Worksheets for
Evaluation Planning

In IDRC Evaluations are carried out on themes, programs and projects for several purposes: to help POs and Directors develop and improve programs; to provide evidence about results and impacts; to document how resources have been used; and to assess the relevance of activities to corporate goals. Divisions and Regional Offices are now expected to submit plans indicating what evaluation activities, addressing what issues, they will be carrying out over a 3 year planning period. The purpose of these worksheets is to assist and encourage responsibility Centres in working through a series of steps leading to a plan which provides basic information on what, when and why specific evaluations will be carried out.

The approach is based on ideas from a number of sources, including some of ISSD's early experience in evaluation planning. We will propose a standardized plan format once there is a bit more corporate experience to base it on. The goal is a planning process which allows maximum creativity and flexibility for responsibility centres, yet which yields plans which are standardized enough to be synthesized into a corporate evaluation plan.   Groups which try using these worksheets are encouraged to invite the Evaluation Unit to participate and to give us feedback on the usefulness of this approach. Experience with it is expected to result in alterations and refinements.

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Worksheet 1
WHY evaluate?

Evaluations tend to be most successful where they are sharply focussed on the information needs of the client, and where the design of the evaluation responds clearly to those needs. No program can afford to evaluate everything that it does, so in evaluation planning we need to be selective and strategic.

Obtaining the best results and ensuring the use of the results of an evaluation is greatly aided by including users and participants, at the earliest stage possible in evaluation planning.

Use these categories as idea starters when you look at the map of your program to select the areas on which you will focus your evaluation activities. These are only suggestions; there may be other questions you want to answer through evaluation. Try and narrow it down to the two or so most important questions relevant to your program in each of the four categories.

RELEVANCE	MANAGEMENT
Is what you said you would do the most useful thing you could do with the resources available? Is your program making a significant contribution in terms of the goals of the Centre? Is your program relevant to community, national, or regional development needs? Does it contribute to the themes? Does it address gaps in the field of study? Could the program usefully move into new areas, move away from some areas? What gender/equity contributions?	Is the program well managed; what improvements could be made? Are the necessary working relationships being established? Are resources well utilized? Are activities being suitably monitored? Are those responsible finding out in time about needs and problems so that they can be addressed? Are appropriate theme contributions being made across the program? Are budgets, training, procurement, workshops well planned and effectively implemented? What are the institutional effects?
ACCOUNTABILITY

Is the program doing what it set out to do with the resources at its disposal? Is there waste? Is the mission being fulfilled? Can the activities, outputs and impacts be monitored? What is the nature of the program's contributions to the themes? | IMPACT

What effects or results have been achieved? Are these consistent with expectations? What "reach" has been achieved (beneficiaries, others affected by program)? What are the lessons for future activities? What results have been achieved in the thematic areas? |

Worksheet 2
Create a map of your program

Worksheet 2 presents the map of your program. The purpose is to create a picture of the program's elements, which is logical to program management and staff and illustrates the rationale linking objectives with activities, with expected outputs and impacts. Your program's map will reflect the judgements and perspectives of those involved in constructing it. Many pictures are possible. Objectives are often nested and hierarchical; outputs at one stage may be activities at another stage. Lay out the program in a way that makes most sense to those responsible for it. Even in a well articulated program, creating this map can provide new insights and ideas for program integration.

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Reach	Impacts

Objectives:
Use the most recent set of objectives which have been recognized on a Centre-wide basis for your program.

Activities: *the events supported with program resources.*
Indicate the activities in support of each objective. Activities may be in support of multiple objectives or single objectives. Activities may be projects, consultancies, or portions of a project, ie, workshops, training, etc.

Outputs: *the directly observable products of each activity*
Each activity has expected outputs, in terms of people trained, research results, reports, etc. Expected outputs should be indicated for each activity

Reach: *the group(s) touched by the program in some way*
The group(s) touched by an activity or project, may include clients, beneficiaries, co-funders, and other stakeholders, including those who may be negatively affected.

