

Rater's Guide for the Evaluation Statement of Work (SOW) Checklist¹

Keyed to USAID ADS 203.3.1.5 (11/2/12) and USAID How-To Note Evaluation Statements of Work

Evaluation SOW Checklist Elements	Rater's Guide
Section 1: Activity² Description <i>Describe the specific intervention, project/program, or process to be evaluated</i>	
1. Is the SOW clear and specific about what is to be evaluated?	<p>This should be a succinct description of the activity to be evaluated and include a sufficient number of the following items to ensure clear understanding. Key elements include: the activity's full name(s), procurement instrument(s), award number(s), funding levels and source(s), start and end dates, key modifications, implementing partner(s) and roles/responsibilities, USAID/Technical office(s) and A/COR(s), activity target group(s), target geographic area(s) including a map(s).</p> <p>Impact evaluation SOWs should identify the specific intervention(s) and expected results to be evaluated.</p>
Section 2: Development Hypothesis and Its Implementation <i>Provide a brief background on the development hypothesis and its implementation</i>	
2. Does the SOW state the development hypothesis (or theory of change) for the activity/ intervention using clear if-then logic/ language in a narrative, Results Framework or Logical Framework format?	<p>This should be an if-then statement (or series of statements) clarifying what the result of a specific intervention will be. If we do X, then Y will occur. Should include what USAID was expected to deliver, expected results, and any critical assumptions. Visual depictions such as results frameworks or logical framework also work. One or the other must be present.</p>
3. Does the SOW describe the implementation status of the activity?	<p>The SOW should briefly describe the current implementation status and any significant changes (to context or activity) that have occurred since the start of the activity and may have impacted implementation (such as, budget changes, key modifications to the project, results achieved/not achieved).</p>
Section 3: Existing Performance Information Sources <i>Identify existing performance information sources, with special attention to monitoring data</i>	
4. Does the SOW identify specific existing performance information sources?	<p>The SOW should provide a list of documents/data that have been/will be provided to the evaluation team as part of the initial stages of the evaluation. Important document types include: project design documents, technical proposal, documentation of key modifications, baseline reports, needs assessments, performance monitoring indicators/data, implementing partner deliverables, previous evaluations, and other relevant materials.</p>
5. Are indicated documents provided with the SOW or does the SOW specify how and when the documents/data will be provided to the evaluation team?	<p>Best practice is to deliver documents with the SOW itself, but if this is not the case the SOW should describe how and when the documents/data will be made available to the evaluation team.</p>

¹ 11.23.13 version

² The term *activity* is used in this checklist to refer to an activity, project or program that will be evaluated.

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6. Does the SOW describe other secondary sources of information that would be useful to the evaluation team?	The SOW should identify additional secondary sources that will help the evaluation team to understand the context in which the activity functions and any changes to this context since the activity started. Types of information may include: Government or international data USAID is using to monitor activity/approach outcomes, e.g., growth rate, poverty rate, and any changes in the activity context.
Section 4: Evaluation Purpose, Audience and Intended Use <i>State the purpose of, audience for, and anticipated use(s) of the evaluation</i>	
7. Is the SOW clear and specific about why, in management terms, the evaluation is being conducted, i.e., what management decisions an evaluation at this time will inform?	Management purposes include: to redesign an existing activity, to provide insight for a follow-on activity, to determine impact, etc. USAID Evaluation Policy (http://www.usaid.gov/evaluation/policy) and ADS 203.3.1.3 (http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/203) provide additional reasons and triggers for conducting an evaluation. A management purpose is more specific than USAID's broad learning and accountability mandates for evaluation. The purpose should be consistent with but not repetitive of the evaluation questions.
8. Does the SOW indicate who makes up the audience(s) for the evaluation and how they plan to use it?	The SOW should identify anticipated use(s) of specific audience(s) such as USAID leadership, partner governments, and/or key stakeholders.
Section 5: Evaluation Questions <i>Identify a small number of evaluation questions that are relevant to future decisions and answerable with empirical evidence</i>	
9. Does the SOW identify a small number of specific questions to be answered?	<p>USAID's How To Note on Evaluation Statements of Work suggests identifying 3-5 questions. These must be questions with an actual question mark to be counted as a question; all question marks should be counted. Do not give credit for statements that should have had a question mark at the end but do not include one; only count the question marks you see.</p> <p>Impact evaluation SOWs should highlight questions that involve causality/attribution, e.g., what effect did the intervention have on specific intended outcomes?</p>
10. Please enter the number of visible question marks you see in the box provided.	Based on the definition in the preceding checklist item, please use the space provided next to this checklist item to provide a specific count of the actual number of question marks (?) that you can visibly see and not infer.
11. Does the SOW indicate the relative priority of each evaluation question?	A SOW should indicate the priority assigned to each question, for example by stating that questions are listed in priority order.
Section 6: Gender Disaggregation and Gender Differential Effects <i>Identify all evaluation questions for which gender-disaggregated data are expected; also identify questions for which an examination of gender specific or gender differential effects are expected</i>	
12. Does the SOW identify questions for which data is expected to be disaggregated by sex (M/F)?	The SOW should identify all evaluation questions for which sex-disaggregated data are expected.
13. Does the SOW identify questions for which an examination of gender specific or gender differential effects are expected?	The SOW should identify all evaluation questions (and aspects within those questions) for which an examination of gender specific/differential effects of the activity are expected (including access, participation, results, benefits).

