

Call for Evaluations for the National Evaluation Plan (NEP) 2014/15 to 2016/17

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. This focus was initially at national level (ie national priorities), but later would happen 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.

Evaluations in the 2012/13 Plan are now completing, and the evaluations in the 2013/14 Plan are now starting. This document sets out the concept for the National Evaluation Plan for 2014/15 to 2016/17 and the process to develop it. 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 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, the Public Service Commission, a number of sector departments, and the Offices of the Premier for Gauteng and Western Cape.

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 during the three years, which are linked with the budget process.

Indicators

Number of evaluations approved by Cabinet that address strategic priorities – 15 each year.

2 Content of the plan

The National Evaluation Plans for 2012/13 and for 2013/14 to 2015/16 are 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:

- 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;
- 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 on average R750 000 to part-fund these evaluations (and in some cases may be able to assist in finding donor funding if needed, particularly for impact evaluations);
- DPME will fund peer reviews, design clinics and workshops as needed around the evaluations;
- DPME will fund training for departments with evaluations in the Plan;

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
Development and submission of concepts	1. Call for proposals for evaluations sent out at National M&E Forum	DPME	March 2013
	2. Letters sent to national DGs, including concept note format	DPME	31 March 2013
	3. Call for proposals tabled at G&A Cluster and FOSAD Manco	DPME	4-5 April 2013
	4. Discussion with departments about possible submissions	Outcome facilitators	June/July 2012
	5. Briefing workshops with departments to deepen understanding on the Evaluation Policy Framework and the National Evaluation Plan	DPME/Depts	17 and 27 April 2013
	6. Meeting between DPME/NPC/Treasury and DPSA to consider priority evaluations	DPME	May 2013
	7. Tentative agreement in departments about priority evaluations and allocations of funds in the MTEF	Depts	May 2013
	8. Deadline for departments to include evaluations in their 3 year budgets	Depts	May 2013
	9. Workshopping of draft concept notes for evaluations with departments	DPME/Depts	End May 2013
	10. DPME discusses draft concept notes with departments	DPME/Depts	June 2013
	11. Deadline for concept notes to be submitted	Depts	30 June 2013
Selection and refining	12. Proposals reviewed by ETWG and recommendations made for 15 evaluations per year, including those already recommended in the previous year's Plan	ETWG	mid July 2013
	13. Training of programme manager/M&E staff for each evaluation recommended for 2014/15 and draft TORs developed	DPME/Depts	August 2013
	14. Scoping workshops for each evaluation where wider stakeholders help to guide the appropriate focus and scope of the evaluation	Depts/DPME	Aug/Sept 2013
	15. Design clinic with international experts to review theory of change, evaluation purpose, questions and methodology and refine TORs	DPME/Depts	12/13 September 2013
	16. Plan drafted	DPME	30 Sept 2013
Approval	17. Plan submitted to G&A working session	DPME	early October
	18. Plan submitted to G&A cluster for recommendation	DPME	late October
	19. Plan submitted to Cabinet Sub-committee	DPME	Early November
	20. Plan submitted to Cabinet for approval	DPME	Late November
Start-up	21. TORs finalised and Steering Committees established	Depts/DPME	Jan 2014
	22. Procurement undertaken	DPME/Depts	Feb 2014
	23. Contracts awarded and inception meetings	DPME/Depts	March 2014

5 Submission process for the 2014/15-2016/17 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 but indicate the lead department. The department must be prepared to support the evaluations they propose, in terms of time and budget.

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 June 2013, to Jabu Mathe of the Evaluation and Research Unit, DPME, at jabu@po-dpme.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. Not all factors have to be applicable for each evaluation. The key criteria are:

1. There is a **potential budget** to at least part-fund the evaluation by the department or donors. Departments need to consider a total budget from a minimum of R1 million, depending on complexity (can be up to R4 million or more if a major survey is needed). DPME will provide part-funding of an average of R750 000.
2. **Focus** of evaluation should be clear, e.g. a policy, plan, programme, or project;
3. 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.
4. There should be an evaluation **purpose** and some main **evaluative questions** the evaluation will seek to address.
5. 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** or the **National Development Plan**, and the top five priority outcomes (education, health, crime and safety, employment and rural) will have precedence. This does not exclude evaluations which are not addressing areas within the outcomes;
 - The content of the evaluation should relate to **specific outputs and suboutputs** within the outcome or in the National Development Plan.
6. The intervention may be **innovative** and learnings are needed.
7. They may be from an area where there is a lot of **public interest**.
8. The same aspect of the intervention should **not have been evaluated** in the last two years.
9. Is the intervention at a **critical stage** where decisions are to be taken for which an evaluation is needed?
10. Is there monitoring **data** that can be used for the evaluation including background and previous documented performance, current programme situation. If an impact evaluation is suggested there must be data on which impact can be assessed (or this must be collected which may be expensive) and ideally there should be a counterfactual – ie data on similar people who did not receive the intervention.

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 1.