Impacts: *outcomes, effects, results, of the program on the stakeholders*
Direct impact, usually fairly **immediate**, occur in the group(s) directly reached by program outputs. Both intended and unintended impacts should be considered. Impact may be perceptual, behavioral or attitudinal change. This may also lead to **longer term impacts** on development activities; these should be related in some way to the mission of the program.

Worksheet 3
Identify the critical evaluation targets for your program

Having thought through and reached consensus on Worksheets 1 & 2, the program can now make the strategic choices about where in the program map (worksheet 2) it will focus, to answer the questions established in worksheet 1. Selectivity is helpful here. To do the best possible job with the resources available, decide where on the program map (worksheet 2) would be the most timely, relevant, place to focus an evaluation, or evaluations.

> What do you need to know in order to create the best possible program?
> What information will support the survival of your program?
> What will permit identification and strengthening of important emergent
>   themes?
> Where and when will you get the best possible information?

Certain projects or program priorities, may be chosen for evaluation, because they are unique; because they are risky; because they represent an important set or style of project; because you anticipate an increasing demand in this area and want to have better information on what is happening, and so on. Program areas and projects may also be chosen to monitor for ongoing management information: is the Program/Division managing its projects well? sufficient monitoring? well designed? leading to results? timely? You are making strategic choices, based on what will give you the information you need for specific purposes, with the minimum resources, and in a timely way.

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Reach	Impacts
I.	1.	i. ii.	A.	a.
	2.	i. ii. iii.	B. C.	b. c.
	3.	i.		
II.	1.	i. ii. iii.	A. C.	b. d.
	2.	i. ii.	D.	e.
III.	1.	i.		

Worksheet 4
Set up the information conditions to fulfil the evaluation needs over the period of the planning cycle

For each area selected for evaluation ((Worksheets 2 & 3) a table can be constructed showing where, how and when the pertinent information will be collected. The table should include the following:

Indicators	Information Sources	Research Tools	Timing	Responsibility	User: Target for Results

Indicators are the sign posts against which to measure success. They will vary from program to program and project to project. Various lists of indicators exist which can serve as guides in the process of selecting appropriate indicators for your needs.

Information Sources: Information and data can be gathered from a wide variety of sources, some of which will be more important that others in certain evaluations. Files, reports, research program staff, research users, stakeholders, decision makers, other organizations, periodicals, are some of the sources of information for program evaluation.

Research Methods are closely linked to the information sources you consider to be the most important. You may choose methods which are more or less participatory. If you are relying primarily on files and reports for an evaluation, then you will use methods such as content analysis. If your sources are people, surveys, interviews and focus groups may be appropriate; for periodicals, perhaps bibliometrics.

Timing: There are two issues of timing in evaluation planning. First is that information and data need to be collected when they are available. Often information is only available at certain stages in the life of a program or project. The second issue is the need to plan when the various components of the evaluation plan will be implemented over the course of the planning period. This is helpful in program planning (knowing when results will be available and needed) and in distributing workload.

Responsibility: Establishing who is responsible for implementation of various components of the Evaluation Plan will help to ensure that it is implemented.

The Evaluation Plan

The information in the first four worksheets is intended to provide the background to build a three-year evaluation plan for your program. The format for the summary of the plan is presented below. The information which is presented here does not include the detail of each evaluation. Rather it summarizes and permits the development of a corporate picture of evaluation activity in the Centre.

Title	Issues to be addressed	Start date	End Date	Responsible Unit and Individual	Comments

Title:
Insert the (tentative) title, or subject, of the evaluation.

Issues to be addressed:
This section should specify what issues or major questions will be covered in the evaluation. Based on the areas identified as important in Worksheet one, and on each of the places in the program selected for focus in Worksheet 3, what are the primary questions the evaluation will aim to answer?

Start date:
The planned start date for the evaluation should be indicated. This is useful both for your internal planning purposes and for creating a corporate picture of evaluation activity across the Centre.

End date:
This clarifies when the final report giving the results of the evaluation is expected.

Responsible Unit and Individual:
This section indicates the IDRC staff person and the Program or Unit within the responsibility centre, responsible for the evaluation being carried out.

