



THE PRESIDENCY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## DPME Evaluation Guideline 2.2.2 Peer Review of Evaluations

Created 15 August 2012

<b>Addressed to</b>	Government staff planning evaluations.
<b>Purpose</b>	This guideline provides practical guidance on how to undertake peer reviews of evaluations.
<b>Reference documents</b>	National Evaluation Policy Framework (DPME) Evaluation Guideline 2.2.1 How to Draw up Terms of Reference for Evaluation Projects.
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## 1 Introduction

Government departments often commission evaluations to service providers and rarely have the capacity to adequately quality assure or review the products submitted by the service provider. Peer review is an internationally accepted approach to strengthen the quality of evaluations. This Guideline provides information on how government departments can promote good quality evaluations through peer reviews. Peer review is a process of self-regulation by a profession or a process of evaluation involving qualified and external individuals within the relevant field. Peer review methods are employed to maintain standards, improve performance and provide credibility. In academia peer review is often used to determine an academic paper's suitability for publication. Another form is reciprocal peer review where peers at the same level in an organization (e.g high school principals) review each other – in this way they learn a lot from the process of doing reviews as well.

## 2 Why do a peer review?

The Peer Review System within Government is undertaken to help ensure the quality at different stages of an evaluation, and also provide an independent view from experts in the field as to the quality. Given that evaluation is not an exact science, there are often a range of possible approaches to answer the same question, and evaluations have resource constraints. A peer review for every evaluation undertaken within Government is used to provide an expert judgement on the most appropriate approaches and methods, as well as on instruments and data analysis. It also provides inputs on the content of the evaluation.

## 3 When to do a peer review?

While in the academic world peer review is often carried out at the final stage of publication, peer review can be undertaken at key stages of an evaluation process. It is critical at the design stage of an evaluation to ensure that the design is robust at the outset as well as support good decision making at different stages of the evaluation.

The table below illustrates some of the key stages of an evaluation (drawing from Guideline 2.2.1 on Terms of Reference) and indicates the possible roles of a peer reviewer. For a fairly simple evaluation 3-4 days will be needed, for a complex one this may be as much as 6-7.

**Table 1: Expected roles of a peer reviewer (shaded rows are always required)**

Deliverable	Role of peer reviewer	Time allocation (days)	
		Methodology expert	Sector expert
TORs	If the peer review is commissioned in time it would be beneficial to get comments on the TORs	0.5	0.5
Proposal	Comment on the proposal of the successful bidder and advise on improvements on aspects such as evaluation questions, evaluation design, methodological approaches as well as practicability issues	0.5	0.5
Inception Report	Respond to questions from the service provider, comment on the inception report and suggest methodology questions or changes as above	1	1
Literature and documentation review	Comment on the relevance, coverage, suggest additional sources if needed. Comment on the conclusions.		0.5
Theory of change	Assess whether the theory of change posited to be reviewed by the evaluation (if not stated upfront by the intervention) is appropriate	0.5	0.5
Data collection methods, instruments and other tools	Comment on the tools, methods including the proposed sampling methodology and instruments	0.5	
Analysis plan	Comment on the analysis plan	0.5	
Other technical or process reports, eg field work report	Comment on reports	0.5 per report	0.5 per report
<b>Draft evaluation report for review, full and in 1/3/25 format (see Action Points);</b>	Comment on report	1	1
Possibly a workshop with stakeholders to discuss the draft report;	Potentially participate	1	1
<b>The final evaluation report</b>	Comment on first and final draft of final report. Also write up short report summarising main issues from the peer review, and the learnings.	1	1
Proposed changes to the intervention design if needed - this may be part of the final report.	Comment		Part of above
<b>Potential total time allocation for a major complex evaluation</b>		<b>7 days</b>	<b>6.5 days</b>

### 3 How are peer reviewers selected?

For any given evaluation, there may well be few people who have both the specific sector knowledge and methodological knowledge to adequately peer review the evaluation. Therefore it is proposed that there should be two peer reviewers – one with knowledge of the sector concerned, and one a methodology expert in the type of methodology needed for the evaluation in question.

