

Project and Program Evaluation Process, Consultancy and Terms of Reference with Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations

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Abstract: Evaluation involves systematic determination of the merit, significance and worth of a project or program by means of a criteria guided by a set of standards. Use of consultants in evaluation brings independence and professionalism in project evaluation. Terms of reference forms the basis of contractual relationship and states clearly the parameters to be measured in an evaluation undertaking by a consultant. Both internal and external evaluations serve the purpose but in general an evaluation should have truthfulness, credibility or beauty, and justice as standards for the process. Consultants should at the end of evaluation make an evaluation report which will facilitate accountability, lessons learnt and improvement of the project or program being evaluated. The evaluation report should be credible, relevant and verifiable and above all acceptable to stakeholders while respecting independence of the evaluator. The consultants' recommendations should be backed by results of evaluation. Evaluation should take care of the stakeholder interests and adequately address them. An evaluation process should be followed by an objective evaluation report which will facilitate accountability, lessons learnt and improvement of the project or program being evaluated. The evaluation report should be relevant to the project, be credible in content and verifiable. Evaluation recommendations by the consultant should be presented clearly, concisely and in order of priority. Recommendations should be supported by specific findings. Application of ethical principles build the trust needed for successful evaluation of projects and programs. Evaluators should give action-oriented recommendations that are specific, practical, and that have a clear indication of responsibility for implementation and anticipated consequences of execution or implementation. For proper evaluation, a qualified and competent consultant should be hired.

Key words: Terms of reference; project evaluation; ToR; benefits of consultancy; role of evaluation consultant; evaluation consultancy, evaluation questions; collaborative models; evaluation stakeholders.

1.0. PROJECT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION AND CONSULTANCY

1.1. Introduction to Evaluation

The very early definition of evaluation is by Cronbach's (1980) who defined evaluation as the process through which a society learns about itself, through many variations. Shadish (1998) identified five components of evaluation theory namely; social programming, knowledge, value, use, and practice. Evaluation involves systematic determination of the merit, significance and worth of a project or program by means of a criteria guided by a set of standards. It can assist an organization, program, design, project or any other intervention or initiative to assess any aim, realizable concept/proposal, or any alternative, to help in decision-making; or to ascertain the degree of achievement or value in regard to the aim and objectives and results of any such action that has been completed (Alkin, & King, 2016; Belford, Robertson, & Jepson, 2017).

Evaluation is a systematic process that is objective and involves analysis and assessment of the organization's policies, programs, partnerships and procedures with respect to a given project or program. According to Shadish, & Luellen (2011) evaluation provides the means to reflect and focus on the project or program performance and progress and involves assessment of policies and activities with the objective of improving, learning and performance. The objective of most evaluations is to gather evidence and analyze findings with the purpose of assessing the impact and effectiveness of various program/project activities. This will then facilitate enforcement of corrective to improve performance and prevent failure of projects and programs (United Nations Commissioner for

Refugees) UNHCR, 2005). According to Conley-Taylor (2005), evaluation is a tool or means used to improve performance in business, community sector and government operations. On their part, Taylor, Purdue, Wilson and Wilde (2005) remarked that evaluation will help project or organization members or personnel learn from their activities, assess effectiveness of effort and establish whether there is progress towards success or failure, and celebrate and build on success. Therefore project evaluation is a failure prevention mechanism employed during execution phase of the project or program.

1.2. Purpose of Evaluation

There is increasing need for organizations to account for the use of resources and demonstrate results realized and value added by the programs and projects. Today's operating environment demands valid, unbiased or impartial as well as credible evidence on project/program relevance, effectiveness, value addition, execution efficiency and effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project/program. With such a demanding environment, evaluation provides a platform to respond or act on these critical demands. Evaluation is an effective instrument that can be used to address accountability for results and value added for learning purpose and knowledge development, strengthen leadership role and governance as well as facilitate reforms that influence the lives of people globally. Organizations, donors, funders, commissioners and all stakeholders in projects and programs are all interested in knowing objectively what is really going on and the effect of effort made and funds committed in execution of projects and programs under consideration (United Nations, 2014). To evaluate performance, managers should use a performance criteria that measures actual results and compare. A good evaluation should also measure dictators of stability and quality in option. (Conley-Taylor, 2005).

There are a number of specific reasons for evaluation. According to UNCHR (2005) the purpose of evaluation is to;

- i.) Gather and analyze findings to enable assessments of impact and effectiveness of operational activities so that evaluators and evaluated can have clear understanding of what is happening.
- ii.) Evaluation facilitates accountability since the evaluation reports are accounts of status and progress record for current and future references.
- iii.) Evaluation promotes organizational and project/program learning and therefore influences organizational culture, support team building, stimulate partnership and increase institutional and public awareness.

1.3. Benefits of Evaluation

Several benefits are realized from carrying out evaluation of projects. These according to the, World Bank (2011), Taylor, Purdue, Wilson and Wilde (2005) include;

- i.) They facilitate dissemination and strategic review of findings and lessons learnt
- ii.) Facilitate critical review of impact of an operation or activities in a project or program.
- iii.) Facilitate development of recommendations or solutions to enhance success and avoid failure of a project or program.
- iv.) Good evaluation brings together findings that are clear, precise and decisive and respond to critical questions asked about a project or program and reflect learning from the project.
- v.) Used to explain to donors and creditors what has so far been achieved hence keep the relationship and trust.
- vi.) Used to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of project/program resources i.e. time, money, personnel etc.
- vii.) Used to test the relevance of the intervention to the beneficiary needs and aspirations and hence make necessary decisions to create relevance or stop to avoid wastage.
- viii.) Used to facilitate learning from experience.
- ix.) Used to determine or check progress of the project or program execution and realization of objectives.
- x.) Evaluation facilitates recording of progress and hence sharing with stakeholders who can make appropriate timely decisions.
- xi.) Evaluation can be used to determine strengths and weaknesses of the project and improve.

1.4. Steps in Evaluation Process

Project or program evaluation process should be systematic and well-coordinated and managed for successful evaluation. The Government of India (2009), Mitchell (1994), & UNHCR (2005), recommend the following stages in project/evaluation process;

- i.) Problem identification at design level.
- ii.) Determination of problems and tasks to be internally and externally handled.
- iii.) Planning for the evaluation exercise and process upon project approval
- iv.) Development of terms of reference for the evaluation.

- v.) Formation of Evaluation team
- vi.) Identification of possible consultants
- vii.) Doing background search about consultants of interest for the evaluation.
- viii.) Hiring project/program consultants
- ix.) Implementation of evaluation and monitoring of the process.
- x.) Assessing evaluation results obtained
- xi.) Effective use of evaluation findings in line with the evaluation objectives and terms of reference for program or project improvement.

1.5. Stakeholders in project/program evaluation

The type and number of stakeholders in a project or program will vary from one project to another depending on the objectives of the project and the evaluation question being addressed. They include community groups, grant makers/funders, researchers, professionals depending on the industry or project, government representatives and the evaluators themselves. Types of stakeholders in project evaluation

- i.) **Community groups:** These include direct beneficiaries of the project and can directly participate or be represented by elected or appointed representatives who should speak for them. Perhaps this is the most obvious category of stakeholders, because it includes the people directly affected by the evaluation.
- ii.) **Grant makers and funders:** Most grant makers and funders want to know how their money is being spent or used, so the evaluators must find out what they want them to evaluate. Check out all your current funders to see what kind of information they want you to be gathering.
- iii.) **Researchers and specialists/professional:** This includes researchers and evaluators that your coalition or initiative may choose to bring in as consultants or full partners. Such researchers might be specialists in public health promotion, epidemiologists, behavioral scientists, specialists in evaluation, or some other academic field. These professional and specialists have their own concerns, ideas, and questions for the evaluation.
- iv.) **Project/program staff:** These are employees or contractors employed to carry out various activities. They should be involved in evaluation as they can give details of what they have done and how they did it and their experience. They also need to know if they are getting it right from independent evaluators.
- v.) **The commissioner:** This is the person commissioning or engaging the evaluator and is responsible to developing the project and evaluation objectives and questions. He often represents the implementing agency, donor or sponsor of the project depending on the objectives of the evaluation. The evaluator should support the commissioner in carrying out his job.
- vi.) **Project manager:** This is the key contact for the implementation and is in charge of day to day execution of the project. He is key to information on all activities being undertaken and may be interested in knowing results or effects of his actions for improvement.

