



**MONITORING & EVALUATION**

# Preparing for an Evaluation

## Guidelines and Tools for Pre-Evaluation Planning

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by Della E. McMillan and  
Alice Willard



Since 1943, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has held the privilege of serving the poor and disadvantaged overseas. Without regard to race, creed, or nationality, CRS provides emergency relief in the wake of natural and manmade disasters. Through development projects in fields such as education, peace and justice, agriculture, microfinance, health and HIV/AIDS, CRS works to uphold human dignity and promote better standards of living. CRS also works throughout the United States to expand the knowledge and action of Catholics and others interested in issues of international peace and justice. Our programs and resources respond to the U.S. Bishops' call to live in solidarity—as one human family—across borders, over oceans, and through differences in language, culture and economic condition.

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# Contents

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- iv** Preface
- iv** Acknowledgements
- v** Acronyms
- 1** Executive Summary

## **Preparing for an Evaluation**

- 2** Pre-Evaluation Steps
  - 3** Step 1: Identify, Empower, and Mentor the Evaluation Manager
  - 4** Step 2: Clarify Donor and Organizational Guidance and Expectations
  - 7** Step 3: Draft the Evaluation SOW and Work Plan
  - 11** Step 4: Identify the Evaluation Team and Finalize the Scope of Work
  - 14** Step 5: Organize the Project Documentation
  - 15** Step 6: Organize Project Information
  - 22** Step 7: Plan the Evaluation Logistics
- 23** Scheduling Demands And Options
  - 23** Person Days Needed to Produce the Pre-Evaluation Outputs
  - 24** Scheduling Person Days: Intensive versus Extensive Pre-Evaluation
  - 25** Why Can't Pre-Evaluation Planning Be Part of the Evaluation?

**Tools & Resources Annexes**

- 30** Annex I References and Further Reading
- 33** Annex II GANTT Chart for Pre-Evaluation Planning
- 34** Annex III Bibliography Style Sheet
- 36** Annex IV Project Management and Administration
- 37** Annex V Institutional Impact
- 39** Annex VI Sample Table: Project-Sponsored Training
- 40** Annex VII Sample Table: Indicator Calculation Update
- 41** Annex VIII Sample Model Community/Activity Matrices
- 42** Annex IX Sample Pre-evaluation Logistics Checklist
- 44** Annex X Checklist of Evaluation Materials and Information for Evaluations
- 51** Annex XI Sample Evaluation Stakeholder Analysis
- 52** Annex XII Sample Evaluation Checklist for Pre-Planning

## Preface

Monitoring and evaluation are core responsibilities of the American Red Cross and CRS program managers and help ensure quality in our programming. *Preparing for an Evaluation* is the first in a series of M&E training and capacity-building modules that the American Red Cross and CRS have agreed to collaborate on under their respective Institutional Capacity Building Grants. These modules are designed to respond to field-identified needs for specific guidance and tools that did not appear to be available in existing publications. Although examples in the modules focus on Title II programming, the guidance and tools provided have value beyond the food-security realm.

Our intention in writing *Preparing for an Evaluation* is to provide readers with information that helps them get the most out of their program evaluation. This module focuses on what needs to be done before an evaluation to ensure that cost, confusion, and frustration are minimized for both field staff whose program is being evaluated and the external evaluator. It offers step-by-step guidance on the who, what, when, where, and how of preparing for an evaluation, with specific tools to organize information and for logistics that have proved useful in a number of settings.

Please send comments on or suggestions for this edition of *Preparing for an Evaluation* via e-mail to [m&efeedback@crs.org](mailto:m&efeedback@crs.org).

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## Acronyms

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>AIDS</b>    | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome                   |
| <b>BHR</b>     | Bureau for Humanitarian Response                      |
| <b>CADECOM</b> | Catholic Development Commission in Malawi             |
| <b>CRS</b>     | Catholic Relief Services                              |
| <b>DAP</b>     | Development assistance program                        |
| <b>DIP</b>     | Detailed implementation plan                          |
| <b>DSU</b>     | DAP Support Unit (comprised of CADECOM and CRS staff) |
| <b>EM</b>      | Evaluation management team                            |
| <b>HQ</b>      | Headquarters  |
| <b>M&amp;E</b> | Monitoring and evaluation                             |
| <b>NGO</b>     | Nongovernmental organization                          |
| <b>PVC</b>     | Private and Voluntary Cooperation                     |
| <b>PVO</b>     | Private voluntary organization                        |
| <b>SOW</b>     | Scope of work   |
| <b>USAID</b>   | United States Agency for International Development    |

## Executive Summary

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**Most donors are clear** about the critical role that evaluation plays in result-based development programming and the elements—indicators, management, finance, annual reports, and resource requests—that need to be considered in both mid-term and final evaluations. Despite these clear expectations, many project administrators are not prepared when it is time for an evaluation.

Based on their extensive experience with the evaluation of private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and bilateral- and multilateral-funded projects, the co-authors have outlined a seven-step process for preparing for an evaluation—pre-evaluation planning—as follows:

⇒ **Step 1: Identify and empower the evaluation manager**

⇒ **Step 2: Clarify donor and organizational guidance and expectations**

⇒ **Step 3: Draft the evaluation scope of work and work plan**

⇒ **Step 4 : Identify the evaluation team and finalize the scope of work**

⇒ **Step 5: Organize the project documentation**

⇒ **Step 6: Organize the project information**

⇒ **Step 7: Plan the evaluation logistics**

Section I describes each of the pre-evaluation steps in terms of:

- Why the project needs the planning step
- What needs to be produced during the planning step
- Who will produce it, where, and when
- How the steps will be accomplished through specific activities.

Section II estimates how much time key actors should allow for each step in an evaluation and presents four options for managing the activities. The annexes include references, tools, sample tables, and checklists.

## Pre-Evaluation Steps

This module outlines the steps involved in preparing for an evaluation of a development project or grant in a PVO.

**Evaluations are central to project planning and execution.** Projects are either in a state of preparing to be evaluated or are being evaluated for 20 to 25 percent of the project life cycle. Yet many project managers and technical staff do not have a clear idea of how to prepare for an evaluation.

This module outlines the steps involved in preparing for an evaluation of a development project or grant in a PVO (see table 1). It will be useful to individuals who manage and those who execute evaluations of both donor- and privately-funded projects. Both evaluation managers and individuals responsible for conducting evaluations (see table 2) must accomplish certain steps to do their jobs. The 7-step pre-evaluation process outlined in this module will facilitate the evaluation process.

Pre-evaluation steps (see table 1) must be in place before the evaluation starts. Some pre-evaluation steps are a normal part of a good project management system, while others are specific to the evaluation and simply help plan and run an evaluation more smoothly. Although many pre-evaluation steps can be done after the evaluation starts, this is not ideal because it:

- Increases the duration of the evaluation and, therefore, increases costs
- Decreases the speed with which an evaluation team can produce its final report
- Increases the likelihood of tensions and frustrations building with key partners and between the project staff and evaluation team.

**Table 1. The 7-Step Pre-Evaluation Process**

| Step | Activity  | Outputs            |                        |
|------|---|--------------------|------------------------|
|      |   | General Management | Specific to evaluation |
| 1    | Identify and empower the evaluation manager                 | Capacity Building  |                        |
| 2    | Clarify donor and organizational guidance and expectations  | X                  |                        |
| 3    | Draft the evaluation scope of work and work plan            |                    | X                      |
| 4    | Identify the evaluation team and finalize the scope of work | Capacity Building  | X                      |
| 5    | Organize the project documentation                          | X                  |                        |
| 6    | Organize the project information                            | X                  |                        |
| 7    | Plan the evaluation logistics                               |                    | X                      |



**Table 2. Project Staff Involved in Pre-Evaluation Process**

| Staff   | Definition  |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Evaluation Management Team</b>                            |   |
| Evaluation Manager (EM)*  | Internal person from country office (project or non-project related) who will manage the evaluation             |
| Evaluation Management Team                                      | Evaluation manager and any internal staff that are officially co-opted to backstop management of the evaluation |
| <b>2. Project Staff (Proj*)</b>                                 |   |
| Project Manager   | Manager of the project being evaluated  |
| Senior Project Technical Staff                                  | Senior technical staff supporting the project being evaluated   |
| <b>3. Management</b>  |   |
|   | Senior management at the country level responsible for the project being evaluated                              |
| <b>4. Headquarters and Regional Technical Advisors (HQReg*)</b> |   |
|   | Food for Peace, Child Survival, M&E Advisors, and so on   |

\*The abbreviations in this table identify each individual's participation in the GANTT Chart for Pre-Evaluation Planning (see [annex II](#)).

## Step 1: Identify, Empower, and Mentor the Evaluation Manager

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One of the most common challenges in PVO evaluations is the lack of clear internal responsibility for managing the evaluation.

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**One of the most common challenges** in PVO evaluations is the lack of clear internal responsibility for managing the evaluation. Many programs wait until they are drafting the scope of work (SOW) and the evaluation work plan (Step 3), or even organizing the project information (Step 6), to clearly establish internal leadership. Step 1 of the pre-evaluation process addresses this issue.

Evaluation managers are often—but not always—the project manager, the head of programming, or head of M&E for the PVO's country program. The evaluation manager needs a clear understanding of the process or a commitment to learning the process. The evaluation manager is responsible for ensuring that specific pre-evaluation products (core project documents, updated information on indicators, and so on) are presented in a timely manner. On a larger project, the project manager may be assisted by one or two others who are assigned responsibility for key functions in the pre-evaluation and evaluation process.

Working with regional and headquarters-based M&E specialists, senior country-level management must identify an in-country evaluation manager. In the process, the headquarters or regional M&E advisor (backstopped by the senior technical program advisor for this category of programming within the PVO) should identify any critical areas where the manager will need

additional support. This process will enable the headquarters and regional teams to identify the types of mentoring and backstopping the manager may need. Once an evaluation manager is clearly identified, this individual becomes the engine driving all other steps.

#### Step 1 Results:

- ✓ An in-country evaluation manager is formally identified and there is a clear understanding of the roles for all those working on the project evaluation.

## Step 2: Clarify Donor and Organizational Guidance and Expectations

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An evaluation manager's best source of information on donor expectations for an evaluation is the original guidance that was used to write the proposal.

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**Even experienced evaluation managers** and PVO country representatives need to be familiar with the donor's program-specific guidance for the projects being evaluated. If project staff members are not familiar with this guidance, they may design an evaluation and an evaluation SOW that overlooks a key agency requirement.

### Donor Guidance

As part of their standard guidance for proposal writing, most donors provide a brief explanation of what they expect in a mid-term or final evaluation as well as for routine M&E (see [annex I](#)). Some grant categories require a final quantitative survey that is separate and distinct from the final external evaluation.<sup>1</sup> Other donors expect the evaluators to facilitate independent data collection to crosscheck the project's M&E system, but do not require an independent quantitative survey.

