ANNOTATED INDEX FOR DRAFTING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF OPERATIONAL EVALUATIONS

Instructions

MINISTERIO
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES
Y DE COOPERACIÓN

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SECRETARY GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Evaluation for Development Policies and Knowledge Management Division

ANNOTATED INDEX

FOR DRAFTING

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

OF OPERATIONAL EVALUATIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

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INDEX

I. PRIOR CONSIDERATIONS

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ANNOTATED INDEX AND HOW SHOULD IT BE USED?

This annotated index has been produced by the Division for Evaluation and Knowledge Management (Evaluation Division) of the Secretariat-General for International Development Cooperation (SGCID) in order to **serve as a guide for drafting the terms of reference** (ToR) **of AECID's operational evaluations**[1]. Therefore, its scope is limited to external evaluations of projects or programmes (interventions).

This document seeks to organize and systematize the principal decisions involved in designing an evaluation process. Its purpose is to guarantee a certain level of standardization of Spanish Cooperation's evaluation processes, in order to facilitate subsequent syntheses, meta-evaluations and quality control. At the same time, it is flexible enough to adapt to the specific conditions of each case, depending on the information needs, context and characteristics of the interventions evaluated.

Thus, the annotated index constitutes an updated complement to other documents, which should be read beforehand: the DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, #the Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Policy, the Spanish Cooperation Evaluation Management Manual, and the Instruction by the Secretary-General for International Development Cooperation on evaluation management (available on the AECID intranet).

Throughout this document, the assumption is that evaluations are designed and accompanied by a team (the Management Committee), either because the evaluations are conducted jointly with partners or other donors, or because it is advisable for several members of a cooperation unit abroad or of a department in Spain to be involved in their management. However, it is likely that in certain cases the responsibility of drawing up the ToR and of guiding the evaluation will lie with a single person.

The annotated index comprises two documents, to be used together:

1. The **instructions**, which contain a basic description of the sections that the ToR must comprise, and explain the information that must appear in each one, offering some examples and proposed wording.

2. A **template**, which makes it possible to identify the sections and contents that are common to all ToR of operational evaluations. Select or eliminate the underlined text in italics in the template, as the case may be, and include all of

[1] For more information on the different categories of evaluations, see Spanish Cooperation's Evaluation Policy.

the remaining text. There is a checklist at the end of each section; delete these checklists after revision.

Remember that **the annotated index is to be used as a guide to orient reflection in each case, not as a rigid model to merely cut and paste.** If any doubts or comments should arise during its use, please contact the Evaluation Division evaluacion-sgcid@maec.es

2. ASPECTS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE STARTING AN EVALUATION

Before drafting the ToR, the management team must take into account that each evaluation has to respond to specific needs; thus, the **ToR must be adapted to the circumstances of each case.** Therefore, when using this instrument, reflect on the following aspects:

1. **The need for and the purpose of the evaluation:** Before designing the ToR, the evaluation managers must reflect upon the purpose of carrying out the evaluation. This will make it possible to correctly identify the specific objectives, envisaged usefulness, critical stakeholders who must participate in the evaluation and target audience of the deliverables of the evaluation exercise. **Many information needs do not require an evaluation**; rather, they can be met through internal reflection, diagnosis, systematization or some other kind of specialized consulting. Be clear about your purpose, so that the results can meet your expectations.

2. **The degree of specialization of the evaluation management team:** To the extent that the cooperation unit has staff with specialized knowledge of evaluation, the annotated index may be used more flexibly, as a guiding framework for the process. Conversely, if the team does not have sufficient knowledge of evaluation, it is advisable to follow the contents of the index, answer the questions on the checklist at the end of each section, and consult any possible doubts with the Evaluation Division (evaluacion-sgcid@maec.es).

3. **Timeframe of the evaluation:** It is important to plan in advance when the evaluation report will be available for decision-making or accountability purposes. Moreover, bear in mind that generating spaces for proper learning and ownership of results, revising deliverables, and even accessing the key literature and informants for the evaluation often require a great deal of time, which, in general, will be greater the more stakeholders are involved in the evaluation process and the more scattered the information. Therefore, take especially into account that the estimated timeframe must include the deadlines for defining the approach of the evaluation by the evaluators, for collecting and analysing information, and for revising and validating the different deliverables.

4. **The estimated required resources for the evaluation:** Adjust the workload to the available time (including the necessary period for the tender), resources and capacities (both human and financial). If the budget and/or staff available for accompanying evaluations adequately is not sufficient, it is better not to launch excessively ambitious projects; in such a case, set priorities for focusing attention.

