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| **ADDITIONAL RESOURCE SUMMARY: EVALUATION QUESTION GUIDANCE** |
| Purpose | Evaluation questions are developed for the following purposes:* Ensure that all project stakeholders have an opportunity to express what they would like to learn from the evaluation.
* Determine evaluation priorities and objectives.
* Focus the evaluation to ensure that it is feasible to collect the information required to fully answer the questions.
* Ensure that the evaluator complies with the Terms of Reference (ToR), through verification that each question in the ToR has been adequately answered.
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| Information Sources | **Information from Project Design and Planning:*** Project stakeholders, in particular project participants
* Past evaluations of similar projects
* Project proposal
* Project Design Workbook

**Information from Project Implementation:*** Progress Reports
* Visits with the target population
* Baseline

Guidance Documents:* OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria
* ALNAP Evaluating Humanitarian Action using the OECD-DAC Criteria
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| Who | The program manager or LWR PM works in a participative manner with the target population, partner staff and evaluator to establish the project evaluation questions.  |
| When | * Ensure that all project stakeholders have an opportunity to express what they would like to learn from the evaluation.
	+ A first draft of evaluation questions can be completed during the PLANNING stages (Detailed M&E Plan) and refined as the project progresses.
* Determine evaluation priorities and objectives.
* Focus the evaluation to ensure that it is feasible to collect the information required to fully answer the questions.
* Ensure that the evaluator complies with the ToR, through verification that each question in the ToR has been adequately answered.
	+ For most projects, finalizing the evaluation questions is the first step in completing the Evaluation ToR. The evaluation objectives can be used to help create relevant and specific evaluation questions or the questions may assist in more clearly defining the evaluation objectives. Evaluation questions are decided early on in the process and inform the development of the methodology.
	+ Evaluation questions should be finalized and included in the Evaluation ToR. The list of questions will be reviewed and revised in a collaborative process with the evaluation consultant and a final list will be agreed upon with all stakeholders.
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| Requirements | **REQUIREMENTS**:* This resource is not required.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:*** The process of choosing evaluation questions consists of two stages: brainstorming the possible evaluation questions from various sources and later, selecting the most critical questions that can feasibly be answered.
* The evaluation team (evaluation manager, partner, LWR PM and evaluator) will select from a comprehensive list (possibly generated through a brainstorming process) of the most critical questions that can be feasibly addressed.
* If the process that you are currently using meets your needs, there is no need to make adjustments. However if you would like more guidance to inform your current process, this section provides guidance for identifying and selecting evaluation questions.
* Guidance is also provided to evaluation managers and the evaluation team, through the use of an evaluation question selection matrix (below), for choosing the most relevant evaluation questions.
* The evaluator then has the obligation to answer each question. If it is not possible to answer all of them, an explanation should be included as an annex to the evaluation report.
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| Tips | * The evaluation questions are an important way to determine if the evaluator fulfills the requirements outlined in the Evaluation ToR.
	+ The evaluation questions should be linked directly to the objectives of the evaluation.
	+ All evaluation questions should be reviewed at each draft of the evaluation report and verified to ensure that the evaluation report properly answers each question. If a question is not answered, inform the evaluator so that s/he can either provide an explanation or agree to provide a more complete answer to the question.
* Evaluations should ask both what happened and why it happened.
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| 1. BRAINSTORMING EVALUATION QUESTIONS |

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is done to be sure we include all the various perspectives and dimensions of the project. Below are possible criteria for choosing evaluation questions. However, depending on the nature of the project and the evaluation, the evaluation team will need to create additional, project-specific criteria to the criteria provided here. For example, an evaluation after the first year could have different criteria than a final evaluation.

In addition to questions that come from the sources listed in the Additional Resource Summary, also consider assessing the Chart of Suggested Evaluation Questions in Table 1. These suggested questions can serve as a guide but the questions chosen by the partner, country teams and evaluator should be project specific.

* + If it is a mid-term/annual evaluation the questions will focus more on the effectiveness of the project so far and determine which changes need to be made.
	+ If it is a final evaluation the questions will also look at effectiveness, but will also seek to know the outcomes of the project and draw conclusions about lessons learned.