Ideally the person should also have an overview of a range of methodologies so can advise on the most suitable. If during the process the methodology changes, then an additional reviewer may be needed who is an expert in the methodology in question. Potential peer reviewers would be recommended by the custodian department or DPME, and would be approved by the Evaluation Steering Committee.

Where possible the relevant persons will be on an approved evaluation or research panel of service providers of the custodian department or DPME.

Where the topic is too specialised, the reviewers may need to be from outside these panels. In such cases a specific deviation will be requested. They could also be from other departments.

As peer reviewers may also be people likely to bid for the evaluation, they may need to be selected or confirmed after the selection process has happened for the service provider who will undertake the evaluation. They will need to sign a Conflict of Interest form or clause.

#### **4 Who contracts the peer reviewer?**

Peer reviewers for evaluations under the National Evaluation Plan would be commissioned and contracted by DPME, as part of the quality assurance process. They would be paid a standard daily honorarium for the work (currently R1000 per day), rather than a market rate fee for services, and so this would not be a normal competitive tender. A simple standard format for a letter of appointment is attached in Annex 1. For evaluations outside the National Evaluation Plan, the custodian department would commission the peer reviewers.

#### **5 Appointment letter and terms of reference for peer reviewers**

An outline appointment letter and terms of reference for peer reviewers are attached in Annex 1 and 2.

#### **6 Reporting**

Peer reviewers will report to the designated official from the commissioning department. In terms of evaluations in the national evaluation plan, it will be an official from the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

#### **7 Conflict of interest policy**

As a peer reviewer of an evaluation the peer reviewers must avoid a conflict of interest or the potential appearance of one. Unless a waiver has been granted by the commissioner of the peer review, or DPME if in the National Evaluation Plan, a peer reviewer cannot review and advise on an approved evaluation if:

- the peer reviewer, the peer reviewer's spouse, child, or business partner, the organisation where the peer reviewer is employed, has an arrangement for future employment or compensation or is negotiating for employment, or
- the organisation where the peer reviewer is an officer, director, trustee, or partner, has a financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation or other interests that effect the peer reviewer's objective judgment.

A peer reviewer is expected to recuse him or herself from reviewing an evaluation if it involves individuals with whom he/she has a personal relationship (such as a close relative, current or former collaborator, or former thesis student/advisor) that may affect his/her objective judgment. The model appointment letter in Annex 1 includes a mandatory conflict of interest statement to sign.

**Signed**

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**Dr Sean Phillips**  
**Director General**  
**Date:** 27/08/12

## Annex 1: Appointment letter for Peer Reviewers

*Name, contact details including email, telephone and address of peer reviewer*

and

**Department of Performance M&E (DPME)  
Union Buildings,  
Government Avenue  
Pretoria  
0001**

Dear name

### **Peer Review Agreement**

We are pleased to offer you a contract for the role of a peer reviewer on the evaluation of ..... You will assist DPME and the partner departments in the evaluation in ensuring the quality of the evaluation, where quality is defined as technical rigor, ensuring policy relevance, and maximising the ownership and commitment of the partner departments. The Peer Reviewer will be expected to pursue the activities according to the annexed terms of reference.

This contract covers the period from 1 August 2012 to 30 April 2013. The contract period shall be open to extension depending on mutual agreement between the Peer Reviewer and DPME.

