Evaluability Assessment

An evaluability assessment is a systematic process that helps to identify whether a program is in a condition to be evaluated, and whether an evaluation is justified, feasible and likely to provide useful information. Its purpose is not only to conclude if the evaluation is to be undertaken or not, but also to prepare the program to generate all the necessary conditions to be evaluated.

It is advisable to undertake this type of assessment before any evaluation takes place, or as an initial stage of it in order to ensure that evaluations are useful. It can also be undertaken as part of the mid-term review of the program in order to identify areas for improvement towards its evaluation. It is important to note that evaluability assessment does not replace good program design and monitoring functions; rather, it is a tool that helps to verify whether these elements are in place and to fill any common gaps.

The evaluability assessment provides recommendations on how the program could be improved to make it ready for an evaluation, or it reaches conclusion that the program is not ready for an evaluation. Frequently the shortcomings of the programs are connected to three areas: program design; availability of relevant information; and conduciveness of the context. The evaluability checklist below indicates what conditions should be met for an effective evaluation. These conditions usually constitute the key parameters for an evaluability assessment.

An evaluability assessment generally deploys qualitative data collection methods such as desk reviews, secondary data analysis, and interviews with key stakeholders. Depending on the time available and the magnitude of evaluation effort it can take days, weeks, or months.

Steps in an evaluability assessment:[1]

1. Involve intended users of evaluation information.
2. Clarify the intended program from the perspectives of policymakers, program managers, those involved in service delivery, and other stakeholders.
3. Explore the program reality, including the plausibility and measurability of program goals.
4. Reach agreement on any needed changes in program activities or goals.
5. Explore alternative evaluation designs.
6. Agree on evaluation priorities and intended uses of information of program performance.

1. Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer (2004) Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation. P 33- 41.

Evaluability Assessment Checklist

Program Design	
Does the program clearly define the problem that it aims to change?	☐
Has the beneficiary population of the program been determined?	☐
Does the program have clear theory of change/logic model?	☐
Is the results framework of the program coherently articulated? Do the outputs, outcomes and goal follow results chain logic?	☐
Are the objectives clear and realistic? Are they measurable (quantitatively or qualitatively)? Do they respond to the needs identified?	☐
Do proposed program activities lead to goals and objectives?	☐

Availability of Information	
Does the program have capacity to provide data for evaluation?	☐
Does the program have SMART indicators on key areas of intervention?	☐
Does the baseline information exist?	☐
Does the program have a monitoring system to gather and systematize the information with defined responsibilities, sources and periodicity?	☐
What are the likely costs of such data collection and analysis (dollar costs in terms of the time of evaluation staff, program managers and staff, and partners)?	☐
What kind of information do the key stakeholders request?	☐

Conduciveness of the Context	
Is the context conducive to conduct the evaluation, both external and internal to the program, including the stakeholder's implication?	☐
Are there resources available to undertake the evaluation such well trained staff, financial resources, equipment?	☐