An evaluation manager's best source of information on donor expectations for an evaluation is the original guidance that was used to write the proposal.<sup>2</sup> Since donors may change their requirements and expectations, this original guidance should be compared with the current guidance, which is often available on the donor's Web site (see [annex I](#) for examples). A wise evaluation manager should always double check with the donor—either directly or indirectly through the headquarters or regional advisors who oversee programs within a PVO—to find out which elements are key and how to harmonize old and new requirements. Many donors require reviewing the SOW before the evaluation; this task should be worked into the timeframe.

1 Not all grants require independent surveys. Smaller development grants and emergency programs often expect the same team that conducts the evaluation to facilitate an independent verification of key project impacts. This is not the case on other grants such as USAID Title II or Child Survival grants, which require independent surveys that feed into the external evaluation.

2 This guidance is usually filed once the proposal is submitted in case it is needed to respond to donor requests for revision before final approval.



## Tools & Resources

### References and Further Reading

## Review the M&E plan in the Final Proposal and Donor-approved Revisions

Always review and keep a copy of the M&E plan in the approved project proposal and any formal proposal amendments. Be aware of all M&E commitments. If any major changes were approved, the evaluation manager should make a copy of all correspondence concerning the request for and approval of these changes. If the project developed a separate M&E Plan<sup>3</sup> or M&E manual for the project (or for specific sub-components, such as the baseline survey), the evaluation manager should include these in the guidance briefing book.

## Donor-sanctioned Guidance on Specific Evaluation Activities

Many donor agencies post helpful guidance on key evaluation functions such as sampling and the preparation of evaluation SOWs. Some of these are available on the technical support Web sites for particular grant categories (see [annex I](#)). The headquarters and regional PVO offices can contribute to this guidance by developing simple bibliographies that identify key references for the major types of programming that they supervise.

## Internal PVO Evaluation Guidance and Formatting Samples

Many PVO operations manuals discuss evaluation. Evaluation managers need to check with their regional and headquarters M&E and technical advisors to ensure that they are in compliance with the internal guidance. These manuals are highly useful to external evaluators because they often explain the PVO's evaluation philosophy and culture.<sup>4</sup> The final word on guidance should come from the donor, in the case of externally-funded projects, or from the PVO, in the case of internally-funded projects.

<sup>3</sup> Many grant agencies require recipients to submit a revised indicator tracking table once they have completed their baseline survey. Some projects submit a revised M&E plan as well.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Aubel (1993).

It is also important at this stage to include examples of how the report should be organized into subsections that correspond with the donor- and PVO-specific reporting requirements. This detailed format can be spelled out in the scope of work and will help project and non-PVO management as well as evaluation team members to harmonize their analysis and writing from the start. If each consultant on the team follows this format—or any revisions of the format that the team agrees to—and a standard agreed upon writing template—covering font size, subheading style, and so on—the team can avoid extensive revisions in the final editing of the report.

The four activities listed above are usually executed by the evaluation manager (see table 2).

### **Management Debriefing and Sensitization on Agency Guidance and the Evaluation**

Before moving to Step 3, however, it is critical that country-level senior managers who oversee the project be briefed on evaluation planning.<sup>5</sup> Their commitment to the pre-evaluation is critical to creating a productive, non-threatening environment for the evaluation. It is equally critical to ensure that there is good follow up on the evaluation's recommendations. In-country management must be on board early, which requires that they be informed so they can participate and show ownership of the scope of work (see Step 3, below).

The management briefing should discuss the evaluation requirements and the suggested timetable for moving through the other pre-evaluation steps (Steps 3 to 7). It is critical that headquarters ensure that the field staff have all the information that they need to prepare a solid scope of work. To provide this information, senior in-country management should summarize the meeting outcomes in a memo to the HQ and regional staff who oversee the project and ask for their feedback or comments.

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<sup>5</sup> This activity is similar to Phase I: Pre-planning Meetings (Evaluation Coordinating Group) in Aubel (1993, p. 1).

**Step 2 Results: The following tasks are completed:**

- ✓ **A briefing book<sup>6</sup> is developed** that organizes the donor guidance, examples of best practice, and internal guidance that evaluation managers, country level senior management, and the evaluation team use to design the evaluation, and
- ✓ **An in-country management debriefing is conducted** to review the briefing book and proposed pre-evaluation planning process.

## Step 3: Draft the Evaluation SOW and Work Plan

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Writing the SOW and getting it approved are time-consuming tasks that are frequently neglected and must be built into the pre-evaluation planning process.

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**Writing the SOW and getting it approved** are time-consuming tasks that are frequently neglected and must be built into the pre-evaluation planning process. A great deal of guidance already exists on how to write an evaluation SOW. Rather than repeat this information, this module simply provides the appropriate references for these resources (see below).

**The SOW should include:**

- A brief program overview—its objectives, activities, and any anticipated delays in the execution of key activities
- The evaluation objectives as defined by the agency guidance identified in Step 2
- Suggested technical expertise needed for the evaluation team, their individual responsibilities, and any physical constraints to consider in recruiting for these positions<sup>7</sup>
- Major issues and questions that the team should address
- A list of key documents and information the country team will provide
- The evaluation timetable
- The final report format.

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<sup>6</sup> Insert the date on the briefing book's contents page because it is a living document that is likely to evolve in the course of the evaluation. Also include a title page to identify the document when it is archived in the PVO's in-country library after the final evaluation or in the project documentation center after a mid-term evaluation. Only one hard copy of the guidance book per evaluation is needed. The team might also eventually want to prepare an electronic version to be archived on the program's hard drive and distributed to the external team.

<sup>7</sup> If field conditions are isolated and require overnight village stays under rigorous field conditions, it is useful to underscore this in the SOW so prospective evaluators can plan for this situation.



In the interest of efficiency, the evaluation manager usually prepares the first draft of the evaluation SOW and work plan. This draft is then reviewed by entire project team and partners. The final revision will not occur until Step 4, as it requires input from the external evaluation team leader. The roles and responsibility matrix ([annex II](#)) can help projects identify the key people who will be responsible for the major pre-evaluation activities.

Although donor guidance to help projects with formulating evaluation SOWs is useful, it is not without limitations. Often it provides limited guidance on issues such as partner capacity building and project management, identifying who will provide critical documents to the team and when, and in defining the role of national partners in data collection, analysis, and pre-evaluation preparation.

### Program-specific SOW Guidance

Given the demonstrated importance of SOWs, many donor-funded programs have developed program-specific SOW guidance (see Bonnard [2002] for Title II food security).<sup>8</sup> For more generic types of evaluations, it is useful to consult one of the standard management guides to evaluation.<sup>9</sup> Agency-specific guidance on SOWs should be classified in the guidance briefing book described in Step 2.

### Draft Evaluation SOW/Terms of Reference and Work Plan

Once the evaluation manager has the donor guidance and M&E Plan, detailed in Step 2, above, s/he should be able to write a draft SOW. The SOW should clearly identify the individuals responsible for providing the project documents and information described in Steps 5 and 6, and the timeline for completion of these documents and information.

A critical decision to be made at this stage is whether the PVO should identify someone from outside the organization to lead the evaluation or whether it should use an internal staff who is not funded by the project or by another program. Internal evaluators are associated with the PVO executing the project. External evaluators are individuals or organizations not associated with the PVO or the project.

<sup>8</sup> Although there is no equivalent of the Bonnard publication on either the Child Survival or the CORE Web sites, the Child Survival Web site includes detailed information on survey design and evaluation (see annex I).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Gosling and Edwards (2003, pp. 48–49, 51–53); UNICEF (2000, pp. 23–25, box IV-2: Suggested Contents of the Terms of Reference; and Patton (1997).

If the decision is made to use an external consultant, another decision has to be made about whether that person should be hired from within the region or the country or from the donor country. Many factors need to be considered including:

- (a) Donor expectations
- (b) The project team's experience
- (c) The kind of expertise available within the region and in the country.

Experience shows that there are definite pros and cons to both internal and external evaluators and that a well balanced combination of both internal and external consultants is usually ideal (see box 1).<sup>10</sup> Whether the evaluation team is internal or external, the project team still needs to conduct the pre-evaluation planning or add that to the evaluation team leader's defined responsibilities.

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<sup>10</sup> See also Mercy Corps (2004, pp. 42–45).

### Box 1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Insiders Versus Outsiders in Planning, Monitoring, Review, or Evaluation

|                           | Insiders   | Outsiders  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Who</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff, managers, and partners</li> <li>▪ Individuals and groups (e.g., mothers) affected by the work</li> <li>▪ Non-beneficiaries</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agency staff from an affiliated with another program</li> <li>▪ External consultants with expertise in a technical field, or in understanding a country or region</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Advantages</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Know the organization</li> <li>▪ Know the program</li> <li>▪ Understand organizational behavior and attitudes</li> <li>▪ Known to staff</li> <li>▪ Less threatening</li> <li>▪ Greater chance of adopting recommendations</li> <li>▪ Less expensive</li> <li>▪ Build internal planning and M&amp;E capability</li> <li>▪ Contribute to program capacity building</li> <li>▪ Familiar with context</li> <li>▪ Know constraints</li> <li>▪ Trained and experienced in conducting evaluations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Objective</li> <li>▪ No organizational bias</li> <li>▪ Fresh perspectives</li> <li>▪ Broad experience</li> <li>▪ More easily hired for longer periods of time</li> <li>▪ Can serve as an outside expert</li> <li>▪ Not part of power structure</li> <li>▪ Can bring in additional resources</li> <li>▪ Trained in evaluation</li> <li>▪ Experienced in other evaluations</li> <li>▪ Brings status to the evaluation</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Disadvantages</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Objectivity may be questioned</li> <li>▪ Organizational structure may constrain participation</li> <li>▪ Known to staff</li> <li>▪ Personal agenda may be questioned</li> <li>▪ May not accept the assumptions of the organization</li> <li>▪ Acceptability by outsiders (credibility)</li> <li>▪ Donors may require an external evaluator</li> <li>▪ May have difficulty avoiding bias</li> <li>▪ Not dedicated solely to the evaluation task (other duties and responsibilities impinge)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May not know the organizations</li> <li>▪ May not know of constraints affecting recommendations</li> <li>▪ May be perceived as an adversary</li> <li>▪ Could be expensive</li> <li>▪ May need time-consuming contract negotiations</li> <li>▪ Follow up on recommendations not always there</li> <li>▪ Operating in an unfamiliar environment</li> <li>▪ May leave the program</li> <li>▪ May miss out on important insights</li> </ul> |
| <b>When is it useful?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any rights-based program where rights holders have right to participate</li> <li>▪ Social development programs</li> <li>▪ Where an aim is to enable groups to develop organizational capacity</li> <li>▪ Where active participation of different groups is essential for success of the work</li> <li>▪ Where there is an opportunity to do so</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To gain a particular type of expertise when needed</li> <li>▪ To take a more objective view from someone who does not have vested interest in the program or organization</li> <li>▪ To gain a wider view of the project or program</li> <li>▪ To give a donor requested specific information about the program</li> </ul>  |

Source: Gosling and Edwards (2003, p. 23), modified by the authors to reflect internal PVO capacities.



