



► Guidance Note 2.2: Self and Internal Evaluations

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This guidance note is part of Pillar 2 ► *Types of evaluation*

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► 1. INTRODUCTION

In the ILO's former, conventional approach, self-evaluation was seen as being a special case of internal evaluation. The implication of this was that guidance on self- and internal evaluation was contained in a single note.

As of 30 Oct. 2018, there has been a change of policy regarding self-evaluations. The ILO Governing Body, at its 334th session, formalized the good practice that final project reports incorporate self-evaluation components in lieu of a separate formal self-evaluation report. A joint EVAL and PARDEV minute sheet introduced the new  [final progress report template with self-evaluation components](#) to be used by projects with value below USD \$500,000.

Therefore, EVAL's guidance note has been revised to focus on internal evaluation. Some mention of self-evaluation is made to allow for comparison and contrast. The target audiences of this guidance note are project managers who will be managing internal evaluations and ILO officials or consultants who will be conducting them.

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► 2. INTERNAL EVALUATION

According to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), internal evaluation¹ is defined as, “Evaluation of a development intervention conducted by a unit and/or individuals reporting to the management of the donor, partner, or implementing organization.” According to the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines, internal evaluation is conducted when a project has a modest budget and is of a short duration. It can also be combined with independent evaluations for projects with more rigorous evaluation requirements.

2.1 PURPOSE OF INTERNAL EVALUATION

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) believes that, when the purpose of an evaluation is accountability, independent evaluation is the logical choice for type of evaluation. This is because evaluations that are conducted using a process that ensure independence are perceived as having greater independence and objectivity.

However, when the purpose of an evaluation is programme improvement and/or organisational learning, internal evaluation may be a better choice for the type of evaluation. This is because internal evaluations maybe less expensive because there is not always the need for an external collaborator; they can be done more quickly because staff are already familiar with the context; they don’t need a certified evaluation manager sand, they can be more useful because those who identify good practices are in a position to implement them.

1. OECD/DAC. Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

2. Internal evaluation follows a formalized evaluation process but is managed by project administration, and may be conducted by and ILO official as well as an external evaluation consultant. If an internal ILO official is used, no ties or conflict of interest should exist with the management of the project. In the cases of mandated internal evaluation for projects over \$1 million, it is recommended that an independent, external consultant be used. All ILO certified internal evaluators completed EVAL’s Internal Evaluation Training Programme. Contact eval@ilo.org for more information.

One might usefully ask if conducting internal evaluation will affect perceptions of independence — one of EVAL’s stated principles. The answer is most definitely, yes. However, if the purpose of the evaluation is project improvement, is then utilization would be a stronger imperative than independence.

2.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The staffing of an internal evaluation is different from that of other types of evaluation in the ILO. Because of a lack of evaluation management capacity and the fact that independence is not a claimed attribute of the evaluation, it is EVAL’s policy that all internal evaluations should be managed by the project manager.

The evaluation, itself, can be conducted by a certified internal evaluator of the ILO² who has had no previous association with the project or an external consultant.. Hiring an external consultant, however, does not change the type of evaluation into an independent one.

2.3 DESIGNING AN INTERNAL EVALUATION

An evaluation design consists of the evaluation criteria and questions, the approach to be used for answering those questions, a plan for collecting the information needed to formulate an answer, a plan for analysing the information that is collected and a description of the deliverables. The evaluation should comply with international norms and standards.

2.4 CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

ILO project evaluations usually focus on the relevance of the project to beneficiary needs, the validity of the project design, the project’s efficiency and effectiveness, the impact of the results and the potential for sustainability. For each criterion, above, the evaluation manager should formulate two or three specific questions.

The main source of these questions is the initial consultation with the tripartite constituents, partners and stakeholders. These are the questions about the project that the clients want the internal evaluation to answer. Because this type of evaluation emphasizes improvement and organizational learning, the evaluation questions used to guide the study should reflect this purpose.

In addition to the above, internal evaluations should address cross-cutting policy drivers – international labour standards, social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination, and a just transition to environmental sustainability.

Further guidance:

-  [Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating gender in monitoring and valuation of projects](#)
-  [Guidance note 3.2: Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)

2.5 APPROACH

Part of the value of conducting internal evaluations is that they expose constituents and ILO staff to the concepts and practice of Results-based Management (RBM) in country programmes. RBM, as the name implies, is a management technique, not an approach to evaluation.

The approach to evaluation that corresponds most closely to RBM is the goal-based approach. The goal-based approach to evaluation is defined as an evaluation based on the goals and objectives of the programme or project.

However, because of the special nature of internal evaluations it might be necessary to create an eclectic blend of approaches. This could be done by incorporating aspects of the participatory approach, the case study approach, etc.

2.6 DATA COLLECTION

In order to address the questions formulated above, the following methods should be used: document analysis, interviews and stakeholders’ workshop. The evaluation consultant should refer to EVAL’s checklist on validating methodologies.³

Document Analysis

An important activity that should be carried out in preparation for an internal evaluation is the assembling of documents. The important documents may include the list found below. These documents will serve as the basis of the desk review. The information should also be circulated in advance to the key stakeholders and partners who will be invited to attend the Stakeholder workshop (see below). The information will serve as the basis of discussion during the workshop.

