Evaluation Guidelines

2022

Government of South Australia
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Table of contents

OFFICIAL

Evaluation Guidelines

1. Introduction

This guide articulates the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) guidelines on how to manage a program evaluation[1]. The purpose of developing these guidelines is to provide common standard and practices on program evaluation across agencies within the Government of South Australia.

The guide covers the key steps of the process and provides resources to assist at the different stages of an evaluation. Use of these tools and templates is not mandatory. In general, the level of effort and resourcing for evaluation will depend on the scale of the program being evaluated. Resources for evaluation should be considered as part of the budget for the program or initiative.

This document is relevant to SA public sector managers who are responsible for program design and evaluation, whether it is undertaken by external evaluators, an internal team, or a combination of internal and external. It can also be used by evaluation teams as a resource to help them understand how to meet the expectations for evaluation under the SA Government program evaluation guidelines.

1.1 Why evaluate?

With limited resources, evaluation can not only support decision making, but also allocate resources more effectively while maximizing the impact of programs. The purpose of evaluation is to understand whether a program has reached its goals and delivered what it is expected to, based on its original plan. It looks at the long-term impacts of a program and exposes what worked, what did not, and what should be done differently in the future. It is critical for developing objective conclusions regarding the extent to which programs can be judged as a success.

Benefits of evaluation include:

- Assessing whether a program is achieving set targets
- Measuring program effectiveness
- Improving program outcomes
- Demonstrating whether program efforts have had a measurable impact on expected outcomes
- Helping identify the most valuable and efficient use of resources
- Increasing accountability and transparency
- Understanding whether strategic changes need to be made

[1] For the purpose of this document, the term "program" is defined broadly to include projects, policies interventions, systems, services, and other efforts.

1.2 Overview of the evaluation process

Evaluation is the systematic approach to collecting, analysing and using information to enhance learning and make judgements to inform decisions.

The evaluation process includes the following four steps: planning the evaluation, conducting the evaluation, implementing recommendations and building capability (see Figure 1). The details of each steps will be discussed in the later sections.

The **planning of the evaluation** starts during the program design stage. Once the program is implemented and data is collected as planned, we can **conduct the evaluation**, analyse data and report findings. These insights will serve to **implement recommendations** and make improvements. Reviewing and reflecting on the previous process will help **build capability** in evaluation and improve the design of future programs.

Figure 1: Evaluation process diagram

Plan the evaluation	Conduct the evaluation	Implement recommendations	Build capability
• Purpose • Scope • Program logic and theory of change • Stakeholder engagement • Governance • Key evaluation questions • Evaluation design • Risk management • Internal or external evaluation	• Guiding principles • Data analysis • Report findings	• Monitor implementation • Post evaluation review	• Improve capability in evaluation • Identify lessons • Develop culture of evaluation