Different stakeholders have a different perspective or objectives in the project and hence the evaluation process as a whole. Each category is unique, and hence the need to carry out stakeholder analysis to identify the stakeholders and their interests. The evaluator should consider stakeholder interests in developing the evaluation plan.

1.6. Principles of Evaluation

Evaluation has a number of key principles whose application makes the process more effective. According to Taylor, Purdue, Wilson and Wilde (2005) the principles of evaluation are;

- i.) Evaluation is a continuous and not a one-off process that informs planning and delivery of projects.
- ii.) Evaluation should involve all key stakeholders who should participate directly or indirectly in planning and execution including definition of the problem and evaluation questions.
- iii.) Evaluation should be an honest appraisal of project or program progress to facilitate learning from what has worked and what has not worked.
- iv.) Achievements and successes should be highlighted through evaluation and celebrated.
- v.) Evaluation should be used to fight or challenge oppressive policies and practices including discrimination.
- vi.) Successful evaluation should be innovative, imaginative and creative in approach.

1.7. How to Evaluate

Taylor, Purdue, Wilson and Wilde (2005) outlined the step by step approach in evaluation as; review of the situation, gathering of evidence for evaluation, analyses of evidence gathered, and making use of what was gathered and sharing the findings with stakeholders.

1.7.1. Review the situation

Begin by reviewing the situation and plan how to tackle. Understand the problem, needed changes and interventions needed, expected results and how to measure progress towards the results.

1.7.2. Gather evidence to support the evaluation

Evidence takes the form of numbers, people's opinions, view and experiences. Photos before and after interventions may be useful. Beneficiaries and form of benefits need to be captured. Start by establishing a baseline and relevant paperwork for such may include the proposal, past research reports, statistical data, press reports, minutes of preliminary meetings among others. Establish systems for regular data and information updates.

Information can be gathered using questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews, feedback forms, focus groups and round tables, diaries, press reports, observations, case studies, evaluation workshops and review meetings.

1.7.3. Analyze the evidence gathered

After gathering sufficient and relevant data, analyze the information. Identify indicators of progress or failure and change so far realized. Investigate the probable cause and report your findings.

1.7.4. Make use of the evidence

In this step, if there are any goals not met, if progress is below expectation, establish the causes and identify solutions to problems realized. Problem may include changes in organizations that have implications on the project, changing positions and expectations of stakeholders, adverse environmental changes.

1.7.5. Share the evaluation findings

It is a good idea to share findings with stakeholders and other interested parties so that they recognize any problems or issues affecting the project or program or interfering with progress. This will facilitate learning and improvements. Sharing findings that are positive will provide an opportunity to celebrate success and built on it.

2.0. TYPES OF EVALUATION

There are many types of evaluation which consequently call for customized evaluation methods. It is therefore important to understand the types of evaluation that can be conducted over the life-cycle of a projector and their timing. The main types of evaluation are process, impact, outcome and summative evaluation.

2.1. Process evaluation

This evaluation is used to measure the activities of the program, quality and beneficiaries. Process evaluation, answers the following questions;

- i.) Has the project reached the beneficiaries or target groups
- ii.) Are all project activities reaching all parts of the target group?
- iii.) Are participants and other key stakeholders satisfied with all aspects of the project?
- iv.) Are all activities being implemented as intended? If not why?
- v.) What alterations did the project make on intended or initially planned activities?
- vi.) Are the products, services, information and presentations or reports suitable for the target group?

2.2. Impact evaluation

This type of evaluation is used to measure the immediate effect of the program/project and is related or associated with the programs/project objectives. Impact evaluation measures how successful the programs/projects objectives as well as sub-objectives) have been realized or achieved.

The Impact evaluation helps answer the following questions;

- i.) How successful has the project/program realized the intended objectives and sub-objectives?
- ii.) Have the e desired short term changes been realized and to what extend?

Impact evaluation measures the program effectiveness immediate after the completion of the program and up to six months after the completion of the program.

2.3. Outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluation deals with long term effects of the program/project. It is generally used to measure the realization of the program/program goal. Outcome evaluation therefore measures how well the program goal was realized or achieved. This evaluation answers the following questions;

- i.) Has the program /project achieved the overall goal?
- ii.) What factors hindered or facilitate the success or failure to realize the project/program goal?
- iii.) What, unintended change has the program/project realized?

Outcome evaluation is used to measure changes at least six months after the implementation of the program (longer term). Whereas outcome evaluation measures the main goal of the project/program, it can be used to as well assess program objectives (My-Peer (n.d); Zint, n.d),

2.4. Summative evaluation

According to My-Peer (n.d); Zint (n.d), summative evaluation is done at the completion of the program/project. This evaluation considers the entire program/project cycle and assists in decisions making and answering questions like;

- i.) Does the project or program continue?
- ii.) Which part of the project should continue, if yes?
- iii.) Is it possible or necessary to change methodology?
- iv.) Is the program or project sustainable?
- v.) What factors contributed to success or failure?
- vi.) What are the lessons leant and recommendations from the project/program?

3.0. TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) IN PROJECT EVALUATION

3.1. Introduction

To realize high quality project evaluation, it is necessary to develop an accurate, elaborate and well specified Terms of Reference (ToR). Terms of reference are developed during the planning phase for the project/program evaluation undertaking and is initially used to attract and engage evaluation consultants in a competitive processor manner. ToR refers to a document that details an assignment for an evaluator or team of evaluators for a project or program. Terms of reference of the consultant outline the services expected from the consultant (Government of India, 2009). The World Bank (2011) defines, "Terms of Reference" as the document that provides details tasks for evaluators of a project/program. (ToRs). A specific ToR indicates evaluator's requirements and expectations with respect to the evaluation exercise to be undertake. ToR is therefore a prerequisite for evaluation consultancy exercise and should be clear and precise since they are used to measure the performance of the consultant and therefore ToR should mainly focus on effort and deliverables expected from evaluators (Government of India, 2009).

Terms of reference (TOR) define stakeholders in terms of their purpose and structures in the project and working relationships so as work together to accomplish a shared goal of the evaluated project nd programs. ToR of a project/program are at times referred to as the project charter. However there are differences between the terms of reference and the charter in that Terms of reference indicate how project or program should be developed, executed and verified and provide written basis for making future decisions and

confirmation or development of project scope as well as relationship between stakeholders (Government of India, 2009). For this to be realized, success factors/risks and constraints need to be identified ahead of time. According to the World Bank (2011) the ToR document defines all aspects of how a consultant or team of consultants will carry out a monitoring evaluation by clearly stipulating objectives and scope of evaluation, roles and responsibilities, and resources for the evaluation process. With all this information, it is noted that ToR forms the basis of contractual relationship and states clearly the parameters to be measured in an evaluation undertaking.

The timings are important in developing of ToR for a consultancy. The ToR should be created during the earlier stages by project designers, immediately after the approval of a project. They are preferably documented by the project manager and presented to the project sponsor or sponsors for input and approval. Once the terms have been approved, the members of the project team have a clear definition of the scope of the project. They will then be ready to progress with implementing the remaining project deliverables (Government of India, 2009; World Bank, 2011).

From the above discussion, "terms of reference" in project/program evaluation thus refers to a set of tasks and deliverables assigned to a consultant, advisor or team of consultants and advisors. The consultants or advisors is engaged by means a contract having terms of engagement that incorporate the terms of reference stipulating the consultant's task.

3.2. Specific Roles of Terms of Reference

According to Government of India (2009) and Mitchell (1994) Terms of reference clearly define the following aspects of a project or program evaluation;

- i.) The evaluation methodology to be used by evaluators
- ii.) Identify resources and funds committed for use in the evaluation process including, financial and physical infrastructure.
- iii.) The evaluation vision, objectives, scope, targets and deliverables of the evaluation in terms of what must be achieved.
- iv.) Identify evaluation stakeholders, their roles as well as their responsibilities in the evaluation. This helps in defining participants and their interests and therefore indicate those who will take part in the evaluation either directly or indirectly.
- v.) Specifies plans on resources, finance and quality plans i.e. how the process will be realized and expected level of quality.
- vi.) Provide evaluation work breakdown structure and task schedules hence specifies when deliverables should be achieved and how this will be done.
- vii.) It stipulates or spells out responsibilities of the consultants and clients.
- viii.) Shows how to realize and measure the required parameters in the evaluation.
- ix.) Clear identification of participants in the evaluation process including staffing and relationships between them.
- x.) Timelines for milestones and completion of the evaluation exercise.
- xi.) Clear declaration of reasons for evaluation and users of the evaluation results and reports.
- xii.) Shows what should be accomplished i.e. actual expected results and outputs of the evaluation exercise.