5. **Stakeholders in the evaluation**: Take into account the stakeholders who are to participate in managing and monitoring the evaluation, as well as those involved in the evaluated intervention.

   a. In the case of joint evaluations[2], before drafting the ToR an **evaluation Management Committee** must be created, comprising representatives of the entities that have decided to carry out the evaluation. As far as possible, in order to ensure greater quality, impartiality and credibility of the evaluation, all the members of the Management Committee must have training and experience in evaluation, and not have any responsibilities directly related to the evaluated intervention. Agree in advance which of the members will lead and coordinate the Management Committee. The committee will perform the duties normally involved in managing an evaluation (drafting the ToR, participating in the evaluators' recruitment, conducting quality control, coordinating and communicating with the other stakeholders involved, etc.), and, as a general rule, its decisions will be adopted by consensus. Significant discrepancies may be resolved by voting (with the contractor of the evaluation sometimes having a casting vote), but the different positions must be recorded if any committee member so requests.

   b. The **main stakeholders involved in the evaluated interventions** participate in the evaluations basically in order to contribute to better adjusting the evaluation process to the needs of the different stakeholders and to the context and characteristics of the intervention, and to achieving higher quality of the process and of the deliverables.

      Their participation also contributes to greater use of the evaluations, both with regard to the different deliverables (reports, presentations, etc.) and to the transformational potential of the evaluation process itself (reflection, spaces for dialogue and exchanges, etc.).

      Particular attention should be paid to this aspect which is key for evaluations to fulfil their ultimate purpose, throughout the entire evaluation process. Find a balance between promoting participation and avoiding excessive demands on participants, which could lead to negative effects due to overload. Moreover, bear in mind that different stakeholders will often have different interests. Therefore, it will be the responsibility of the evaluation managers to seek to reach agreement

[2] Joint evaluations are those in which different stakeholders are involved in the management, guiding and accompanying the process and adopting decisions by common accord.

and make certain decisions, as the case may be (e.g. regarding the evaluation scope or the focus of the issues addressed in the questions).

6. **The information available:** Before designing the evaluation it is essential to know, as accurately as possible, the background information available on the evaluation object. This is not only important in order to be able to draft good a ToR; it will also be useful for preparing the documents and the other sources of information to be supplied to the evaluation team. The quality and accessibility of these documents may also be a determining factor in the evaluability of the intervention.

7. **The type of evaluation**: The Evaluation Division considers that any evaluation exercise must be guided by a comprehensive vision, in order to appraise the different dimensions of the evaluation object (design, processes, structure—capacities and resources—and results), and analyse the relations between them (e.g. how the design or the processes have influenced the results). However, it is not necessary to carry out the same depth of analysis for all the dimensions in all the evaluations, nor should dimensions be used as fixed compartments or criteria.

   Even though **the focus of the analysis has to respond to the specific needs of each case**, mid-term evaluations should pay priority attention to elements of design, structure and processes, because the analysis of certain results may be premature. However, this does not preclude the analysis of whether, in its design, the intervention facilitates management for development results (quality of the indicators, established monitoring systems, quality of the sources of information, etc.). In **final evaluations, significant weight must be given to analysing results and to understanding the factors that have had an impact on these results.**

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SECTIONS OF THE ToR

TITLE OF THE EVALUATION

In this item, state the evaluation object[3] clearly and simply, including the evaluation timeframe **(WHAT IS BEING EVALUATED)**. For example, "*Joint evaluation of the institutional strengthening programme of X province, 2011-2014".*

1. JUSTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This section must address the following aspects:

Grounds for evaluation: State clearly the fundamental reason for carrying out the evaluation **(WHY IS THE EVALUATION BEING CARRIED OUT)**. Mention can be made of the provisions included in the intervention itself regarding the evaluation system, as well as of the contextual factors that may provide added value to carrying out the evaluation at a specific time: scheduled changes in the intervention planning or midcourse corrections; programme ending or mid-term time in the implementation process, etc.

> **EXAMPLE**
>
> *The innovative nature of the programme management model, the total amount invested, the partners' commitment to carrying out a final evaluation, and the launching of similar Spanish Cooperation initiatives in the country all make it advisable to carry out an evaluation as a first step towards defining a new framework for action.*

Evaluation objectives: Specify the objectives sought with the evaluation. **These objectives must be few, and clearly reflect the main evaluation purposes.** Their wording must be adapted to the needs of each case; avoid using excessively generic formulas and expressions that simply refer to assessment criteria, such as "evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the project".

