

Concept for National Evaluation Plan (NEP)

1 Background

1.1 Why a national evaluation plan?

The National Evaluation Policy Framework was approved by Cabinet on 23 November 2011. This includes the establishment of an annual and a 3 year rolling National Evaluation Plan as a focus for priority evaluations of government, initially at national level (ie national priorities), and later at provincial and departmental level. These evaluations would be those that are large, strategic, innovative, or of significant public interest, and in particular those addressing aspects of the 12 outcomes.

This document sets out the concept for the National Evaluation Plan and the process to develop it. The first plan to be developed will be for one year – 2012/13, but in mid 2012 the process will start to develop the 3 year plan starting 2013/14. It is important to programme over several years as many evaluations require work over at least two financial years (particularly impact evaluations where a baseline is needed). This will need to have some flexibility in case funding is lost for particular evaluations, data proves to be too poor, etc.

The Plan is being led by the Evaluation and Research Unit (ERU) of DPME, supported by a national Evaluation Technical Working Group, including Auditor General, Treasury, DPSA, DSD, DBE, Health, Human Settlements, Stats SA and the Public Service Commission.

1.2 Reflections on international experience

This proposal has drawn from international experience of evaluation plans. To support DPME, the World Bank undertook a quick review of experience from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and the US. In addition the team had an example of a portfolio evaluation plan from Australia in the mid 1990s when Australia was the leading example of the use of evaluation. Some key elements from these countries are:

Brazil

- criteria include how feasible it is to develop a causal link between intervention and outcomes
- the evaluations are linked to national priorities
- they undertook double planning – first planning the short term priorities then the medium and long-term as we are planning
- Used a Programme Assessment Rating Tool (PART) which sets the criteria to rank best potential evaluations

Chile

- Undertakes 3 types – government evaluations, impact evaluations, comprehensive expenditure reviews with specific standards – note they link this to the budget process and they emphasise doing the government ones in the first 6 months of the financial year so it can feed into the budget process
- The Government budget law sets the guidelines to elaborate, select and fund evaluation proposals
- Selection criteria include background and previous documented performance, current programme situation (which evaluations are missing), programmatic priority
- Implementation of Evaluation Plans is submitted to the Ministry of Finance (which leads on evaluations) and subsequently Congress is in charge of determining if implementation plan is adequate

Colombia

- Evaluation committee of different ministries reviews proposals for government-funded evaluations. In addition donors fund many of the evaluations
- Once the evaluation has been agreed in outline a full proposal has to be submitted, so they clarify that it is feasible before agreeing funding
- Closely link monitoring data to evaluation
- An AntiCorruption Unit provides a legal framework to ensure ethical evaluations

Mexico

- Prepare multiyear evaluation plans
- Receive proposals and rank using the General Guidelines document. This document also sets out the sequence of evaluations, starting with the development of logical frameworks
- Each fiscal year provides the priority areas to be evaluated with the type of evaluation that best fits budgetary objectives

US

- Choice is based on policy importance
- Previously applied a Programme Assessment Rating Tool (PART) to evaluate all public funded programmes

Australia

- Had a system of portfolio evaluation plans during the period 1986-1996, and all federal programmes had to be evaluated

In practice the Australian example was very relevant and much of the format has been drawn from that example.

1.3 Objective of the National Evaluation Plan (NEP)

Purpose of the Plan

To provide details of evaluations approved by Cabinet as priority evaluations to undertake in 2012/13, which are linked with the budget process.

Indicators

Number of evaluations approved by Cabinet that address strategic priorities – 10 for 2012/13, 15 for 2013/14, 20 for 2014/15

2 Proposed content of the plan

The outline content of the plan is in Annex 1.

3 Benefits to departments to have their evaluation in the National Evaluation Plan

The benefits for departments submitting evaluations for the NEP are that:

- DPME will be a full partner in these evaluations, helping to assure technical quality;
- DPME will have up to R500 000 to part-fund these (and in some cases may be able to assist in finding donor funding if needed, particularly for impact evaluations);
- The approval by Cabinet will give some political focus, as well as impetus in ensuring the findings are followed up and have political support;
- The evaluations will be used to test and develop the system, and so the department has the opportunity to participate in development of the evaluation system.