3.3. General Functions of ToR in Project Evaluation and Methodology used

The terms of reference provide a number of functions which according to World Bank (2011), these include the following;

- i.) Background information as well as rationale for the project evaluation by describing the project along with its key milestones and history of the project or program. A ToR will include a brief review of known facts about the project or program that will facilitate general understanding of what the project or program is all about.
- ii.) It is used to develop or identify specific evaluation questions through development of the scope, process as well as expected results for key evaluation tasks and by so doing it justifies the evaluation process. The valuation question provide guidance on how the evaluation will be carried out and what to look for in the evaluation.
- iii.) The terms of reference defines the scope, approach and methodology to be used by specifying evaluation scope in terms of time, period, and depth of evaluation. It guides the evaluation in terms of degree to which they can provide additional or alternative methods of executing the tasks. Therefore evaluation ToR describes the scope in terms of depth and timelines, approaches as well as methodology to be used in the evaluation.
- iv.) Prescribes or articulates the leadership and accountability arrangements including the structure, established resources and hierarchy for accountability during the project evaluation. In this case, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders are stipulated.
- v.) Facilitates scheduling the process by specifying the deliverables, their timelines and work plans. ToR may determine the products as well as services to be developed as well as development of detailed timelines.

- vi.) Terms of reference provides the guiding principles and value systems in terms of ethics and procedures desired to be followed by project evaluators. It specifies research ethics or procedures that monitoring evaluators are expected to follow as they execute the task.
- vii.) It makes possible and ease the determination of the budget and hence allocation of resources for use by evaluators in the evaluation process.
- viii.) The terms of reference determine and fix professional qualifications of evaluators as a team or individuals which includes their experience, credentials, competencies and expected moral and ethical standards including their experience and desired competencies.

3.4. Contents or Scope of Terms of Reference For Project Evaluation

To execute its functions, the ToR contains several elements and features. According to Government of India (2009), Mitchel (1994), & World Bank (2011), they include;

3.4.1. Background information and rationale of project evaluation exercise.

The background of terms of reference is contained in in the opening section of ToR document. The section gives the overall program or project activities that are to be evaluated. The focus of this section is;

- i.) Objectives or purpose of the program or project being evaluated.
- ii.) The rationale of the project being evaluated
- iii.) The historical perspective of the program or project in terms of progress and orientation
- iv.) The project or program operating environment i.e. organizational, economic, regulatory, environmental and social perspectives.
- v.) Key stakeholders and their specific and general roles and responsibilities in project design, implementation as well as evaluation.

3.4.2. Specific Objectives and Evaluation Questions

This is a brief but important section of terms of reference and includes

- i.) Specific project or program evaluation questions
- ii.) Expected use of evaluation results and reports
- iii.) Targeted users and stakeholders of project/program evaluation

It is desirable not to have lengthy objectives and use clear and focused language that is free of technical jargon or complex terms to facilitate general readership and understanding.

3.4.3. Evaluation Questions

There should be logical progression between purpose of evaluation, specific objectives and evaluation questions with questions being focused and specific. Evaluation questions are used to further focus the evaluation and should capture, the purpose of the evaluation exercise and process as well as the priorities set for the evaluation and stakeholder needs and expectations.

3.4.3.1. How to develop evaluation question;

CDC (nd.) suggests the following process of developing evaluation question;

- i.) Involve all key stakeholders and review the logic model for the project being evaluated.
- ii.) Brainstorm over the evaluation questions with staff and other stakeholders. They should be asked to develop own evaluation questions about operations, implementation as well as expected project outcomes with their interests, perspectives and concerns being well articulated, captured or presented in the evaluation questions formulated.
- iii.) Classify the evaluation questions into process and outcome questions.
- iv.) Prioritize the evaluation questions inn order of importance to the program objectives and activities, program staff and stakeholders.

3.4.4. Scope of Evaluation Work

This section of the terms of reference presents parameters of evaluation with respect to scope and limits. The scope should be realistic in terms of available time and resources. The details of this section includes;

- i.) The time period and project component covered by the evaluation process.
- ii.) Highlight of other existing or planned evaluations on the same subject with the study either building or complimenting relevant activities.

- iii.) Evaluation target groups e.g. beneficiaries or other stakeholders depending on purpose of the evaluation.
- iv.) Main issues or items that are not within the scope like aspects identified by the evaluation commissioner as difficult to analyze or not useful for the purpose of the evaluation.

3.4.5. Approaches and Methodology

This section of terms of reference declares how the project/program evaluation will be conducted with several key elements highlighted that include;

- i.) The methodological framework to be used like case study, sample survey, desktop reviews, mixed method, etc.
- ii.) Evaluation data to be collected, data collection instruments and presentation techniques.
- iii.) Outcomes, outputs, as well as indicators proposed or used to measure performance
- iv.) Availability and access to relevant data like existing local, regional or national data
- v.) How to verify findings with key stakeholders in the evaluation process or exercise.
- vi.) How to engage with or interact with other stakeholders for example through meetings, workshops, conferences etc.
- vii.) How to involve other participants and stakeholders in the steering committee and other forums for the purpose of the evaluation.

3.4.6. Governance and Accountability requirements

In this section, the terms of reference specify the management, administration and governance arrangements for carrying out the project evaluation exercise. Any provision for decision making, guidelines and arrangements are stated in this section in form of organization and functions. An evaluation chart may also be presented indicating relationship between participants and stakeholders.

3.4.7. Values and Guiding Principles for the evaluation

This section of the terms of reference outlines research ethics or procedures to be adhered to by the evaluators. The commissioner may include references and evaluation specifications as well as standards as outlined by various professional organizations or associations like United Nations, UNDP and other relevant professional and regulatory bodies. The sections could also appear within scope or background sections.

3.4.8. Professional Qualifications of evaluators

The evaluation terms of reference clearly specify the profile of evaluators or team of evaluators, as individuals or a team. The details of these section include;

- i.) Specific expertise, skills and experience that the evaluator or team is required to have or possess language proficiency, country, regional or national experienced, evaluation skills, technical competence in evaluated area among other considerations.
- ii.) Whether an individual or team of evaluators is needed for the evaluation.
- iii.) How to integrate different experts in the team for the case of team evaluation

4. Expected level or degree of distribution of responsibilities among leader and the team member for an evaluation team.

As evidence for the required attributes, the evaluation commissioner may ask for curriculum vitae, referees, samples of previous work reports and certificates.

3.4.9. Deliverables and Schedules

This section of the ToR document contains the outputs and reporting requirements expected of the evaluators. The details covered in these sections include;

- i.) Structure and format of each product or service like length, contents, size etc.
 - ii.) Communication style and language in which deliverables can be written by evaluators.
2. Clarification or detailed information about the types of products like reports, presentations, uses and how they will use the reports and products of evaluation.
 3. Expected standards and practices established by the organization that guides on formats for written documents.
 4. Set or expected timeframes and products milestones for major activities in evaluation process or exercise.
 5. Information or details on meetings, consultations and frequency of such meeting including participants in the course of evaluation and thereafter.
 6. The indicative work plan and schedule for completion of each task

3.4.10. Budget and Payments

In this section, the commissioner should consider availability of funds for use in execution of envisioned activities and tasks. The ToR may also require potential evaluators to develop their own budgets based on their proposed activities and tasks. This sections also contains details on payments like frequency and amounts, currency, mode of payments and accounting and other critical details relating to payments and accounting. In this section, inputs or resources to be provided by the authority or commissioner for the evaluation work are declared.

3.4.11. Structure of Proposal and Submissions

The ToR provides instructions on format of proposal, contents, submission process and details about;

- i.) The structure with list of topics to be included.
- ii.) Deadlines for submission and other activities of proposals.
- iii.) Means or mode of submission or transmission of documents and reports.
- iv.) Number of copies and recipients or contact persons
- v.) Methodology or criteria and timelines for selection and other milestones
- vi.) Opportunities for clarifications or appeal if any is provided by the commissioner.

