

Decide who will conduct the evaluation

Evaluations can be conducted by a range of different actors including: external contractors; internal staff; those involved in delivering services; by peers; by the community; and by a combined group.

Therefore it is important to make decisions about who is best to conduct the evaluation.

Consider the relative importance of different types of expertise. Relevant expertise may include skills and knowledge in evaluation, in the specific domain (eg education) or program (e.g. delivering health services), or the local culture and context.

Consider the balance of distance and involvement that will be most suitable and that will support use of the evaluation findings. An external, unaligned evaluator may be viewed as more (or less) credible by different stakeholders. Involving staff and communities may be important for supporting cultural change, knowledge building and supporting the utilization of the evaluation findings.

Different management tasks arise depending on who is involved in which evaluative activities. For example, when using an external evaluator you will need to develop a process for selecting and managing them. If internal staff and/or intended beneficiaries are involved there may be a need to ensure processes are well documented and that relevant training in specific evaluation options is conducted to ensure that quality and ethical standards are maintained.

Decisions about who will conduct an evaluation, or components of an evaluation, will also be informed by timelines, resources, and the purpose of the evaluation.

Methods

- [Community](#)

The community, particularly intended beneficiaries of an intervention, can undertake an evaluation or contribute to a combined team.

- [Expert review](#)

Expert review involves an identified expert providing a review of draft documents at specified stages of a process and/or planned processes.

- [External consultant](#)

An external consultant is someone external to the organization who is contracted to conduct the evaluation.

- [Hybrid - internal and external staff](#)

A hybrid evaluation involves both internal and external staff working together.

- [Internal staff](#)

Conducting an evaluation using staff from the implementing agency rather than hiring external consultants.

- [Learning alliances](#)

Learning alliances involve a structured partnership between two or more organisations with the aim of working together to build and share knowledge around topics of mutual interest.

- [Peer review](#)

Conducting an evaluation using individuals/organizations who are working on similar projects.

Approaches

- [Horizontal evaluation](#)

Horizontal evaluation is an approach that combines self-assessment by local participants and external review by peers.

- [Positive deviance](#)

Positive deviance (PD) refers to a behavioural and social change approach that is premised on the observation that in any context, certain individuals confronting similar challenges, constraints, and resource deprivations to their peers, will nonetheless

- [Participatory evaluation](#)

Participatory evaluation is an approach that involves the stakeholders of a programme or policy in the evaluation process.

Resources

Guides

- [NSW Government evaluation toolkit](#)

This web-based toolkit has been developed to help program managers in New South Wales (Australia) government agencies manage evaluations (including those undertaken by internal or external evaluators, or by a combination of both).

- [Key considerations for managing evaluations](#)

This guide from Pact South Africa is aimed at providing an overview of the key considerations that need to be assessed before and during the evaluation process.

- [The program manager's guide to evaluation](#)

This comprehensive guide from the US Administration for Children and Families provides a step-by-step outline of the evaluation process from purpose to reporting.

Blog post

- [Is independence always a good thing?](#)

This blog post from Howard White (May 1, 2014) argues that the benefits of an independent evaluation team can sometimes be overstated. He presents three arguments to support this contention: Institutional independence does not necessarily safeguard against biases toward positive evaluation; independence comes at a cost; and what agency evaluation departments do is only a small part of the evaluation story.