It is important to make sure that the objectives are **realistic and attainable**, depending on the context, the information already available or that can be obtained during the evaluation process, as well as the scheduled timeframe and the available resources. The establishment of the evaluation objectives **must respond to the specific information needs existing in each case.**

[3]The *evaluation object* is what is going to be evaluated. It should not be confused with the *evaluation objectives*.

EXAMPLE

Mid-term evaluations

Review the suitability of the intervention rationale and the adequacy of the programme design, bearing in mind both the current context of the Maghreb and the need to advance in management for development results.

Appraise critically the intervention progress in order to determine the elements that are facilitating or hindering the achievement of the expected objectives.

Final evaluations

Know the results, both expected and unexpected, reached by programme X during period Y.

Analyse the aspects that have had the greatest influence on the programme results, in order to draw lessons learned with a view to extending the programme to two new countries.

Intended use of the evaluation: Identify the specific uses intended for the evaluation results **(WHAT IS THE EVALUATION FOR)**. Whenever possible, they must be linked generically to the stakeholders who will be their principal users.

EXAMPLE

As regards the intended use of the evaluation, it is expected to provide relevant, useful and timely information, lessons learned and recommendations to Spanish Cooperation in Spain and in country X, to Bank Y and to the micro-financing institutions (MFIs), which may serve as the basis for improving the implementation of the Programme in the 2014-2018 period and for the appropriate design of similar interventions. Moreover, the evaluation will provide lessons learned and recommendations to Bank Y, which it may use in its loan operations to MFIs.

Finally, in addition to being of use for the specific case of country X, this exercise will provide more general inputs which will serve as feedback for interventions promoting inclusive financing from FONPRODE with other Spanish Cooperation partner countries.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The aim of this section is for stakeholders in the evaluation, as well as potential bidders, to better understand the background, the characteristics of the evaluation object, and the context in which the evaluation is taking place.

Therefore, this section will include a summary of the history of the evaluated intervention, including references to the expected aims and results, to any relevant changes that have occurred during the evaluation period, and to the principal data and information sources. It is not necessary to explain the entire background in great detail, because the evaluation team will have the opportunity to obtain any more information necessary during the evaluation process itself. However, it is necessary to provide sufficient information to facilitate preparing the bids for the tendering process.

Futhermore, provide the basic data to give an outline of the principal characteristics of the intervention.

Also provide a brief overview of the context in which the evaluation object is located, including organizational, social, political and economic factors that have been and still are relevant for implementing the intervention to be evaluated. Moreover, include a reference to any especially outstanding element that has arisen during the evaluated period in that country, although there is no need to explain the entire background in detail.

Avoid literally reproducing paragraphs from the planning documents of the evaluated interventions, because the aim is to offer a vision of the present, not limited to reproducing initial forecasts or expectations.

3. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This section must reflect specific information about the intended scope for the evaluation, so that **the evaluation object is delimited as accurately as possible.**

The ToR must clarify the following areas:

a. *Geographic:* Specify the regions or areas of the country on which the evaluation will focus its analysis, providing appropriate reasons. This should not only include the areas where the fieldwork is to take place, but the scope of the evaluation itself.

b. *Timeframe:* State the time horizon which is to be reviewed (e.g. from 2010 to 2013).

c. *Considerations regarding cross-cutting priorities:* The evaluation must expressly include a review of how the cross-cutting priorities have been implemented. Not all cross-cutting areas should be addressed with the same level of detail, but their analysis must be prioritized depending on the context. Avoid confusion between the analysis of cross-cutting areas and the analysis of specific interventions.

d. *Principal stakeholders involved in the intervention*: funders, managers, end users, etc.

e. *Principal documents of reference*: diagnoses, project documents, plans, strategies, monitoring reports, evaluation reports, etc.