3.4.12. Additional Resources

The ToR should identify useful information source for evaluators to access. Acceptable references may be listed in the text or material may be appended as annexes of ToR documents to help or guide evaluators.

3.4.13. Desirable Features of terms of Reference

A good ToR should be brief and concise and typically consist of 5 to 10 pages with desirable annexes depending on the project or program under evaluation. The specific contents of and format of Tor document varies based on;

- a.) Organizational requirements with respect to the project and evaluation
- b.) Local practice with respect to the project or program and evaluation requirements
- c.) Type of assignment to be undertaken

3.5. Evaluation of Similar Consultancies and Duplication of Effort

In cases where the commissioner or authority requires a consultant on several related or similar projects and programs, hence a similar ToR is required, it is economical and efficient, a cluster of these projects/programs can be combined into one package and a single evaluator or team of evaluators selected for the tasks with duplication of effort (Government of India, 2009).

4.0. CONSULTANCY IN PROJECT EVALUATION

A consultancy is advisory service contracted to a qualified person who carries out monitoring in an objective and independent manner. Consultancy is also rendering independent expert or professional advice about an issue or problem (Sarda, & Dewalkar, 2016).

4.1. Parties in a Consultancy

The main parties in a consultancy are the consultant and the client or commissioner of the exercise and both parties have binding obligations towards one another as stipulated in the consultancy contract.

4.1.1. Client/ commissioner

The client or commissioner is the organization, corporate, group of individuals or an individual who procures or engages the services of a professional consultant for an agreed project or program or activity for a specific period time on agreed terms and conditions.

4.1.2. Consultant

A consultant is an expert or professional who provides advice in an area of competence and experience. The consultant analyses data and information and uses it to advise the client so as he makes the best decisions and choices for a given scenario. A monitoring and evaluation consultant are therefore a professional or firm that provides professional service to a client or commissioner in project monitoring and evaluation.

4.1.3. Consultancy Contract

This is a binding relationship between a consultant and the client which stipulates the terms and conditions of the agreed consultancy.

4.2. THE EVALUATION CONSULTANT

4.2.1. Role of Consultants

Consultants have several functions they play in the cause of evaluation consultancies. According to Turner (1982), consultants do the following roles;

a.) They provide specific information to a client.

Consultants generate and provide information on a project/program by gathering facts and compiling using surveys, cost and /or benefit analysis, feasibility studies, market research, analyses of the composition and structure of an industry or business. For a project, analysis of project indicators and other observable variables. The project commissioner may also have data may be unable to spare the time and resources to develop the data internally, hence the need for a consultant.

b.) They solve a client's/commissioners problems.

Quite often, consultants receive difficult problems to solve in the cause of their work but their work is to get answers to problems. The consultant also has a task and responsibility to ask whether the problem is framed in best way. Often the client/commissioner needs guidance in defining the real issue or problem with respect to the project. Therefore the consultant should start by investigating the context of the problem and work with the problem as defined by the client a way that leads to a more useful problem definition.

c.) They carry out diagnosis, which may necessitate redefinition of the problem.

The consultant's value lies in their ability to diagnose, a process which may lead to strained consultant-client relationship. Reasons may include employees who may be fearful of being found culpable. A good diagnosis should go beyond obvious examination of the external environment, the technology and economics of the business, and the behavior of workers. The process of executing independent diagnosis is often a major reason for employing consultants, and is more successful if the client or his team is involved. Joint consultant-client approach to work enables managers to comfortably begin implementation of corrective action even ahead formal recommendations making consultancy more effective and useful.

d.) They make recommendations based on their diagnosis for client decision making

A consultancy concludes with a written report and/or oral presentation which summarizes what the consultant has learned and recommendations on what the client should do to improve the situation. The exercise should present recommendations that are related to the diagnosis on which they are based. It is advisable for the consultant to make recommendations, but it is the client who decides whether and how to implement. For best decisions to be made the consultant should provide clear guidance and information to support decision making.

e.) Assisting with implementation of recommended solutions.

A consultant often ask for a follow-up engagement to help install a recommended system. Effective work on implementation problems requires a level of trust and cooperation that is developed gradually throughout the engagement process. A consultant should strive to identify recommendations that can be implemented. If a consultant's assignment has a goal of building commitment, creating learning, and developing organizational effectiveness, a consultant should always suggest implementable recommendations.

f.) Building a consensus and commitment around corrective action.

The consultant should provide clear and convincing recommendations. The consultant should be persuasive and have good analytical skills and have ability to design and conduct a processes for;

- i.) Building consensus or agreement about crucial steps to be undertaken and
- ii.) Establish momentum or motivation to see the necessary steps through.

A consultant's observation should well summarize this. The consultant should establish enough consensus t within the organization that the desired or proposed action makes sense. For this to happen a consultant should have good problem solving ability as well as persuasion skills to convince through logical analysis. Sufficient key stakeholders should be, should be mobilized for support and hence success of a project.

g.)Facilitate client learning by teaching the clients how to resolve problems in the future.

Consultants enable learning by incorporating employees and other stakeholders of the client organization in the evaluation processes. In some cases however, members of management may need to acquire complex skills that may only be acquired through guided experience long period of time. Participation by the client or his representatives in the evaluation process, provides opportunities for learning needs. The challenge is that managers may not be comfortable with being taught what they should be knowing. Consultants should learn to be more effective in designing and executing projects in.

h.)Enable permanent improvement in organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Successful implementation of evaluation consultancies requires new, concepts and techniques in management, change in attitudes with respect to management and control functions and changes in how organizational functions are executed. Many projects induce change in one or more aspects of the organization's functioning that may prove counterproductive because it doesn't combine well other aspects of the system. While working on current issues, a consultant should address future needs of the organization, project or program even though we rarely have important changes in human resources function just because of a consultant's recommendation. Consultants ought to encourage clients to improve organizational effectiveness not just by writing reports and recommendations, but by modeling methods that work well for the organization or project under evaluation. A professional diagnosis by the consultant should cover or include assessment of overall organizational effectiveness, and the consulting process should help address various barriers to better performance now and in future by the organization.

4.2.2. Desirable qualities of Consultants

To be effective in his work, an evaluation consultant should have several desirable professional, academic and ethical competencies. According to United States Department of Health and Human Services (2011), NSI (2013), and World Bank (2011) a consultant should have desirable competencies, experience and knowledge that include;

- i.) The consultant should have knowledge of the project or program being evaluated.
- ii.) Should have a clear understanding of the legal and ethical requirements applicable to the evaluation as well as the project and program being evaluated.
- iii.) Should have knowledge and understanding of current trends in evaluation and the project or program under consideration.
- iv.) Should have specifically required professional knowledge acquired through education and work experience
- v.) Should have ability to engage in collaborative problem-solving with stakeholders
- vi.) Should be a good communicator with effective oral and writing skills
- vii.) Ability to work with individuals and teams
- viii.) Ability to develop and use data collection methods like questionnaire, interview guide
- ix.) Ability to analyze and interpret collected data
- x.) Have good negotiation skills so that he can handle crises and conflicts in project/program evaluation.
- xi.) Possess good observation skills to facilitate learning and experience from the project or program.
- xii.) Should be morally upright and responsible person in his/her dealings.
- xiii.) Should possess high level of professionalism
- xiv.) Should be technology friendly so that he can use modern digital analytical tools that make work effective and efficient.
- xv.) Should be honest and have good attitude towards work and environment as a whole.
- xvi.) Should be able to manage rejection if and when it is encountered in the course of his work
- xvii.) Should be familiar with cultural environment of the project and program under consideration to avoid conflict or confrontations.
- xviii.) Should be flexible and not rigid so that they can adapt to changing environment in terms of teams and individuals as well as physical and sociocultural environment.

5.0. TYPES OF CONSULTANTS

Consultants can be classified as internal or external

- i.) Internal Consultants
- ii.) External consultants

5.1. Internal Versus External Consultants

Making use of either internal or external consultants has both advantages and disadvantages. However, in either case there are more benefits than the disadvantages if the commissioner or client one knows when and how to make use of these two types of consultants (Reddy, nd). According to Conley-Tayler (2005), factors that may influence the choice between internal and external evaluation include; specialized skills, perceived objectivity, flexibility, costs involved, availability of evaluator, ability to collect correct information for evaluation, accountability requirements and expectations, willingness to criticize, mode of results dissemination and recipients, knowledge of the project/program context, ethical issues and concerns, and use of the evaluation results.