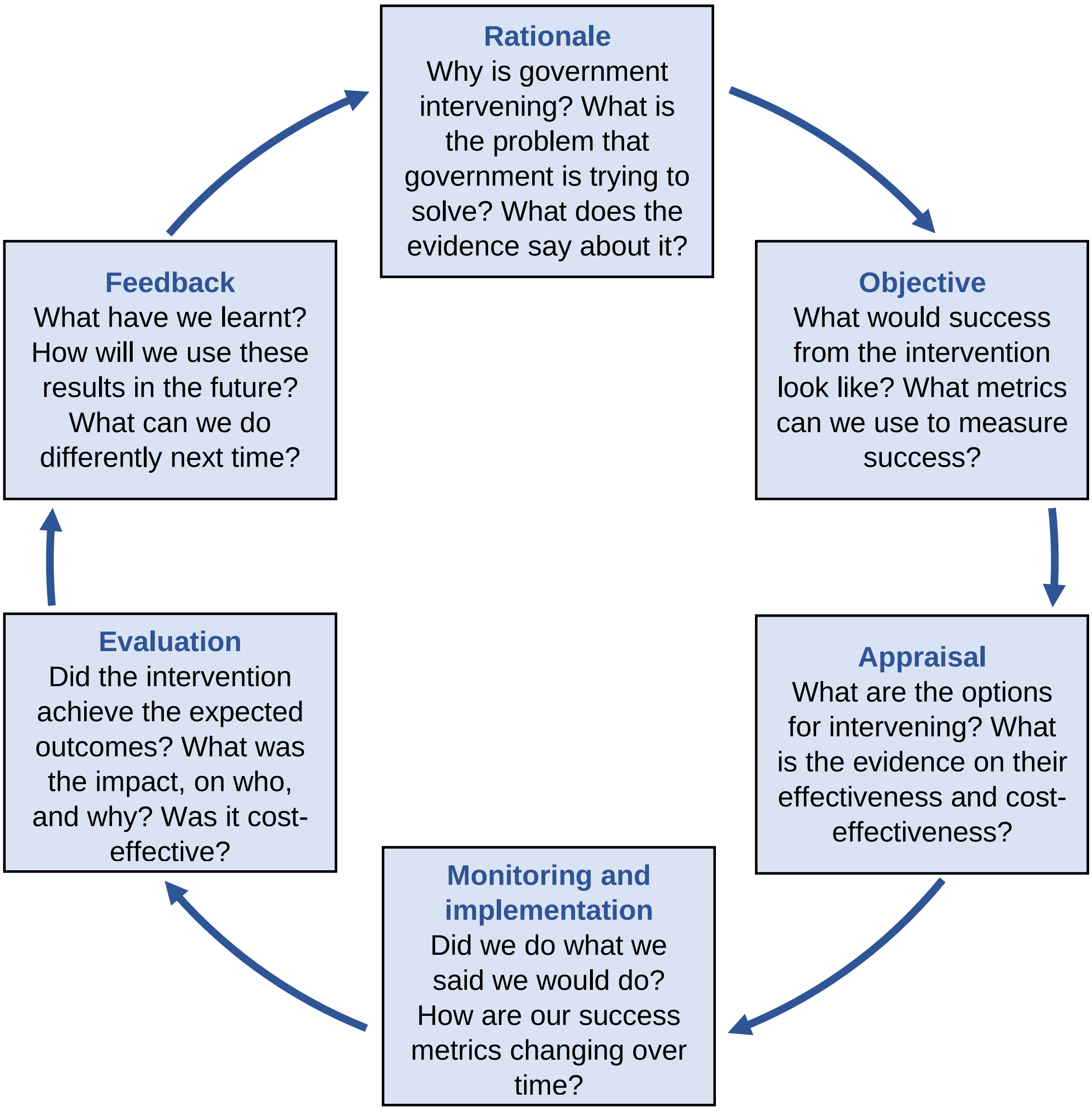
1.3 Evaluation in the policy cycle

Thinking about evaluation from the start

Designing programs with evaluation in mind ensures that the program objectives are achievable and measurable, that data is collected at the beginning as well as on an on-going basis and that stakeholders are identified early on.

Sometimes evaluation is only considered after a program has been implemented. However, evaluation is a key component that should inform thinking in all stages of the policy cycle. The ROAMEF framework is useful for thinking how evaluation is important in each of them. This is not a linear process and none of the steps is an isolated activity. Each will inform, and be informed by, the other steps (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: The ROAMEF policy cycle[2]



[2] Adapted from HM Treasury 2020, *Magenta Book: Central Government guidance on evaluation.*

Government of South Australia
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Rationale

Before a program is implemented, the rationale identifies the need for the government intervention and provides support for that need. Previous evaluations can help shape program design and can provide insights on how the program activities will deliver the intended outcomes, why the intervention might work, what evidence there is to support this thinking and where risks and uncertainties lie. Refer to Section 2 Plan the evaluation and Attachments A, B and C.

Objective

During program design it is also important to plan how the program will be evaluated. The Better Regulation Handbook requires regulatory impact statements include an outline of the evaluation plan before the regulation is implemented[3]. The Guidelines for the evaluation of public sector initiatives also require developing a post-implementation review plan during project planning[4].

Developing Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound (SMART) objectives makes it easier to identify the indicators and performance measures that need to be tracked to assess the program's intended benefits. This also helps establish data collection methods early on, supports the provision of timely, accurate and comprehensive data and makes it easier to retrieve this information at the time of the evaluation. Refer to Section 2 Plan the evaluation and Attachment F.1 and F.2.

Commencing Theory of Change thinking at this stage can help articulate objectives and assess potential intervention ideas. Refer to Section 2 Plan the evaluation and Attachments B and C.

