
Evaluation Workbook VI.

Evaluation plan: Report and use evaluation findings

Key points

When planning an evaluation, consider the key audiences for the evaluation, and how it will be used.

- Plan evaluation reporting for different audiences and information needs:
 - establish a stakeholder communication plan
 - plan to publish evaluation findings
 - plan to report next steps in response to findings.
- Plan for the evaluation's findings to be used in decision-making:
 - plan to monitor implementation of recommendations
 - identify recommendation 'owners'.
- Review ex-ante forecasts
 - use learnings to inform the design and appraisal of future initiatives.
- Share learnings

Introduction

A process for reporting and using the evaluation findings should be planned for in advance of the evaluation, as part of management planning (see *Workbook IV. Evaluation plan: Manage the evaluation*).

Workbook VII. Example evaluation report template presents an example comprehensive evaluation report template.

All proposals seeking government resources are required to include details of when the initiative was last evaluated or subject to other review processes (for example, audit and assurance), the findings and the recommendations, and the agency response (see *Evaluation TPG. 4. Evaluation for new proposals*).

Design evaluation reporting

When planning the evaluation, consider who the evaluation's findings will be reported to and how they will be used.

The evaluation is likely to be of interest to a range of stakeholders. When planning for evaluation reporting, consider the target audiences, their information needs, how the information should be presented, and the timeframes in which information is needed to inform decision-making (see *Table 1*). Engage early with key stakeholders to understand their communication preferences (for more on stakeholder engagement see *Workbook IV. Evaluation plan: Manage the evaluation*).

To support communicating and using evaluation results, it may be appropriate to develop different reports for the needs of different audiences. Consider different language and literacy levels, as well as access to communication channels (for example, internet access). Reporting formats may include a written report and summary information, briefing sessions or seminars, PowerPoint presentations, or interactive web-based materials (it may be useful to share a draft report with key stakeholders to test if the reporting is clear and accessible). Presenting at conferences and publishing in peer reviewed journals can provide opportunity to share lessons learned.

When presenting the evaluation report, the agency may separately provide comment on the evaluation findings and recommendations and publicise the next steps to be undertaken.

Plan to use findings

Evaluation management planning should include a plan to use evaluation results.

The evaluation workplan should consider how information can be presented and shared to support adaptive management and improvement of initiatives.

The evaluation process can be used to develop recommendations to inform further action. Where appropriate, work with the delivery teams and key stakeholders to co-design or test the feasibility and practicality of recommendations that respond to the evaluation findings. Consider how the recommendations align with the strategic direction of the agency and State Outcomes.

Establish a formal process to respond to the evaluation results and recommendations. Results and recommendations may relate to different areas of responsibility, such as initiative design, delivery or communications. Plan to work with the relevant business/delivery teams to implement responses to recommendations. For complex initiatives, responses may need to be coordinated across agencies, clusters or different levels of government.

Develop methods to identify response 'owners', who will be responsible for implementing responses and tracking their impact on key indicators. A table for monitoring the progress of recommendations may incorporate recommendations, agency comment, corresponding activities/responses, action owners, action dates and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor progress against recommendations (see *Table 2* for an example).

Review assumptions used in initiative design and appraisal

Evaluation is an opportunity to review and refine the assumptions about how an initiative will work, including how this is presented in the theory-of-change or logic model.

Where ex-ante appraisal was undertaken for the initiative, ex-post evaluation presents the opportunity to review forecasts against outcomes and benefits achieved and test the modelling methods used in the analysis.

A discussion of ex-post cost-benefit analysis (CBA) results compared to the ex-ante CBA forecasts, may be useful, particularly where significant differences warrant investigation (see *Technical note: Ex-post CBA*). A **business case variation report** will compare forecast benefits with findings, and document and investigate variations. When undertaken during the life of the initiative, an evaluation may provide information regarding what is achievable that can be used to update the business case.

Where evaluation is undertaken as part of benefits realisation management, it will provide evidence to update the benefits register and benefits report. The evaluation may also inform a **lessons-learned report**, which identifies successes, challenges or lessons learned through the benefits management process. These learnings can be used to improve planning for future initiatives.

Share learnings

Aim to share learnings from evaluation widely, across the organisation and with other organisations.

A key principle in the Evaluation Guidelines is that evaluation processes should be transparent and the findings released. Agencies are mandated to proactively and publicly release the findings of evaluations, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information, in line with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

Best-practice involves publication of the full report, and information on methods used in the evaluation, on the commissioning agency's website. Agencies may also choose to release a plain English executive summary and statement of findings on their website. Share findings with the stakeholders who participated in the evaluation and recognise their contributions.

Templates

Table 1 presents an example template for evaluation reporting.

Table 2 presents an example template for monitoring progress against evaluation recommendations.

Table 1: Example evaluation reporting plan

Evaluation reporting plan				
Type of evaluation	Audiences	Information requirements	Reporting format	Timeframes
For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process evaluation • Outcome evaluation 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative manager • Initiative delivery team 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed findings, to inform initiative management and improvements in delivery 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dashboard status updates • Data analysis - summary • Full evaluation report 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly reporting of status updates • Data analysis shared when completed (e.g. in 3 months) • Draft and final evaluation reports shared when completed (e.g. in 4 and 6 months)
	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive leadership 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level findings to influence decision making 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive summary (of evaluation report) • PowerPoint presentation 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared when final evaluation report complete (e.g. in 6 months)
	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer/client groups 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on how their input has shaped findings • Evaluation findings, excluding confidential information • Next steps by the agency 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder feedback presentation • Summary evaluation report, shared with relevant contacts 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation (4 months) • Final summary report shared when complete (e.g. in 6 months)
	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public audience • Media 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level findings, excluding confidential information 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary evaluation report, published on website 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final summary report shared when complete (e.g. in 6 months)

Table 2: Example recommendation monitoring template

Initiative:						
Objective:						
Date of evaluation:						
Recommendation	Agency Comment	Agency Response	Action owner	Action date(s)	KPIs	Implementation status
<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement new process • Adjust delivery timeframes 	<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support recommendation • Do not support recommendation 	<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action to be taken • Action not needed 	<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency 	<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to be completed by [date] 	<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators to monitor progress 	<i>For example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not commenced • In progress • Implemented