5.2. Internal Consultants

These are consultants who double up as employees of the commissioner or client (Conley-Tayler, 2005).

4.2.1. Benefits of Internal Consultants

According to IDRC (2012) and Reddy (2019), benefits arising from use of internal consultants include;

- i.) Unlike external consultants, internal consultants understand the operating environment, its culture and the people and so are better placed to get to the root or bottom of any existing problem more successful and this insider perspective from internal evaluators adds value to the process and hence outcome of evaluation.
- ii.) Quite often, workers take time to get used to and cooperate with external consultants compared to internal consultants and this makes the work of external consultants challenging therefore internal evaluation give timely information for quick decision making.
- iii.) Internal consultants understand the tasks, processes and status of the project and so they can finish the exercise faster and with more precision because they have better understanding of the project and operating environment. External consultants rarely give this benefit of buy-in like internal consultants.
- iv.) It is cheaper to use internal consultants because expenses like extra travel and accommodation needed by an external consult are not necessary as they perform within employment status and terms with little or no extra expenses to incur.
- v.) Little or no collaboration is needed when using internal consultants making the process faster than a team of external consultants who often need collaboration with program staff or. This makes the process faster with no real chances for miscommunication.

5.3. External Consultants

An external consultant is an outsider or non-employee of the client or project/program Commissioner.

5.3.1. Benefits of external consultants

According to Conley-Tayler (2005) Reddy (2019), benefits arising from use of external consultants include;

- i.) Internal consultants having worked around for sometimes may find it hard to find flaws in the systems unlike external consultants who assume a more neutral approach and hence are more objective hence diagnosing a problem is easier for them.
- ii.) Since internal consultants are used to handling things in a given way, it is difficult to walk the extra mile and develop new and creative ideas unlike external consultants who are more flexible and can handle wider scope and greater depth into an issue leading to innovative and creative ways of solving crises.
- iii.) External consultants approach their work without bias, they are able to give an honest opinion and therefore under certain conditions, having an external consultant will give a true picture of what is happening compared to an internal consultant.
- iv.) External consultants take their work more seriously since that is their source of livelihood and will therefore be keen at digging for more information on various issues and these leads to better results and more detailed findings.
- v.) The use of external consultants guarantees professionalism in the process since the exercise is cushioned from internal power plays, mistrust, competition and rivalry which frustrate the process and pollute the results.
- vi.) There is more public confidence or trust from stakeholders in an evaluation done by an external consultant than one done by an internal consultant from the neutrality and professional point of view.

5.3.2. Disadvantages of external consultants

There are a number of limitations for hiring external consults. According to IDRC (2012) these disadvantages include

- i.) External evaluations can be costly compared to internal evaluations
- ii.) External evaluations are difficult to manage and are time consuming
- iii.) In some cases, it is difficult to find appropriate or relevant evaluators who understand the substance and context being evaluated.

5.4. Validity of Evaluation

According to Conley-Taylor (2005), it is possible to get transparent evaluation from external and internal evaluators, but the use of an external evaluator brings some impartiality and legitimacy to the process and results even though both internal and external evaluators have own biases.

Conley-Taylor (2005) and House (1980) identified three criteria for validity of an evaluation i.e.

- i.) Whether it is true
- ii.) Whether it is credible
- iii.) Whether it is normatively correct.

They remarked that there is no one right approach to an evaluation process, and so the closer the approach is to a prevailing situation, the better it will be in terms of acceptability. Cronbach et al. (1981) remarked that excellence of an evaluation should be judged against its ability to serve a society or stakeholder. An evaluation pays off to the level or ability to give ideas and solutions clearly.

Peck, Kim, & Lucio (2012) affirmed that, beauty, truth and justice are the basic standards for evaluation. Where the evaluator and decision maker are the same, selection of standards is relatively easy since the evaluator can apply his or her standards of evaluation and make judgment as the decision maker. If the evaluator and decision maker not the same persons, then credibility of the evaluator is a consideration. The decision maker has a duty to determine if facts from the evaluation are correct and whether or not the evaluator is truthful. At such a point, communication and credibility become critical consideration, reflecting a relationship between the two parties in the evaluation. For the case of a public program the evaluation holds collective value. Decision makers could include a large number of stakeholders. Apart from truthfulness and credibility, an evaluation undertaking should consider justice for all stakeholders. Therefore truthfulness, credibility (beauty), and justice are standards for evaluation process.

5.5. Consultancy Styles

A consultant can be classified based on the type of consulting style used, the process applied in consultancy or the level of consultant involvement during the consulting process.

5.5.1. Expert Consulting Style

The consultant uses his expertise and knowledge to diagonalize and solve the problem for the client. It is favorable style where the client wants a quick solution with his own little involvement in solving the problem. The problem with this style is that the client does little or no learning hence little or no internal learning and capacity building.

5.5.2. Process Consultant

In this consultancy style, the consultant helps the client to think through the problem and generate own solutions to the problems.

5.5.3. Classification Based on level of involvement in the project

Consultants come in all sizes and different types. According to Ucko (nd.), consultancies range in sizes from individual consultants to multinational consulting firms or companies. Ucko identified four types of consultants. A consultant or team of consultant can operate in more than one style, depending on the project characteristics. It is the responsibility of each consultant to select the most appropriate type or style of consulting. Based on the level of involvement, a consultant can work as;

- i.) Data or information gatherer
- ii.) Advisor
- iii.) Doer
- iv.) Coach

Table 1 bellow shows the four types of consultants with their services, deliverables with specific examples of the consultants.

Table1: Four types of consultants based on operating/working style

Type of Consultant	Information Gatherer	Advisor	Doer	Coach
Service provided	Provides only Information	Advise and recommendation	Act as staff implementing systems and programs	Helps the commissioner do some tasks that he cannot do better
Deliverables	Written report of evaluation	Oral or written report or both	Installs systems or does the task	System, tasks and learning experience
Examples	1. Market research 2. Economic forecast	i.) Organizational design ii.) Selection of appropriate computer system	i.) Payroll system execution ii.) Training program iii.) Computer	i.) Management coaching, ii.) Organizational Team building

Generally, the doer is able to function in three different ways as a pair of hands, expert and partner as follows:

- i.) As an **expert**, telling you what you should do hence the work is advisory.
- ii.) As a **pair of hands**, the consultant does actual execution of instructions just like an employee.
- iii.) As a **partner**, the consultant collaborates with the client in an equal or symbiotic manner where both parties act at par to one another or as equals.

It is therefore necessary that while selecting a consultant to work as a doer, the Commissioner should be sure which of the three roles will be performed.

5.6. Client -Consultant Relationship Model

The nature of relationship between a consultant and client or commissioner comes up with four models of collaboration, namely, collaborative or process model, clinical or doctor patient model, engineering model and the survival model.

The table 2 below shows the relationship between client influence and consultant influence and the resultant relationship.

Table 2: Relationship between client and consultant influence

	High Consultant influence	Low Consultant Influence
High Client influence	Collaborative/Process model	Engineering Model
Low Client influence	Clinical Model	Survival model

i.) Collaborative /Process Model

In relationship there is mutual influence and joint commitment to goals and objectives where both the consultant and client view consulting as a learning experience where they learn from one another.

ii.) Clinical model (Doctor-patient model)

In this type of relationship, the consultant possesses a higher degree of influence over the client, so the quality of relationship is a function of the quality of professional expertise. The client provides data and responds to queries raised by the consultant. The client assumes the role of a patient as the consultant assumes the role of a doctor.

iii.) Engineering Model

In this relationship or model, the client possesses a higher level of influence over the consultant and as a result, the client directs the consultant during the evaluation process.

iv.) Survival Model

In this type of model/relationship, both the client and consultant lack influence over one another and as a result they both struggle to survive in the working relationship. Effectively the consultant does not receive support from the client and is instead seen as an intruder and so the consultant encounters hostility, rejection and is treated with contempt and suspicion.