Appraisal

During appraisal, previous evaluation evidence helps to assess the feasibility and cost of the different options and to identify the most appropriate one. Theory of Change thinking can help articulate how various options are expected to work and the strength of the evidence that underpins them. It is also useful to see what data is available. Refer to Section 2 Plan the evaluation and Attachments B and C.

For business case analysis refer to the Treasurer's Instruction 17 Guidance Material. For regulatory impact analysis refer to the Better Regulation Handbook. For infrastructure projects refer to the ISA Assurance Framework.

Monitoring and implementation

While delivering its activities, programs capture monitoring data. This ongoing evidence helps ensure that the program is being delivered as intended and that the expected benefits are being achieved. It is also useful to identify what needs to be adapted to improve performance. Refer to Attachment F.1 and F.2.

---

[3] Government of South Australia, *Better Regulation Handbook*, p. 12 [Online].

[4] Government of South Australia, *Guidelines for the evaluation of public sector initiatives – Part B*, Department of Treasury and Finance, p. 18, p. 47 [Online].

Evaluation

Program evaluations can be conducted prior to, during, or after program implementation. Evaluations conducted prior to or during implementation are formative and process focused. They investigate how the program is delivered and can be used to continually improve programs by informing adjustments to delivery.

Evaluations conducted after implementation are considered summative and outcomes focused. They measure if the program was successful, what contribution it had on the outcome, what effects it had on different groups, if there were any unintended consequences and if it was cost-effective. Refer to Sections 2 Plan the evaluation, 3 Conduct the evaluation, 4 Implement recommendations and Attachments A, D, E, F, G, H.

Feedback

Evaluations help reflect on what worked, what didn't work and what could be done differently next time. These lessons are then fed back to the rationale and design of new programs. In this sense, evaluation holds agencies accountable, supports continuous learning and facilitates decision-making. Refer to Section 5 Learning and building capabilities.

The following table shows how the policy cycle relates to the [Better Regulation Handbook] and the [Infrastructure Assurance Framework].

Table 1: Comparative table of the policy cycle, the regulatory impact assessment cycle and the infrastructure assurance framework

Policy cycle	Regulatory impact assessment cycle	Infrastructure SA assurance framework
• Rationale	• Problem identification	• Initiative registration
	• Case for government action	• Strategic assessment
• Objective	• Identify policy options • Impact analysis • Finalise preferred option	• Options analysis • Business case
• Appraisal		
• Monitoring	• Implementation and evaluation	• Procurement review • Service readiness review • Benefits realisation review
• Evaluation		
• Feedback		

2. Plan the evaluation

Plan the evaluation → Conduct the evaluation → Implement recommendations → Build capability

Evaluation plans come in many forms. There is no one “right” way to do an evaluation. However, an evaluation plan should always provide a transparent explanation about how the evaluation will meet its purpose and answer the evaluation questions.

Foundations of a good evaluation

The foundations of a good evaluation, which then drive all the subsequent steps, are:

- Having a clear purpose
- Identifying the scope
- Specifying the key evaluation questions

2.1 Purpose

The evaluation plan states why the evaluation is being undertaken, what it will assess and how, what decision it might inform and how the findings will contribute to change in the program.

2.2 Scope

The evaluation scope outlines the:

- The timeframe of the program that the evaluation will cover
- Intended users and audiences
- Key stakeholders and how they will get engaged
- Data collection methods
- Resource requirements versus availability
- Limitations. Some parts of the program may be out of scope. Identifying these constraints establishes what the evaluation will not achieve and helps the evaluation team focus on the areas within its scope.

See Attachment A Evaluation Plan Template for a guide on how to plan an evaluation.

