WRITING THE INCEPTION REPORT

This checklist is provides guidance to evaluation managers, evaluation focal points, and evaluation consultants. Not all evaluations require inception reports, but for complex and high-budget projects, it ensures that the evaluator understands the Terms of Reference (TOR). The inception report is a means of ensuring mutual understanding of the consultant's plan of action and timeline for conducting the evaluation. It also provides additional guarantee of adherence to, and interpretation of the TOR.

Revised March 2014

1.   ADHERENCE TO THE TOR

The inception report should describe the conceptual framework planned for undertaking the evaluation. The conceptual framework most often used in the ILO is one that is consistent with Results-Based Management (RBM) and should address the following criteria proposed by the OECD: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

The main source of the evaluation questions, resulting from consultation with the tripartite constituents, partners and stakeholders, are questions about the project that the client(s) want the evaluation to answer. For each of the above-listed criteria, the evaluation manager should have included two or three specific evaluation questions in the TOR.

2.   EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The consultant should adequately describe the way that the chosen **data collection methods, data sources, sampling and indicators** will support the evaluation questions.[1]

The inception report should include the **data collection worksheet**, **Annex I** of this checklist.

It is important to check that methods draw on both **subjective and objective sources** of data which can provide a balanced and insightful report.

Choice of any **site visits** within a country by the evaluator, who is entitled to select locations randomly or based on selection criteria, should be specified in the report. Any workshops planned for data collection, interviews or discussions should also be documented.

---

[1] Approval of the inception report by the evaluation manager constitutes an acceptance by the ILO of the results generated through the proposed methodology. See also **_Guidance Note 6: The Evaluation Manager: Duties and Responsibilities._**

3.   WORK PLAN

The inception report must contain a work plan which indicates the phases of the evaluation, the timing, key deliverables and milestones. A timeline or work process flow chart can sometimes be an effective way of communicating this information and keeping track of the evaluator's progress *(see Annex II)*.

4.   ADHERENCE TO ILO GUIDANCE AND FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

The Inception Report should include the consultant's acknowledgement of the formatting requirements, especially with regard to:

- ✓   Formulating and presenting recommendations;

- ✓   Identifying and presenting lessons learned, and filling in the appropriate templates; and

- ✓   Identifying and presenting emerging good practices, and filling in the relevant templates.

The evaluation manager should discuss the inception report with the evaluator until all points are mutually understood and agreed upon. The following supplemental documentation issues should be verified:

- ✓   *Checklist 10: Documents for the evaluator*, should be finalized and signed by the evaluation consultant which confirms that all necessary documentation has been received; and

- ✓   Acceptance of the terms noted in *Checklist 5: Preparing the evaluation report*.

Inception Report – Template for filling in form [To access a form and timeline to fill in: Click here]

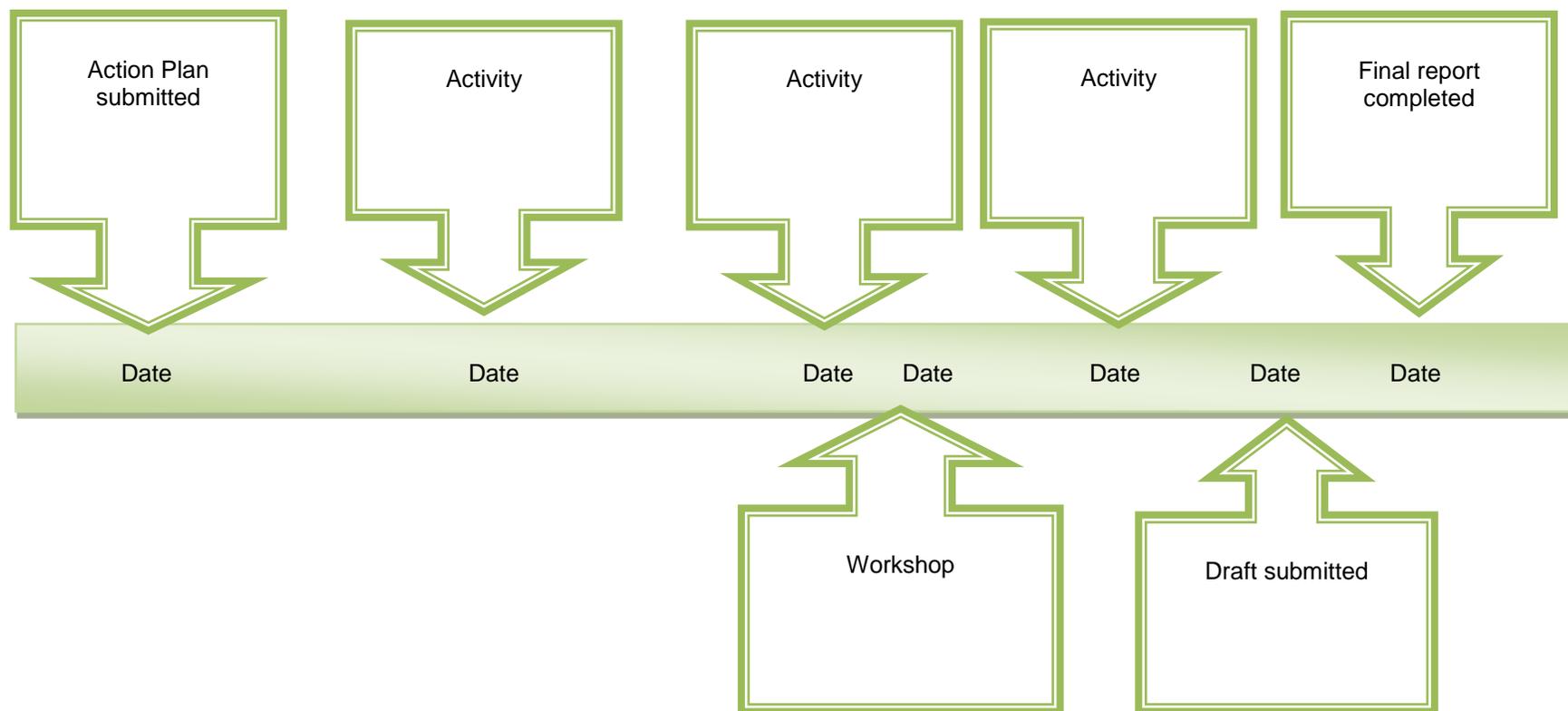| *ANNEX I -* DATA COLLECTION PLAN WORKSHEET FOR THE INCEPTION REPORT							
Evaluation Questions	Indicator	Sources of Data?	Method?	Who Will Collect?	How Often?	Cost?	Who will analyze?
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

ANNEX II - SAMPLE TIMELINE[2]

[To access a form and timeline to fill in: Click here]

Evaluation: _____   Date: _____

Action Plan submitted

Activity

Activity

Activity

Final report completed

Date   Date   Date   Date   Date   Date   Date

Workshop

Draft submitted

---

[2] This can be customized by the evaluation consultant