5.7. Selection Criteria for Consultants

Generally speaking, expertise and specialty, impartiality and fairness, cost implications, and time requirement are key considerations for employing an external consultant or team of consultants. The level of complexity and scope of the task may require an external consultant, nature of political sensitivity of the program or project may also demand high level of impartiality and hence the need of an independent external consultant. In some cases, it is just lack of personnel and time making choice for an external evaluator the best option (IDRC, 2012). There is need to have a transparent scoring matrix that emphasizes the Sponsor’s strategy and service needs without bias to any one firm. Typical examples of criteria include understanding of the project, key personnel qualifications and experience, firm’s qualifications and recent experience as well as judgment on ability to meet project schedule.

A recommended criteria is used in the selection of evaluation consultants who are interested in the evaluation undertaking through submission of evaluation proposals. The selection committee should assign points to various attributes used for the consultant rating. (NSI, 2013). The choice of a consultant could be internally or externally motivated for different reasons. However key considerations in consultant selection according Indian Government (2009), NSI, (2013) and World Bank (2011) are;

i.) Capacity to execute all the services required

The consultant should have the necessary resources to perform all of the services required. This include planning, surveying, software, etc. The consultant or firm selected should have professionals with skills and experience to work on the project.

- ii.) Should have adequate experience on related or similar project being evaluated.
- iii.) Ability to meet the schedules and deadlines of the project. The consultant should have competence, timeliness, and quality of performance to work on the project. The consultant or team should have sufficient time to devote to the project in order to meet the schedule submitted in the proposal. In this case, his workload and capacity can be examined for decision making.
- iv.) Proposed technical approach and schedule to accomplish the project should indicate the consultant's understanding and familiarity with the particular requirements of the project or program to be evaluated. In particular, the consultant should be familiar with relevant planning and execution guidelines and requirements.

5.8. Selecting the Ideal Consultant

The very first thing to consider when selecting an external evaluator is the type of evaluation and corresponding role of the consultant evaluator. This is because different evaluation types require different roles of the consultant and so are the methods used in evaluating. Therefore Before interviewing candidates, there is need to specify the desired characteristics of the right or ideal consultant for the project to be evaluated.

It is however not always easy get a consultant who exactly matches the desired specifications, but it is possible to get closer to what is desired. According to NSI (2013) and IDRC (2012), an ideal consultant can be determined by attempting to answer questions;

- i.) Relevant experience: How much experience in similar projects the consultant should have and if at all similar experience is a prerequisite.
- ii.) Industry background: Whether or not the consultant needs to have previous experience in the specific project, program or industry.
- iii.) Cultural compatibility: This considers personal characteristics of the consultant required for example whether or not the consultant should be reserved in nature and approach or outgoing, easygoing or tough acting. In some cases the consultant may be required to adhere to some dressing codes.
- iv.) Ethical issues or Integrity: Integrity may be a key aspect of some evaluations, in some cases it may not be the main concern. Some potential consultants may have integrity issues and this may be considered in the selection while some undertakings may demand the use of consultants who are known and respected by peers in the field.
- v.) Location of the consultant: In some evaluations, a quick undertaking may be required and so ready availability of a local consultant may be a requirement while in some assignments the client or commissioner simply wants the best regardless of where they can be found.
- vi.) Size of consultant's firm: Some evaluations are more diverse and complex than others. For small assignments or undertakings, only one person can carry out the task hence size is not important. However in complex undertakings, diverse skills and more numbers may be a requiring hence need to go for large diversified firms or a consultant with more human and physical capital.
- vii.) Language and level communication skills: If communication ability or skills is important for the task, a consultant with such skills and attributes will be selected. In some cases, the client may be interested in a consultant who is able to understand and communicate in a specific industry jargon or s project specific terminology.
- viii.) Profile of Consultant or Status: In some cases, a client or commissioner only wants to deal with known names or personalities in evaluation. In this case the profile of the consultant will be very important. In some evaluations, the client may prefer someone who is still building his or her reputation in the field.
- ix.) Project evaluation objectives and goals of evaluation: The client may just be after having a problem solved, or while in some cases he wants to learn how to solve similar problems in future. Where learning is one of the objectives, then a consultant with strong interpersonal and teaching skills will be selected. If the client wants a consultant to personally solve the problem then experience in solving similar problems become a requirement.
- x.) Availability of the consultant: The client may immediate undertaking while in some cases urgency is not a priority. In case consultant has many other ongoing projects, then chances are he will delay and so may not be appropriate where the client needs quick results in a short period of time.
- xi.) Approach to consulting: The nature or form of results may also influence the selection of a consultant. In some cases the client or commissioner needs written reports while in others oral reports are needed. The client may also want something's implemented, while in others recommendations enough. Some evaluations need a close working relationship, or while in other, the evaluator's total independence is required. In either case, consultants who best deliver the expected output will be preferred and hence selected.
- xii.) Evaluation fees or charges: The consultants will also be selected based on the fees or charges they demand and available budget. Often a consultant who has best technical and financial

6.0. CONSULTANCY CONTRACT

6.1. Elements or Contents of Consultancy contract

Important elements or contents of a consultancy contract are;

- i.) Contract term or duration of evaluation which stipulates when the agreement takes effect and when it ends.
- ii.) Project evaluation objectives which determines the expected results of evaluation

- iii.) Definition of success and requirements for success: This specifies what success is and how it is measured and who measures it including the standard of measurement.
- iv.) Scope of the project or program evaluated: In this section, project work plans and processes are considered together with tasks and activities to be undertaken.
- v.) Project deliverable or products and services: In this section, the consultant is informed about what he has to deliver or leave behind e.g. a working system, evaluation report, oral report or presentation, interim and final reports due.
- vi.) Ownership of the product. There are cases where consultant's product and services have rights with commercial value. Clarification is provided in this section on transfer or ownership of any copy rights and whether or not the consultant will be able to sell the same program to other customers. The commissioner's expectations about copyrights may also influence the selection of a consultant. .
- vii.) Confidentiality: Since consultants often have access to confidential or proprietary information. It is necessary to agree disclosure of such information to others and limits if any.
- viii.) Communications: The contract specifies forms of communication with the consultant. This can be regular phone calls, meetings, written progress reports or formal reviews. The frequency of communication is also specified.
- ix.) Project or program Staffing: The contract specifies who works on the project, substitutions, and numbers involved.
- x.) Supervision of the consultant: the contract specifies who will supervise the consultant or be the consultant's primary contact during the evaluation.
- xi.) Scheduling. This shows when the project starts, milestones expected and dates, as well as expected completion time and dates.
- xii.) Incentives and penalties: This section specifies any financial incentives and penalties available for good performance and completion ahead or behind schedule. .
- xiii.) Termination of Contract: This section specifies circumstances and method of ending the contract hence notice requirements and penalties if any will be specified.
- xiv.) Cancellation policy: This section stipulates circumstances and consequences of stopping or cancelling the project before it commences. This includes notice requirement and penalties applicable.
- xv.) Arbitration: Disputes may arise in the course of evaluation or execution of the contract. Disputes may arise over fees, deliverables, fees, or other items. This section clarifies how such disputes can be resolved through arbitration and conditions for arbitration.

6.2. Consultancy fees

The evaluation fee set should be simple in structure for the client to understand and should be based on the principle of indifference such that the consultant does not become devastated by lose of the contract or feel shortchanged by himself or the client. The consultation fee can be based on;

i.) Time Charges

When charging for time, consultant will multiply an hourly or daily rate (the "billing rate") by the actual number of hours or days spent on the project. Quite often, the consultant will quote an estimated fee or fee range in advance.

ii.) Project Fees

In this mode, the client and consultant agree in advance on a fixed fee for the exercise regardless of time spent. Consultants calculate project fees by:

1. Multiplying their billing rate by expected duration of the undertaking.
2. Charging what they think the task is worth
3. Charging what the market will bear for the undertaking. .

ii) Retainer fees

In this case consultants receive regular monthly payments for the work in exchange for repetitive work like analysis of financial statements or other program statements, discounted bills or guaranteed availability

7.0. THE EVALUATION EXERCISE BY EVALUATOR/CONSULTANTS

The evaluation exercise starts with the invitation for consultants to bid for contract to carry out evaluation process. After review of bids or submission by interested consultants, the best qualified is selected. This is followed by;

- i.) The selected consultant or evaluator meets the commissioner or client
- ii.) The consultant develops an evaluation proposal
- iii.) Upon agreement with the commissioner, a consultancy contract is signed
- iv.) Development of data collection tools
- v.) Data collection needed as evidence for the evaluation.
- vi.) Collected data analysis and presentation of results.
- vii.) Making conclusions and evaluation report writing
- viii.) Dissemination of transmission of results and report to the commissioner stakeholders

- ix.) Validation of reports
- x.) Termination and exit of the consultancy.