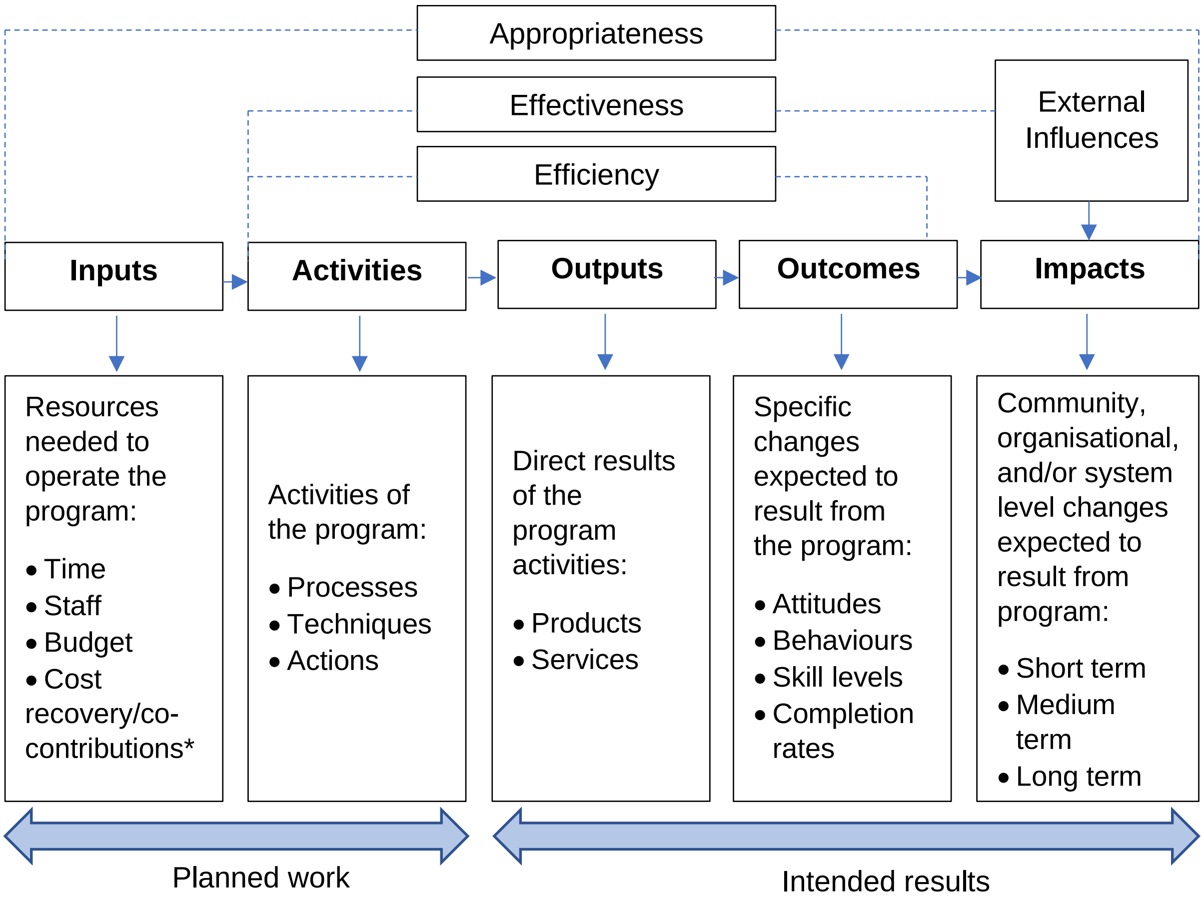
Program logic and theory of change

Logic models and theory of change are tools used to describe how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. They are ideally developed in the program design stage, but they can also be useful for clarifying the scope of an evaluation. They help to:

- Identify outcomes as well as indicators to measure them.
- Develop better evaluation questions.
- Find gaps in the theory or logic of a program and work to resolve them.
- Build a shared understanding of what the program is about and how the parts work together.
- Focus the attention of management on the most important connections between action and results.
- Prioritise data collection and provide a structure for data analysis and reporting.
- Provide a way to engage stakeholders in the design, processes, and use of the evaluation.

Program logic: A program logic model is defined as a picture that links outcomes (both short and long term) with program activities/processes and its theoretical assumptions/principles.

Figure 3: Program logic and performance model



* If your program has a cost recovery model you can refer to the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.

See Attachment B Program Logic Template for a guide on how to develop a program logic.

Theory of change: A theory of change explains how the activities undertaken by a program contribute to a chain of results that lead to the intended impacts. It outlines any interim outputs or short-term outcomes/changes that may be necessary before long-term outcomes can be achieved[5].

See Attachment C Theory of Change Template and Example for a guide on how to develop a theory of change.