Comments:
Special issues or features (timing, focus, responsibility) should be noted here.

Evaluation Planning
Worksheet 1

Relevance	Management
Accountability	**Impact**

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Reach	Impacts

Evaluation Planning
Worksheet 4

Indicators	Information Sources	Research Tools	Timing	Responsibility	User: Target for Results

Evaluation Plan

Program Unit: _____

Responsibility Centre: _____

Date: _____

Planning Period: _____

EVALUATION TITLE	ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED	START DATE	END DATE	RESPONSIBLE UNIT AND INDIVIDUAL	COMMENTS

What is Evaluation

Evaluation is a means of measuring results: judging, appraising or determining the worth, value or quality of on-going or completed research, generally in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

Monitoring, which is often carried out in conjunction with evaluation, is observing or checking on-going research activities and on their context, results and impact. Its goals are to ensure that implementation is proceeding as planned and to provide the opportunity for mid-course corrections, either in activities or in objectives, where warranted.

The purposes of evaluation are three-fold:

to enhance **accountability** to ensure that resources are provided as planned and are used appropriately,

to improve **performance**, to contribute to a better understanding and ultimately more effective program,

to document **lessons learned** and integrate the learning into the planning process.

An evaluation is not a report card. It is not the mechanism by which a program or project will rise or fall. It will not be sufficient to "prove" that something is good or bad. It is, rather, a tool to help managers, researchers and program officers do a better job, to find out why things go as they do, and provide a basis for making improvements. It is a tool to enhance learning about what we are doing. Some results of evaluation may be useful to senior management in presenting the public face of IDRC but evaluation should not be confused with what is a fundamentally political process.

IDRC evaluation needs are for multiple purposes within this framework:
- to measure value for money,
- to measure development impact & research impact,
- to assess relevance of IDRC to achieving Canada's sustainable development objectives,
- to assess the relevance of Divisions, and ROs in contributing to Centre

and Canadian objectives,
- to explore whether or not Divisional objectives are the most appropriate under current (and changing) conditions,
- to measure the effectiveness of RO strategies,
- to measure the effectiveness of Programs/Units in each Division,
- to extract lessons learned for further application.

Not all of these needs can be pursued at the same time. The wide range of needs reflects one of the basic dangers in evaluation: trying to collect all possible information on all possible issues. It is important to be clear about and to sharply focus on those issues. One should also be clear what it will not achieve. For example, evaluations assessing institutional linkages, or relevance of training will not necessarily collect data on development impact.

Criticisms are levelled at evaluation for several main reasons:

- An evaluation can be shaped to empower or disenfranchise certain groups, by virtue of the questions it asks, selection of participants and so on.
- An evaluation is often so "independent and objective" that it loses sight of the needs of the participants, beneficiaries and managers, so is not relevant to them.
- Evaluation reports often present so much information that the reports are difficult to assimilate and difficult to use. Further, evaluations are often lengthy processes; by the time information is presented, it is no longer relevant to the decisions which have to be made.
- Evaluation can be a high consumer of resources, collecting vast quantities of information much of which is never analysed let alone presented to the client groups.
- Evaluations are often so qualified by the approaches adopted and methods used that they are only useful to other evaluators who understand the specialized uses of the terms in the evaluation field.

Through a few guiding principles, we hope to avoid most of these problems.

Guiding Principles for
evaluation at IDRC

1. Evaluation is viewed from a program management perspective at IDRC. It is carried out in order to contribute to decision making, to help staff and management improve their programs and to help strengthen delivery to recipient institutions. In order to be effectively integrated into the management cycle, an evaluation plan should be based on continuous consultation and the presentation on an ongoing basis of findings leading to reports.

2. As far as possible, evaluation should adopt participatory methodologies which makes the evaluation transparent and stronger. Involving the participants, beneficiaries and users of the information in the evaluation process gains their interest, and also makes is possible to address their information needs in the evaluation. Stakeholders put at risk by an evaluation should have a right to active involvement in the process.

3. Evaluation should be incorporated into the design stage of a project or program, so that the information can be collected when it is available. This reduces the burden in time and financial resources placed on projects by evaluation.