4 Sources of potential evaluations

Evaluations may be proposed from a number of sources:

- Departments who feel that they have a topic(s) which qualify;
- Provinces or municipalities where they have a project which is of national importance;
- Centre of government departments who feel that a particular area needs to be explored through an evaluation (but the department involved must agree);
- Outcome facilitators in DPME who identify a topic in an outcome that needs to be addressed (but again the relevant department must agree);
- FOSAD/President/Cabinet who may suggest topics.

5 Process to develop the NEP

The process is in Table 1.

Table 1: Action plan for developing the National Evaluation Plan

Action	Responsible	When
1. Call for proposals for evaluations sent out at National M&E Forum	ERU	30 January
2. Letters sent to national and provincial DGs, including concept note format	ERU	31 January
3. Discussion with departments about possible submissions	ERU/outcome facilitators	February
4. Meeting with outcome facilitators about possible topics	ERU/outcome facilitators	February
5. Consider national priorities coming from FOSAD, President etc	ERU/DPME	February
6. Workshops with the departments to deepen understanding on the Evaluation Policy Framework and to assist them to complete the concept notes	ERU/Dept	15 February 21 February
7. Deadline for concept notes to be submitted	Depts	29 February
8. Proposals for evaluations consolidated	ERU	9 March
9. Proposals reviewed by ETWG and recommendations made for 10 evaluations for approval by Cabinet	ETWG	13/14 March
10. Final draft plan written up and sent to ETWG for comment	ERU	21 March
11. Comments back from ETWG	ETWG	23 March
12. Plan submitted to G&A working session	DPME	15 March
13. Plan submitted to G&A cluster for recommendation	DPME	5 April
14. Plan submitted to Cabinet Sub-committee	DPME	8 May
15. Plan submitted to Cabinet for approval	DPME	May tbc
16. Finalisation of terms of reference, commissioning of evaluations in the NEP	Depts	June+

6 Submission process for 2012/13

The submissions should be by the department that is the custodian. If there are several departments with no-one coordinating, then put all the departments.

If centre of government departments wish to propose an evaluation, they should discuss with the relevant department who should make the submission.

The proposals must be submitted by 29 February, to Jabu Mathe of the Evaluation and Research Unit, at jabu@po.gov.za.

7 Selection process

7.1 Criteria for selection

The following criteria have been developed for selection of evaluations, and a scorecard will be developed based on this:

1. Object of evaluation should be the specific intervention e.g. policy, plan, programme, or project
2. Should not be exclusively the responsibility of a parastatal? (need to discuss further – e.g SASSA vs DSD; Eskom vs Energy/DPE)
3. There should be clear implementation responsibility for the evaluation and ownership of the potential improvement plan
4. It should be a national priority as indicated in the Framework
 - large (>R500m or with a wide footprint), and/or strategic, and/or innovative and learnings are important, and/or of significant public interest
 - Strong preference to those linked to the 12 outcomes, and the top five priority ones will have precedence
5. They may be emerging as a key area where learning is needed in the outcomes, and a programmatic priority within the outcome
6. They may be from an area where there is a lot of public interest.
7. A later criteria will be how feasible it is to develop a causal link between the intervention and outcomes ie existing theory of change. In future a logical framework will be required for evaluating programmes and projects, unless a diagnostic evaluation is being considered. At this stage delivery programmes are not standardised and so this is difficult.
8. How recently was the intervention evaluated – if not for a long time then it is a higher priority.
9. Ideally there should be monitoring data that can be used including background and previous documented performance, current programme situation
10. There is a potential budget for evaluation from the Dept, DPME or donors

A concept note format has been developed which will be used for submissions and gives background on the proposed evaluation and provides information which can be used for motivating and assessing the proposal. The concept note is in Annex 2.

A score sheet has been developed which is attached in Annex 3.

7.2 Selection process

The ERU will meet to consolidate the proposals in preparation for an extended Evaluation Technical Working Group meeting on 13-14 March where teams will go through the proposals and score them, and a consolidated set of proposals produced (which will eventually be reduced to Table 1 in the plan.

In terms of possible responses to the proposals these include:

- Yes, included in the plan
- Not included in the plan but a good idea – the department should go ahead anyway, (and ERU may be able to provide some support) or it could be considered for a subsequent year
- Not included in the plan and the department needs to strengthen certain aspects – but it may be possible for future consideration
- Rethink and we suggest these areasshould be strengthened

Annex 1: Outline of the National Evaluation Plan

This will be around 20 pages long

1 Introduction

1.1 The Framework

- approved when
- key elements
- why doing evaluation (key messages)
- why the Plan, what are the benefits
- what selection in the plan means (and what it doesn't mean)
- Link to other relevant documents (could be table)
- Audit of evaluations (do we want to annex the list?)
-

1.2 Purpose of the NEP

To provide details of evaluations approved by Cabinet as priority evaluations to undertake in 2012/13, which are linked with the budget process.