EXAMPLE

*The **object** of this evaluation is Spanish Cooperation's country programme with X. "Country programme" means both the general development cooperation strategy between both countries, and all the interventions funded by the different Spanish Cooperation actors in the country, including all the direct bilateral cooperation modalities and instruments with State X, geographically-earmarked cooperation through multilateral organizations, and funds channelled through Spanish and local civil society organizations.*

*The **geographical scope** of the evaluation comprises the entire country, although it must be taken into account that some Spanish Cooperation interventions have had a national dimension, and others have focused on priority regions.*

*The **time horizon** of the evaluation corresponds to the 2006-2013 period. This timeframe was chosen because there are no previous evaluations of the country programme, and because the analysis must include a sufficiently long period which, on the basis of the Country Strategy Document (CSD), will make it possible to analyse patterns and trends, explain the results and assess their sustainability. Therefore, even though the focus of the analysis is expected to concentrate on the period corresponding to the Third Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation (2009-2012), the evaluation will need to take into account Spanish Cooperation's overall history with X from 2006 to the end of 2013.*

*Particular attention must be paid to the **cross-cutting priorities** of gender in development and environmental sustainability.*

4. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions must be consistent with the objectives. They are the issues that the evaluation team must respond to clearly in its report, especially in the sections on findings and conclusions.

The evaluation Management Committee must take into account the following elements when drafting the evaluation questions:

- **Before including questions in the ToR**, it is useful to **frame them in line with the objectives**, in order to verify that there is consistency among the critical aspects and that we are not leaving any information gaps.
- The questions must be **directly linked to the purpose and evaluation objectives**. Please remember that an evaluation of what has been done must not be confused with advice about what should have been done.
- **Drafting the right evaluation questions** is essential, because the entire subsequent process will be aimed primarily at answering them. The more specific the questions, the easier it will be for the conclusions to be relevant and for the evaluation to provide useful and realistic recommendations.
- It is advisable to focus on **a small number of questions (no more than 10)**, so that the priority information needs to which the evaluation has to respond may be clearly reflected. However, there can also be subquestions linked to broader questions, or so that the scope of the questions may later be debated with the evaluation team.
- **The questions must lead to a response involving an assessment**, and not be mere descriptive queries about certain aspects of the programme (in general, descriptive data should be provided by the information and monitoring systems). However, at times it will be possible to include a descriptive question about which there is no information, to facilitate the understanding of the evaluation object or to contribute to the aims of the evaluation.
- The questions must be **directly linked to the evaluated interventions**, and not to external events or social dynamics.
- The questions must not merely paraphrase the criteria **(avoid questions like “Was the programme relevant?”)**. Nor should they reflect the indicators in advance for their measurement, or condition the techniques that will be used to answer them. They must be worded simply and concisely.
- Given the learning purpose inherent to every evaluation, **word the questions so that the evaluation will enable us to know not only what has happened, but also how and why it happened.**

EXAMPLE 1

After consulting the information needs of the stakeholders involved in designing and implementing the programme, a preliminary list of evaluation questions is proposed, established in accordance with the planned levels of analysis:

The Programme as a Spanish Cooperation instrument with Bank X:

1. Has the Programme been adapted adequately to Spanish Cooperation's objectives and to the country's needs and priorities?

2. Has the Programme planned and implemented all needed actions to ensure the fulfilment of its objectives?

3. What impact has the Programme had on Bank X? And, in this regard, what changes—in management, capacities, structure, financing—has the management of the Programme involved for Bank X?

4. What influence has the Programme had on changes in the country's microfinancing sector in the 2000-2013? What have been the channels of influence?

5. What influence have these changes in the microfinancing sector had on the Programme? What have been the channels of influence?

Financial institutions intermediating with the Programme resources (MFIs):

***6.** What influence has the Programme had on the participating MFIs? To what extent has there been a contribution to their institutional strengthening? To what extent has there been a contribution to the geographical and economic scope, intensification, diversification and improvement of their microfinancing services?*

7. What criteria have the participating MFIs followed in granting financial services?

8. Do these criteria promote equality, sustainability, profitability and social performance among their clients?

Beneficiary microenterprises:

9. What are the characteristics of the target population and of the beneficiary population?

10. What influence has the provision of financial services had on the Programme's beneficiary microentrepreneurs?

EXAMPLE 2

1. *What contextual factors have had the greatest influence on the strategy's success or shortcomings?*
2. *To what extent have the strategy's objectives been adapted to the problems defined and to the social needs of the regions where the actions are being carried out? Is the strategy aligned with the National Programme for Local Development? Does the strategy draw on the current dynamics and strategies in the regions of intervention?*
3. *Does the strategy take into account other donors' interventions in the sector? What kinds of synergies have been achieved and what effects are they producing?*
4. *To what extent have national and local partners been involved in the process of designing and implementing projects to fulfil the strategy?*
5. *Have the expected deliverables been produced and used by the different stakeholders? How and to what extent is the strategy helping to improve the functioning of decentralized entities and to consolidate their mandate and structure?*
6. *To what extent have the actions linked to the strategy contributed to the strengthening of national and/or local capacities and to the continuity over time of the processes initiated and of the results achieved?*
7. *What is the added value of the intervention strategy with regard to other working approaches in the sector?*