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Section 7: Evaluation Design/Methods <i>Identify evaluation method(s) that will generate the highest quality and most credible evidence on each evaluation question, taking time, budget, and other practical considerations into account and specify methods with sufficient detail</i>	
14. Does the SOW recommend specific design/methods for conducting the evaluation?	<p>The SOW should suggest design/methods that will generate high quality evidence which take into consideration the evaluation questions, purpose and resources available. All evaluations should describe anticipated methods with specificity.</p> <p>Impact evaluation SOWs should indicate expectations for the use of an experimental or quasi-experimental design, including a specific type of quasi-experimental design if appropriate.</p>
15. Does the SOW recommend data collection methods on a question-by-question basis?	<p>The SOW should include data collection methods on a question-by-question basis, pursuant to USAID's How-To on developing evaluation SOWs.</p>
16. Does the SOW state clear requirements for sampling stratification and/or the presence of a sampling plan?	<p>The SOW should describe anticipated sampling procedures, (representative or not; random quota, purposive, criteria). Requirements for analysis by strata (sex, age, region) should be identified.</p>
Section 8: Data Analysis <i>Describe how data collected on evaluation questions will be analyzed</i>	
17. Does the SOW recommend specific methods for data analysis?	<p>The SOW should identify anticipated data analysis methods, including specific types of quantitative (descriptive statistics, inferential statistics) and qualitative analysis (content, pattern).</p>
18. Does the SOW recommend an analysis method for each evaluation question or type of information?	<p>The SOW should describe data analysis methods on a question-by-question basis and/or in relation to data collection methods the SOW describes.</p>
Section 9: Strengths and Limitations <i>Describe strengths and limitations of the evaluation methods</i>	
19. Does the SOW identify known or anticipated strengths and limitations of methods proposed?	<p>The SOW should identify strengths and limitations of methods proposed. These are usually related to an evaluation's anticipated credibility and, for impact evaluations, the validity of inferences about causality.</p>
Section 10: Evaluation Deliverables <i>Specify the evaluation deliverable(s) and their timelines and logistics, including requirements for the transfer of data to USAID and expectations concerning evaluation team involvement in the dissemination of evaluation results</i>	
20. Does each deliverable listed specify requirements including a timeline?	<p>At a minimum, required deliverables should include the actual evaluation team's evaluation design/plan (inclusive of instruments and a sampling plan, if appropriate), a draft and final evaluation report, any briefings required, and evaluation data. The SOW should specify the time frame and content of each deliverable that evaluators are required to complete.</p>
21. Does the SOW explain how deliverables (including data) will be transferred to USAID?	<p>The SOW should request that all evaluation deliverables and data (data sets, code books, transcripts, including any required translations) be provided at the end of the evaluation and explain how and in what format data should be transferred, e.g., quantitative data on a flash drive or CD; qualitative data in an electronic file in a well-organized, easy to read format.</p>