In some cases the evaluator may have a closing meeting with stakeholders before or after production of the final report in a way that may allow input but not in a way that will compromise his/her independence as consultant or evaluator.

8.0. ETHICS IN EVALUATION CONSULTANCY

Ethics in consultancy is the act of doing what is expected of you as a consultant by the stakeholders. Ethics is acceptable standard of professional conduct and practice that is anchored in a profession. It represents attitudes, principles and norms that are considered appropriate for success of a given profession that leads to customer satisfaction (Kabeyi, 2018). Both external and internal evaluators face several ethical issues of concern which should be managed (Conley-Tyler, 2005).

8.1. Code of ethics in project/program evaluation

Code of ethics refers to a document that outlines the principles of conduct to be adhered to while engaging in a given professional exercise. The benefits of having recognized ethics in evaluation are that it limits the need for tough legal precautions and provisions in the relationship between the client/commissioner and the evaluator or consultant. This simplifies the evaluation process and creates an environment of trust for evaluation. The degree of ethics is a function of the organization and the individual consultant since organizations also influence ethical behavior and conduct. The ethics in evaluation forms the basis for self-regulation and hence confidence and positive engagement between the consultant and the commissioner or client. Ethics can be said to be a trust building mechanism in evaluation (Kabeyi, 2018 & Vallini, 2007).

The main ethical problem is with respect to other stakeholders interests which are often not clear and so the fundamental ethical principle in this case is to be, to determine the interests of other parties or stakeholders in the evaluation and respect them without harming them. Being intellectuals, consultants have a direct and personal relationship with clients and this often leads to ethical dilemmas. In project consulting, decisions with respect to the main objective of the project and exercise should never be oriented to the interests of the consultant but should be aim at supporting the commissioner's business goals. Where the consultant's principles appear to be in conflict with the main objective, the best to do is to reject the appointment (Vallini, 2007).

8.2. Ethical Dilemmas in consultancy

Vallini (2007) identifies the following cases of ethical dilemmas for a consultant

- i.) Helping a client avoid or reduce tax liability
- ii.) Helping a client avoid legal liability
- iii.) Help a client exploit loopholes in a contract for his/her advantage or gain over the other party
- iv.) Help a client eliminate neutralize a competitor with technology or other ,means

8.3. Ethical guidelines conduct in consultancy

A consultant may find himself in an ethical dilemma. This is a moral situation where the consultant has to choose between two equally undesirable alternatives. These may arise due to a number of reasons, circumstances, attitude, individual and organizational behavior, failure of personal character, conflict of personal values as well as conflict between organizational goals and social goals (Kabeyi, 20018).A dilemma therefore whenever the consultant faces a choice between two or more options that have various consequences on the commissioner, consultant himself, organization and the project/programme beneficiary, donor or other stakeholders. Ethical dilemmas involve making decisions in an environment where rules a vague or in conflict while the outcome of an ethical decision cannot be predicted with certainty as to whether a decision made is right or wrong and quite often mistakes are made (Fernando, 2012). Valini (2007) recommended that for a consultant to uphold ethical standards and requirements in the course of evaluation, he should do the following;

- i.) the consultant should not accept a job from a commissioner where he is sure that it will force him to act unethically
- ii.) Accept a job only if you are able to perform it
- iii.) Only give opinions on decisions when you are sure that it is a correct solution and that it will help the commissioner or client
- iv.) Opinions given by a consultant should never be motivated by personal interests
- v.) Any solution or opinion given by the consultant should highlight risks involved to the client
- vi.) Suggested solutions or opinions should indicate the effect to third parties including the environment.
- vii.) All information accessed by the consultant in the cause of consultancy should be handled with confidentiality and should not be used or given for any other use without authority from third parties.
- viii.) Consultants should not consult for competing clients without authority or declaration.
- ix.) Consultants should always declare any conflict of interest during their evaluation work.

9.0. EVALUATION REPORT

An evaluation report is an important product of project evaluation process whose main function is to give a transparent framework for accountability for obtained results that is needed to make necessary decisions on the project or program being evaluated. The overall result of this is enable development of lessons learnt and hence enable improvement (UNDP, n.d). Evaluation reports vary greatly from one another based on the purpose, needs for evaluation, expectations and budget provided (Miron, 2004). An evaluation report forms basis for decision making. According to USAID (2012) the most important outcome and use of an evaluation to guide decision making and aimed at improving projects and programs. A well-written, valuation report that clearly provides credible findings and conclusions is desirable. An evaluation report is prepared by the consultant or evaluator to document what he did and what he found out. The reports should be easily accessed and quickly by interested or targeted stakeholders. It serves as a record of the status as at the time of evaluation and so acts as a means of comparison between the current and future evaluations when they are carried out. It is through an evaluation report that the evaluator can give written account or summary of the evaluation exercise and findings to stakeholders and other interested parties.

The primary responsibility for preparing the evaluation report rests with the evaluation consultant or the leader of the evaluation team. The commissioner and evaluated can also contribute to the report with their inputs. Important stakeholders need be involved in draft report review to check for any relevant factual errors or omissions, and to highlight any areas that they consider as inaccurate which ought to be accepted by evaluators although to safeguard the independence, they should be free to make own conclusions from the findings. For compliance with the criteria stated, a quality assurance and enhancement system may be put in place (UNDP, n.d).

9.1. Evaluation Report outline

The specific outline of an evaluation report may vary from one evaluation to another. However Miron (2004; UNDP (n.d), and USAID (2012) recommend the following outline of a typical evaluation report;

i.) **Title page of the report**

Title of the evaluation may include a clear reference number, Links to the evaluation plan , with information on strategic value, national involvement and alignment, timing, resources and financing, outcomes and the Strategic plan priorities, geographical coverage of the evaluation, name and organization of the evaluators and information in annex for assessment of competence and trustworthiness, name of the commissioning organization, date of evaluation report, expected actions from the evaluation and dates for action, dates for stakeholder meetings and status of meetings and name of contact point for the evaluation

ii.) **List of acronyms and abbreviations and operational definition of terms**

In these sections, the evaluator or consultants presents the various signs, acronyms and abbreviation used in his report for easy understanding by the readers of the evaluation reports. Operational terms can also be defined under definition of terms

iii.) **Table of contents including list of acronyms**

The table of contents is a section that is used to show what the report contains as outlook with section numbers and pages where each part is found. It facilitates easy sorting of information and selective reading of the report based on what the reader is looking for.

iv.) **Executive summary**

This may contain brief description of the project, evaluation purpose, questions and scope of evaluation, key findings, conclusions and key recommendations. The executive summary should not include information that is not mentioned and substantiated in the main report. Therefore executive summary is just the contents in brief.

v.) **Introduction: Background and context of project or program**

The introduction part of the evaluation report provides a brief purpose of evaluation, evaluation question if not covered in methodology, description of program or project, phenomena being evaluated including goals and history. The depth of information or details depends on whether or not the same is provided in another section of the report. Review of related literature is also highlighted in introduction and background of the report.

vi.) **Description of initiative or program**

In this section of the report, the consultant or evaluator describes the project or program and what it seeks to achieve. Deliverables and timelines of the project or program being evaluated are presented. This forms basis of evaluation by specifying or indicating what is key in the project or program.

vii.) **Objective or purpose of the project/program evaluation.**

This may contain the reason(s) why the evaluation is being conducted should be explicitly stated, justification for conducting the evaluation at this point in time should be summarized. Also details of who requires the evaluative information should be made clear

and description of context to provide an understanding of the geographic, socioeconomic, political and cultural settings in which the evaluation took place.

viii.) Research questions with scope of evaluation exercise stating limitations and delimitations

The research question may be developed by the commissioner, consultant/evaluator or jointly developed based on the purpose of the evaluation. The research question forms basis of data collection as the evaluator seeks for answers to the question through appropriate data collection instruments.

ix.) Research methodology or approach used in the evaluation exercise.

