calls on the Electronic Tendering Service (MERX)

☑ Standing offers

☑ Advanced Contract Award Notices (ACANS)

☑ Selections pursuant to master agreements with Special Operating Agencies (SOAs)

Often rosters of local professionals are readily available in developing countries. These may be maintained by CIDA's AID Sections or Program Support Units; Canadian Embassies or High Commissions; and/or within the resident donor community.

Making the Selection

Evaluator selection involves finding the candidate most capable of meeting CIDA's requirements for delivery of the evaluation. Experience, expertise, knowledge and skills are matched against these requirements to determine the successful candidate.

Generally, consulting firms propose an evaluation team in response to a request from CIDA for a proposal to perform the evaluation. The selection of the consultant is usually based on the information provided by the consultant describing experience and expertise; profiling the individuals proposed for the evaluation team; and proposing how elements of the evaluation could be carried out.

Selection relies on the judgment of the individuals making the decision to arrive at a credible choice. Is the candidate "right" for the job? How will individuals involved function together? How will they perform within the country context?

Background information is merely indicative of capacities to perform. It is often more important to determine: "Has the evaluator a proven ability to deliver results and meet expectations?"

Answering this questions can present a challenge. Effective leadership and management skills can be essential to success. The evaluation team must function smoothly with authority and conviction, consistently demonstrating a singular outlook and purpose. There is no understating the importance of group chemistry and dynamics, particularly when working in challenging environments.

No amount of direction and control can ensure a successful evaluation if the individuals selected to conduct the evaluation cannot, for whatever reason, perform at an expected level of professionalism.

Contracting

CIDA's evaluation manager selects and recommends the successful consultant to the responsibility centre manager for approval. Once this decision is made, contract negotiations are initiated.

During negotiations, CIDA's evaluation manager is responsible for representing the best interests of the Agency, and is accountable for her/his decisions. The intent is to establish a mutual understanding of what is to be done, by when and at what cost. CIDA's contracting officers can serve as a valuable resource throughout the contracting process.

Method of payment options include:

☑ Fixed-price
☑ Cost plus, applying a fixed per diem

The latter is used when the extent of effort cannot be precisely defined due to extenuating circumstances.

CHECKLIST

Does the Evaluator…

☑ Have the knowledge to organize and carry out all aspects of the evaluation?

☑ Have a track record that demonstrates the ability to successfully complete evaluations respecting time and cost restraints?

☑ Possess the leadership skills needed for effective evaluation management and for dealings with partners and stakeholders?

☑ Meet the requirements for technical and sectoral knowledge and expertise, including the ability to address crosscutting themes such as gender equality, the environment and poverty reduction?

☑ Have the capacity to work successfully in developing countries?

☑ Have an adequate understanding of local social and cultural issues, and possess the language skills necessary for functioning in the recipient country?

☑ Understand how to carry out participatory evaluations and the need to engage local professionals?

Important

The successful consultant must not enter into a conflict of interest position with the awarding of contract. There should be no previous involvement with the initiative being evaluated or any other initiative that would create a conflict of interest.

Once the contract is signed, the evaluator is positioned to carry out the evaluation. The contract sets out what comprises performance of contract, with the first deliverable typically being the evaluation workplan.

The evaluation workplan is prepared by the evaluator and is approved by CIDA's evaluation manager. The workplan allows the evaluator to respond to Agency's TOR, bringing refinements and elaboration to evaluation planning – and identifying what is feasible within project parameters.

The evaluation is operationalized with implementation of the evaluation workplan.

These guides are designed for
internal application.
They should, in no way, be viewed as
defining and/or modifying
CIDA Policy.

We welcome any suggestions to
improve our work.

Please e-mail us at:

dger_prb@acdi–cida.gc.ca

…thank you