6.2 Selection process

The national Evaluation Technical Working Group will meet in July 2013 to go through the proposals and score them, and a consolidated set of proposals will be 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 different year than the one proposed.
- 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)

Note that the ETWG may also suggest additional evaluations that should be undertaken, eg a policy evaluation to build on a number of programme evaluations.

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

This concept motivates why a particular intervention is a priority for evaluation under the National Evaluation Plan. It is not a plan for the evaluation which will be done later.

Part A: Key contact details

Name of proposed evaluation		Year proposed to be implemented	201_-201_
Organisation proposing evaluation	<i>Could be suggested by a central government institution but custodian will normally be an implementation department.</i>		
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>		
Programme Manager		Title	
Telephone		Email	
M&E person		Title	
Telephone		Email	
Other key departments/agencies involved in the intervention			

Part B: Background to the intervention being focused on

Note this section is not about the evaluation, but the **policy/plan/programme** that the evaluation proposes to focus 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			
The problem or opportunity the intervention focuses on	<i>For example the National School Nutrition Programme focuses on disadvantaged learners coming to school without having eaten which undermines their ability to learn</i>		
Objective or outcomes of the intervention (specify which)	<i>These should not be general but should be taken from the original programme plan, policy document etc.</i>		
Key components of the intervention (eg outputs in a logframe or programme plan)	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
Duration and timing of the intervention	<i>Started (or proposed to start)</i>		<i>Ends</i>

Part C: Motivating for the evaluation of this intervention being considered in the National Evaluation Plan

Why is this evaluation a priority for the National Evaluation Plan? Note the evaluation does not have to score high on all of these.

How is this linked to the 12 outcomes?
<i>Show how this links to specific outputs/suboutputs in the delivery agreement.</i>
How is this linked to the National Development Plan
<i>Be specific of how this links to specific sections and recommendations in the National Development Plan (give page number).</i>
Innovative
<i>Is the intervention innovative (eg testing out a new model of service delivery)? Note this is not a requirement and many interventions that are not innovative still need to be evaluated. Is it important to do an evaluation to learn the lessons which can be applied more widely?</i>

How large is the intervention?			
Budget for intervention for 2013/14 financial year	R	Estimated total budget for the intervention (over 3 year MTEF period)	R Period
Nos of people directly affected or enrolled (eg service users, beneficiaries...)	<i>If this does not directly serve citizens, then it should be a measure of coverage, eg if the proposed evaluation is of whether to lease buildings or to own, then this could be the number of buildings covered.</i>		

Is this an area of substantial public interest?
<i>This is not about whether the intervention is important but if it is very much in the public eye and if so how this is shown.</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 eg proposals for expansion, decisions whether to continue. When will these decisions be taken?</i>

Part D: Details on the evaluation proposed

In this section you give details on the evaluation being proposed, not the intervention that the evaluation is focusing on. Note we want to understand what you are trying to get out of the evaluation, but are not expecting you to know what methodology is needed.

Key focus of the evaluation	<i>For example the evaluation may only focus on part of a programme or policy</i>
Type of evaluation	<i>Write here one or more of the options below. Some evaluations can combine these</i>
Diagnostic	<i>Analyses the situation, brings out root causes, considers options. Used prior to design or replanning an intervention</i>
Implementation	<i>Used during implementation to understand how the intervention is working and how it can be strengthened</i>
Cost effectiveness	<i>To understand how cost effective the intervention is – often combined with implementation or impact</i>
Impact	<i>To understand what impact the intervention has had and why. Note this often needs either existing data or to collect data (expensive) on what are the impacts of people impacted by the intervention, and similar people not impacted by the programme. Do you have this data?</i>

Suggested purpose of the evaluation	<i>Look at the Guideline on TORs for how to define the purpose – available at http://www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za/dpmewebsite/Page.aspx?Id=146#</i>
What are the main evaluative questions you will be asking (maximum 5) – use the Guideline on TORs to help you think these through	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
What credible monitoring data or existing evidence can be used, including on background and previous documented performance, or current programme situation.	
<i>If little evidence exists then an impact evaluation will be difficult. You are likely then to have to collect the data, which may be expensive.</i>	
<i>Comment also on the quality of the data available</i>	
Likely duration (months)	<i>Indicate when the evaluation needs to start and when to end</i>
How recently was this intervention evaluated – if not for a long time then it is a higher priority	<i>Date and type of evaluation and what it focused on (attach copy to this submission)</i>
Do you have an estimate for what the evaluation may cost?	<i>If you are not sure discuss with DPME around likely cost.</i>
What budget for the evaluation has been allocated by the Dept, or donors – not this must come from existing budgets	<i>You are expected to at least half-fund the evaluation. DPME may be able to fund all in exceptional circumstances</i>

Part E: Approval by sponsoring department(s)

Name of DG or relevant DDG of custodian department	
Signature	
Name of DG or relevant DDG of partner department	
Signature	
Name of DG or relevant DDG of partner department	
Signature	