## SOW and Work Plan Review with the Evaluation's Major Actors

Once the draft SOW and evaluation work plan have been completed, the evaluation manager needs to facilitate review of these documents by the full project team and major partners (e.g., national PVO partners, government, and donor representatives). For informed participation, the meeting should start with a review of the donor's basic guidance, regulations, and norms. A review of basic terms and concepts is also useful.<sup>11</sup> Some manuals recommend using an "evaluation stakeholder analysis" (see [annex XI](#)) to help orient the workshop discussions of information needs and the specific questions that they need to anticipate in the SOW. At this juncture, it is always important to review the differences between a mid-term and a final evaluation as well as basic concepts and terms such as impact and monitoring indicators. Such a review can also "minimize any anxieties about being 'judged' by an outsider" (Gosling and Edwards 2003, p. 21).

### Step 3 Results:

- ✓ A draft SOW for the entire evaluation and an evaluation work plan are produced that includes critical dates for producing and distributing the major pre-evaluation outputs (see [annex II](#), GANTT chart).

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Team leaders must also have the demonstrated ability to manage and synthesize the input and participation of the core evaluation team as well as various government, PVO partner, and donor teams in the evaluation.

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## Step 4: Identify the Evaluation Team and Finalize the Scope of Work

**Good team leaders** have demonstrated experience evaluating this type of project or experience with a similar type of project outside their own organization. This background is important to ensure that the evaluation meets donor expectations.

Team leaders must also have the demonstrated ability to manage and synthesize the input and participation of the core evaluation team as well as various government, PVO partner, and donor teams in the evaluation. Each of these individuals or groups has a different mission goal or agenda. The team leader's job is to structure the participation of these different individuals so that each core team member can satisfy some of their personal goals for participation while still working toward the common goal of a constructive evaluation. Good communication skills—both verbal and written—are essential.

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<sup>11</sup> Other important concepts include the difference between process/monitoring and impact indicators (Mercy Corps 2004, pp. 19–22, 45).



The task of identifying the specific qualifications needed in the team leader and core evaluation team members is normally carried out during Step 3 as part of the development of the SOW. The PVO's HQ and regional M&E specialists and senior in-country management should cooperate to choose the team leader. The evaluation checklists and evaluation stakeholder analysis are useful tools for orienting this preparation process (see [annexes XI](#), and [XII](#)).

## Identify a Pool of Suitable Candidates

The process of identifying—and hiring, when the candidates are from outside the organization—the team leader starts with networking to identify a pool of appropriate candidates for the team leader and technical specialist positions. The best information sources are usually HQ and regional offices and other PVOs that execute similar projects in the same country.

Once candidates are identified, they should be sent the draft SOW and asked to submit a resume. Ask for a writing sample as well. If they do not provide a trusted source for a referral or reference, always verify their role on an assignment if they were not the lead author/team leader.

## Interview and Select the Evaluation Team Leader

Many evaluation guides offer practical tips for interviewing candidates for the team leader position<sup>12</sup> and for managing consultants.<sup>13</sup> Interviewing is usually done by the HQ or regional office for international external candidates and by the national PVO office for national candidates. If the candidates are not familiar with the type of project to be evaluated, they must be willing to learn what they need to perform the task. A good team leader will be results-oriented and focused on management objectives and how the evaluation results will be used.

Too much emphasis on methodology—in particular quantitative methodologies—may mean that the candidate would be better suited to design and execute an evaluation survey. Also, note the candidate's travel schedule and make sure s/he will have enough time to complete the assignment, especially writing the draft evaluation report in-country for review prior to the his/her departure. Asking questions is a sign of interest and dedication to understanding the project's needs and donor requirements.

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<sup>12</sup> Many project evaluations include only one external evaluator who is usually the evaluation team leader. Although a large evaluation may include several external and internal consultants, the team leader's position is the most critical since s/he is responsible for writing the final report.

<sup>13</sup> See Gosling and Edwards (2003, pp. 262–73).

## Finalize the Evaluation SOW

Once the final candidate for the evaluation team leader position has been selected, the evaluation manager should work with the newly hired/seconded team leader to review and revise the draft SOW that was prepared in Step 3. Circulate the revised SOW to any HQ, regional, or national donor representatives who will be interviewed and/or who will review the final product, before the SOW is finalized. Be careful, however, before adding new questions or topics to the official SOW that may add unnecessarily complications. Never forget that donor staff may not be familiar with the original versus revised donor guidance, so it is always wise to attach the donor guidance to the SOW.

## Finalize the SOW for Evaluation Team Members and Hire/Second Other Team Members

Most evaluations use the main evaluation SOW as the basis for contracting the external evaluators or budgeting the time of any internal staff. Some team leaders like to develop short, one-page job outlines (e.g., an individual's SOW) for each internal and external position on the team, including any government or donor officials that participate. This is done to ensure that each person is clear about his/her role and the format and deadlines of any written deliverables to be produced. For internal staff, this provides a formal mechanism for ensuring that senior managers shift their responsibilities so that they have sufficient time to complete their evaluation work properly —i.e., that their participation on the team is not just another add-on to their existing duties.

Both the team and the individual SOWs should clearly express the requirement that the evaluation team members report to the evaluation team leader, not to the evaluation manager or senior in-country management. Failure to clarify this chain of command from the start can lead to confusion in the field and can affect team synergy.

### Step 4 Result:

- ✓ The internal or external team leader, as described by the evaluation manager in the SOW—with the program team's input—is hired or seconded<sup>14</sup> (if s/he is internal) and the evaluation SOW is finalized (Gosling and Edwards 2003, pp. 20-21; Mattesich 2003, pp. 63).

<sup>14</sup> *Seconded* are evaluation team members who are affiliated with the PVO but outside the project and are seconded (lent) to the evaluation team.

## Step 5: Organize the Project Documentation

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**If the documentation is well organized, the evaluation team can start work more quickly.**

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**One of the best indicators** of a project's management process and efficiency—two areas that most evaluations consider—is the project's published reports. Participants know this but may not have had time to organize the project documents. It is common for the evaluator to arrive and find a box of project documents in the evaluation manager's office or to discover that documents have been shipped to the team leader ahead of time. Evaluators only need to know that these materials exist. They do not need, nor do they want, to see or read every single document.

If there is not a project documentation center with clearly labeled boxes for specific categories of documents, the pre-evaluation process is an excellent opportunity to create such a center. The technology for a basic documentation center is not complicated (e.g., box files), but should not be delegated to a secretary. This step requires a professional staff member to categorize the information effectively.

If the documentation is well organized, the evaluation team can start work more quickly. If it is not organized, the evaluators will waste time determining what documents they need, and the project staff will also waste time trying to compile these documents

### Project Bibliography

There are two steps for building a solid bibliography—under the project manager's supervision:

1. The project manager should work with the M&E specialist to develop a list of core project documents by document category (see box 2).<sup>15</sup>
2. The project manager should ask all technical supervisors to provide a list of their technical reports, training manuals, and any other reports from major partners.

To streamline the documentation process, provide each person who is responsible for a section of the bibliography with a standard bibliography format—author, title, publication year and place, and publisher (see [annex III](#)) and examples of actual bibliographic references using this format before they begin working on the bibliography. Emphasize that following this format, even if it seems to provide obvious information, will save time.

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<sup>15</sup> Sample categories include: Project Proposal; Letters of Transfer and any Amendments; Annual, Quarterly, and Monthly Project Reports (on the whole project); M&E Documents (Plans, Training Manuals, and so on); Mid-term Surveys and Evaluation Reports; Final Surveys and Evaluation Reports; NGO and Donor Supervision Reports; Other Relevant Project Documents; Relevant Partner Reports/Documents.

**Tools & Resources****Bibliography Style Sheet**

One person on the team should be given the task of developing a bibliography that is divided by category (i.e., not simply alphabetized) and ensure that everyone follows the standard bibliographic format.

## Develop a Core Documentation Briefing Book

The evaluation management team should produce a core documentation briefing book for each evaluation team member. The briefing book should include only the most important documents that the entire team needs to consider (e.g., the approved proposal, any official amendments to the proposal, annual reports, any relevant surveys or previous evaluation reports) (see box 2, below). One section should include a dated version of the project bibliography. Another section should be labeled “logistics and team SOW” and include a list of key telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and office addresses as well as the final SOW.

**Step 5 Results:**

- ✓ A core documentation briefing book is produced that includes a comprehensive project bibliography.
- ✓ An organized system for project documentation or explanation of an existing project documentation center is developed.

## Step 6: Organize Project Information

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Talk with the prospective evaluator about what types of summary information they need and present it in a project activity briefing book.

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**Most projects have annual figures** on key tasks such as training and outreach as well as multiple reports that describe different aspects of the project's administration, financial systems, and key partnerships. An ambitious evaluator may try to bring this information together into simple summary tables that describe the evolution of the project's organization and activities over time. However, it is not realistic to expect the evaluator to do this for each major subcomponent for several reasons. First, they do not have the time. Second, staff may not be available to assist the process during the time when the consultant is available.

**A project activity briefing book:** A better strategy is to talk with the prospective evaluator about what types of summary information they need and to present it in a project activity briefing book.<sup>16</sup> A project activity briefing book should include separate sections on the following (see box 2, below):

- Project administrative history and organization
- Financial systems
- Project M&E systems and indicator updates
- The project's technical components
- Community/activity matrices
- Maps
- A table of contents identified by date completed.

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<sup>16</sup> Africare developed this model over a five-year period based on its experience with the mid-term evaluations of its Title II food security programs in Chad, Mali, Niger, and Uganda, and final evaluations in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Uganda.

