

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 2012/13 Plan has been developed and implementation is starting, but the process now needs to start to develop the 3 year plan beginning 2013/14. It is important to put in place a plan for three years as many evaluations require work over at least two financial years (particularly impact evaluations where a baseline is needed), and as departments have to do medium-term expenditure frameworks for 3 years. This will need to have some flexibility in case funding is lost for particular evaluations, data proves to be too poor, or other priorities emerge the following year, hence the 3 Year Plan will be rolled and adjusted each year.

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, DPISA, DSD, DBE, Health, Human Settlements, Stats SA and the Public Service Commission.

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, which are linked with the budget process.

Indicators

Number of evaluations approved by Cabinet that address strategic priorities – 15 for 2013/14, 20 for 2014/15 and 20 for 2015/16.

2 Content of the plan

The National Evaluation Plan for 2012/13 is available. The core to the plan is 1-1.5 pages summarising each of the evaluations approved by Cabinet.

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, that a good improvement plan is developed, and ensure that emerging opportunities and challenges are addressed;
- 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 and all evaluation reports and improvement plans being submitted to Cabinet will give 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 Process to develop the NEP

The process is in Table 1.

Table 1: Action plan for developing the 2013/14+2 National Evaluation Plan

Action	Responsible	When
1. Call for proposals for evaluations sent out at National M&E Forum	DPME	23 May 2012
2. Letters sent to national and provincial DGs, including concept note format	DPME	31 May 2012
3. Discussion with departments about possible submissions	Outcome facilitators	June/July 2012
4. Tentative agreement in departments about priority evaluations and allocations of funds in the MTEF	Depts	June 2012
5. Consider national priorities coming from FOSAD, President etc	DPME	June/July 2012
6. Briefing workshops with departments to deepen understanding on the Evaluation Policy Framework and to assist them to complete the concept notes	DPME/Dept	19 and 26 June
7. Deadline for departments to include evaluations in their 3 year budgets	Depts	30 June 2012
8. Deadline for concept notes to be submitted	Depts	31 July 2012
9. Proposals for evaluations consolidated	DPME	August 2012
10. Proposals reviewed by ETWG and recommendations made for 15 evaluations for 2013/14, 20 evaluations for 2014/15 and 20 for 2015/16.	ETWG	Early September
11. Final draft plan written up and sent to ETWG for comment	ERU	Mid September
12. Comments back from ETWG	ETWG	End of September
13. Plan submitted to G&A working session	DPME	early October
14. Plan submitted to G&A cluster for recommendation	DPME	late October
15. Plan submitted to Cabinet Sub-committee	DPME	Early November
16. Plan submitted to Cabinet for approval	DPME	Late November

5 Submission process for the 2013/14-2015/16 Plan

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.

Centre of government departments can submit evaluations they consider essential, but ideally these should be submitted by the department concerned.

The proposals must be submitted by 31 July, to Jabu Mathe of the Evaluation and Research Unit, at jabu@po.gov.za.

6 Selection process

6.1 Criteria for selection

The following factors will be considered for selection of evaluations, and the scorecard is based on this:

1. Focus of evaluation should be clear, namely: object of evaluation e.g. policy, plan, programme, or project; methodology and evaluation questions
2. There should be clear implementation responsibility for the evaluation and ownership of the potential improvement plan. The intervention should not be exclusively the responsibility of a state-owned enterprise (SOE), although a SOE could be responsible for implementing it in partnership with a department.
3. The intervention should be a national priority so:
 - It is large (>R500m or with a wide footprint, covers >10% of the population), and/or strategic
 - strong preference will be given to evaluations linked to the 12 outcomes, and the top five priority ones will have precedence. This does not exclude evaluations which are not addressing areas within the outcomes.
4. Innovative and learnings are important /needed in the outcomes, and a programmatic priority within the outcome.
5. They may be from an area where there is a lot of public interest.
6. It should have a theory of change/logical framework. At this stage delivery programmes are not standardised and so this is not a killer.
7. How recently was the intervention evaluated – if not for a long time then it is a higher priority.
8. Is the intervention at a critical stage where decisions are to be taken for which an evaluation is needed?
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 department, DPME or donors

A concept note format has been developed which must 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.

6.2 Selection process

DPME will meet to consolidate the proposals in preparation for an extended Evaluation Technical Working Group meeting in September 2012 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, evaluation should be considered for the year proposed.
- Not recommended for the national plan for the year proposed but included for a subsequent year
- Not recommended for the national plan but a good idea, department should go ahead.
- 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).
- Rethink and we suggest these areas need to be revisited (to be indicated)

Annex 1: Template for Concept Note for Proposed Evaluations for the 2013/14-2015/16 National Evaluation Plan

Part A: Key contact details

Name of proposed evaluation		Year proposed	201_-201_
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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 state-owned enterprise, If several departments, then list these here, and suggest who would coordinate</i>
Other key departments/ agencies involved in the intervention	

Part B: Background to the intervention being focused on

Specific unit of analysis of the evaluation (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 of the intervention (specify which)	<i>These should not be general but as specified in the programme plan, policy etc.</i>
Outputs of the intervention (eg from logframe)	1 .. 2 .. 3 .. 4 ..
Duration and timing of the intervention (when started, when ends)	

Part C: Motivating for the evaluation of this intervention being considered in the National Evaluation Plan (does not have to score high on all of these)

How is this linked to the 12 outcomes?	
<i>Be specific of how this links to outputs/suboutputs in the delivery agreement. If not linked to an outcome make clear.</i>	
Innovative	
<i>Is the intervention innovative and so it is important to do an evaluation for learning?</i>	
How large is it?	
Estimated budget for intervention for current financial year (total also if known)	
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>	

Part D: Details on the evaluation proposed

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>
How recently was this intervention 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	<i>At a later point this will be a requirement</i>

framework	
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Part E: Approval by sponsoring department

Name of DG or relevant DDG of custodian department	
Signature	
Name of DG or relevant DDG of partner department (repeat if needed)	
Signature	