4. Evaluation can impose a considerable burden in time and resources on recipient institutions. It is therefore important that donor evaluations, primarily for IDRC purposes, should not be carried out without some concomitant contribution to agency evaluation for its own needs.

5. Evaluation is both science and art. The art of identifying the critical issues to evaluate, persuading people to participate in the collection and utilization of information, is as important to the evaluation as the rigorous collection and analysis of the data.

6. Evaluation is based on the values of those who design and carry it out. The outcome of an evaluation does not describe "reality," but rather one version of reality. Constructions of reality are also linked with the context in which they are located: economic, spatial, temporal, social, cultural.

7. Evaluation plans and evaluations are based on individual or group constructions of reality, and they are subject to error and change as conditions, contexts and views, change; thus, the usefulness of evaluations is tempered by a clear understanding of the contexts in which they were carried out.

The IDRC Evaluation System

The IDRC evaluation system is an integral part of the reporting systems, and is made up of the following:

1. **Evaluation Plans** are developed and implemented by each Responsibility Centre (RC), with support from the Evaluation Unit.

2. **Project evaluations** are the responsibility of each RC. Evaluations may be conducted internally, externally, and with or without the assistance of the E.U. Project evaluations may also be requested or carried out by SMC or EU. This is done in consultation with the appropriate RC(s).

3. **Strategic evaluations** are conducted by the Evaluation Unit on a periodic basis.

4. The development and maintenance of a corporate perspective on evaluation is the responsibility of the Evaluation Unit.

BACKGROUND ON TYPES OF EVALUATION

The dictionary defines *evaluation* as "ascertaining or fixing the value or worth of" the object being evaluated. When this object is a project, program, policy, or an institution, evaluation involves judging the value of the results in terms of intended (and unintended) goals and objectives, and in reference to the resources put in to generate them.

Evaluation is conducted not for the sake of generating interesting information, but for strengthening *accountability* and for improved decisionmaking. Making the results available to stakeholders reinforces accountability. The *learning* that results from evaluation enables managers take more informed decisions.

The accountability dimension of the evaluation of publicly funded programs such as the CGIAR is quite important. The public goods generated by these programs are not subject to the valuation mechanisms and the discipline of the marketplace; and their clients and beneficiaries (such as the national agricultural research institutions in developing countries and poor farmers) are not powerful enough to have their opinions about them make a difference in the way these programs are run.[20] In these circumstances, evaluation activities also serve as a "surrogate market mechanism," by demonstrating how useful (or not useful) the program has been to its clients and beneficiaries.

Evaluation is conducted also for purposes other than reinforcing accountabilities. The following is a description of most types of evaluation carried out by public agencies.

Formative vs. summative evaluation. Formative evaluation aims at improving and strengthening the program[21] being evaluated. It focuses on inputs, processes, structures, implementation mechanisms, quality, etc., to identify ways of further enhancing performance and effectiveness. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is conducted upon the completion of the program for examining its results and effects. Ex-post impact assessments, for example, would be a form of summative evaluation.[22]

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[20] In market situations, clients can "exit" (i.e., refrain from purchasing the product) or "voice" their opinions about the product when they feel strongly about change. See: A. Hirschman, Exit, Voice and Loyalty (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1970) and S. Paul, Accountability in Public Services (World Bank, WPS 614, Washington, 1991.)

[21] Heretofore the term "program" is used to refer to the object being evaluated, which could be a project, program, policy, or an institution--such as a CGIAR center or the CGIAR System as a whole.

[22] For further examples of formative and summative evaluation see W. Trochim, "Developing and Evaluation Culture for International Agricultural Research" in David Lee, et.al., eds, Assessing the Impact of International Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development (Proceedings from a Symposium at Cornell University, Ithaca, 1991). Use of formative and process evaluation in the health field is described in: Dehar, M., Casswell, S. and P. Duignan, "Formative and Process Evaluation of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs", Evaluation Review. Vol 17, No. 2, 1993.