## Box 2. Pre-evaluation Documentation for the Final Evaluation of the CRS/Malawi USAID Title II-funded Development Assistance Program, 2004

|  |
|--|
| <p>Project Bibliography and Documentation System<br/>(in numbered boxes and folders)</p>   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preplanning Exercises             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1. Vulnerability Mapping of Zones</li> <li>1.2. Commissioned Technical Background Papers</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. CADECOM(Catholic Development Commission in Malawi) Strategic Planning Exercises and Capacity Assessments and Existing/Ongoing projects that the Development Assistance Proposal (DAP) followed and Memoranda of Understanding</li> <li>3. RRA/PRA—Pre-planning Studies</li> <li>4. Regional and headquarters, and USAID Supervision/Trip Reports</li> <li>5. DAP, Review and Inception Exercises, and Transfer Authorizations (TAs)</li> <li>6. Baseline Surveys</li> <li>7. Monitoring and Evaluation Documents including Training Manuals</li> <li>8. Mid-term and Final Evaluations including Final Evaluation Survey</li> <li>9. CRS/CADECOM Joint Training Exercises for DAP Support Unit and CADECOM Staff</li> <li>10. CADECOM/CRS Partnership Collaboration Documents</li> <li>11. Terms of Reference for and Minutes of the DAP Advisory Board Meetings</li> <li>12. Key Technical Partners (Memoranda of Understanding, special reports on partnership [not documented in proceedings of partnership meetings in section 14 or 10])</li> <li>13. USAID Strategy Papers for Malawi</li> <li>14. Minutes of Quarterly Review Meetings with Major Partners</li> <li>15. M&amp;E Reports and Training Materials for the Project and the Country Programme</li> <li>16. M&amp;E Guidance (USAID Title II)</li> <li>17. General Documents on CRS Activities in the Country</li> <li>18. Quarterly Reports</li> <li>19. Special Technical Reports (including surveys), Planning Documents, Surveys: Agriculture</li> <li>20. Special Technical Reports (including surveys), Planning Documents, Surveys: M&amp;E</li> <li>21. Special Technical Reports (including surveys), Planning Documents: Safety Net</li> <li>22. Special Technical Reports (including surveys), Planning Documents: Health</li> </ol> |
| <p>Core Documentation Briefing Book</p>  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Table of Contents</li> <li>2. DAP Approved Proposal</li> <li>3. Baseline Survey Report</li> <li>4. Annual Reports to USAID (Revised M&amp;E plan was attached to the first Report)</li> <li>5. Mid-term Evaluation Final Report</li> <li>6. Mid-term Evaluation Recommendations Summary (separate from report)</li> <li>7. Final Survey Report</li> <li>8. Project Bibliography</li> <li>9. Scope of Work for the Evaluation</li> </ol>  |



## Document the Project's Administrative History and Organization

A **project chronology** is a useful tool to help project planners understand and explain the major factors that affected the project's evolution. It is especially useful if the management staffing has changed or if there have been major changes in the project organization (see [annex IV](#)).

**Staffing patterns and turnover** need to be noted. Evaluators need to know when staff were hired for key positions and when they left. This can either be combined with the project chronology or presented in a separate table (see [annex IV](#)).

A **summary of funding data on training events** is needed. Most development projects spend a high percentage of their funds on training staff and beneficiaries. The evaluators need summary data on this funding, from the project beginning to the most recent expenses. Care must be taken to describe the training for the different levels of major actors. Major actors include the PVO that is coordinating the project and the PVO national partners, which tend to conduct most American Red Cross and CRS-funded programs, and government partners at different levels (see [annex V](#)). Staff who are trained include: high-level administrators and senior non-project staff that oversee the projects but do not bear direct responsibility for execution; managers and supervisors with direct responsibility for key activities; and extension staff and beneficiaries. Even the beneficiary categories can be divided into traditional and group leaders and by gender and age, if these categories are relevant to the project. Additional information that can be helpful in describing how participants are trained, such as training manuals and pre- or post-tests, should also be organized. Keep a list noting where this information is located in the project files or documentation center.

**Document partner coordination and executive board meetings.** Many projects pride themselves on their strong collaboration with national partners. However, these projects must document how they have managed this collaboration, what types of collaboration are taking place, and what, if any, impact this collaboration has had on the partner's internal capacity. The project documentation center should include boxes or files that contain the hard copy of all meeting announcements or proceedings of partnership coordination and executive board meetings. Summary tables for meetings that present the dates, agenda, and attendees from different partners are also very useful (see [annex VI](#)).

**Document institutional capacity building.** If one of the project's goals is to build the institutional capacity of one or more national partners (as is often the case with American Red Cross and CRS projects), the team members need to



determine how they can document whether this type of capacity-building has taken place. A good rule of thumb is to consider the following questions:

- What type of information is needed to answer this question?
- How this information can be presented in a report?
- Which institution has this information?

If a national affiliate has this information, this agency needs to be brought on board in the SOW planning process, so that its role in pre-evaluation data collection and analysis can be clearly described in the SOW.

**Assess the financial systems and accounting procedures.** Even though an evaluation is not an audit, an evaluation is often asked to:

- Assess the efficiency of a project's administrative and financial systems
- Compare actual expenditure patterns with those in the project proposal
- Analyze the program's cost effectiveness.<sup>17</sup>

This type of assessment is very different from a financial audit or an audit of the commodity management system, which is covered by internal audits and special USAID administrative supervision reports.

Teams should prepare the following items as part of the pre-evaluation process:

- A one-page description of the project's financial systems and how they operate
- A table listing all internal or external audits by date
- A table comparing the actual expenditures with those identified in the proposal or any approved project amendment
- A table that compares the different expenditure levels — for example, how much was devoted to administrative support in the central coordinating unit, how much to administration in the decentralized project execution units, and how much to field training and execution
- A separate budget analysis for each collaborating partner, if any key activities are executed through national partners.

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<sup>17</sup> See also Gosling and Edwards (2003) for useful tips on how to incorporate consideration of cost-effectiveness into project assessments.



## Tools & Resources

Sample Table: Indicator Calculation Update

## Collect Updates of the M&E Indicators and Methodologies

Most large-scale projects use standard indicators to monitor their progress. Typically, they also include annual or mid-term and final (or life of activity) targets for each indicator. For this reason, the most critical outputs of any pre-evaluation exercise are the updates of the official indicators, along with information on how they are calculated.

**Indicator update:** Many donor-funded projects monitor their progress by providing the donor with information on a number of impact and process or monitoring indicators. If the project does not have pre-agreed indicators in its proposal, the evaluation management team can work with the evaluators to develop an appropriate list.<sup>18</sup> In this situation, the project implementation team needs to develop a provisional list of indicators before the arrival of the evaluators. This information should be updated—for the project as a whole and for specific sites,<sup>19</sup> if relevant—in the donor-requested format at least one month before the evaluators arrive to integrate their results into the technical activity updates (see the next activity).

**Indicator methodology update:** During the process of updating the indicators, the M&E specialist should prepare a table that describes the actual—as opposed to the projected—methodologies for collecting and analyzing the data for the main project indicators (see [annex VII](#)) and provides an explanation for any changes since the original proposal.

## Technical Sector or Component Updates

Each technical supervisor should provide a separate list of activities (including training activities) and investments that are designed to achieve specific intermediary results or targets. This subsection should include summary tables that describe the project activities to date for these subcomponents. If this information is ready when the evaluation starts, the evaluator can concentrate on his/her own interviews and not lose time in routine data collection.

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<sup>18</sup> For guidance on how to do this, see Gosling and Edwards (2003, pp. 222–34) and Roche (1999, pp. 43–44) for a discussion on indicator dilemma; i.e., the importance of “looking beyond predetermined indicators” in order to capture expected as well as expected results and the broader impact of a project on peoples’ lives.”

<sup>19</sup> Most M&E data can be disaggregated by site as well as by national PVO partner. Although the donor may not wish this disaggregated data to appear on the official indicator performance tracking table or logframe, it is useful to the evaluation. It is especially important because it allows the evaluator to determine if there are any major differences between sites or between partners.



## Tools & Resources

### Sample Model Community/ Activity Matrices

## Village/Community/Activity Matrices

Many communities receive more than one project intervention. An evaluation, therefore, needs some basis for determining exactly how many communities (or sub-communities) have been affected and in what way. This same information provides the basis for an evaluator's choice of which sites to visit. A useful tool for categorizing interventions is a village matrix, which indicates which villages (vertical axis) received which activities (horizontal axis) (see [annex VIII](#)). A simple X can be used to note which communities benefited from which intervention. The same matrix can be used to note:

- The year a particular category of intervention started in that village (year must be noted by activity for each community), or
- The field agents' perceptions of how successful a particular intervention has been (from A to C, with A being highest).<sup>20</sup>

## Maps

A good map shows the project location in the country; it is an important part of any evaluation. A second, more detailed map is needed to show specific sites where the project intervenes. In most cases, the site maps that were included in the proposal are out of date or no longer relevant by the mid-term evaluation. All maps—plus any additional background maps that the evaluation management wants the team to consider—should be prepared well ahead of the evaluator's visit to avoid costly delays in commissioning new or redrawing old maps.

### Step 6 Results:

- ✓ Project information is organized and accessible to the evaluation team.

<sup>20</sup> This system was used to rank activities on the final evaluation of the CRS/Malawi Title II Development Assistance Program. The evaluators used this ranking to determine which villages they wanted to visit. This additional step of ranking enabled the evaluators to visit both successful and less successful interventions. The co-authors are divided about the utility of ranking the village matrices since this type of pre-evaluation ranking might prejudice the evaluators.

## Step 7: Plan the Evaluation Logistics

A detailed, clearly coordinated logistics plan is needed for a successful evaluation.

**Armies move on their stomachs and so do evaluation teams.** If logistics are poorly thought out and funded, even the best evaluation team will not be successful. A detailed, clearly coordinated logistics plan is needed for a successful evaluation.

### Logistics Plan

Critical logistical pre-planning includes the following:

- Negotiate preliminary site visit dates and objectives with local NGO, government, and village-level leaders, with the time and dates finalized within two weeks before the evaluation team arrives at each project site <sup>21</sup>
- Identify dates when the evaluators will notify district-level officials of the timeline for visits to specific villages
- Develop a one-page announcement of the visit that includes both the anticipated dates the team will be at specific locations and the names of the evaluation team members (in the local language) that is signed by a representative of the project's host ministry
- Organize food, transportation, office space, computing and printing facilities, and lodging for the team.

### Identify an Evaluation Logistician

The evaluation manager, with backing from country-level senior management, should designate a person as the evaluation logistician. If the data collection and analysis are up-to-date, the logistician might be able to combine this function with another technical or M&E function on the evaluation management team. However, this dual role is difficult if the person is expected to participate actively in field interviews, analysis, and updating indicators.

#### Step 7 Results:

- ✓ A detailed, well coordinated, logistics plan is in place and an evaluation logistician is on board.

<sup>21</sup> For additional guidance on organizing project visits, see Gosling and Edwards (2003, pp. 274–80).

## Scheduling Demands and Options

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The **GANTT chart** described in [annex II](#), shows the approximate sequence of tasks for all staff involved with a pre-evaluation. The associated timeline is an approximation. The actual time requirements to complete those tasks will vary based on whether or not an intensive or extensive pre-evaluation will take place.

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If a great deal of staff turnover has taken place or if project files are extremely incomplete for any reason, the amount of time needed to complete these tasks will increase.

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### Person Days Needed to Produce the Pre-Evaluation Outputs

Estimates of the time needed for pre-evaluation tasks vary from project to project. Moreover, the person days can be spread out over a long period of time leading up to the evaluation. In our experience, the estimated person days (rounded off to the nearest half-day) for pre-evaluation planning of a typical Title II program is as follows (see [annex II](#)):

- 15 person days for the internal evaluation manager (EM<sup>22</sup>)<sup>23</sup>
- 19 person days for the project manager and senior project technical staff (including the M&E specialist), estimated here at 6 people working approximately 3.25 days each to update the indicators, documentation, and activities for the technical and administrative activities that they oversee
- 4 person days for the country level senior management (Mgt) responsible for the project/program being evaluated (country representative and heading of programming)
- 4 person days for the regional and headquarters M&E and technical advisors (HQReg).