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Section 11: Team Composition <i>Clarify expectations about the methodological and subject matter expertise and composition of the evaluation team, including expectations concerning the involvement of local evaluation team members (one team member should be an evaluation specialist)</i>	
22. Does the SOW specify the size of the evaluation team required and qualifications/responsibilities for specific positions?	The SOW should describe the size of the evaluation team necessary, the roles and responsibilities of team members, and specific qualifications that team members must possess. Indicate whether the team leader must be external.
23. Is the SOW explicit about requiring that one team member be an evaluation specialist?	The SOW should be explicit about requiring an evaluation specialist, which is described as an individual with BOTH training/education in evaluation/research methods, as well as significant experience on or leading evaluation teams. (See <i>Meta-Evaluation of Quality and Coverage of USAID Evaluations 2009-2012</i> Exhibit 1 at http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/meta-evaluation-quality-and-coverage-usaid-evaluations-2009-2012)
24. Does the SOW describe expectations concerning the involvement of local evaluation team members?	The SOW should indicate whether USAID requires the participation of local team members.
25. Is the SOW explicit about requiring that team members to provide signed statements about any conflict of interest?	The SOW should explicitly state that all team members are required to provide a signed statement attesting that they have no conflict of interest, or describing any existing conflict of interest, <u>before</u> costs associated with the evaluation are incurred.
Section 12: Intended Participation of USAID Staff and Other In County Stakeholders <i>Describe intended participation of USAID staff, implementing partners, national counterparts or customer/ beneficiaries in the design or conduct of the evaluation</i>	
26. Does the SOW describe who beyond the evaluation team will participate in the evaluation?	The SOW should specify who, beyond the team members described in the team composition section of the SOW, will participate in the evaluation – USAID staff, implementing partners, host government, and/or beneficiaries.
27. Does this section describe how and when these individuals will participate in the evaluation?	The SOW should describe the intended roles and responsibilities of any additional participants. For those individuals who are described as participating <u>team members</u> , rather than observers, the estimated amount of time they will make available to serve as team members should be indicated.
Section 13: Scheduling and Logistics <i>Address scheduling, logistics and other support</i>	
28. Is the SOW clear and specific about any dates that need to be reflected in the evaluation team's plan?	The SOW should identify any dates around which the evaluation team must schedule their evaluation work and deliverables (local holidays, fixed dates, seasonal issues). The SOW should also state the expected period of performance. Experience suggests that this is often best conveyed by stating expectations in relation to contract signing, i.e., two weeks after contract is signed, rather than specific calendar dates. Where a specific completion data is important for USAID, that date can be identified as a “fixed date” for a particular deliverable.
29. Does the SOW indicate whether it will be USAID's responsibility to provide the team with logistical support or if the team is expected to make its own arrangements?	The SOW should outline the specific kinds of support USAID will provide, along with any additional logistical roles or responsibilities that it expects the team to fill. The SOW should also identify any security issues or procedures that may apply.

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Section 14: Reporting Requirements <i>Clarify requirements for reporting and dissemination, including mandatory inclusion of the Appendix 1 of the Mandatory Reference on Evaluation</i>	
30. Does the SOW describe requirements for the draft and final report?	The SOW should specify the sections required in the report, expected number of pages, and any formatting, branding or translation requirements (including reference to the Evaluation Report Template - http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/evaluation-report-template and How-To Note Preparing Evaluation Reports - http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/how-note-preparing-evaluation-reports).
31. Is the SOW clear about any requirements that will support the dissemination of the evaluation's results?	The SOW should identify anything above and beyond the delivery of a single electronic report that is required e.g., the number of hard copies needed of the final report, PowerPoint/handouts for oral briefings, submission to the DEC. The SOW should include relevant sections of USAID's dissemination plan if one has been created for this evaluation.
32. Does the SOW include a copy of Appendix 1 of the USAID evaluation policy, which describes USAID's criteria for ensuring the quality of an evaluation report, as required by that policy?	The SOW MUST include a copy of the Appendix 1 of the Mandatory Reference on Evaluation and should note that the evaluation report will be reviewed against the Evaluation Policy's <i>Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report</i> as described in Appendix 1. A copy of this Appendix is provided below so that it can be included when the SOW is reviewed if that has not already been done.
Section 15: Evaluation Budget <i>Include a budget</i>	
33. Is the SOW clear about the total budget or at least the LOE available for the evaluation?	The SOW should include information about the LOE expected, preferably in the form of a matrix that displays team member days allocated by evaluation task. Additional budget information should be included here if available.

APPENDIX I

CRITERIA TO ENSURE THE QUALITY OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

- The evaluation report should represent a thoughtful, well-researched and well organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in the project, what did not and why.
- Evaluation reports shall address all evaluation questions included in the scope of work.
- The evaluation report should include the scope of work as an annex. All modifications to the scope of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition, methodology or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the technical officer.
- Evaluation methodology shall be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists and discussion guides will be included in an Annex in the final report.
- Evaluation findings will assess outcomes and impact on males and females.
- Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).
- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay or the compilation of people's opinions. Findings should be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- Sources of information need to be properly identified and listed in an annex.
- Recommendations need to be supported by a specific set of findings.
- Recommendations should be action-oriented, practical and specific, with defined responsibility for the action.