Once the evaluation team has set forth a preliminary approach to the evaluation object and to the available literature, **adjust the initial set of questions in agreement with the evaluation managers.** This adjustment may be carried out for different reasons: the feasibility of addressing certain issues; the need to adapt the exercise to the existing time and resource restraints; the incorporation or adaptation of certain elements depending on the knowledge and experience that the evaluation team can bring to the process, etc. Therefore, **this section of the ToR must include a reference to the flexible nature of the questions** and to the role of the evaluation team, analysing their possible limitations as regards answers to the evaluation questions and to appraise the evaluation object. Moreover, it must be stated that any proposal for adjusting the evaluation questions should be clearly justified and presented for the approval of the evaluation managers. Do not forget that logical coherence among the evaluation's objectives, its scope, and the evaluation questions is essential. The template includes a standard paragraph for use in different cases.

5. METHODOLOGY

This section must include considerations about the **methodological design of the evaluation**, i.e., about **how the evaluation exercise is to be addressed in order to obtain the best possible answers to the evaluation questions.**

Given its technical complexity, this is undoubtedly the section of the ToR requiring the most specialized knowledge on the part of the evaluation managers.

There is no *a priori* proposal for the **theoretical or methodological approach** that must be used in each evaluation. Rather, the approach will vary depending on the evaluation aims and on the type of information and analysis required in order to answer the questions. The ToR must, therefore, identify the evaluation team's role in producing the methodological design and specifying the aspects which, as a minimum, should be included and developed by team.

> ***EXAMPLE***
>
> *The evaluation team should follow the methodological proposal of Patton and Patrizi (2010), based on the work of Mintzberg (2007), which focuses on analysing strategies as **patterns** of organizational behaviour.*

It is worth noting that, in line with Spanish Cooperation's Evaluation Policy, **evaluation criteria** are considered to represent useful tools for conducting evaluations, but they are not indispensable. Consequently, the criteria-oriented evaluation model is assumed to be one of a number of possible models and, in any case, its criteria are not restricted to the list drawn up by the DAC (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability), but should be guided by the characteristics of each intervention and by the information needs of the different stakeholders involved (thus, criteria such as coverage, accessibility, inclusion and ownership could be included).

If a criteria-oriented evaluation is chosen, it is advisable to include an explanatory list of these criteria and make sure they are coherently related to the evaluation questions.

EXAMPLE

The evaluation will be guided by the following criteria:

Relevance: Extent to which the aims of a development intervention are consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements, the country's needs, the overall priorities, and the stakeholders' and donors' policies. In retrospect, the issue of relevance usually refers to whether the objectives or the design of an intervention are still appropriate, even when circumstances have changed.

- Examples: To what point does concentrating assistance on basic education respond to the needs of the partner country and to the comparative advantages of Spanish Cooperation? Is it still advisable to maintain positive discrimination measures to foster young indigenous women's access to secondary education?

Effectiveness: Extent to which the aims of the development intervention have been—or are expected to be—achieved, taking into account their relative importance. This is also used as an aggregate measure of or judgement about the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has achieved—or is expected to achieve—its major relevant aims effectively, sustainably and with a positive institutional development impact.

- Examples: To what extent has the assistance contributed to the existence of equal access to quality basic education? Have the teachers participating in the programme improved their capacities and are they bringing their new knowledge into the classroom?

Efficiency: Relationship between the resources/inputs used (funds, time, etc.) and the results achieved.

- Examples: Has the shift from a programme and project approach to sector-based budgetary support made it possible to improve results and/or reduce the transaction costs for Spanish Cooperation and the partner country? Taking other similar interventions as a reference, has the investment in IT been reasonable with regard to the results achieved?

Sustainability (feasibility): Continuation of the benefits of a development intervention after it has been completed. Probability of benefits continuing in the long term. Situation in which net advantages are resilient to risks over time.

- Examples: To what extent has the intervention contributed to strengthening the management capacities of the partner country's public institutions? Have the programmes launched been maintained even after the conclusion of the intervention?

Impact: Effects (generally long-term), both positive and negative, intended or unintended, produced directly or indirectly by a development intervention.

- Examples: Have the women participating in the project improved their economic position with regard to men? What influence have the latrines built had on the environment?