These estimates assume that the project M&E system works and that most project documents exist and are catalogued at the project site or coordination office. If a great deal of staff turnover has taken place or if project files are extremely incomplete for any reason, the amount of time needed to complete these tasks will increase. If the staff can dedicate time to this organization and planning in the course of routine work, the time can also correspondingly decrease. Make no mistake, however, this is a serious investment of staff time, but one that has multiple uses for project management beyond the evaluation itself (see table 2).

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<sup>22</sup> These abbreviations cross reference to the GANTT chart (see annex II).

<sup>23</sup> Time budgeted is for one evaluation manager. Some functions can be delegated to other evaluation team members, should the project opt for a core three-person team.

Once the evaluation team leader is identified and hired (Step 4), s/he should be involved in pre-planning. The involvement level can be increased or decreased depending on the presence/absence of internal leadership for the pre-evaluation process in-country. This involvement—and the team leader’s role in routine pre-evaluation organization—should be carefully spelled out in the SOW before final contracting takes place.

## Scheduling Person Days: Intensive versus Extensive Pre-Evaluation

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Once management does its homework, an evaluation manager with long-term experience on the project being evaluated can facilitate most of the other steps in one week.

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**Option One:** An intensive pre-planning week that the evaluation manager facilitates. Once management does its homework (Steps 1 and 2), an evaluation manager with long-term experience on the project being evaluated can facilitate most of the other steps in one week.

**Option Two:** An intensive pre-planning training exercise that the evaluation team leader or a member of the PVO’s regional or headquarters staff facilitates. If the team is inexperienced or the evaluation manager is new to the project, the evaluation manager might request that:

- The team leader help backstop Steps 5 and 6 of the pre-planning process as part of his/her activities as team leader, or
- A qualified person with extensive experience in evaluation or that particular category of programming facilitates all 7 stages.

Option Two works well if it is used to build the capacity of the country-level project evaluation manager/senior management to conduct this and future evaluations. Option Two is less effective when the project evaluation manager is bypassed and merely brought in to execute a SOW that neither s/he nor the team fully understands nor owns.

**Option Three:** Two intensive pre-planning periods. A third option is to separate the preparation of Steps 1-4 from Steps 5-7 to jump start the hiring process or coordination with multiple partners or execution units. Option Three is usually the best model if a project is being executed through multiple partners since the different partners must: (a) first understand the process and develop a core pre-evaluation process; then (b) create their own debriefing book for specific sites. If the partners/national affiliates are unfamiliar with the process, it is critical that someone from the main executing PVO (or the project coordination unit for a consortium) be tasked with facilitating and harmonizing the affiliates’ preparation, as well as the preparation of the project coordinating unit.

One of the most common problems is that the project coordination unit invests heavily in Steps 1-4, but fails to help the affiliates organize Steps 5 and 6. Since most of the relevant information on activities and impacts is at the affiliate level, this often results in a situation where the coordination unit is well organized, but little or nothing is known about project site-specific activities except for what is reported through official indicators.

**Option Four:** Mainstream pre-evaluation planning. A fourth option is to organize a concentrated pre-planning process for Steps 1-4 and to let project staff incorporate Steps 5-7 as part of their normal activity. Although this sounds good in practice, if it is not done well in advance of the evaluation team's arrival, it can throw the project staff into disarray two to three days before the evaluators arrive.

## Why Can't Pre-Evaluation Planning Be Part of the Evaluation?

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If the “pay later option” is chosen, the PVO will pay much more in terms of staff time and for the consultants to supervise these efforts.

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The pre-evaluation planning can be part of the evaluation. However, when these two processes are combined, the final evaluation slows down, unless the process of producing the pre-evaluation outputs is built into the evaluation work plan.

In most cases, there are two options, as follows:

1. Either pay up front in terms of staff time to produce the pre-evaluation products, or
2. Pay later in terms of staff time to produce the pre-evaluation products during the evaluation exercise.

If the “pay later option” is chosen, the PVO will pay much more in terms of staff time and for the consultants to supervise these efforts (see table 3). In addition, there is the risk of frustrating your partners who have to look for information while they are hosting the evaluators.

**Table 3: Common Evaluation Problems and Solutions**

| Step   | Common Problem  | Options for Solving Them   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>1: Identify, empower, and mentor the evaluation manager</b> | Project and country PVO team are inexperienced in evaluation and/or recently hired  | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Identify an in-country evaluation manager and use headquarters and regional staff to mentor this individual in performance of key pre-evaluation tasks. This will pave the way for a smoother evaluation the next time around.</p> <p><b>Option 2:</b> Take advantage of the evaluation team leader's knowledge to mentor the evaluation manager via email and telephone before the team arrives.</p> <p><b>Option 3 (if delayed until team arrives):</b> The team leader must train the evaluation management team on-site, which typically delays the mission. The associated delays may cause some frustration among PVO partners and staff.</p>                          |
|  | Team is late in designing final survey  | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Complete the survey before evaluators arrive and allow enough time for preparing other information required by steps 1-7 of pre-evaluation process.</p> <p><b>Option 2:</b> Consider using extra national consultants and technical support from other field programs to speed up the data analysis and collection and allow enough time for other pre-evaluation functions.</p> <p><b>Option 3 (if delayed until team arrives):</b> Efforts to perform both tasks simultaneously typically result in a lower quality final or mid-term survey that does not adequately reflect the project's performance and insufficient pre-evaluation organization of steps 5 and 6.</p> |
| <b>2: Clarify donor guidance and expectations</b>              | Country representative or evaluation manager thinks that s/he knows everything about evaluation without reviewing guidance and develops the evaluation SOW on his/her own with little staff input | <p><b>Option 1:</b> HQ or regional staff should require all projects to document the production of a guidance briefing book and pre-evaluation plan.</p> <p><b>Option 2 (if delayed until team arrives):</b> The project staff can overlook key areas in preparing for the evaluation.</p>   |
|  | The project currently being executed bears little resemblance to the one in the proposal.   | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Provide clear explanations of why the strategy and activities were changed in the SOW (step 3) and briefing book (step 6) sections that are most relevant. Provide team with written correspondence where donor representatives approve/ acknowledge changes.</p> <p><b>Option 2 (if delayed until team arrives):</b> The team spends the first two weeks trying to document why this occurred, which leaves them little time for appreciating the project's achievements under the revised model.</p>   |



| Step   | Common Problem  | Options for Solving Them  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>3: Prepare the draft evaluation SOW and work plan</b> | The project coordination unit (and field execution staff) does not understand the difference between a mid-term or final survey and the mid-term or final evaluation surveys. | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Staff training in project evaluation and survey guidance (as part of step 3) is essential. The work plan for the evaluation (see step 3) should be completely separate from the work plan for the survey.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until team arrives): If staff understanding isn't developed, they will tend to focus on the survey rather than the other types of pre-evaluation planning, especially steps 5 and 6.</p>   |
|  | Pre-evaluation work plan developed but not executed.  | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Clearly define responsibility for specific tasks and task one person (the evaluation manager) with ensuring that tasks are executed in steps 1 and 3.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until team arrives): Work plans are developed but not executed, which requires the evaluation team to waste time during the first week getting the team ready.</p> <p><b>Option 3</b> (if delayed until team arrives): Address the delay and amend the SOW so the evaluation team leader will supervise the pre-evaluation preparation via email and arrive one week in advance.</p>   |
|  | Team skipped steps 1-3 and focused on the SOW and hiring.   | <p><b>Option 1:</b> The evaluation manager trains the staff retroactively on guidance and pre-evaluation.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until team arrives): If the evaluation manager does not train the staff in guidance and pre-evaluation, the evaluation team will have to do so once the evaluation starts, a far more expensive and labor-intensive process.</p>   |
|  | Core project staff understands the guidance, but the executing partners do not understand it.   | <p><b>Option 1:</b> If the project is implemented through NGO partners (as CRS and American Red Cross usually are), it is critical for the staff in the executing PVOs to understand the core guidance and rules. Staff should take time to train and familiarize the partners during the process of developing and reviewing the SOW (step 3). Proper training of national partners during step 3 can help the NGO partners produce the materials outlined in steps 5 and 6 in less than a week. (In the authors' experience, most national affiliates see this type of pre-evaluation training as an opportunity to develop skills that they can use to develop future projects.)</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until team arrives): Without building a common understanding and lexicon, there can be negative consequences, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create the attitude that the evaluation is just another task being imposed on them by the project coordination unit</li> <li>▪ Force data collection from the PVO partners to overlap with the evaluators' field visits to the PVO partner sites</li> <li>▪ Create ill feelings toward the program coordination unit for not adequately preparing their partners.</li> </ul> |

| Step   | Common Problem   | Options for Solving Them   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>4: Identify and hire the evaluation leader and team and finalize the evaluation SOW</b> | Project is having trouble identifying a consultant for one of the external evaluator positions.                          | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Widen the search within the country and inform the evaluation team leader about this issue. Consider bringing in someone from another country program of the same PVO. Do NOT eliminate the position outlined in the SOW without telling the team leader.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delay until team arrives): One program component is neglected. If this is a mid-term evaluation, this omission can have very serious long-term consequences for the remaining project life.</p>   |
|  | Neither the country representative nor the evaluation manager has communicated directly with the evaluation team leader. | <p><b>Option 1:</b> This is usually not a problem that can be resolved, but is instead an indicator (i.e., red flag) that the senior in-country management has not clearly delineated an evaluation manager. A wise HQ or regional advisor will monitor whether this communication is occurring. If the communication is missing, they should investigate the pre-evaluation planning process and determine whether the team needs help producing the actual outputs in the work plan developed as part of step 3. An elaborate pre-evaluation work plan is not useful if the staff members are unsure about how to implement it.</p> <p>Two options to address this are to:</p> <p>(a) Have the external evaluation team leader arrive one week before the other team members to ensure a smooth transition and organization review before the full team arrives, or</p> <p>(b) Outline a formal “distance” pre-evaluation mentoring process as part of the team leader’s activities and time allocation.</p> |
| <b>5: Organize the project documentation</b>   | Documentation is not prepared when the team arrives.   | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Project manager takes charge of working with technical advisors to develop a classification and organizational system that works for the team. This activity should never be delegated to a secretary or program assistant as it is a core team function.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until team arrives): Ask the team leader to visit at least one week ahead of the other team members to facilitate this and add time for this to the team leader’s contract.</p> <p><b>Option 3</b> (if delayed until team arrives): Immediately add one week to each team member’s contract to allow the project team time to prepare the necessary documentation and activity summaries.</p>   |
|  | Bibliographies are only partially developed and do not follow a standard reference format.                               | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Distribute examples of best practice for bibliographic references and let the staff correct the references themselves before the team arrives. This trains the staff in proper referencing, which is a tremendous help on annual reports and proposals as well.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until team arrives): The evaluation team will spend approximately three days organizing the documentation and compiling the bibliographies.</p>   |

| Step                                       | Common Problem  | Options for Solving Them  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>6: Organize the project information</b> | Indicators were not updated.  | <p><b>Option 1:</b> Updating the indicators should be a top priority for the entire team. All technical supervisors (even newly hired ones) should be conversant with the methodologies being used to collect and analyze the information that is used to monitor and evaluate their activities.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until team arrives): If this is not completed when the evaluators arrive, it can add at least a week to the in-country exercise and even more to the follow-up write-up which usually requires a contract amendment to extend each team member's contract.</p>  |
|  | Staff is not clear on how indicators were calculated in previous years due to staff turnover. | <p><b>Option 1:</b> This is a common problem that can be solved by clearly detailing this process for each indicator before the evaluation team arrives. This issue usually arises because the M&amp;E system is overly centralized in one person, which is not a good situation, but can be easily corrected at mid-term. If this is not resolved at mid-term, it can create major problems during the project's final evaluation.</p> <p><b>Option 2</b> (if delayed until arrives): If this issue is not addressed during pre-evaluation, the final evaluation team will spend about a week trying to decipher the way the major indicators were calculated.</p> |
| <b>Prepare the final report</b>            | Field staff has difficulty understanding and reading English.                                 | <p>Critical pre-evaluation documents (step 6) should be prepared in the local language to facilitate field input.</p> <p>Some national team members may be more comfortable and produce better chapters if they write them in the local language.</p> <p>The SOW for the individual consultants (see step 4) should be clear about the language of the draft report. The team leaders, however, should be clear from the start that evaluations must be written in the language of the donor.</p>   |

*Note:* For any of the options that require extra consultant time, make sure that there are budget funds available to cover the extra costs.

