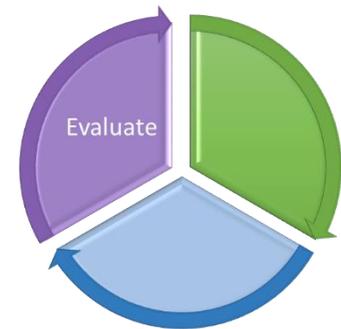


EVALUATE PROGRAM

Purpose:

The purpose of this stage is to gather credible information to answer the evaluation questions and monitor data collection activities to ensure timelines are being followed.



Step 1: Gather the evaluation data

Within the **Evaluation Plan** tool, you will have outlined who will collect the data and the timeline for the evaluation. Consider consulting a Program Evaluator before beginning data collection to ensure the plan is feasible. Refer to the **New Data Collection** tool to review how the data is being collected and follow the plan as written. If you are collecting new data, ensure ethical and privacy elements are considered. Please refer to the Research & Evaluation Policy (2-040).

TOOLS

- *Evaluation Plan*
- *New Data Collection tool*
- *Work Plan*

Step 2: Analyze the evaluation data

The previous stage guide, *Prepare to Evaluate*, outlined who will be analyzing the evaluation data. It is not sufficient to simply analyze the evaluation results; you also need to reflect on the results in relation to the evaluation questions from the *Focus Evaluation* and *Prepare to Evaluate* stages. You can refer to the performance indicators developed in the *Establish Key Indicators* stage when analyzing the data. It is more likely the results will be used to inform future program directions when the evaluation results are reflected on.

Step 2a: Describe patterns and summarize the information

The first step of analyzing evaluation data is to describe any patterns you are seeing and pull out the most important information. Qualitative and quantitative data will need to be analyzed separately using the best test/methods for each type of analysis. If a Program Evaluator or Epidemiologist is not currently involved in the evaluation, you may need to request support at this point to help provide direction.

Once the information has been analyzed, it is time to develop summaries for the analyzed information. The summaries will also be separated according to the type of indicators that were gathered (qualitative or quantitative). Consider the following guiding questions when analyzing the data.

Guiding Questions

- Are there alternative explanations for the evaluation results?
- Is there consistency in the results across multiple data collection methods, if various methods were used?
 - For example, if you conducted 10 interviews, were you seeing 10 different responses among the participants or were the findings consistent across the 10 interviews?
 - If you are seeing 10 different responses to the interview questions, consider pilot testing the questions to ensure the questions are being understood correctly and that they yield the information you are seeking to answer from the evaluation questions.
- Process evaluation:
 - What results help you understand whether the program intervention / component and activities are being implemented as planned and have produced the intended outputs?
 - What does information gathered from multiple data sources (e.g., staff, clients, community partners) tell you about areas of success and areas for improvement with the program?
- Outcome evaluation:
 - Which results help you determine whether or not the intended outcomes (short, intermediate or long-term) of the program have been achieved to demonstrate the program's effectiveness?

Additional information about process and outcome evaluations can be found in the *Focus Evaluation* stage guide.

Step 3: Summarize key evaluation results based on evaluation questions

Step 3a: Consider how the results answer the evaluation questions and/or compare to the established targets and benchmarks

It is now time to reflect on the extent to which the evaluation results answered the evaluation questions previously outlined in the *Prepare to Evaluate* stage guide. You may have also established targets and/or benchmarks for achieving process or outcome indicators in the *Monitor & Report Key Indicators* stage guide. Refer to the **Routine Monitoring & Reporting** tool. Use the targets previously outlined to reflect on the achievement of the indicators.

Guiding Questions

- How do the results compare with the targets and/or benchmarks established as performance indicators?
- How do the results compare with those of other evaluations from similar programs or from the peer reviewed literature?

- Process evaluation:
 - How do the results answer the questions you set out in the evaluation? (e.g. Is the program being implemented across sites in a consistent manner? Is it reaching the target group? What are the challenges to implementing the program activities?)
- Outcome evaluation:
 - How do the results answer the questions identified at the outset of the evaluation? (e.g. Do the program outcomes vary with the intensity of the program? Do program outcomes vary with the degree to which the target groups participate? Were the intended short/intermediate/long-term outcomes observed across all sites?)

Step 3b: Highlight how limitations impact the results

You may want to draw on the core stakeholders' (including members of the priority population(s)) perspectives by sharing preliminary results. Consider if any limitations exist in the data analysis and interpretation process that could influence the interpretation of the results. Consider the limitations to the methods and the data analysis process. These limitations can impact how the data can be used and reported. For example, two schools within the same neighbourhood in London are evaluated for their use of a snack program where the results can be confidently made into recommendations for these schools. Limitations of the results are they cannot be generalized for all of Middlesex-London schools.

Step 4: Develop recommendations with core stakeholders

It is time to identify recommendations from the evaluation results. In collaboration with core stakeholders, clearly outline the recommendations for the program by linking them directly to the results and gather their perspectives on the feasibility of implementation. This may involve small-scale programmatic changes related to improvements about how the program is being implemented. There may also be more large-scale changes, for example suggesting a program change or stopping a program. The recommendations should be tied to the initial purpose of the evaluation within the **Evaluation Plan**.

Guiding Questions

- What are the recommendations from the evaluation results?
- Are there improvements that can be made in terms of how the program is being implemented?
- Is there a recommendation to continue the program, change it, or stop the service/program?

Evaluate Program Checklist

Items relevant to staff are white with a dotted border;

Items relevant to the Program Manager are grey with a solid border

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gather evaluation data (Contact an Epi or PE for support) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Analyze data (Contact an Epi or PE for support) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Summarize the evaluation results |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | With core stakeholders, develop recommendations based on the evaluation results |