1.2 Criteria and process used for selection

- guidelines to elaborate, select and fund evaluation proposals
- role of ETWG
- calls from different sources (national depts/provinces/municipalities, centre of gov, outcomes facilitators, Presidency, Cabinet)

2 Priority national evaluations conducted in 2011/12

2.1 Evaluations completed within the year

Early Childhood Development (ECD) diagnostic review

The first evaluation undertaken supported by DPME has been a Diagnostic Review of the ECD Sector, undertaken in tandem with a Review of the National Integrated Plan for ECD. The partners have been DBE, DSD, Department of Health, Department of Women, Children and People with Disability. The main report was presented at the end of January and the key finding was.....A combined report with the NIP Review will be presented in May. The evaluation has been a diagnostic, assessing the issues overall in the sector. There is much existing work done, and so this has not been primary research, but using 47 existing studies. Key questions were around the overall paradigm being used, the types of services offered, cost-effectiveness, and institutional issues.

2.2 Evaluations started in the year and continuing to 2012/13

There would be one paragraph on each.

- Human settlements 1
- Child/maternal health
- CRDP

3 Summary of proposed evaluations for 2012/13 to 2014/15

Table 1 summarised the evaluations proposed for 2012/13. The three year plan will be produced by September 2012.

Table 1: Summary of proposed evaluations for 2012/13

Name of Department	Name of intervention	Title of evaluation	Methodology	Years of implementation			Key motivation for this evaluation including scale (eg budget, beneficiaries)
				2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	
Social Department	Child Support Grant	Impact evaluation of the child support grant	Rigorous quasi experimental research design following a mixed method. Preliminary work needed in order to inform the quantitative study with regards to impact pathways	Completes			This is a major social benefit for poor people, reaching 10.4 million children per year, and with an annual budget of R90 billion in 2011/12. No rigorous impact evaluation conducted previously.

4 Concepts for evaluations for 2012/13

Includes the 10 evaluations in the 2012/13 plan, providing a maximum of one page on each evaluation. An example is provided below.

4.1 Impact Evaluation of the Child Support Grant

Implementing department Department of Social Development

Background to the intervention and the evaluation being considered

The Child Support Grant was introduced in ...and is one of the Government's biggest poverty relief interventions with around 10.4 million children benefiting. The grant is sometimes recognised as having a positive impact on the lives of the most marginalized and vulnerable South Africans. There is at the same time a strong view of the unaffordability of the social security programme and which claims that the grant creates dependency, that it acts as a disincentive to seek employment and that it has a range of other undesirable spin-off effects. While there has been some rigorous research done – all of which finds in favour of the grant and its poverty reducing and developmental impacts – in general, it is not yet sufficiently persuasive and does not succeed in conclusively proving the value of the benefits accruing as a result of the investment being made in our children. This evaluation will create the evidence base required to make these arguments conclusively.

Importance of the evaluation

This is a major programme spending R90 billion on some 10.4 billion children. In view of the questions raised about social grants this will enable assessment of the impact that the Child Support Grant is having and whether this is a worthwhile investment by the South African Government.

Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation will provide strategic information (on whether the grant is achieving its policy goals); operational information (on where, how and why its implementation achieves the best results) and knowledge to be used for learning purposes (by showing how its performance can be improved by learning from what has been done).

Key questions to be addressed

- How has early versus late enrollment affected the well-being and cognitive development of children?
- How are critical life course events of adolescents affected by the extension of the CSG?
- What is the impact of the CSG on recipient households?
- What conditions determine and influence access to the CSG?

Principal audience Politicians, policy makers, Government officials

Type of evaluation Impact

Methodology

This will be a rigorous quasi experimental research design following a mixed method. Preliminary work is needed in order to inform the quantitative study with regards to impact pathways.

Management strategy

The project is jointly managed by DSD, SASSA and UNICEF with the DSD acting as the lead agent for this component of the evaluation process. SASSA, DSD and UNICEF form a Technical Steering Committee (TSC) that provides guidance and supervise the activities outlined in the TOR.

