

## Determine and secure resources

The purpose and scope of the evaluation needs to be considered when determining the budget.

The amount of resources available may influence the level of an evaluation's rigor or the certainty of its findings. The importance of the program, existing knowledge about the program from previous evaluations and the decisions to which the evaluation will contribute are important factors to consider.

A program that has been thoroughly tested in a context similar to the current implementation setting may require fewer resources to satisfy information needs. A higher proportion of funds may be warranted for:

- Evaluations that will contribute to important decisions, such as whether to roll out a program on a large scale
- Evaluations that require highly defensible findings or will come under scientific scrutiny
- Programs that have not been evaluated before

Very often the available resources (time, money and expertise) will restrict the scope of the evaluation (the number of questions, size of the sample, data collection and analysis options) or influence the choice of evaluation designs. Some organizations have a policy of setting aside a certain percentage of the total program budget for evaluation. Organizations often use a "rule of thumb" to specify considerations in making a budget estimate. Common budget estimates range between 5 – 20% of program costs.

When commissioning an evaluation it is wise to start the budgeting process by consulting with the budget, procurement and/or human resource offices within the organization in order to verify and understand budget process, rules, and stipulations. Engage project staff, stakeholders, and M&E staff or professionals to ensure that the budget is comprehensive and accurate.

The process of developing an evaluation budget may be an excellent opportunity to encourage stakeholders to agree on the value of the evaluation and the amount and type of resources necessary to support it. Sometimes after intended users are engaged and the evaluation purpose and questions decided there is scope to add additional resources in order to undertake the type of evaluation that is required.

Budgets are just as critical for planning an internal evaluation as an external one. Although an internal evaluation draws primarily from resources within the organization, getting agreement on available resources will ensure the evaluation runs much more smoothly. For example, staff may be more flexible than consultants, but developing an accurate calculation of staff time costs early in the process helps to enlist their commitment.

## Methods

### Determine resources needed

- [Evaluation budget matrix](#)

An evaluation budget matrix specifies various items that need to be costed as individual line items.

- [Evaluation costing](#)

Evaluation expenses are highly situational and there are no magic formulas for calculating costs.

- [Resources stocktake](#)

The resources available for evaluation include people's time and expertise, equipment and funding.

## Secure resources needed

- [Designated staff time for evaluation](#)

This strategy for securing sufficient resources for conducting evaluation involves allocating a specified amount of staff time (hours or days per week) to work on evaluation.

- [Grant funding for evaluation](#)

You may also consider approaching a foundation or other donor agency for the funds to undertake an evaluation.

- [Work with universities to staff the evaluation](#)

This strategy requires management leadership and uses the rule of thumb approach to estimate the percentage of project funds to spend on evaluation which could be done more accurately by developing an initial evaluation budget.

- [Institutionalized budget allocation](#)

This strategy requires management leadership and uses the rule of thumb approach to estimate the percentage of project funds to spend on evaluation.

This could be done more accurately by developing an initial evaluation budget.

- [Leveraged partnerships to carry out the evaluation](#)

As many projects are undertaken by a consortium of organisations working together, sometimes it is worthwhile to consider approaching your implementing partners to pool resources and carry out the evaluation jointly.

- [Strategies to reduce costs](#)

Reducing costs is something to consider if evaluation costs outweigh the predicted benefits or available resources.