Coherence / complementarity: This criterion may have several dimensions:

1) Internal coherence of Spanish Cooperation's development programme.

- Examples: Do the activities and results make it possible to achieve the objectives in a logical manner? Are there any contradictions between the different levels of objectives?

2) Coherence / complementarity with the partner country's policies and/or other donors' interventions.

3) Coherence / complementarity with other policies.

- Example: Is there convergence between the development intervention objectives and those of other Spanish policies (trade, agriculture, fishing, etc.)?

When the evaluation management team appraises the evaluation bids submitted, it must pay attention to the following elements:

- **The theoretical and methodological framework must correspond to the purpose of the evaluation and the characteristics of the evaluation object.** The evaluation methodology must ensure an approach coherent with the evaluation objectives, levels of analysis, and questions, as well as with the timeframe and resources available for carrying it out.
- The information collection and analysis **techniques must be consistent with the methodological approach** and appropriate for the nature of the information that is expected to be available for answering the different evaluation questions.
- **There must be a triangulation of methods and sources of information**. Triangulation in social research is the combination of two or more theories, data sources or research methods in the study of a single phenomenon. According to the aspect in which the combination strategy is adopted, we can distinguish between:

  1. *Triangulation of data sources*—considering the point of view of the different groups comprising the reality that is the study object.
  2. *Triangulation of researchers*—involving several researchers in the process, in order to overcome the potential bias coming from data analysis using a single perspective.
  3. *Triangulation of theories*—applying to the research the different existing theories on a subject, to find the complementary aspects applicable to the research subject that are provided by the different perspectives.
  4. Finally, *triangulation of methods* consists in combining different methods of data collection and analysis in order to approach the research subject from different perspectives.

  Likewise, the combination of different types of triangulation is called *multiple triangulation.*
- It is necessary to specify how the **cross-cutting approaches set forth in Spanish Cooperation's Evaluation Policy** will be included in the analysis. (This is different from analysing how the programme incorporates the cross-cutting priorities, because it consists in incorporating cross-cutting approaches into the evaluation process itself, not merely as one of the elements of the evaluation object.)
- Interventions often do not have an explicit theory of change; however, it is advisable for the evaluation team to reconstruct, during the preparation phase, at least the **implicit rationale guiding the intervention** (the results chain plus the underlying assumptions).

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE: THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change helps us to answer the question of what change we want to achieve, and what needs to happen for that change to occur.

To this end, it starts from an analysis of the situation or reality that is to be changed, establishes a long-term goal, and describes the necessary pathway to achieve it. This description involves identifying the elements comprising the results chain and the relations between them (i.e. the "preconditions" linking activities to deliverables, and deliverables to results and impact). Moreover, it involves explicitly formulating the "assumptions" or rationales on which the results chain is based (i.e., how and why the changes are expected to occur).

The theory of change is usually formulated through a graphic representation following a participatory process, so that consensus is generated and a common vision is promoted, to guide the action of the different stakeholders involved. Thus, a kind of shared "road map" is generated, both in terms of the aims sought and the means to reach them, and as regards the mechanisms or tools used to periodically verify progress towards the results and review the validity of the underlying rationale.

Key elements of the theory of change:

- Systematically describes change processes.
- Identifies, defines and maps the relations between the different levels of action, both in the pathway to be followed up to the ultimate goal and with regard to the internal dynamics of the relations between the different elements.
- Clarifies and explains the underlying causal rationale, highlighting the assumptions on which it is based.

The backbone of the technical proposal is an **evaluation matrix**, which must contain an initial operationalization including the methodological intertwining between the questions, the indicators and the different sources and techniques. Take into account that the evaluation indicators do not necessarily need to correspond with the indicators set forth in the planning, because they have a different purpose.

Moreover, bear in mind that, given the limited time and literature that is normally available to evaluation teams when submitting proposals, the most common situation is to have a more or less generic pre-design of the evaluation. This pre-design will enable us to discover key concepts about the team's technical knowledge of the evaluation object, the principles of their methodological approach, the coherence of the proposal, and their skill in producing the indicators, among other aspects. However, **once the contract has been awarded, and following a preliminary review of the literature**

and some initial interviews, the technical proposal should be adjusted by the evaluation team accompanied by the evaluation management unit. This adjustment may involve a review of the questions and an adaptation of the initially proposed evaluation matrix and techniques.

