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| **ADDITIONAL RESOURCE SUMMARY: PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA RECOMMENDATIONS** | |
| Purpose | This tool is used to determine which projects should be evaluated, under which circumstances, and who should conduct the evaluation. |
| Information Sources | **Information the project team should have in order to determine if/how to conduct an evaluation:**   * LWR’s Core Program Area Strategies * M&E Proposal Checklist   **Guidance for Evaluation**:   * ARC-CRS Preparing for an Evaluation (P. 10) * ARC-CRS Managing an Evaluation (P. 12) * Donor M&E Requirements (for restricted projects) |
| Who | The person leading the M&E planning during proposal development. |
| When | Evaluations should be planned into the project during the proposal, therefore this document should be used by the M&E Lead during the proposal development to assist in determining if an evaluation should be conducted and if so, what type. |
| Requirements | All projects should have some kind of evaluative process. If an external evaluation is not needed, the project team should nonetheless determine the exact evaluative process that will take place during the project and plan accordingly for the tasks it will require during the M&E Planning processes. |
| Tips | Any evaluative process should seek to include as many of the project stakeholders as possible, in particular the project participants. Planning for the evaluative process should take into consideration LWR’s Criteria for Evaluation Participation outlined in Section 2 of this document. |

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| 1. GENERAL GUIDELINES |

1. LWR evaluations can be done INTERNALLY (by the LWR staff/project teams), INTRA-ORGANIZATIONALLY (by LWR staff from other countries or regions), or EXTERNALLY (by an evaluation consultant). Regardless of who evaluates the project, all evaluations (or evaluative processes) should follow the same standards for objectivity and methodological rigor.
   * Internal: *Is when partner or LWR staff conduct the evaluation using a pre-planned methodology*. The advantages of an internal evaluation include that the person will know the organization and the project, will understand organizational behavior and attitudes, will know the constraints of the project, and will cost less. However the disadvantages include that his/her objectivity may be questionable, it may be difficult to avoid bias, and he/she may not be dedicated solely to the evaluation.
   * Intra-organizational*: Is when LWR project staff from a country or region outside of that which the project was implemented conducts the evaluation.* This method still gives an internal perspective as s/he will be aware of LWR’s projects and operations, but will not be directly linked to that project. This will help with objectivity and will allow him/her to have more insights about the project that will be useful to LWR. The disadvantage of this method is that many LWR staff may not have time to dedicate to conducting an evaluation, it is more costly than an internal evaluation, and requires significant advanced planning.

* External[[1]](#footnote-1): *Is when someone external to the project and organization is hired to conduct the evaluation.* The advantages of an external evaluation include more objectivity, no organizational bias, fresh perspective, training in evaluation. The disadvantages include that he/she may not know the organization, may not know of constraints affecting recommendations, may miss out on important insights, could be expensive, and requires a lot of staff time to manage the consultants and evaluation process.

1. **All projects should include some kind of evaluation process**, whether formal or informal, internal, external or intra-organizational.

* Most projects benefit from an evaluation process at the end of the project. Mid-term evaluations are helpful for projects of 3 or more years.

1. **Projects that are implemented with RESTRICTED funding must follow the donor’s requirements**. Identify these requirements and guidelines during the development of project proposal (*Initial M&E Plan)* and take them into consideration when completing the Detailed M&E Plan*.* This will ensure that monitoring, reporting, and data collection contribute to meeting the donor’s evaluation requirements.

* If the donor does not require an evaluation, then follow the LWR recommendations outlined below.
  + - * Make sure to document the selected evaluation method with justification, confirm it with the donor, and document and file the donor’s confirmation in the project files.
      * If the donor requirements are not clear, consult the LWR M&E Unit or the NBD proposal lead for advice during the proposal phase.

1. During the design stage for UNRESTRICTED projects, and based on each region’s specific processes, the partner, LWR country staff, and/or regional M&E manager should make recommendations for which evaluative process they suggest for each project. The following criteria can be used as reference when determining if the project should be evaluated internally, externally, or intra-organizationally.

**INTERNAL EVALUATIONS:**

* The default evaluation for projects should be internal evaluations, unless there is specific justification for an external or intra-organizational evaluation.
* Remember, internal evaluations can utilize everything from participatory reflections with stakeholders to formal and rigorous evaluation methodologies. An internal evaluation should not mean that a less rigorous method will be used.
  + The evaluation methodology needs to clearly articulate that it was conducted internally so those who read and/or use the results understand the strengths and shortcomings (such as evaluator bias) of the evaluation.

**EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS:**

* Are used when required by donors.
* Can be used for new or innovative projects that seek to document new approaches and lessons learned.
* Can be used for projects designed to leverage LWR funding for larger restricted awards.
* Can be used for projects identified as having the potential to strengthen the evidence of success of LWR’s programming in its priority sectors.
* Can be used to evaluate projects that are part of initiatives across regions (ex. coffee or cocoa initiatives)
* Can be used for projects that partners identify as being strategic for their mission.
  + The purpose and use for an external evaluation should be clearly articulated using the Evaluation Use Plan

**INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATIONS:**

* Can be used to encourage cross regional sharing and learning.
  + It should take advantage of country program staff (outside of the country where the project is implemented) that have expertise in a sector or field related to the project that will be evaluated.

1. Annual or other periodic project review can be conducted, but these should be internal exercises that build upon the analysis completed in Project Progress Reports.

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| 2. LWR’S CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION PARTICIPATION |

*The level of stakeholder participation will greatly affect the methodological design of the evaluation.*

LWR places significant emphasis on working through partners. The reasons for this are various, ranging from the value LWR places in the dignity of all people; the value placed on partnerships because of the way they transform us and partners; the greater sustainability that comes from deep investment by participants; the innovation that comes from working with local partners who understand how to best influence the local context; and the efficiency of working through others. In general, for LWR, partnership is a matter of best practice.

There are also good reasons to conduct evaluations that are participatory, particularly during the annual and/or mid-term evaluation. Participation by project participants generates more ownership for the project effort on the part of participants which translates into greater sustainability and greater overall dignity because participants are learning and making realizations from their evaluation experience.

Some variations of participation are highlighted in the chart below.

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| **Continuum of Participation** | |
| **Some variations:** | Ask people for their views, perhaps through interviews or discussion groups |
| Involve beneficiaries in the design of the evaluation, for example, ask them to help define key questions and criteria for evaluation |
| Involve beneficiaries in the design, and also in carrying out parts of the evaluation, for instance doing interviews |
| Hand over responsibility for the evaluation to the beneficiaries |

The degree of participation will vary depending on:

* Whether it is a mid-term, annual or final evaluation
* The evaluation questions (i.e. some participants won’t be able to answer some questions.)
* The project evaluation objectives (i.e. the project designer may place a larger emphasis on learning than accountability and vice versa).

1. For more details on internal vs. external evaluations see Box 1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Insiders Versus Outsiders in Planning, Monitoring, Review, or Evaluation in ARC-CRS Preparing for an Evaluation P. 10 and Table 4: Tradeoffs between Internal and External Evaluators in ARC-CRS Managing an Evaluation P. 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)