

## C-15:

# SOW Checklist for Performance Evaluations

Use the *Evaluation Scope of Work (SOW) Checklist* to review and strengthen SOW during the evaluation planning stage. In most cases you should plan evaluations during the project design stage. Use the Checklist at this stage to “rough out” the SOW while adding detail as you get closer to the start date for the evaluation. The eighteen (18) items that are bolded are the most critical factors that should be addressed in early drafts of the SOW. All forty one (40) factors should be adequately addressed (with a rating of 3 or higher) by the time the SOW is finalized. One of the most critical factors in the SOW is to ensure that the relationship between the number of evaluation questions, level of effort and budget for the evaluation is clear and realistic. Refer to the related *Checklist for Estimating Level of Effort and Budget for Performance Evaluations* to support these estimates.

### Evaluation SOW Checklist

Version 1.0

Statement of Work Checklist Keyed to USAID’s ADS 203.

Project or Program to be Evaluated: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Implementer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Person Who Reviewed the SOW: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

SOW Elements and Sub-Elements	How Well is the SOW Element Addressed					Issues Noted by SOW Reviewer
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	
Adherence to General Principles in USAID’s ADS 203 Guidance.						
1. Is the SOW developed as part of project design?						
2. Does the SOW take measures to reduce bias such as contracting evaluations with third-party contractors?						
3. Does the evaluation address the most						

important and relevant questions about project performance?						
4. Does the SOW propose methods that are spelled out in detail to answer the key questions?						
5. Are limitations to the methods identified?						
6. Are high-quality data sources identified for each method?						
7. Does the SOW include methods of reinforcing local evaluation capacity and/or using local evaluation specialists?						
8. Does the SOW include provisions for sharing the findings from the evaluation as widely as possible with full and active disclosure?						
9. Is the SOW clear about requirements for the Final Evaluation Report following USAID's ADS 203 Guidance?						
<b>Identify the activity, project, or approach to be evaluated</b>						
10. Is the SOW clear and specific about what is to be evaluated, e.g., activity, project/approach (identified by name and relevant identifier and agreement numbers); funding mission/office; sector/topic; budget; target group/area? (looking at the big picture)						
11. Is the duration of the project or program stated in the SOW, i.e., start and end years? Is the reference period for the evaluations stated clearly?						
<b>Provide a brief background on the development hypotheses and its implementation</b>						
12. Does the SOW provide a clear description of the development hypotheses; intended results; critical assumptions, e.g., narrative, and/or Results Framework/Logical Framework? (can refer to other documents)						
13. Does the SOW clearly describe the nature of the intervention, i.e., what USAID would deliver (training, TA, etc.) and what was expected to change (at the output and especially outcome levels)?						
<b>Identify existing performance information source, with special attention to monitoring data.</b>						
14. Is SOW clear and specific about existing activity/project/approach (program) monitoring data/reports that are available, i.e., specific indicators tracked, baseline data, targets, progress towards targets; narrative quarterly/annual reports; and when/how evaluators can access these data?						
15. Does the SOW describe other documents or sources of information that would be useful to the evaluation team, e.g., government or international data USAID is using to monitor activity/project/approach outcomes, e.g., growth rate, poverty rate, etc.?						
<b>State the purpose of, audience for and use of the evaluation</b>						
16. Is the SOW clear and specific about why, in management terms, the evaluation is being conducted, i.e., what management						

decisions an evaluation at this time will inform? <i>(ADS 203.3.6.1 identifies several management reasons why USAID might undertake an evaluation).</i>						
17. Does the SOW indicate who makes up the audience for the evaluation, i.e., what types of managers in which organizations, e.g., USAID; Implementing Partner(s); the host government, other donors, etc., are expected to benefit from the evaluation and how?						
<b>Clarify the evaluation question(s)</b>						
18. Does the SOW include a list of the specific questions the evaluation team is expected to answer? [Please enter the number of question in the far right hand column.]						Number of Questions SOW asks the evaluation to address [count question marks]: __
19. Is the SOW list of evaluation questions consistent with USAID expectations about limiting the number asked? <i>(ADS 203.3.6.2 says “a small number of key questions or specific issues answerable with empirical evidence.”)</i> [Small is often considered to be less than ten; every question mark signals a question.]						
20. Does the SOW indicate the relative priority of each evaluation questions, e.g., are they in priority order or are “top priorities” identified?						
21. As a group, do the evaluation questions appear to be consistent and supportive of the evaluation’s purpose?						
<b>Identify the evaluation methods (USAID may either specify methods or ask the evaluation team to suggest methods)</b>						
22. Is it clear from the SOW whether USAID requires the use of specific data collection/analysis methods or is leaving such decisions up to the evaluators?						Describe:
23. Is the SOW clear and specific about any data disaggregation, e.g., by gender, or geographic region, etc., it requires?						
24. Is the SOW clear and specific about any samples (e.g., representative); analyses (comparison of means for two groups); or response criteria (significant at the .05 level) it mentions?						
<b>Specify evaluation deliverable(s) and the timeline</b>						
25. Are the deliverables for which the evaluation team is responsible clearly specified in the SOW?						
26. If deliverables in addition to a draft and final version of the report are required, e.g., detailed evaluation plan, summary of findings prior to drafting the report; oral briefings for stakeholders, are these deliverables clearly described?						
27. Does the SOW include information about expected start and completion dates for the						