6. EVALUATION MANAGEMENT

This section of the ToR **should clearly explain the evaluation's governance structure, indicating the committees that will finally be established, as well as their composition and specific functions.**

Generally speaking, ToR should propose a governance structure resting on two basic levels (the Management Committee/unit and the Reference Group), and an optional third level for certain evaluations that require it (Advisory Group).

In non-joint evaluations, instead of a Management Committee there will be a management unit.

Tasks of the Management Committee/unit will include:

- Provide broad guidance and direction in drafting ToR in consultation with the Reference Group, and give approval to the ToR.
- Appraise bidding proposals and select the evaluation team.
- Maintain a close, efficient and regular liaison and dialogue with the evaluation team and the Reference Group.
- Provide technical advice and methodological oversight to the evaluation process.
- Carry out the evaluation quality control and supervise the accomplishment of deadlines.
- Validate the inception report and approve all the evaluation products in consultation with the Reference Group.
- Release the evaluation products and facilitate the dissemination of the evaluation results.
- Coordinate filling out the management response document and promote use of the evaluation recommendations.

An on-the-ground **Reference Group,** comprising representatives of the collectives involved in the intervention or with an interest in the progress of the evaluation, and which, as in the previous case, should be specified in the ToR.

The Reference Group's main **functions** will be to:

- Bring comments, suggestions and informative requirements to the management committee (*whichever is appropriate*) to draft the ToR

- Be closely involved in the evaluation process by providing comments and suggestions on the evaluation products (inception and final reports and other products) to the management committee/unit (*whichever is appropriate*).

- Provide the evaluation team with all needed contacts and access to all the relevant information to carry out the evaluation.

- Contribute to the dissemination of the evaluation results.
- Support the implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

A **Reference Group** in Spain, comprising representatives of the different AECID and SGCID units involved, wherever suitable on a case-by-case-basis. Another option is that the Reference Group comprises individuals known to have experience in the areas to be evaluated. In this case, the reference group will act as an advisory committee.

The Reference Group's main **functions** will be to:

- Convey comments, suggestions and information needs to the Management Committee/unit with a view to drawing up the ToR.
- Provide constant feedback on the evaluation process, receive the results provided by the evaluation team, and convey comments and suggestions to the Management Committee/unit.
- Contribute to disseminating the evaluation findings.
- Facilitate use of the evaluation recommendations

7. SCHEDULE AND DELIVERABLES

ToR should include **an estimate regarding the phases that will constitute the evaluation**, the **duration** of each of them, the **specific activities,** the **deliverables that the evaluation team should produce**, the **deadline for presenting them,** and the **tasks assigned** to the different governance bodies.

The template includes a model that, with the corresponding deadline adaptations, can be used in all cases.

The languages in which the evaluation deliverables are to be presented must be specified. As a general rule, the executive summary should be presented in Spanish, in an official or widely used language from the partner country, and in English (if this is not a language used in the partner country).

In countries with languages different from Spanish, the remaining documents must be presented in a language that enables both proper management by the corresponding cooperation unit abroad and the participation of local stakeholders. In any case, dissemination products (brochures, leaflets, etc.) should be created in the languages of the country in order to enhance the evaluation's usefulness and accountability.

The layout and printing expenses will be paid by the corresponding cooperation unit abroad. Since the evaluation reports tend to be long and not often read in their entirety, to optimize resources it is recommendable to publish on paper only the executive summaries and dissemination materials, making sure that the other documents are made available on the internet (website of the corresponding cooperation unit abroad and of Spanish Cooperation, for which purpose they should be sent to the Evaluation Division after approval).

8. EVALUATION PRINCIPLES, AUTHORSHIP AND PUBLICATION

Regarding this point, and generally speaking for all evaluations falling within Spanish Cooperation's Evaluation Policy, the principles on the template will be included directly.

Regarding publication and distribution rights, it is advisable to always ensure AECID's participation, especially in those cases where the contracting party is from the partner country. The contract must include a clause indicating the transfer to AECID, free of charge, of the rights to dissemination and distribution for purposes in the public interest.

9. PROFILE OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

This paragraph must specify the **number of members of the evaluation team, and the professional profiles and qualifications required**.

Regardless of whether they are natural or legal persons, the **person responsible for coordinating** and promoting the work and establishing formal contact with the Management Committee must be identified.

ToR should advise that the evaluation team composition should maintain an appropriate balance between men and women, and to include professionals from the partner country. However, this recommendation cannot be considered a requirement nor can points be awarded for such a reason, because our laws forbid discrimination on the basis of gender or nationality.

