EVALUATION QUALITY STANDARDS

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Takeaway from the session

• Participants will learn about and share experiences in applying evaluation quality standards.
The development of key norms and standards for development evaluation - used by many actors around the world.

Normative work: principles for evaluation, a glossary translated into 15 languages, quality standards and evaluation criteria.

Specific guidance on evaluating: humanitarian aid, conflict prevention & peacebuilding and managing joint evaluations.
Why is this work important?

- Stronger evaluation systems and higher quality
- Better use of evidence for decision-making
- More effective programmes and services
- Better lives and sustainable development
Why evaluation quality standards?

- Evaluation should provide credible and useful evidence to strengthen accountability for development results and learning.
- Reviews of evaluations found lacunae, with implications also for synthesis and collaboration.
- Internationally-agreed standards needed on key quality dimensions of evaluation *process and product*.
- Developed and tested through a consultative process with members and development partners.
DAC Quality Standards for Evaluation are intended to:

- Improve the quality of development evaluation processes and products;
- Facilitate the comparison of evaluations across countries;
- Support partnerships, collaboration and collaborative evaluations;
- Increase development partners’ use of each others’ evaluation findings.
The Evaluation Quality Standards contains four sections, following a standard evaluation process:

1. Overarching considerations
2. Purpose, planning and design
3. Implementation and reporting
4. Follow-up, use and learning
1. Overarching considerations

- Transparent and independent evaluation process
- Ethics: Undertaken with integrity, honesty, respect for differences in culture and customs.
- Systematically consider a partnership approach
- Co-ordinate and align with local country plans
- Maximize positive effects on capacity
- Quality control throughout the evaluation process
2. Purpose planning and design

• 12 standards covering the initial stages, including such issues as:
  – Clear rationale and purpose
  – Defining object and scope
  – Stakeholder involvement
  – Selection of evaluation criteria
  – Defining TORs
3. Implementation and reporting

- 15 standards covering such issues as:
  - Selecting the evaluation team and ensuring independence
  - Consultation of stakeholders
  - Key elements in the final product/report: clarity, context, methodology used, answer evaluation questions, acknowledge changes, limitations, disagreements, include stakeholders’ comments.
4. Use and follow-up

• Designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of intended users.
• Conclusions, recommendations and lessons are presented in an accessible format, are clear, relevant, targeted and actionable.
• Distributed for learning and follow-up actions and to ensure transparency.
• Systematic response to and follow-up on recommendations made.
How are the standards used?

- By members of the DAC Evaluation Network, often in their role as commissioners of evaluations
- The standards are referred to numerous evaluation policies and guidelines
- Applied by some through checklists or grids - for review of inception and draft evaluation reports
- By evaluation teams (consultants)
- By country partners
Some benefits of using the quality standards

- Specific to *development* evaluation
- Provides a clear reference for quality assurance in design and management of the evaluation, and for review of completed reports.
- Brief and easy to apply in practical contexts.
- Provides guidance for evaluators/consultants so they know on what basis their work will be assessed.
- Easier to work together (shared understanding) and to use each others’ reports.
- Builds legitimacy and credibility of evaluation work – based on internationally agreed norms.
Managing Evaluations

Quality

Timing

A DELICATE BALANCE

Use
• National and regional evaluation associations have developed standards, covering many dimensions, e.g. US, France, Germany
• UNEG standards for UN agencies
• Good practice standards for MDBs
• Evaluating humanitarian action – ALNAP
• Protocols for systematic reviews, e.g. Campbell, Cochrane
Questions for discussion

• What is your experience of the quality of evaluation reports generally?
• Do you currently apply national and/or international standards?
• What measures have you found useful for ensuring quality control?
• Do you have views on how to strengthen evaluation quality? What are the main challenges?
Thank you!

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