## Annex I

# References and Further Reading

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## Useful Web sites

### Title II Food Security Programs

- Food Aid Technical Assistance Project (FANTA)  
Sampling guidelines for Title II baseline, mid-term, and final surveys:  
<http://www.fantaproject.org/publications>
- FANTA Assessments, Monitoring, and Evaluation site:  
<http://www.fantaproject.org/focus/monitoring.shtml>
- DCHA (Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance)/FFP Web site for:
  - MYAP guidelines:  
[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/ffp/fy06\\_myap.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/fy06_myap.html)
  - Non-emergency program reference materials (CSR4 guidelines, Bellmon information; etc.):  
[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/ffp/nonemergency.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/nonemergency.html)
- The Web site for FAM (Food Aid Management) has a wealth of information about the M&E of Title II programs. It has a more easily understandable presentation than the USAID Web site that facilitates accessing information.  
<http://www.foodaid.org/mne3.htm>

### Child Survival

- CORE Web site:  
<http://www.coregroup.org>
- For child survival guidance, see: [www.childsurvival.com](http://www.childsurvival.com). (See technical support, tools, M&E including M&E checklist and KPC 2000 plus modules including Rapid Catch and KPC field guide). Especially important are the:
  - See Gosling and Edwards (2003).
  - USAID/DCHA/PVC, PVO Child Survival Grants Program. 2002. "Guidelines for a Mid-term Evaluation." August.
  - USAID/GH/HIDN/NUT. Child Survival and Health Grants Program. 2003. "Guidelines for Final Evaluation." July.

### General M&E

- <http://www.ngoconnect.net/home>
- <http://www.fantaproject.org/publications>
- For translation of key evaluation terms:  
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>

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- Social Impact. n. d. "Managing the Project Cycle. A Guide to People-Centered and Results-Oriented Project Management." Workshop Notes. Social Impact, Reston, Virginia. Email: [info@socialimpact.com](mailto:info@socialimpact.com); [www.socialimpact.com](http://www.socialimpact.com).
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## Other Useful Reading

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# Annex II

## GANTT Chart for Pre-Evaluation Planning

| Child Survival - Cambodia  |                 | Matrix assumes grant signed o/a 10 February 2005 |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  | Notes           |  |
|--|-----------------|--|------|-------|-------|----------|------|-------|-------|----------|------|-------|-------|------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|-------|-------|-----|--|--|-----------------|--|
| Activity   | POC             | January  |      |       |       | February |      |       |       | March    |      |       |       | April      |     |       |       | May   |     |      |       | June  |     |  |  |                 |  |
|  |                 | 2-8  | 9-15 | 16-22 | 23-29 | Jan 30-5 | 6-12 | 13-19 | 20-26 | Feb 27-5 | 6-12 | 13-19 | 20-26 | 27-April 2 | 3-9 | 10-16 | 17-23 | 24-30 | 1-7 | 8-14 | 15-21 | 22-28 | 1-4 |  | 5-11   |                 |  |
| <b>STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH:</b>   |                 |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Inform partners, and Federation  | HOD             |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  | ongoing contact |  |
| Visit USAID Mission  | HOD             |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  | ongoing contact |  |
| Identify CRC counterpart (potentially need to hire this individual)  | HOD             |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  | Program Dept. has temporarily assigned Mr. Chaksanna; will be traveling with team for    |                 |  |
| May share program budget with key partners.  | HOD             |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Meet with key stakeholders (CS orientation meeting), and jumpstart the DIP process and involvement of key stakeholders.  | HOD             |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  | ongoing contact; also expanded following baseline for DIP set-up                         |                 |  |
| Develop draft start-up workplan; share and negotiate workplan with local partners.   | HOD/Mark        |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| May develop Technical Assistance Committee of in-country experts to provide coordination and oversight. (Mission, UNICEF, WHO, MOH, other health projects working in same region.) | delegate        |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Attend MOH IMCI Technical Working Group meetings   | HOD, delegate   |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Meet with other CS grantees in Cambodia  | HOD             |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  | ongoing contact, both in working groups and individually                                 |                 |  |
| <b>GRANT:</b>  |                 |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Cooperative Agreement Finalized  |                 |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Contracts Officer signs CA   | USAID (done)    |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| ARC senior management sign CA  |                 |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Provide 269s to new PVOs   | USAID           |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| <b>COMPLIANCE/FINANCE/ADMIN:</b>   |                 |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |
| Develop/sign Country Service agreement with Federation   | Mark, HOD, OGC  |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  | Will work through country service agreement with Federation WHERE DO WE STAND WITH THIS? |                 |  |
| Pre-identify banking institution to be approved by Treasury  | done (existing) |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  | May depend on operational modality, though Fed and CRC also use Foreign Trade Bank       |                 |  |
| Provide list of potential banking institutions with requisite forms to Treasury to open account.   | done (existing) |  |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |          |      |       |       |            |     |       |       |       |     |      |       |       |     |  |  |                 |  |



Download this document online.

GANTT Chart for Pre-Evaluation Planning (Excel)

[http://crs.org/publications/appendix/PreparingEvaluation\\_AnnexII.xls](http://crs.org/publications/appendix/PreparingEvaluation_AnnexII.xls)

## Annex III

# Bibliography Style Sheet

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Source: “Pre-evaluation Documentation Organization for the Final Evaluation of the CRS/Malawi USAID Title II Funded Development Assistance Program” 2004, excerpts from bibliography, annex 8; cross-references to box 2.

### Pre-planning Exercises

#### Vulnerability Mapping of Zones

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CADECOM (Catholic Development Commission in Malawi), Diocese of Blantyre (CADECOM/Blantyre). 1999. “Report on the Evaluation of CADECOM Blantyre Integrated Food Security Program. Pilot Phase. June 1998-December 1999.” Submitted to CORDAID/Netherlands. CADECOM, Blantyre.

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## Annex IV

# Project Management and Administration

### Program Management Milestones

| Date                         | Management Milestone                    |
|------------------------------|---|
| September 1997               | Award of ConServe MG                    |
| September 1997               | Acquisition of new FIS                  |
| October 1997                 | Development Audit                       |
| November 1997                | First strategic planning meeting, Kenya |
| November 1997-September 2000 | US-Africa staff exchanges               |
| December 1997                | Approval of IT upgrading plan.          |

Source: McCorkle and Chadri 2000.

### Program Planning and Implementation Milestones

| Date          | Management Milestone   |
|---------------|--|
| November 1997 | Mandate from AWF Board of Trustees for a landscape vision  |
|               | AWF US (and pre-MG, Africa) SWOT analysis meetings, in preparation for first strategic planning meeting  |
|               | First strategic planning meeting (Nairobi), the "Strategy Development Launch Workshop," resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>revised mission, vision and values statements</li><li>tentative definition of a landscape approach, etc.</li></ul> |

Source: McCorkle and Chadri 2000.

### Original versus Actual Organigram of Project Administration (project specific)

Instructions: Suggest including a model of the original organigram of the project alongside an organigram of the project as it actually functions at the time of the pre-evaluation. If no organigram was included in the original proposal, one should be developed from the proposal. This simple diagram can provide a simple direct way of explaining institutional changes and save time during the evaluation.

### List of Key Positions Hired and Rehired by the Project

| Position                   | Pre-project position or incumbents? | Person Hired or rehired (if turnover)             | Dates |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------|
| US Program officer         | US Msc Environmental studies        | US Msc Watershed management                       | 01/00 |
| Program Technical Director | None                                | US Msc Environmental Studies (internal promotion) | 01/99 |

Source: McCorkle and Chadri 2000.

Note: If several people have held the position, note the employment dates for each person in the "Dates" column.

## Annex V

# Institutional Impact

### Organizational Checkup

| Organizational Measure  | Score |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Board</b>  |       |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1. Board members have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities as providers of overall direction.                   | 0     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. Board is capable of carrying out key roles such as PVO policy formulation, fund raising, public relations, financial oversight and lobbying. | 0     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. Board understands PVO programs and provides appropriate input and redirection.   | 0     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <b>Mission</b>  |       |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. PVO has clearly articulated mission and goals.   | 0     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. Strategies are aligned with mission.   | 0     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. PVO has appropriate geographic coverage to support its mission.  | 0     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <b>Management Style and Systems</b>   |       |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. PVO has an organizational structure with clearly defined lines of authority and responsibility.  | 0     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <b>Other Categories of Organizational Impact, Etc.</b>  |       |   |   |   |   |   |   |

Source: Adapted from the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool [OCAT] in the "Final Evaluation of the African Wildlife Foundation," McCorkle and Chadri (2000, pp. 107-08).

### Institutional Impact: Major Foundation and Grant Funding before and after the Project<sup>24</sup>

| Amount   | Source and Project   | Dates |
|----------|--|-------|
| \$25,000 | CSC: Summit Foundation gift for conservation enterprise strategies   | 1997  |
| \$83,000 | Heartlands: Delano Foundation gift for AWF's Amboseli Elephant Research project (AERP) and its International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP), etc. | 1997  |

Source: McCorkle and Chadri 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Relevant table if the project funding increased organizational capacity to attract other funds.

### Institutional Impact: Evolution of CRS and Non-CRS Facilitated Grant Support for the Blantyre CADECOM, FY97-Present<sup>25</sup>

| Dates (beginning-end) | Blantyre | Phalombe | Projects /donor          | Activities  | Amount |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|--------------------------|---|--------|
|                       | X        |          | CARITAS<br>Germany       | Relief  |        |
|                       | X        |          | CARITAS<br>Netherlands   | Pilot-Food Sec-Mwanza                                   |        |
| 2000-03               | X        |          | CRS (private<br>funding) | Environmental Health<br>Program. Chiladzulu<br>District |        |

Source: CADECOM/CRS, Phalombe, July 27, 2004, in McMillan, Brockman, Nordin, and Ndonka (2004).