Input vs. process vs. output evaluation. Many public agencies carry out evaluation of inputs for accreditation or other purposes. Output evaluation is another name for summative evaluation. [23] The term process evaluation is sometimes used to refer to re-engineering, benchmarking or other studies aimed towards generating improvements in the processes used for transforming inputs into outputs.

Output vs. outcome evaluation. These terms draw a distinction between the immediate results of a program (its <u>direct</u> outputs, such as a new technology) and its ultimate effects (such as on farmers, the environment, and the society at large). [24] The distinction is particularly important for international agricultural research programs where the direct outputs of these programs are but one of the inputs to the work of national agricultural research institutions in developing countries and, therefore, the eventual impact of an international agricultural research program on beneficiaries and target objects depends also on action by these other actors. In many cases the national institutions work in partnership with international centers and contribute to the generation of both the outputs and outcomes.

Ex-ante vs. ex-post evaluation. *Ex-ante* evaluation of a program examines the likely effects (outputs and outcomes) of a planned activity before implementation starts. *Ex-post* assessments are carried out after the implementation is completed. The former is geared towards examining the key evidence and arguments in support of or against a planned activity, as a way of applying stringent tests of justification. The latter helps document the outputs and impact of the completed activity so that whatever is learned can help the institution reach better decisions in the future.

There are three distinguishing features of these various types of evaluation:

o *when* the evaluation is conducted, i.e.,
   -    *before* the start of implementation (or during program design);
   -    *during* implementation; or
   -    *after* the completion of the program.

o *what* the evaluation focuses on, i.e.,
   -    efficiency of inputs and processes;
   -    actual outputs and impacts.
   -    probable future impacts.

o the *purposes* of the evaluation, i.e.,
   -    to improve program design;
   -    to improve program performance;
   -    to generate information about outcomes and effects as an aid to further decision-making.

[23] Francis G. Caro, <u>Readings in Evaluation Research</u> (Russell-Sage, New York. 1971), pp. 2-3.
[24] This distinction was emphasized by the CGIAR Study Panel on Governance and Finance. See: CGIAR, <u>Report of the Study Panel on the CGIAR's Long-Term Governance and Financing Structure</u> (CGIAR Secretariat, Washington. D.C., 1994)

o .   *who* conducts the evaluation, i.e.,
-          self evaluation by board. management and staff;
-          internally-commissioned external evaluation;
-   *externally-commissioned and conducted evaluation.*

Figure A-1 below illustrates the various types of evaluation in terms their timing and main focus. A lag is shown following program completion as there is often a delay in the transformation of direct outputs into impacts (such as in the case of the national agricultural research systems further refining the technology generated by a CGIAR center before it is released for use by the farmers.)[25] The figure also includes "monitoring" as a form of evaluation that takes place during program implementation.

Figure A-1. Types of Evaluation for Finite Projects or Programs
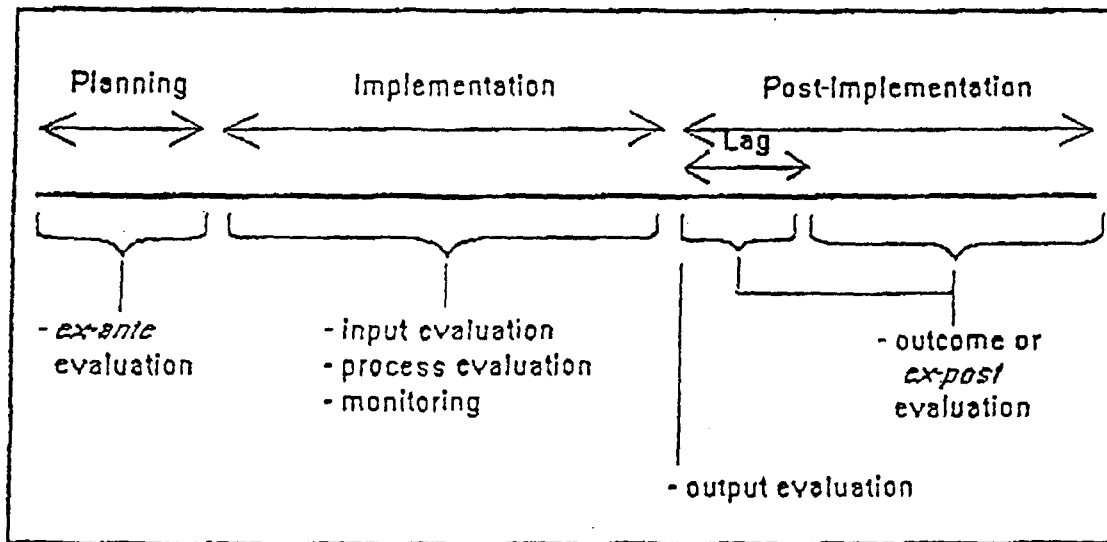
[25] In a similar visual presentation, George Psacharopoulos refers to this lag as "gestation period" for education projects. See: Psacharopoulos, G., "Tracking the Performance of Education Programs: Evaluation indicators," Paper presented at the Conference on Evaluation and Development, Washington. D.C., World Bank, December 5-6, 1994.