#### Purpose of this agreement:

1. Under this agreement the Peer Reviewer will be responsible for reviewing and commenting on the design, methodology, reports and products of the evaluation, submitted by the evaluation service provider as requested by DPME. Comments may also be requested on some process aspects of the evaluation, such as survey design and implementation.
2. DPME agrees to pay the Peer Reviewer an honorarium plus all costs (travel & per diem) for any agreed-upon participation in events in which the evaluation is discussed will be covered by DPME.
3. The reports and products to be reviewed will be sent to the Peer Reviewer upon submission by the project teams and according to a timetable of deliverables agreed-upon with each project team. In the event of delays, DPME will do its utmost to keep the Peer Reviewer informed. Timing of any event in which the Advisor is expected to participate will be decided upon by mutual agreement between the project team, the Reviewer and DPME. The review process will be managed by (name of DPME person supporting the evaluation), DPME, who is supporting the specific evaluation (referred to as the Review Manager).

#### Use of Funds, Accounts and Audit Use of Funds

1. DPME will remunerate the Reviewer an honorarium upon completion of this assignment of an amount of R..... In addition, DPME will cover all costs (travel and accommodation) for any agreed-upon participation in events in which the evaluation is discussed. Travel and accommodation will be booked by DPME, using the DPME travel agent.

2. The Reviewer acknowledges receipt of public funds from DPME and agrees to provide a high level of accountability to DPME in respect of these funds.
3. Requests for payment should be submitted to [nkamang@po.gov.za](mailto:nkamang@po.gov.za). The attached supplier registration form should be completed and returned to The Head: SCM, DPME within 5 working days of receipt of this letter.
4. All materials produced or acquired under the terms of this contract—written, graphic, film, magnetic tape, or otherwise—shall remain the shared property of DPME unless written permission designating otherwise is given. DPME retains the exclusive right to publish or disseminate reports arising from such materials.
5. In the event that DPME is dissatisfied with the quality of outcome achieved, or the rate of progress being made, or any material aspect of the review process, DPME may terminate this agreement in whole or in part, by giving the Reviewer fourteen calendar days notice in writing.
6. The Reviewer agrees to respect the confidentiality of information provided for the evaluation as ‘confidential’, ‘restricted’, or in-confidence’. Both parties are obliged to take steps to ensure the confidentiality of the Review Panel towards the service provider.
7. The terms of this agreement, including the purpose and payment(s), may be modified, limited, extended or terminated. No variation to this agreement shall be effective unless it is agreed in a formal Letter of Variation and signed by both parties, or varied electronically through an exchange of e-mails. Where the Reviewer seeks to vary any material aspect of this agreement the Reviewer must first obtain approval of DPME prior to incurring any additional costs or additional tasks and prior to the agreement expiring.

Indemnification and dispute resolution

8. By agreeing to the terms of this contract, the Reviewer agrees to indemnify and hold harmless DPME and its officers and employees from and against any injury, loss, claim and/or action arising out of the performance of the Reviewer’s responsibilities under the contract.
9. Both parties shall make every effort to resolve amicably by informal negotiation any disagreement or dispute arising between them under or in connection with this agreement. In doing so, the parties shall be guided primarily by the specific terms of this agreement, and act in good faith, in a spirit of goodwill and cooperation. If they are unable to resolve their disagreement or dispute, they shall refer the disagreement or dispute for resolution to a single mediator or arbitrator selected by mutual agreement. The place of mediation or arbitration shall be Pretoria.

Please indicate your agreement with the foregoing by signing and returning a copy of this letter by fax or mail to: [Nkamang@po.gov.za](mailto:Nkamang@po.gov.za).

Signed on behalf of Peer Reviewer

Date:

Name and address:

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Signed on behalf of DPME

Signed

Dr Ian Goldman  
Head, Evaluation and Research  
Department of Performance M&E  
Union Buildings  
Government Avenue  
Pretoria  
0001  
Tel: 012 308 1918  
Email: [nkamang@po.gov.za](mailto:nkamang@po.gov.za)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST MANDATORY DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

I have read the Conflict of Interest Policy of DPME, and I support its intent.