<sup>25</sup> Amounts not relevant to the evaluation are not represented here unless deemed relevant by CADECOM/Phalombe. They were useful to the external review team, however, in understanding the CADECOM's wider portfolio.

## Annex VI

# Sample Table Project-Sponsored Training

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### Village-Level Training Programs in the ISAN Project Villages of Dogon Doutchi and Tanout (HKI/CRS)

| Training theme                                 | Dogon Doutchi |               |  | Tanout       |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|--|--------------|---------------|
|  | Participants  | Percent women | Trainers   | Participants | Percent women |
| CVD Organizational Skills                      | 232           | 65            | CRS  | 427          | 24            |
| Sustainable agricultural production techniques | 80            | 40            | Arrondissement and district-level technical services | 80           | 50            |
| Tree Nursery Management                        | 18            | 0             |  | 22           | 36            |
| Improved cultivation techniques                | 80            | 40            |  | 80           | 50            |

Source: CRS, April 4, 2003 in McMillan, Jaharou, Mohamadou, Mariko, and Chano (2003).

## Annex VII

### Sample Table: Indicator Calculation Update

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| Strategic Objective and Performance Indicator | Definition of Indicator/Unit of Measure | Data Source | Collection Method | Analysis Method | Frequency of Data Collection |
|---|---|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Impact Indicator 1.1.                         | XXX                                     | XXX         | XXX               | XXX             | XXX                          |
| Monitoring Indicator 1.1.                     | XXX                                     | XXX         | XXX               | XXX             | XXX                          |



## Annex IX

# Sample Pre-evaluation Logistics Checklist

| Evaluation Component  | GAP      | Gujarat  | DMH      | Work to be done prior to the evaluation team's arrival |
|---|----------|----------|----------|--|
| <b>Team composition</b>   |          |          |          | <b>x</b>   |
| American Red Cross (TBD)  |          |          |          |  |
| Person x  | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Person y  | X (NHQ)  |          |          |  |
| Person x  |          | x        |          |  |
| DMH team (selected)   |          |          | x        |  |
| IRCS PARTICIPATION (TBD)  | x        | x        | x        |  |
| IRCS/Patan  |          | x        |          |  |
| IRCS HQ   | x        | x        | x        |  |
| IRCS TN   | x        |          |          |  |
| IRCS Orissa   |          |          | x        |  |
| IRCS Gujarat  | x        |          | x        |  |
| External consultant   |          | ?        | ?        |  |
| <b>Timing</b>   |          |          |          |  |
| First two weeks in August   | x        |          |          |  |
| October (two – three weeks)   |          | x        |          |  |
| TBD   |          |          | x        |  |
| <b>Techniques</b>   |          |          |          |  |
| Develop critical questions  | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Project site/activity map   | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| <b>Document Review</b>  | <b>x</b> | <b>x</b> | <b>x</b> |  |
| Document collection (logframe, M&E plan, workplans, village activity reports, quarterly reports, annual reports, meeting notes, end of mission briefings, etc.): should be sorted by time produced (earliest to latest) | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Materials collection (two copies of any training materials, publication, flyer, etc.) developed/ adapted during life of project   | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Document/materials bibliography   | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| <b>Focus groups</b>   |          | <b>x</b> | <b>x</b> |  |
| Develop focus group questionnaire   |          | x        | x        |  |
| Determine location for focus groups   |          | x        | x        | x  |
| Get permission from local authorities   |          | x        | x        | x  |
| Set up focus group schedule   |          | x        | x        | x  |
| Organize logistics for focus groups   |          | x        | x        | x  |
| Conduct focus groups  |          | x        | x        |  |
| <b>Key informant interviews</b>   | <b>x</b> | <b>x</b> | <b>x</b> |  |



| Evaluation Component   | GAP      | Gujarat  | DMH      | Work to be done prior to the evaluation team's arrival |
|--|----------|----------|----------|--|
| Determine list and contact points for key informant interviews | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Develop key informant interview protocol                       | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Set up interview schedule                                      | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Conduct key informant interviews                               | x        | x        | x        |  |
| <b>Site visits</b>   | <b>x</b> | <b>x</b> | <b>x</b> |  |
| Determine list and contact points for site visits              | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Develop site visit direct observation checklist                | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Set up site visit schedule                                     | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Arrange logistics for site visits                              | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Conduct site visits  | x        | x        | x        |  |
| <b>Survey/questionnaire</b>                                    |          |          |          |  |
| Random sample survey   |          | x        |          |  |
| Training follow-up questionnaire                               | x        |          |          |  |
| Develop instrument   | x        | x        |          |  |
| Implement instrument   | x        | x        |          |  |
| Analyze results  | x        | x        |          |  |
| <b>Participatory methods</b>                                   |          |          |          |  |
| Community mapping follow-up                                    |          | x        |          |  |
| Others?  |          |          | x        |  |
| <b>Preliminary Steps</b>                                       |          |          |          |  |
| Permission to conduct evaluation                               | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Permission for staff travel                                    | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Travel arrangements (NHQ plane & hotel)                        | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Develop data collection protocols                              | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Conduct pre-evaluation visit                                   | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Donor approval   | x        |          |          | x  |
| Evaluation TOR   | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| <b>Evaluation Report &amp; Outreach</b>                        |          |          |          |  |
| Draft outline of report  | x        | x        | x        | x  |
| Determine lead writers for sections                            | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Develop report-writing schedule                                | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Determine report review team                                   | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Schedule findings briefing (Delhi)                             | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Schedule findings briefing (field)                             | x        | x        | x        |  |
| Finalize report  | x        | x        | x        |  |

Source: Alice Willard, Technical Solutions Unit, NHQ, American Red Cross, Pre-evaluation Planning Mission, designed to support close-out evaluations for three projects in India.

## Annex X

# Checklist of Evaluation Materials and Information for Evaluations<sup>26</sup>

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This checklist itemizes documents, data, and other kinds of information that international private voluntary organizations (PVOs) that are recipients of USAID grants would be well-advised to collect or compile in preparation for their midterm or final evaluations. Of course, each PVO will want to choose among the items listed, selecting those that are relevant to the activities, outputs, intermediate results (IRs), and strategic objectives (SOs) as set forth in their particular grant. Relevance is defined as being directly or indirectly supported by grant funding, and documented as reasonably attributable to such funding.

Not all PVOs will need to have all the following information available. It will depend on program/project objectives and specific capacity-building and other activities as funded under or leveraged by the grant. On the other hand, this list is by no means comprehensive. Each PVO will think of other items that ought to be included here, especially when it comes to program activities and aims that are not widely shared by other PVOs.

Nevertheless, the items on the checklist have generally proven very useful—not only for those conducting an evaluation, but also for those being evaluated and for ongoing PVO management generally as well as strategic planning for the future. Grantees have reported finding this checklist helpful for:

- new ways to present PVO activities and achievements;
- subsequent evaluations;
- the PVO's next annual report;
- items to include in reports to other donors or to PVO publics, and to display in PVO brochures, Web sites, and so forth;
- standardization of definitions and procedures across far-flung PVO units;
- construction of useful new institutional databases;
- finer-grained and/or internal-comparative analyses of PVO staffing, programming, and finance;
- consciousness-raising among managers, staff, and partners about the need, value, and means of M&E and the importance of qualitative as well as quantitative M&E data.

The checklist is offered in this multi-purpose spirit, in hopes that grantees may find it more broadly useful. At the same time, it may be helpful to evaluators as a “tickler” in thinking about the kinds of information they will need to examine. Checklist items are roughly grouped in categories corresponding to the point in the evaluation or the type of information for which they might prove most useful.

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<sup>26</sup> This tool was originally elaborated by Dr. Constance M. McCorkle, under contract to USAID's Office of Private Voluntary Cooperation, Bureau of Humanitarian Response. It has been re-organized, edited, and updated by Dr. McCorkle for inclusion in the present M&E module. As of August 15, 2005, this revised checklist was copyrighted by CMC Consulting, Falls Church, Virginia.

## I. Startup Information

The following items should be made available to the evaluators as early as possible, even before any preliminary meetings with the PVO. The evaluators can then become familiar with the PVO overall; appreciate the general outlines of the grant in relation to same; and save everyone time needlessly spent in meetings to describe basic background information that is readily available in grant documents.

### The PVO

- A master list of acronyms commonly used by the PVO in relation to itself and the grant.
- Annual reports for each of year of grant funding, and the equivalent number of years before that, for the PVO as a whole and the PVO country programs or chapters supported by the grant.
- Public awareness, fundraising, brochures, flyers, and Web sites distributed by the PVO, as per the same parameters for annual reports above.
- Any strategic or action plans by the PVO, its grantee countries/chapters, or its partners that are relevant to the thrusts of the grant.

### The Grant

- The PVO's original grant proposal.
- Results Framework for the grant – ideally as linked to the PVO's overall strategy, as well as to the relevant USAID units' Results Frameworks. (Normally, this is already included in the proposal.)
- The detailed implementation plan (DIP) submitted by the PVO upon grant award.
- The corresponding budget.
- Documentation showing USAID approval of any major modifications to SOs and their targets, the DIP, or budget.
- Simple chronograms summarizing major milestone events and changes in management, programming, targets, assumptions, implementation approach, etc. in grant operations to date.
- All required, regular grant reports to USAID.
- Any other reports that may be relevant to grant operations and achievements (internal or external studies and reviews, reports to other donors, etc.). Note: In the case of a final evaluation, it is imperative to provide the midterm evaluation of the grant to read the assessment of action on midterm recommendations.

## II. General Program Information

As the evaluation proceeds, more specific information will be needed about the particular activities, outputs, IRs, and SOs of the grant. As a rough rule of thumb, these typically entail the following.

- Creating and strengthening relationships between the PVO and its stipulated grant partners, such as national government agencies; regional, national, or local NGOs; private enterprises; and other entities such as universities, research centers, and networks;
- Building PVO and partner capacities via technical assistance and training;
- Producing and disseminating tools, publications, training materials, etc. for use in said capacity-building and in developmental relief by the PVO, its partners, communities, and other developmental-relief agencies at large.

By and large, the following items reflect data the PVO should already have on hand as a result of initial proposal preparation and ongoing monitoring of grant implementation. Unless otherwise specifically contracted, it is not the evaluators' job to collect and organize these data. Thus, for this and all remaining sections of the checklist, if the PVO has not already established baselines and then monitored for the kinds of "before and after" changes promised in the proposal, it had better do so *ex post*, before the formal evaluation begins.<sup>27</sup>

### Partners

- List of PVO partners supported by or collaborating in the grant
- List of representatives of PVO partners and their contact information
- Brochure or other brief sketch about each partner, its thrusts, and general contact information – or a table summarizing such for all partner organizations
- Copies of any written agreements and budgets drawn up with partners
- Tables of specific technical or and other kinds of assistance (e.g., financial, material, travel) lent to partners by the PVO (excluding training, below)
- List of tangible products resulting from all such assistance to partners
- List or table of partner contributions to grant-related activities
- Any available data on how membership size or composition, revenues, range or numbers of activities, staff skills, organizational management and visibility, governance, legal standing, etc., of partner organizations have increased or improved as a result of grant-funded activities (excluding training, below)
- Written summaries, reports, or minutes of meetings, focus groups, etc., previously held by any entity to gather partners' impressions of PVO service delivery, quality, performance, and need-responsiveness.

