EVALUATION QUALITY STANDARDS

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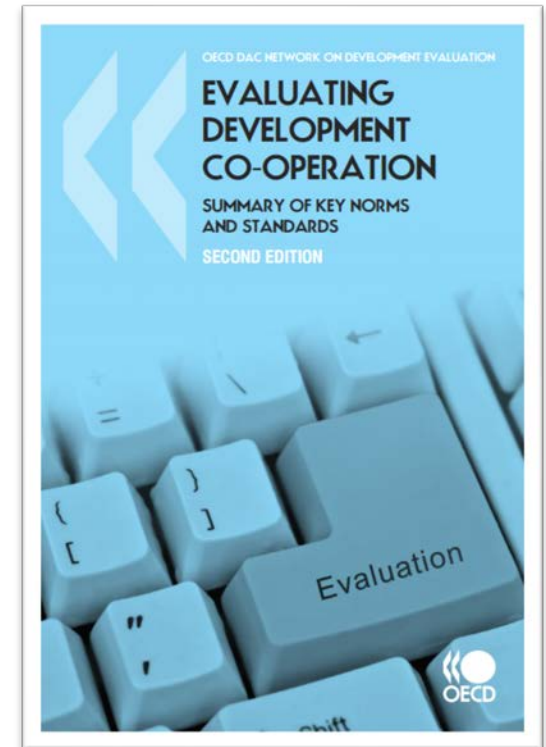
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Takeaway from the session

- **Participants will learn about and share experiences in applying evaluation quality standards.**

DAC Evaluation Network work on norms and 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.

OECD DAC NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

SUMMARY OF KEY NORMS AND STANDARDS

SECOND EDITION

Evaluation

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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
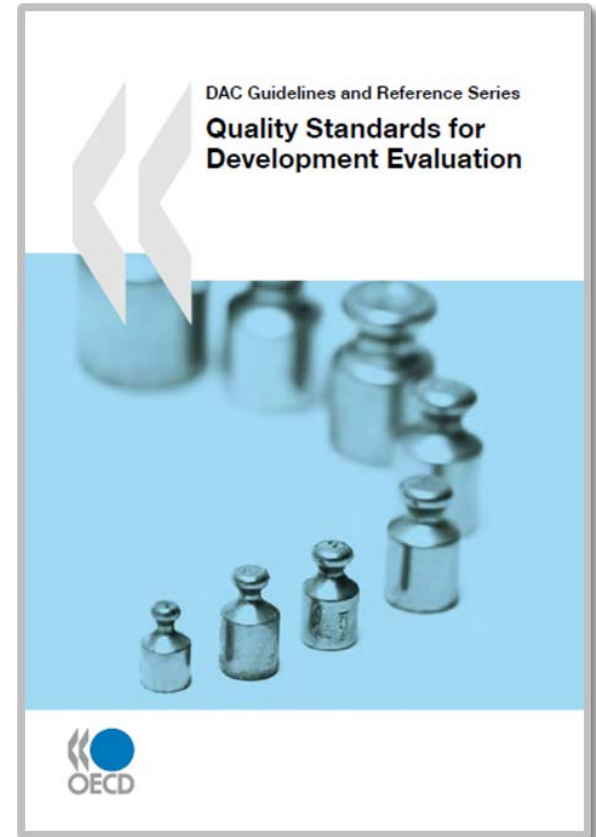
Why evaluation quality standards?

- 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

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.

DAC Guidelines and Reference Series

Quality Standards for Development Evaluation

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Key dimensions

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

A DELICATE BALANCE

Timing

Use

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Norms and standards cont.

- 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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