

Appendix F - Guidelines for Reviewing Evaluation Reports

Framework and Tools for Evaluating Health Surveillance Systems, March 2004

Issues / Requirements	Criteria	Assessment (Good / Met / Needs Improvement)	Improvements Suggested
1. Executive Summary			
	<p>Briefly present the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ description of the policy, program, initiative or function evaluated; ○ why the evaluation was done; ○ who the client and intended audience of the evaluation are; ○ the key evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. <p>Suggestion: The executive summary should be about 3 pages.</p>		
2. Introduction and Context			
2.1 Description	<p>The policy, program, initiative or function evaluated is clearly described, including the logic of cause-and-effect links between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and external factors contributing to success or failure – i.e., policy or program theory and assumptions.</p> <p>The description of program reach (intended beneficiaries) is clearly described.</p> <p>The program resources are clearly described so that the reader can understand how program monies are allocated and have been spent.</p>		
	<p>Depending on the nature, purpose and timelines of a particular evaluation study, the following evaluation questions should be considered for inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the program still relevant to the needs of Canadians? ○ Are the program's resources being used in the most efficient and effective way to deliver appropriate results? ○ Is it necessary for the federal government to operate this program, or could it be transferred to other levels of government, or to the private or voluntary sector? ○ Is there scope for considering more effective program structures and service delivery arrangements? ○ Are departmental management practices appropriate and of sufficient quality? 		
3. Methodology / Design / Data			
3.1 Description of the Methodology / Design	<p>The design of the evaluation is described to the extent that the study can be replicated; e.g., the relationship between the data collection and the analysis is described clearly.</p> <p>The evaluation design is appropriate for the intended objectives of the study.</p>		
	<p>The Data collection is appropriate to the design (the methodology, instruments and sample are described in sufficient detail to make an assessment of methodological rigour); e.g., valid and reliable data.</p> <p>The analysis is appropriate. The data supports the analysis (as determined by, for example, significant tests, response rates).</p>		
3.2 Multiple Lines of Evidence	<p>The evaluation relies on more than one line of evidence and uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches, one of which should be a literature review.</p>		
3.3 Data Quality	<p>The data used in the evaluation are accurate and reliable.</p>		
3.4 Limitations and Impacts	<p>The limitations and trade-offs of the methodologies, data sources and data used in the evaluation are clearly described.</p> <p>Actual and potential biases in and reliability of the data are identified and explained in terms of their impact on stated findings.</p> <p>The constraints of the evaluation and the perspective from which the intervention is evaluated are clear and the reader can assess the validity of the evaluators' judgement.</p>		
3.5 Accuracy	<p>The information in the report is free of errors of fact or logic.</p>		

4. Key Findings			
4.1 Evaluation Issues	The evaluation issues / questions are adequately addressed.		
4.2 Objectivity	All significant findings are presented, testable, and do not go beyond what the evidence will support.		
	Balanced perspective – reflects the range and intensity of the observations and other evaluation input received; e.g., quotes of interviewees should indicate how prevalent the quoted sentiment or opinion is among all interviewees.		
	The results are sufficiently qualified to help readers draw substantiated inferences.		
4.4 Clarity and Conciseness	Used plain language – avoided specialized technical language.		
	Report is not overload with details. Detailed information and analyses are included in technical appendices.		
4.5 Evidence-based Findings	The findings are substantiated by the evidence, as described in the evaluation report.		
5. Key Conclusions			
5.1 Supportable Conclusions	The conclusions address the evaluation questions and are supported by the findings.		
	The conclusions fit the entire analysis.		
6. Recommendations			
6.1 Evidence-based Recommendations	The recommendations are supported by and flow logically from the findings and conclusions.		
	The recommendations address significant issues – i.e., they are not unprioritized “shopping lists”.		
	To the extent possible, an assessment of the potential impact (on the policy, program, etc. evaluated) of implementing a recommendation is provided.		
	The recommendations include proposed timing for management action and some indication of quantity and quality – e.g., a simple statement that “funding should be increased” without some benchmark” objective that provides an idea of “by how much” and what “sufficient” or “good enough” could look like would be insufficient.		
	The recommendations are practical and realistically attainable.		
7. Document Length			
7.1 Length of report	To help bring better focus to the “truly important”, the main body of the evaluation report should be limited to approximately 25 pages. Other information could be provided in appendices and annexes.		
8. Management Action Plan			
8.1 Action Plan	The Action Plan adequately addresses findings and recommendations.		