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<sup>27</sup> This can be done simply by organizing the same number of previous years' information to compare with those of the grant period under evaluation. Whenever such data are available on a year-by-year basis, it is best to present them thus to the evaluators, who can then analyze them for trends across time. If no such comparative data are available, then reconstructive/recall techniques may be used.

## Professional Development, Training, and Learning Events

In the items below, be sure to include workshops, seminars, and conferences as hosted or sponsored by the PVO or its partners using grant funds. These events constitute another type of training/learning event, as does also on-the-job training or mentoring.

- List of types of grant-funded training given to PVO staff (i.e., professional development), partner staff, volunteers and community members, etc. plus number, locale, duration, etc., of training events and their certificate or degree status.
- Charts of all such trainees by all variables the PVO and evaluators deem pertinent, e.g.: institutional affiliation and position title, nationality, gender (required), age, degree level, number of others supervised or to be trained in turn by trainees, etc.
- Table of scholarships to trainees, according to the same variables.
- A generous sampling of course/workshop/etc. training-related announcements, schedules, syllabi, readings, back-at-work action plans, course evaluations, etc. These should be organized in packets by training event or type.
- Data on training outcomes (e.g., pre/post tests) and impacts.

## Publications, Manuals, Guides, Toolkits, Web sites, and Similar Items

This whole category refers to materials supported directly or indirectly under the grant and intended for immediate use by the PVO and its partners, but also for sharing with other developmental relief agencies too.

- List of publications, manuals, guides, toolkits generated by the PVO.
- A good sampling of all the foregoing types of materials, for the evaluators to review.
- Data on: e.g., numbers of publications etc. printed; languages in which they were produced; numbers distributed gratis or sold, and to whom (in terms of types of individuals or organizations); numbers and types of distribution outlets; users'/readers' opinion of the materials; variety of uses to which recipients put the materials; impacts that resulted as a consequence of use.
- Printout of all grant-supported materials displayed on the PVO's Web site – and of the Web site itself, if supported by the grant.
- Tally of hits on web pages or the Web site, accordingly.
- All the same variables as above for PVO partners for whom institutional sustainability was a mandate under the grant.

## III. Specific Information

This category is difficult to describe in detail, since PVOs vary widely in the mission thrusts that may be supported by the grant: e.g., agriculture; natural resource management, environment, conservation; microfinance, small and medium enterprise development; health, nutrition; conflict resolution, democracy, governance, civil society; and so forth. Materials for this portion of the checklist will derive mainly from the PVO's own indicator-monitoring system for the grant, as per its approved Results Framework and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) or Performance Indicator Tracking Plan (PITT) (also called Indicator Performance Tracking Plan [IPTT]). Other possibly useful materials should be discussed with the evaluators.

Typically, most PMP or PITT data are quantitative. These should all have been brought up-to-date by the time the evaluation is to begin. The evaluators can then do their job of verifying the performance data, perhaps amplifying them using various evaluation methodologies or conducting special or more sophisticated data analyses.

Examples of other, more general kinds of quantitative information that are usually wanted in an evaluation include those listed below.<sup>28</sup> In the course of their work, evaluators may also ask for other kinds or breakdowns of quantitative data.

- List of all field projects or sub-projects funded or affected by the grant, accompanied by reports or other relevant documents about each.
- Table of numbers of direct, primary grant beneficiaries (aside from direct, secondary beneficiaries such as PVO and partner trainees, above) reached by said field projects, sub-projects, or other activities -- all perforce disaggregated by gender, and other categories as appropriate to the PVO's particular grant.
- Table of numbers of primary indirect beneficiaries, as above. (With good M&E, this can also include unanticipated as well as anticipated indirect beneficiaries.)

In terms of qualitative information, one type that has proved especially illuminating is “mini-case-studies.” These are brief anecdotes of grant-funded experiences that provide particularly telling examples of successes, failures, lessons learned, impacts, spread, and multiplier effects. Such “stories” are most often used to illustrate programmatic outcomes; but they are equally telling for management and other issues (next section). Often, such mini-cases are to be found scattered throughout existing PVO reports and publications. In preparation for the evaluation, the PVO may wish to gather these together in some unified document or format, or even assign staff to write up new ones.

## IV. Management Information

Grants often provide funds to improve PVO or partners’ organizational development with regard to strategic planning, institutional structuring, management of human resources, Board of Trustees functioning, information and communication technology, buildings and equipment, financial or programmatic M&E, and more.

Numerous references, systems, and both qualitative and quantitative tools exist for baselining and then tracking, analyzing, and reporting these aspects of organizational strengthening – some of them created by USAID itself. So the following items represent only a sampling of the kind of evaluation information that may be wanted here. Always, these data should be presented in some pre/post, comparative form.

- Organigram (i.e., organizational chart) of the PVO.
- General policy guidelines, operating or reporting manuals, etc. for the PVO and its Board of Trustees.
- List of past and present trustees, with brief biographies of each trustee.
- Job announcements and descriptions for new hires recruited/to be recruited under the grant, and actual or sample candidate resumes, respectively.

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<sup>28</sup> Consult USAID guidance for standard definitions of primary/secondary and direct/indirect beneficiaries. Also consider that there may be unanticipated beneficiaries as a result of spread and multiplier effects.

- Staffing charts accordingly – perforce disaggregated by gender, and also by any other variables of interest under the grant such as: nationality, degree level, years of prior professional experience, contractual category, general job type (e.g., managerial, technical, support, logistic), PVO unit or location, etc.
- Inventories of PVO computers, phone lines, Internet access, LANs, software licenses, etc.
- Inventories for vehicles, buildings, other infrastructure.
- List of regular and supervisory meetings, site visits, and other kinds of exchanges by PVO headquarters and project staff, with a description of attendee types.
- Budgets and accounts showing planned versus executed expenditures of grant monies, broken down in various ways to show financial flows to different PVO, partner, or other entities as per their functions and agreements, as outlined in the original (or amended) proposal.
- All external and internal auditors' reports for the grant itself, up to the time of the evaluation.
- All the same variables as above for PVO partners targeted for organizational development and strengthening under the grant.

## V. Sustainability and M&E Systems

Sustainability can be (and is) defined and measured in many different ways, from many different perspectives – e.g., environmental, programmatic, economic, financial. But the latter is one of the most fundamental ways in which a PVO's or NGO's institutional sustainability is calculated. This is the focus of the items listed below.

When it comes to M&E, virtually this whole checklist speaks to M&E. So below, only a few additional items are noted that do so very explicitly and that have not been noted in earlier sections of the checklist.

### Sustainability

- Business plans or any Board of Trustees notes or other documents (minutes, memoranda) showing financial strategizing and decision making.
- List of PVO donors by name and category (e.g., multi- or bi-lateral agencies, foundations, other PVOs, private enterprises, charitable individuals, etc.), organized into pre- and post-grant sub-lists.
- Tables of annual and then aggregate pre/post PVO revenues -- possibly by category (e.g., grants, charitable contributions, earned income, investment income, membership fees), organized as per donor types above.
- Same as above, but for PVO costs.
- Documents and accounts indicating facilitation or leveraging of increased funding as a direct or indirect result of grant-supported activities.
- All the same variables as above for PVO partners targeted for organizational development/strengthening under the grant.

## M&E Systems

- As required by USAID, an updated DIP, showing (1) variance in targets set versus achieved by the time of evaluation, with (2) commentary on the reasons for such variance, for both under- and over-achievement of targets.
- Samples of all data-collection and reporting forms and of data-entry sheets for the PVO and its partners – for both financial and programmatic data.
- One detailed example each of the types of FIS and MIS (financial/management information system) or other data-based reports regularly generated for use by PVO and partner managers.
- Schedule and, if available, flow diagrams for distribution and use of these reports, plus other kinds of information dissemination, e.g., to donors, communities, national or international publics, and the developmental/relief community at large.
- Indication of archiving and retrieval systems for M&E data and reports, whether in electronic and hard copy.



## Annex XI

# Evaluation Stakeholder Analysis

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To Identify Information Needs and Specific Evaluation Questions to be Included in an Evaluation Scope of Work

| Evaluation stakeholders         | Information needs | Specific evaluation questions | Priority:<br>High, medium, low |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Project Beneficiaries           |                   |                               |                                |
| OXFAM project manager           |                   |                               |                                |
| OXFAM field staff               |                   |                               |                                |
| OXFAM country director          |                   |                               |                                |
| ODA Project manager (Bangkok)   |                   |                               |                                |
| ODA country desk (London)       |                   |                               |                                |
| SAVE project field staff        |                   |                               |                                |
| SAVE UK                         |                   |                               |                                |
| ODA Social Development Advisors |                   |                               |                                |

Source: Social Impact n.d., pp. 6-17.

## Annex XII

# Sample Evaluation Checklist for Pre-Planning

| Yes/No | Key Points to Consider in Evaluation Pre-Planning                           |
|--------|---|
|        | <b>Participation</b>  |
|        | 1. An evaluation stakeholder analysis has been completed.                   |
|        | 2. The analysis identifies the information needs of important stakeholders. |
|        | 3. The analysis informs who will participate in the evaluation process.     |
|        | <i>You are clear about:</i>   |
|        | <b>Deciding</b>   |
|        | 4. Why are you doing the evaluation?  |
|        | 5. For whom you are doing it?   |
|        | 6. What is to be reviewed?  |
|        | 7. Who will be involved?  |
|        | 8. How will it be managed?  |
|        | 9. When it will be done?  |
|        | 10. What are the resource implications?                                     |
|        | 11. How the results will be used?   |
|        | <b>Designing</b>  |
|        | 12. The detailed scope and focus (or terms of reference) of the evaluation. |
|        | 13. The evaluation methods and tools to be used.                            |
|        | 14. Measurements and indicators to be used.                                 |
|        | 15. Methods for recording, disseminating and storing findings.              |
|        | <b>Action</b>   |
|        | 16. What facts and qualitative and quantitative data will be collected?     |
|        | 17. How will the data be gathered (questioning, observing, reading, etc.)?  |
|        | 18. How will data be analyzed and interpreted?                              |
|        | 19. How to validate analysis and judgments?                                 |
|        | 20. The format of the final report and/or presentation.                     |
|        | <b>Using results</b>  |
|        | 21. How to agree on recommendations.  |
|        | 22. How to make changes to recommendations.                                 |
|        | 23. How the evaluation will be reviewed.                                    |
|        | 24. How to follow up on and support the recommendations.                    |
|        | 25. How to use feedback (or evaluation) to improve future evaluations.      |

Source: Social Impact n.d., pp. 6-18.