The specific conditions that evaluation teams have to meet will depend, among other aspects, on the country involved, the focus of the analysis, and specific characteristics of the interventions evaluated. **It is advisable to differentiate the requirements of each member on an individual level from the requirements that the team as a whole needs to meet.**

As a general rule, the following requirements should be taken into account:

- The team coordinator must accredit having a university degree and specialized training in evaluation or social research, and at least 3 years' experience in carrying out evaluations.
- X members of the team will be required to have a university degree, preferably in areas related to the subject matter of the evaluation.

As a whole, the evaluation team must accredit:

- Wide-ranging knowledge of the socio-economic context and public policies of the country where the evaluation is being carried out.
- Knowledge of Spanish Cooperation.
- Specific knowledge of the sector/s to be evaluated and, when relevant, of the areas or sub-themes that the evaluation is going to prioritize.
- Knowledge of cross-cutting approaches. This requirement will be adapted depending on the specific weight of the different approaches in each case.

IMPORTANT NOTE

When Spanish legislation is applied, in no case shall a score be given to characteristics of the evaluation team (e.g. academic qualifications, experience), which are a requisite of expertise or a minimum condition for participating in the tendering process. Minimal levels of expertise must be defined (x years of experience, x previous evaluations on a similar subject, training in evaluation or in the area under evaluation, etc.), but what should be considered is the quality of the service being proposed, not the characteristics of the team. However, it would be appropriate to distinguish between the required technical expertise (minimal requirements not included in a score) and characteristics that go beyond them (e.g. knowledge of local languages), which could add extra points to a score. If the technical expertise requirements are not met, the bid should be excluded.

The ToR will request that **the technical proposal must include the tasks to be carried out and the time to be devoted to evaluating by each one of the professionals,** as well as a formal commitment to be part of the evaluation team throughout the validity of the contract. Any change to the composition of the evaluation team must be previously agreed upon with the Management Committee.

10. SUBMISSION OF BIDS, BUDGET AND BIDS' APPRAISAL CRITERIA

In this section, it must be specified **where and how bids are to be presented** by the natural or legal persons interested in carrying out the evaluation. In contracts that are processed through a negotiated or open procedure, this section will form part of the Specific Administrative Clauses.

It is important to include the following information:

- Deadline, manner and place (if applicable) for submitting bids.
- Documents to be presented:
    - Presentation of the company (if applicable) and résumés of the evaluation team members. It shall be stated that, at any time, the presentation of documents accrediting the accuracy of this information may be required.
    - Technical proposal. The expected contents of the proposal must be described in detail. It is recommended to ask for a description of the evaluation object, a methodological proposal including the operationalization of the evaluation matrix (a proposed matrix in order to facilitate the standardized presentation and subsequent scoring of bids is copied at the end of this chapter) and a work plan.
    - Financial proposal. This must be broken down into the different types of expenses (travel, accommodation, meals, fees, materials, etc.). In the case of fees, the tasks and fees of each member of the evaluation team are to be specified, indicating the amount per person and per day.

The tender base budget must be indicated. As a general recommendation, t budget restrictions should not be a limiting factor in the evaluation quality. If resources are limited, the best alternative is to narrow the scope of the evaluation. Moreover, it is important to consider that the questions to be answered and assessed in the evaluation can have different degrees of complexity and require different levels of inquiry and application of social research techniques on the part of the evaluation team (interviews, questionnaires, case studies, discussion groups, etc.) which have an impact on the evaluation budget.

It is important for the ToR to establish clearly the **scoring criteria to be applied to bids for selecting the evaluation team**.

The technical proposal and the financial proposal should be scored separately, establishing the corresponding percentages on a case-by-case basis. In order to ensure the quality of the evaluation, the recommended financial score for the bid should not exceed 30% of the total.

In ToR for smaller contracts, the criteria for scoring bids should be kept generic, avoiding complex formulas. For instance, a formula like the following would be sufficient:

Financial bid (30%):

Technical bid (70%):

Knowledge of the evaluation object	15 points
Rigour and clarity of the methodological proposal and its adaptation to the nature and purpose of the evaluation	30 points
Quality of the evaluation matrix and improvements to the evaluation questions	30 points
Feasibility of the work plan	12.5 points
Treatment of cross-cutting approaches in the methodological proposal	12.5 points

Take into account that the final score (100) featured on this table should be weighted thereafter based on the weight assigned to the technical proposal with respect to the financial proposal.