Cost estimate

The evaluation will cost X spread over y years. RX will be from X department and RY from Y donor.

Timing and Duration

The evaluation started in X. In 2012/13 we will be doing Y which should happen between (date 1) and (date 2). This impact evaluation is conducted 10 years after the CSG has been implemented and 2012/13 will see the finalisation.

4.2 Evaluation 2 etc

5 Outline of evaluations for 2013/14 and 2014/15

Paragraphs on each – to be done for the 3 year plan in mid-2012/13 and is not needed for the 2012/13 plan.

6 Key implementation issues

- How we report on the plan, and review the plan
- The link to the budget process, including donor funding
- Cabinet to approve the Plan and ensure that implementation is adequately supported.
- Next steps once the plan is approved eg development of full proposal
- Role of Parliament

Annex 2: Template for concept note for proposals for evaluations for 2012/13 National Evaluation Plan

Name of proposed evaluation	
-----------------------------	--

Institution proposing evaluation	<i>Could be suggested by central government institution but custodian is a different department</i>	Initial Contact person (name /designation)	
Telephone		Email	
Alternative contact		Telephone	
Email			

Department that is custodian (and will implement the improvement plan arising from the evaluation)	<i>Should not be exclusively the responsibility of a parastatal, if several departments with none coordinating, then list these here,</i>
Other key departments/ agencies involved in the intervention	

The evaluation you are proposing

Key focus of the evaluation	
Type of evaluation	Diagnostic/Design/Implementation/Cost effectiveness/Impact
Likely duration (months)	<i>Indicate when it needs to start/end</i>

The intervention being focused on

Specific unit of analysis (should be a policy, plan, programme or project)	<i>Eg ECD Policy, X programme, Y project etc</i>
Give some background to the intervention	
Summary description	
Focus of the intervention	<i>Addressing what problem or opportunity?</i>
Objective or outcomes (specify which)	
Outputs	1 .. 2 .. 3 .. 4 ..
Duration and timing (when started, when ends)	

Motivating for it being considered in the National Evaluation Plan

How is this intervention linked to the 12 outcomes?	
<i>Write the specific suboutput/output and how it links to it</i>	
Innovative	
<i>Is the intervention innovative and so important to do an evaluation for learning?</i>	
How large is the intervention?	
Estimated budget for current financial year (total also if known) and who will contribute what	<i>This is the budget for the intervention.</i>
Nos of people directly affected or enrolled (eg service users, beneficiaries...)	<i>If this does not directly serve citizens, then should be a measure of coverage, ie could be the number of buildings covered if the proposed evaluation is of whether to lease buildings or to own.</i>
Is this an area of substantial public interest? Is so how is this shown?	
<i>Please indicate whether this is very much in the public eye?</i>	
Is the intervention at a critical stage where decisions need to be taken, and when?	
<i>Please indicate any key decision points the evaluation needs to feed into</i>	
How recently was this evaluated – if not for a long time then higher priority	<i>Date and type of evaluation (send copy)</i>
Do you have an approximate budget for the evaluation?	
What potential budget for evaluation is available from the Dept, or donors	
What are the main evaluative questions you will be asking (maximum 5)	
1 ..	
2 ..	
3 ..	
4 ..	
5 ...	
What monitoring data or existing evidence can be used including on background and previous documented performance, current programme situation. Is this of good quality?	<i>If little evidence exists then a diagnostic is likely to be the only evaluation which is possible</i>
Is there a strong theory of change and logical framework	<i>At a later point this will be a requirement</i>
Name of DG or relevant DDG of custodian department	
Signature	
Name of DG or relevant DDG of partner department (repeat if needed)	
Signature	

Annex 3: Scoresheet for selection of proposals

NAME OF DEPARTMENT:

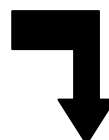
EVALUATION TITLE:

EVALUATION TYPE: ...Diagnostic, implementation, impact, economic, synthesis

1 Is the intervention a national priority and we need to focus on it?

Criteria <i>Indicative meaning of scores is indicated to give the range. Note that zero on these does not mean it is a killer score.</i>	Total Score	Dept Score
National Priority why this is a national priority in terms of the following 5 criteria.		
1.1 Linked to 12 outcomes (and especially top 5) Directly linked to an output/suboutput of one of the top 5 outcomes=15-20 Directly linked to an output/suboutput of one of the other 7 outcomes=10-15 Addresses a small part of one of the outcomes = 5-10 Is not part of the 12 outcomes but otherwise a priority of government=5 Is not part of the 12 outcomes or another national priority=0 <i>Comment</i>	20	
1.2 Innovative – is the intervention testing out new approaches and so learning is key? Very innovative, or a key area in an outcome where there is confusion/lack of clarity/ or not much is known=10 Quite innovative, or an area of an outcome where some is known but it would benefit from an evaluation=5 Not innovative or an area where quite a lot is known=0 <i>Comment</i>	10	
1.3 Large (R500 m + and in terms of footprint) Very large (>R1000m, <u>or</u> covers >10% of the population)=10 Large (R500-R999m, <u>or</u> covers 5-9% of the population)=5 Small <R499m=0 <i>Comment</i>	10	
1.4 Substantial public interest Many complaints in hotline=10 Significant number of complaints in hotline=5 Not very much in the public eye=0 <i>Comment</i>	10	
Overall comment		
Category total score	50	

If it scores more than 40, it can be considered for question 2.



2 Is it important that it is evaluated in 2012/13

<p>2.1 Is the intervention at a critical stage where decisions are to be taken for which an evaluation is needed? Critical stage/decision reached by end of 2012/13 where key decisions needed=10 Critical stage/decision reached by end of 2013/14 where key decisions needed=5 Not critical decision point=0</p>	10	
<p>2.2 Previous evaluations (if any) - How recently was a similar evaluation undertaken? If >5 years, score 5, if less than 2 years score zero (unless the evaluation proposed is very different) <i>Comment</i></p>	5	
<p>2.3 Availability of budget - How assured are we that there is a budget for evaluation from the Dept, or donors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget available from department/donor = 10 • Budget likely or partially available from department, and supplemented by DPME = 5 • Only budget available is from DPME = 0 <p><i>Comment</i></p>	10	
<p>Overall comment</p>		
<p>Category total score</p>	25	

If the score is over 12, then move to question 3.



3 How feasible will it be to evaluate this year?

Note these questions are not killers, and may just mean that the evaluation will take more work.

<p>3.1 Focus of evaluation - Is the object of evaluation clear (policy, programme, plan or project), and are the methodology and evaluative questions clear? The evaluation is clear with strong evaluative questions=10 The evaluation has a reasonable focus but could be clarified=5 The evaluation is unclear=0 <i>Comment</i></p>	10	
<p>3.2 Availability of monitoring data - Is there sufficient evidence to undertake an evaluation? Key data is needed and available=10 Key data is needed but will have to be collected=5 Key data is needed but difficult to obtain=0 <i>Comment</i></p>	10	
<p>3.3 Existence of the theory of change/logical framework Is there a full logical framework for the intervention including indicators and assumptions?=5 If there is no logical framework=0 <i>Note in future this priority will be raised and may become a killer.</i> <i>Comment</i></p>	5	
<p>Overall comment</p>		
<p>Category total score</p>	25	

AGGREGATE/ OVERALL SCORE	Score	%
Importance of the intervention		
Important that done this year		
Ease of doing evaluation		
Total (maximum 100)		

DECISION AND FEEDBACK TO THE DEPARTMENT BY THE TECHNICAL EVALUATION WORKING GROUP

No.	DECISION AND FEEDBACK	Please tick (X)
1	Yes, evaluation should be considered for the plan for 2012/13. <i>Reasons:</i>	
2	Not recommended for the 2012/13 national plan but a good idea, department could go ahead, or could be considered for national plan in future (would not need to be resubmitted). <i>Reasons:</i>	
3	Not included in the plan and the department needs to strengthen certain aspects (either to implement itself, or to resubmit for a later national plan). <i>Reasons and aspects to be strengthened:</i>	
4	Rethink and we suggest these areas need to be revisited (to be indicated) <i>Reasons and areas to be revisited:</i>	

Assessors

<p>_____ Signed <i>Name</i> Member : TEWG Date:</p>	<p>_____ Signed <i>Name</i> Member : TEWG Date:</p>	<p>_____ Signed <i>Name</i> Member : TEWG Date:</p>
--	--	--

<p>Signed on behalf of DPME:</p>	<p>_____ Signed Dr Ian Goldman Head: Evaluation and Research Unit, DPME Date:</p>
---	---