Figure A-2. Types of Evaluation for Continuing Projects or Programs
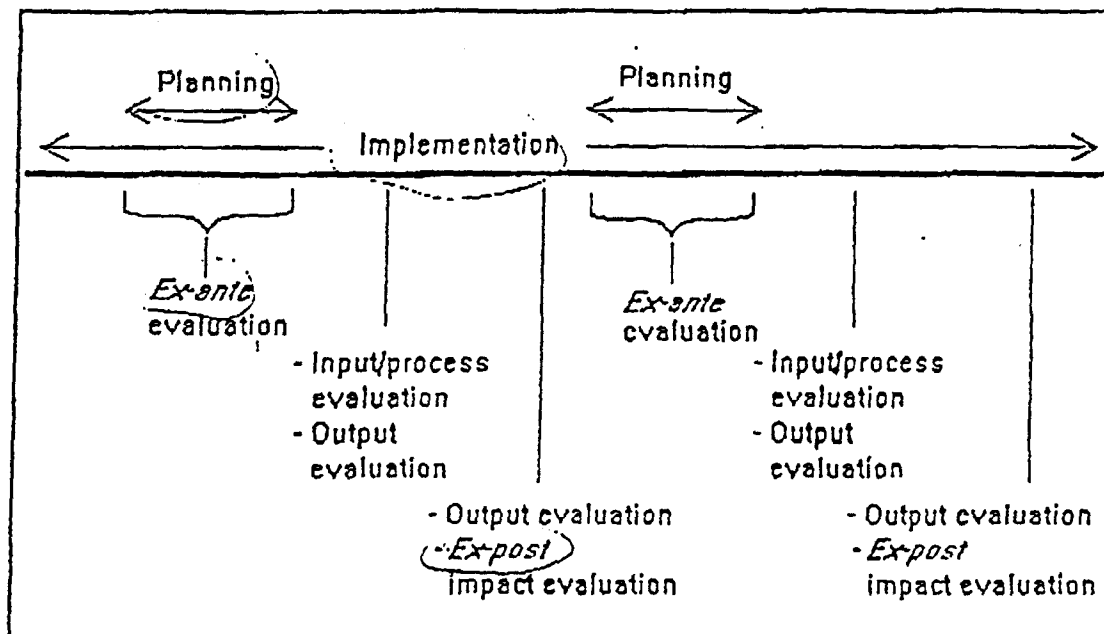
Most definitions of evaluation refer to a project or a program with time-bound objectives and a finite life. In such cases the differences between input/process evaluation and output/impact evaluation are pronounced because there is a point at which the project or program ends, signaling the possibility of starting the latter type of evaluation. The situation for programs of a <u>continuing</u> nature is different because there is no clear point at which the program would come to a close. In such cases there may be some milestones which could serve as trigger points for the start of output/impact evaluation. In general, however, for continuing programs the distinctions between input/process and output/impact evaluation are more blurred because of the somewhat arbitrary nature of the starting point for output/impact evaluation. As a result, clients of evaluation studies on continuing programs expect to see both types of assessment information in the evaluation reports. This situation is illustrated in Figure A-2 above.