

International Food Assistance Division Evaluation Quality Checklist

Purpose: This checklist serves as a tool for USDA staff to review and strengthen IFAD baseline, midterm, and final draft evaluation reports. It may also be used as a guide for evaluators or implementing partners preparing evaluation reports. High-quality, evidence-based evaluation reports are critical for learning, accountability, and improving IFAD program effectiveness.

Instructions: For all questions below, answer with one of the following:

G (3 points): *Generally Addressed*: the evaluation mostly addressed the key element(s) of the criterion but did not have to completely address all elements.

P (2 points): *Partially Addressed*: the evaluation had one or more clear area(s) for improvement on the criterion

I (1 point): *Inadequately Addressed*: the evaluation had many clear area(s) for improvement on the criterion

N (0 points): *Not at all Addressed*: the evaluation did not show that steps were taken to address the criterion

n/a: Not Applicable

#	Question:	Response	Notes
	<i>Cover and Pre-Report Items</i>		
1	Does the report include the USDA template cover page?		
2	Does the cover page include the names of the evaluation team leader(s)? *Name(s) provided will be listed as report author on the DEC.		
3	Does the report include a glossary and/or list of acronyms?		
	<i>Executive Summary</i>		
4	Does the report have an Executive Summary that provides the reader with an accurate reflection of the evaluation purpose, methodology, limitations, findings, and recommendations?		

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	<i>Introduction and Purpose</i>		
5	<p>Does the report include a description of the project evaluated, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results Framework, • theory of change, • critical assumptions, • project implementation strategy, • locations, • target population, • stakeholder roles, • timeline, • phase (new/continuation), and • project budget 		
6	Does the report include a description of the evaluation purpose, including the target audience and anticipated use of evaluation results ?		
	<i>Evaluation Design</i>		
7	Are the evaluation questions clearly aligned to the project strategic objectives and results?		
7.1	Do the evaluation questions address relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability?		
7.2	Do the evaluation questions match those specified in the approved TOR?		
7.4	Do evaluation questions help in assessing if the intervention has contributed to promoting gender equality?		

#	Question:	Response	Notes
7.5	Do evaluation questions help in assessing if the intervention has contributed to promoting equity for any relevant disadvantaged groups?		
7.6	Do evaluation questions take into account unintended consequences?		
8	Is the evaluation design appropriate for answering the evaluation questions?		
8.1	If the evaluation design differs from the design proposed in the approved TOR, does the report (or annexes) provide a justification?		
8.2	FOR IMPACT EVALUATIONS ONLY: Is the counterfactual group well described and sufficiently rigorous to attribute impact? If not, is it clearly explained why?		
9	Is there a description of how the evaluation process incorporated participatory methods? Participatory approaches may be employed at any phase of the evaluation (e.g., design/methods selection, data collection, analysis, formulation of recommendations, or other) and involve a variety of project stakeholders (participants, staff, Government Partner, USDA, other donors, etc).		
10	Does the evaluation design incorporate ethical standards regarding all participants, including at-risk populations, if applicable?		
	<i>Methodology and Implementation of the Evaluation</i>		
11	Are the target population and sampling methods appropriate, given the scope and nature of the evaluation questions?		

#	Question:	Response	Notes
11.1	Does the description of the sampling methods include the sampling frame, sample size, rationale and mechanics of selection, and limitations of the sample?		
11.2	Are the quantitative sampling methods and sample size calculations presented in sufficient detail (type of analysis, minimum detectable effect size, and confidence level)?		
12	Does the report describe specific data collection methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, etc.), and are the methods appropriate for answering the evaluation questions?		
12.1	Are the data collection methods presented in a manner that makes clear which specific methods are used to address each evaluation question?		
12.2	Do data collection procedures appear to ensure the reliability of the data?		
13	Are data analysis methods clearly specified for each evaluation question (e.g. regression, dif-in-dif, interview coding, etc.)?		
13.1	Is the data analysis appropriate to answer the evaluation questions?		
14	Are the main study limitations identified?		
<i>Findings and Conclusions</i>			
15	Do the findings and conclusions address all evaluation questions (i.e. OECD evaluation themes, gender equality, equity, unintended outcomes, etc.)		
16	Are findings credible, i.e. presented as analyzed facts logically and transparently linked to evidence? (For example: 60% of beneficiaries interviewed reported that...; re-analysis of		

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	school records shows..., responses from principals indicate that...)		
17	Are the conclusions directly based on findings and evidence presented in the report?		
	<i>Recommendations</i>		
18	Are recommendations specific and actionable?		
19	Are recommendations justified by the available evidence?		
	<i>Annexes</i>		
20	Does the report have a table of project indicators that includes both targets and actuals?		
21	Does the report include a copy of the TOR or Scope of Work (SOW) for the evaluation?		
22	Are the data collection instruments provided as evaluation report annexes?		
23	Did the report include <i>Conflict of Interest</i> forms signed by team members?		
	<i>Overall Quality</i>		
24	Is the report well-written and mostly free of typos and other grammatical errors?		
25	Is the report well-organized (each topic is clearly delineated, subheadings used for easy reading)?		
26	Do tables and figures match what is reported in the text? (i.e. do tables reporting results match the description of results in the text of the report?)		
	<i>For Publication</i>		
27	Does the report have an accompanying public evaluation disclosure statement attesting that it is free from personal identifying information?		

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28	If the public and internal versions are different, are they clearly labeled as such (e.g., having a watermark that says “for internal use only” or similar verbiage).		
29	Does the public version of the report meet Section 508 Accessibility Standards?		
30	Does USDA have a Microsoft Word version of the document?		

Note: Many of these questions/criteria are adapted from the following sources:

- [1\) U.S. GAO - Foreign Assistance: Agencies Can Improve the Quality and Dissemination of Program Evaluations](#)
- [2 \) USAID's Annex E in Sectoral Synthesis of FY2015 Evaluation Findings and also after looking at FAS M&E Policy](#)