evaluation?						
28. Are dates provided for all of the deliverables specified as evaluation requirements?						
<b>Discuss evaluation team composition (one team member should be an evaluation specialist) and participation of customers and partners.</b>						
29. Are specific positions and/or skills the team is expected to include clearly defined, e.g., specific positions and associated qualifications including technical, geographic, language and other skill/experience requirements?						
30. Is the SOW explicit about requiring that one team member be an evaluation specialist?						
31. Is the SOW clear about whether and how USAID expects its staff; partners; customer/beneficiaries or other stakeholders to participate in the evaluation process (i.e. developing the SOW, collecting/analyzing data or providing recommendations)?						
<b>Cover procedures such as scheduling and logistics</b>						
32. Is the SOW clear and specific about any dates that need to be reflected in the evaluation team's plan, e.g., local holidays, specific dates for oral presentations already scheduled, etc.						
33. Is the SOW clear about whether space, a car or any other equipment will be made available to the team or that they must make their own arrangements?						
<b>Clarify requirements for reporting</b>						
34. In addition to the Reporting Requirements in USAID ADS 203, is the SOW clear about places visited, language(s) in which the report is to be submitted, etc?						
35. Does the SOW state when an oral report will be given at the mission and which stakeholders should be present for this meeting?						
36. Is the SOW clear about dissemination requirements, e.g., numbers of hard copies of final report needed; PowerPoint/handouts for oral briefings; submission to the DEC, etc.						
<b>Include a Level of Effort and Budget</b>						
37. Is the SOW clear about the LOE available for the evaluation?						
38. Is the LOE consistent with the types of methods that will be used?						
39. Is the SOW clear about the total budget for the evaluation?						
<b>Reviewer Sense of Reasonableness</b>						
40. In the reviewer's judgment, is the relationship between the number of evaluation questions, timeline and budget for this evaluation clear and reasonable?	Yes	No	Insufficient Information			

## DEFINITIONS:

**Performance evaluation:** focuses on descriptive and normative questions: what a particular project or program has achieved (either at an intermediate point in execution or at the conclusion of an implementation period); how it is being implemented; how it is perceived and valued; whether expected results are occurring; and other questions that are pertinent to program design, management and operational decision making. Performance evaluations often incorporate before-after comparisons, but generally lack a rigorously defined counterfactual.

**Impact evaluation:** measures the change in a development outcome that is attributable to a defined intervention; impact evaluations are based on models of cause and effect and require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual to control for factors other than the intervention that might account for the observed change. Impact evaluations in which comparisons are made between beneficiaries that are randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group provide the strongest evidence of a relationship between the intervention under study and the outcome measured.

**Theory of change:** A tool to design and evaluate social change initiatives. It is a blueprint of the building blocks needed to achieve long-term goals of a social change initiative.

**Development Hypothesis:** Identifies causal linkages between USAID actions and the intended Strategic Objective (highest level result).

**External Validity:** The degree to which findings, conclusions, and recommendations produced by an evaluation are applicable to other settings and contexts.

**Results framework:** A management tool that presents the logic of a project or program in a diagrammatic form. It links higher level objectives to its intermediate and lower level objectives. The diagram (and related description) may also indicate main activities, indicators, and strategies used to achieve the objectives. The results framework is used by managers to ensure that its overall program is logically sound and considers all the inputs, activities and processes needed to achieve the higher level results.

**Logical framework:** A management tool used to improve the design and evaluation of interventions that is widely used by development agencies. It is a type of logic model that identifies strategic project elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure.

**Findings:** Empirical facts collected during the evaluation

**Conclusions:** Interpretations and judgments based on the findings

**Recommendations:** Proposed actions for management.