- National development frameworks
- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

- Decent Work Country Programme Documents
- Strategic Programme Framework and Programme & Budget
- Baseline reports and information
- Monitoring reports
- Progress reports and status reports
- Project evaluation reports
- Other studies and research undertaken
- Technical and financial report of partner agencies
- National workshop proceedings or summaries

Interviews

The internal evaluator will also need to conduct interviews with key informants. An interview is a conversation with a purpose. Interviewing is necessary to find out about behavior that occurred when the researcher was not present, opinions, feelings, knowledge, sensory perceptions, and/or background information⁴.

Stakeholders’ Workshop

Convene a stakeholder’s workshop to which up-to 25 key constituents, stakeholders and partners are invited. The workshop will have four purposes: 1) to gather additional information from the participants, 2) to answer the evaluation questions by reviewing and discussing the information on the project, and 3) to present the preliminary findings to the sources from which information was collected as a way to validate the interpretations, 4) to make evidence-based recommendations on how the project should go forward.

2.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND TRIANGULATION

Qualitative data analysis should be used to analyze the data collected using the methods described above. This type of analysis involves conducting content analysis of the data, looking for patterns, categories, taxonomies, and/or themes. In order ensure validity and reliability, the findings that emerge should be triangulated. Triangulation involves the confirmation of findings using multiple sources of data and methods of data collection.

2.8 DELIVERABLES

Another key task, for which several roles share joint responsibility, is evaluation reporting. Below the discussion of reports is an explanation of the structure and contents of the draft and final reports. This is followed by the procedure for circulating and approving reports.

Inception Report

The value of an inception report is that it ensures a common understanding of the ToR by the involved parties. The elements of an inception report include: 1) administrative information; 2) background and context; 3) purpose, scope and clients; 4) criteria and questions; 5) methodology; 6) deliverables; and 7) work plan.

Of the various elements, the work plan is probably the most important. The work plan indicates the phases of the evaluation, the timing, key deliverables and milestones. A work process flow chart can be an effective way of communicating this information.

Further guidance:

[Checklist 4.8: Writing the inception report](#)

3. See [Checklist 4.1: Validating methodologies](#).
 4. [Patton. How to use qualitative methods in evaluation](#). Sage Publications, 1987.

Draft and Final Reports

The internal evaluator should communicate the main findings and recommendations through a written report. Certain standard elements should be addressed in every evaluation report. Table 1 presents a sample structure and table of contents of a evaluation report and identifies the standard elements that should be addressed in each evaluation. The report should not usually exceed 20 to 30 pages.

The procedures for circulating and approving written reports call for the internal evaluator to prepare a draft report according to TORs and submit it to the evaluation manager. The evaluation manager, in turn, circulates the draft report for comments to tripartite constituents, partners and stakeholders.

The evaluation manager compiles the comments received from the tripartite constituents, partners and stakeholders and forwards them to the internal evaluator. The internal evaluator incorporates them and submits the final report to the evaluation manager. As a professional courtesy, the evaluation manager sends a copy of the final report to the Regional Evaluation Officer who, in-turn, forwards it to EVAL for inclusion in the i-track database. EVAL does not approve internal evaluation reports.

5. [Checklist 4.2: Preparing the Evaluation Report.](#)
6. UNHCR. (2005). Organizing Participatory self-evaluations at UNHCR: Guidelines.

Table 1. Structure of a evaluation report (see EVAL Checklist 4.2)⁵

- i. Cover page with key programme and evaluation data
- ii. Executive Summary
- iii. Description of the programme
- iv. Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation
- v. Methodology
- vi. Clearly identified findings for each criterion
- vii. Conclusions
- viii. Recommendations
- ix. Lessons learned and good practices
- x. Country Office management response
- xi. Annexes

2.9 RESOURCES

The principal resources that are necessary for conducting an internal evaluation are funds, people, information, and time⁶.

- **Funds:** the bad news is that internal evaluations are paid for out of the project budget. The good news is that internal evaluations are usually less expensive than independent evaluations;
- **People:** to build the internal evaluation capacity of ILO staff, the Evaluation Office has launched the Internal Evaluation Certification Programme (IECP). A roster of trainees is available upon request;
- **Information:** this includes all of the internal and external documents that are necessary for answering the evaluation questions;
- **Time:** Experience has shown that it takes at least three months to plan, execute and follow-up with the internal evaluation exercise.

2.10 USE AND DISSEMINATION

All internal evaluations should be sent to EVAL upon completion so that they may be uploaded into a centralized repository of evaluation reports and information that can be accessed by all ILO officials. These internal reports do not require EVAL approval, but should adhere to this guidance to produce findings that are relevant and useful.

Once the evaluation has been completed, the evaluator should present findings to project staff, the relevant technical department, key stakeholder groups and other relevant ILO officials. The presentation should focus on the evaluation findings evaluation, lessons learned and emerging good practices. Once all of this is accomplished, project management is expected to take action on the recommendations.