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| **Table 1.**  | **Chart of Suggested Evaluation Questions** |
| **Suggested Criteria (OECD-DAC Criteria)** [[1]](#footnote-2) | **Possible Evaluation Questions** |
| **Relevance/Appropriateness:** assesses whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policy). Appropriateness is the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability and cost-effectiveness accordingly.[[2]](#footnote-3) | * Did the project participants believe the project’s activities were appropriate?
* Did the project participants believe that the results achieved in the project were relevant in improving their overall well-being?
* Do the project participants believe that the project responded well to their needs?
* What is the project’s relevance to the social, economic, political and natural Context in which it is operating?
* What is the project’s relevance to LWR’s core program strategies (when/if identified)?
* What is the project’s relevance to LWR’s Strategic Objectives?
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| **Efficiency:** measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving an output to see whether the most efficient approach has been used. | * Were the activities chosen in the project those that used the least resources to achieve the most impactful results? If not, what other activities would have been more efficient in achieving those results?
* Was the project implemented precisely as the design specified? Were there deviations in implementation of the project design? If there were deviations, were they intentionally undertaken by the project team to achieve improved results?
* Did the project implementation team have sufficient management capacity to achieve project outcomes?
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| **Effectiveness:** measures the extent to which an activity achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs. Implicit within the criterion of effectiveness is timeliness. | * How well did the project meet its indicator targets?
* Did the project achieve the Outcomes set out in the logframe of the project proposal?
* How effective was the process of accountability to all stakeholders, especially project participants?
* Was the project effective in incorporating the most appropriate stakeholder participation to achieve the project’s results?
* To what extent does LWR’s accompaniment approach contribute to project effectiveness?
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| **Impact:** assesses the wider effects of the project – social, economic, technical, and environmental – on individuals, gender- and age-groups, communities and institutions. Impacts can be intended and unintended, positive and negative, macro (sector) and micro (household). | * What were the unintended Outcomes of the project? (positive and negative)
* Did the project achieve its Outcomes? If not, was the project impact in the eyes of the project participants?
* What happened in the target population as a result of achieving the Outcomes?
* What are the perspectives of project participants on the immediate and intermediate effects? Quotes provide important evidence of participant perspectives.
* What are the perspectives of partner staff on the immediate and intermediate effects? Quotes provide important evidence of partner perspectives.
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| **Sustainability:** assesses the long term effects the project may have within the target population. This aspect examines if the impacts identified are temporary or if they may be sustained in the longer term. | * How did the nature and quality of relationships and partnerships change?
* What made the project sustainable? (i.e. structural changes, commitment by participants to continue activities or benefits, new resources, external stakeholder support, enabling policy environment?)
* What are some stories that document shifts in power relationships (male-female, LWR-Partner, NGO-community members, government-community, buyers-sellers etc.) as a result of project participation?
* What are the perspectives of project participants on the sustainability of the outcomes? Quotes provide important evidence of participant perspectives.
* What are the perspectives of partner staff on the sustainability of the Outcomes? Quotes provide important evidence of partner perspectives.
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| **Cross Cutting Themes/Additional Evaluation Areas**  | * Did the project perform a gender analysis? How effectively did the project implement gender-based programming?
* What are other important expected results of the project? (These results should be made explicit during the project design so that an evaluation can fairly assess them.)
	+ Empowerment?
	+ Risk management?
	+ Integration of approaches? Capacity building of partner organization/CBO?
	+ Participation of local government?
	+ Coordination with peer organizations/CBOs?
	+ Coordination between field and HQ?
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| 2. SELECTING EVALUATION QUESTIONS |

After completing the brainstorming process, it is important to apply the following questions to each of the proposed evaluation questions. They will ensure the relevance of the questions, thus reducing the time needed to select the final set of questions. These questions elaborate on the questions listed in the Evaluation Question Selection Matrix below.

**1. *Who would use the information? Who wants to know? Who will be upset if this evaluation question is dropped?***Evaluate the importance of the question based on a balance of interests among the partner, LWR, the participants and other stakeholders and how they would use the information. Is this something that the local government office would like to add to its statistical database? How useful is the question to participants, the partner and LWR?

* The Evaluation Use Matrix can help answer who are the key evaluation stakeholders and how they could use the results from the evaluation.

**2**. ***Would an answer to the question provide information that is already available? Or would the answer tell us something new?***Do we already know the answer through reports and field visits?

***3. Is it important in this case to validate existing data?*** Sometimes the evaluation serves as an opportunity to validate information collected throughout the project’s implementation.

***4. Would the answer to the question yield important information that would influence future decision making?***Important questions are those whose answers will help provide information that might inform decision-making. They may address areas that LWR, the partner or the participants consider problematic and would like to prioritize. In particular, priority should be given to critical questions of continuing importance (PAZ, sector strategy questions). Would the answer to this question be nice to know? Or would it be something we must know?

**5. *Would the scope or comprehensiveness of the evaluation be seriously limited if this question were dropped?***If so, keep it if possible. On the other hand the evaluator, PM, partner and other stakeholders should consciously consider the overall breadth and depth of evaluation questions.

**6. *Is it feasible to answer this question, given available financial and human resources, time, methods and technology?*** Resources may limit how many important questions can be answered.

**EVALUATION QUESTION SELECTION MATRIX**

The matrix below can help in selecting evaluation questions based on set criteria. The criteria are only a sample, so if the evaluation manager and the partner have additional criteria they find more appropriate to the project, they should use those criteria to make the selection. The number of questions should reflect the scope of the evaluation, or in some cases be used to help determine the scope of the evaluation. Too many questions without adequate time and resources can lead to superficial conclusions. A more exhaustive list of key evaluation questions can be included in the evaluation ToR, however, they should be reduced to the most relevant and most feasible questions during the finalization of the ToR with the selected evaluation team. The finalized questions will be documented as an annex to the Evaluation ToR. (See page 6 of the Evaluation ToR Guidance)

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| **Would the evaluation question…** | **Evaluation Questions** (Each number below represents the specific questions that are being considered. If it’s more useful, substitute key words from each question for the numbers provided below.) |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** |
| Be of interest to the partner, LWR, or other key stakeholders? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reduce present uncertainty? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Influence decision making by the partner, participants or LWR? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Be of long-term, not short-term interest? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Be critical to the evaluation’s scope if comprehensiveness is important?  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Be answerable in terms of |  |
| a. Financial and human resources? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| b. Time? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| c. Available methods and technology? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2010. *DAC Guidelines and Reference Series: Quality Standards for Development Evaluation*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. These definitions were borrowed directly from ALNAP-Overseas Development Institute. 2006. *Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC Criteria.* London. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)