To be presented in this section include data needed to answer the questions and the sources of this data, sampling procedure applied to ensure e.g. area and population to be represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, numbers selected out of potential subjects, limitations to sampling, procedures applied including triangulation to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information collected, bases for making judgements and interpretation of the findings including performance indicators or levels of statistical significance as warranted by available data, description of procedures for quantitative and qualitative analyses. Innovations in methodological approach and added value to development evaluation, how the evaluation addressed equity in its design and in the provision of differentiated information to guide policies and programmes and how a human development and human rights perspective guided the evaluation and influenced the scope of the evaluation.

x.) Research or evaluation findings/results

In this section of the report, the evaluator presents findings of the evaluation clearly and logically. The results may be presented using descriptive statistics. Tables, charts, graphs that are well labelled and interpreted may be used.

xi.) Discussion including summary, explanation of findings and results interpretation.

In this section, the evaluator summarizes his findings and explains gives explanation of the results. The results are discussed and interpreted. The evaluator or consultant then makes his judgment or opinion about the program that covers merit and worth fairly based on presented results.

xii.) Conclusions

These are the judgements made by the evaluators and should not repeat the findings but address the key issues that can be abstracted from them. Conclusions are made based on an agreed basis for making judgments of value or worth relative to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of a project or programme. They address issues of relevance and significance to the subject being evaluated, determined by the evaluation objectives and the project evaluation questions being pursued.

xiii.) Recommendations and lessons learnt

Evaluation recommendations are derived and presented logically from the evaluation's findings and conclusions. Recommendations ought to be relevant to the evaluation and decisions to be made based on the evaluation exercise. They should be presented in a clear and concise manner and in order of priority. Recommendations should be supported by specific findings of the evaluation. Recommendations given should action-oriented, specific, practical, and indicate responsibility for action.

xiv.) Acknowledgements

In this section, the evaluator recognizes all who assisted him or made his evaluation possible and may include the data collectors or research assistants and commissioner or his/her entire team. The evaluator should be guided by research ethics to avoid any breach of trust or causing discomfort where confidentiality may be required.

xv.) References

In this section of the report, the evaluator or consultant lists the relevant literature cited in his report. The evaluator uses a suitable citation style like American Psychological Association (APA) is used consistently and all in text citations should show in references.

xvi.) Appendices/annexes to the report

They include original terms of reference, data collection instruments, data and data analysis, evaluation plan and other relevant documents related to the evaluation.

9.2. Qualities/characteristics of a good evaluation report

i.) Utility criteria

- a.) The report should serve the purpose of evaluation by providing complete information to all stakeholders. These can only be realized through adequate stakeholder involvement or participation, maintenance of evaluator or institutional credibility, alignment of evaluation process with institutional, available of adequate budget and time.
- b.) Recommendations should be specific, clear and actionable.
- c.) The report should provide details of expected follow-up actions by stakeholders.
- d.) The report presentation should of evaluation process and results should be exhaustive and well-structured for easy access and retrieval for action by stakeholders.

ii.) Credibility Criteria

- a.) The evaluation report will be credible if evaluation procedure and instruments are valid and reliable. For this to happen, the evaluators or consultants must be competent professionals and look or appear valid in opinion of users/stakeholders
- b.) The basis for making observations and judgments ought to be transparent and based on negotiated agreements between evaluator and evaluated.

iii.) Relevance, appropriateness and added-value

This criterion is met if information provided addresses organizational or project priorities, information needs and does not duplicate other information already available and is also relevant to the project and organizational goals.

10.0. CHALLENGES OF CONSULTANCY IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There are a number of challenges that are associated with consultancy. Aceved, Rivera, Lima. & Hwang (2010); Mitchel (1994); Rahman (2015) identified a number of challenges with using consultants in project and program evaluation.

- i.) Evaluation is often considered secondary to project planning and implementation and does not receive adequate funding during resource allocations and most effort is made in planning, launching and executing projects with little or no room for evaluation and change if needed making improvement orders not feasible. This creates sufficient for conflict between consultants or evaluators and the project execution team.
- ii.) Tendency of consultants to make reports and recommendations that are pleasing to the commissioner as appointing authority hence risk independence and objectivity.
- iii.) In case of joint evaluations with teams or other stakeholders, building consensus can be costly and time consuming process.
- iv.) A consultant being external to the project or program may miss important information and facts necessary to make reliable and credible reports and recommendation needed to improve the project or program.
- v.) The process of procuring evaluation consultants can consume significant resources in terms of personnel, time and money but with no guarantee of successful results.
- vi.) Whereas consultants are professionals expected to have a high degree of confidentiality and trust, engaging them exposes them to some data and information that may be considered highly confidential which has some degree of risk to the project or program in case of breach.
- vii.) Consultancy is performed by individual professional and quality in the services is heavily relies on these individuals who keep moving from one organization or firm of consultants to another making it difficult to guarantee quality and consistence in the work of consultants especially multiyear consultancies.
- viii.) Failure to correctly define the problem and evaluation question often leads to wrong or inaccurate data collection, misdiagnosis and wrong prescription leading to failure of the project or program.
- ix.) There is often lack of a theory of change for most projects which leaves a significant gap in design aspects of the project structure impacting negatively on ability to monitor, evaluate and report on project performance.

11.0. CONCLUSION

Evaluation is systematic, and objective analysis and assessment of the projects, programs, partnerships and procedures with respect to a given project or program. The process of evaluation provides the means to reflect and focus on performance and progress and the process involves assessment of policies and programs with the objective of improving learning and performance. There are various stakeholders in evaluation who have different interests e.g. the project manager, funders, beneficiaries, professionals that should be met. Therefore, evaluation process should involve some stakeholder analysis. Evaluation can be done by internal or external evaluators or both depending on prevailing circumstances and requirements, but generally an evaluation should have truthfulness, credibility (beauty), and justice as standards for the process. External evaluation is usually done by consultants. Evaluations should be guided by terms of reference.

Consultants play an important role in project evaluation and their use brings desired independence and professionalism in project evaluation. Terms of reference for monitoring evaluation provide an overall overview in terms of requirements and expectations of the evaluation undertaking. The terms of reference provide the objectives, roles, and responsibilities of the evaluator, the commissioner's expectations, other stakeholders and interests, and resources available for evaluation exercise. Terms of references are effective if they fulfill these functions. Terms of reference specify the working relationship between the evaluation and an external consultant or team of consultants, clarify scope, responsibilities, schedules, and budgets needed in the evaluation. Evaluators

should take care of the stakeholder interests and adequately address them during evaluation. An evaluation process should be followed by an objective evaluation report which will facilitate accountability, lessons learnt and improvement of the project or program being evaluated. The evaluators' reports should be relevant, credible and verifiable. Recommendations by the consultant should be presented in a manner that is clear, concise and in order of priority or weight. Recommendations made should be supported by specific findings from the evaluation. Evaluation is more successful in an environment of trust and positive working relationship between evaluators or consultants and commissioners as well as other stakeholders. The integrity of the consultants is critical, so ethics should be a guiding principle and consultants should stick to ethical standards and requirement during evaluation. Recommendations given should action-oriented, specific, practical, and indicate responsibility for implementation. The suggested recommendations should be implementable and their consequences should be declared by the evaluator.

12.0. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION CONSULTANCY

There are several enablers of successful evaluation and consultancy. According to Lahey (2015); Mitchel (1994) the following factors acts can enhance performance of consultants;

i.) **Build Trust**

When stakeholders trust one another clients or their employees don't hold back information needed for fair evaluation.

ii.) **Maintain confidentiality within the organization.**

The risk of information 'leaks' is always greater at the client end of the relationship than the consultant's, therefore it is recommended to treat consultants with courtesy.

iii.) **Consultants should be paid well and in time.**

Late payment destroys client-consultancy relationship. Consultants in general work on small margins and hence should be facilitated. Consultants may develop resentment of late fee payers leading to poor performance of the evaluation by consultants.

iv.) **Develop partnership between consultant and commissioner/client**

The consultant and the commissioner should work together and clearly define the problem and evaluation question for successful evaluation and correct results of evaluation.

v.) **Provide adequate funding for evaluation and consultancy**

Funding for evaluation of projects and programs whether conducted or by external technical experts- should be built into budgeting and costing associated with project activities.

vi.) **Carefully develop terms of reference**

Terms of reference (ToR) should be carefully crafted with the relevant objective and evaluation question but should always give room for changes whenever necessary or when fundamentals change during the process.

vii.) **Hire the best consultant possible**

Successful evaluation should be done by a qualified consultant properly source

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