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, I do not have any financial or other interest that raises an actual or potential conflict of interest with my activities on behalf of DPME or other partners in the evaluation. If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists, the conflict as well as the financial or other interest upon which it is based are listed below and are more fully described in the written statement I have attached to this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If an actual or potential conflict of interest subsequently develops, I will promptly submit an amended Mandatory Disclosure Statement to the Head of Evaluation in DPME.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Annex 2: Outline terms of Reference for Peer Review of the .....evaluation of .....**

### **1 Background to the evaluation**

*Provide some background to the evaluation. Refer to the summary of the project in the National Evaluation Plan or Terms of Reference if these are already developed. Don't make this longer than half a page.*

### **2 Purpose of the assignment**

This assignment is to peer review (X evaluation) and provide advice on the methodology and comment on the final products. It is to peer review the technical quality and relevance of the products (*in some cases you may want to peer review the process too, or this can be handled through an end of assignment reflective workshop with the steering committee*).

### **3 Tasks for the content reviewer**

- 3.1 Review the terms of reference for the evaluation and provide comments on issues arising from these, and implications for the proposals.
- 3.2 Comment on the final proposal accepted so as to provide feedback to the service provider for the inception meeting.
- 3.3 Interact with the service provider on request from the Steering Committee about content focus during the inception phase.
- 3.4 Comment on the inception report and how far issues raised have been addressed and the programme focus is appropriate.
- 3.5 (if included in the TORs for the service provider) Comment on the proposed sample, particularly if purposive, in terms of the reviewer's knowledge of the situation in different areas of the country.
- 3.6 Review the draft report in depth providing suggestions for changes, in terms of logic, coherence of analysis, findings and recommendations, as well as content.
- 3.7 (if included in the TORs for the service provider) Attend a stakeholder workshop on the draft report.
- 3.8 Comment on the first and final drafts of the final report
- 3.9 Provide a short final report summarising the learnings from the peer review, including an assessment on the quality of the assignment using a standard format provided by DPME.

Note that feedback should be given in a constructive way so it helps to build the capacity of the government staff and evaluators.

The peer reviewer should provide comments within 5 days of receiving the reports in question.

### **4 Tasks for the methodology reviewer**

- 4.1 Review the terms of reference for the evaluation and provide comments on issues arising from these, and implications for the proposals.
- 4.2 Comment on the final proposal accepted so as to provide feedback to the service provider for the inception meeting.
- 4.3 Interact with the service provider on request from the Steering Committee about methodology issues during the inception phase.
- 4.4 Comment on the inception report and how far issues raised have been addressed and the revised methodology is appropriate, as well as the programme focus.
- 4.5 (if included in the TORs for the service provider) Comment on data collection instruments, analysis plan and the proposed sample.



- 4.6 Review the draft report in depth providing suggestions for changes, in terms of logic, coherence of analysis, findings and recommendations.
- 4.7 (if included in the TORs for the service provider) Attend a stakeholder workshop on the draft report.
- 4.8 Comment on the first and final drafts of the final report
- 4.9 Provide a short final report summarising the learnings from the peer review, including an assessment on the quality of the assignment using a standard format provided by DPME.

Note that feedback should be given in a constructive way so it helps to build the capacity of the government staff and evaluators.

The peer reviewer should provide comments within 5 days of receiving the reports in question.

## **5 Reporting**

The peer reviewer will be approved by the Steering Committee of the project. If the evaluation is in the National Evaluation Plan they will report to the evaluation specialist in DPME responsible for the evaluation in question.

## **6 Remuneration**

The assignment is not a commercial assignment, but follows the approach for academic peer reviews, which are done for free on the expectation that such service is provided between peers. There will be a token remuneration based on a standard honorarium per day, well below market rates.

## **7 Intellectual property**

The intellectual property for the assignment lies with the contracting organisation. All documents should be treated as confidential and not passed on to a third party.

## **8 Conflict of interest disclosure statement**

The peer reviewer is required to certify that to the best of their knowledge, they do not have any financial or other interest that raises an actual or potential conflict of interest with any activities on behalf of the peer review of the evaluation in question. If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists, the conflict as well as the financial or other interest upon which it is based will have to be declared and a written statement attached to the contract.