2.3 Stakeholder engagement

It is important to identify who the evaluation affects and what their needs are. The range of stakeholders may include[6]:

- the clientele of the program,
- Ministers and Cabinet,
- Chief Executives and other decision makers,
- program partners,
- client managers and program administrators,
- academics and specialists,
- the wider community,
- other agencies, and
- external peak bodies.

Key stakeholders are to be identified and engaged in the planning stage to build trust and legitimacy. They will have varying degrees of knowledge about the program, the extent to which it can be evaluated, and the suitability of different evaluation designs and methods. The evaluation will have the greatest chance of success if the key stakeholders can participate in clarifying the purpose of the evaluation and developing the key evaluation questions.

See Attachment D Stakeholder Engagement Template.

[5] Better Evaluation, *Describe the theory of change* [Online].

[6] Australian Capital Territory Government 2010, *Evaluation Policy and Guidelines*, Policy Division, ACT Chief Minister's Department, p. 20.

2.4 Governance

Authorising entity or person

The authorising entity or person could be the Minister, Chief Executive of the agency, or Senior Executive/Management Committee. It is responsible for approving and signing off on the evaluation reports conducted by the agencies.

Policy and program delivery areas

Policy and program managers need to be invited to participate in the evaluation and their support during the evaluation process is critical.

Reference Group

The Reference Group consists of representatives of the evaluated program and policy areas. Staff from other SA government agencies with specific expertise or knowledge in conducting evaluations related to the program or policy area may be invited to be part of the Reference Group. The Group's key functions include approving the Terms of Reference of an evaluation and providing input and oversight during the evaluation process.

Not all evaluations need a formal Reference Group. Each evaluation plan will determine what is fit for purpose.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference is a formal governance agreement among key stakeholders that provides an overview of what is expected in an evaluation and defines how the evaluation will be conducted.

> See Attachment E Terms of Reference Template for a suggested outline of terms of reference.

2.5 Timelines

Consider when the findings will be needed and any other milestones, such as the evaluation plan being finalised, interviews and data collection, first draft of the evaluation report, final draft of the evaluation report, consideration by the Reference Group, consideration by the executive team and final report deadline.

2.6 Resourcing

It is important to determine what resources are available for an evaluation since these may limit its scope and influence the choice of the evaluation design. Resources include:

- Existing data and knowledge about the program

- Funding
- People, time and expertise

2.7 Key evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions arise once you have considered the above foundational issues. These are typically 3-5 questions that you want answered by the end of the evaluation. They can also be broken down further into more detailed questions.

Each may require different methods and data to answer them and be of interest to different stakeholders.

There are three broad categories of questions depending on which criteria they seek to address:

- Appropriateness – A program is appropriate when it is the best approach to satisfying identified and high priority needs and when it aligns with government priorities. E.g.: To what extent does the program address an identified need? How well does the program align with government and agency priorities?
- Efficiency – The program's outputs and outcomes are being produced at the lowest possible cost. E.g.: Do the outcomes of the program represent value for money? To what extent is the relationship between inputs and outputs timely, cost-effective and to expected standards?
- Effectiveness – An effective program is one that produces identifiable, measurable and sustainable outcomes or impacts that achieve the program objectives. E.g.: To what extent is the program achieving the intended outcomes, in the short, medium and long term? To what extent is the program producing desired outcomes and/or meeting each of its objectives?

Impact and sustainability are two other categories also frequently used[7].

Determining whether some, or all, of these concepts will be evaluated helps define the scope of an evaluation.

2.8 Evaluation design and methods

The design of a program evaluation identifies:

- what data will be collected; how, when and who is responsible;
- how these data will be analysed to answer the evaluation questions.

The availability, quality and reliability of data will be crucial in providing insights that will lead to findings and recommendations, which in turn will be used by executives to make informed decisions with respect to the program. It is crucial to know whether there will be sufficient quantitative and qualitative data sources to inform decision-makers prior to collecting data and conducting the evaluation.

[7] Markiewicz, A. and Patrick, I. 2016, *Developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks*, SAGE.

Program managers should systematically and continuously collect the data according to the Evaluation Plan so that these data are available for analysis. Retrospective data collection, unless it's routinely collected for other purposes, is rarely complete or successful.

In pre-post evaluation designs, collecting baseline data is critical to assess program performance and draw meaningful comparisons on the situations before and after the program. Baseline data also helps adjust progress towards the program outcomes and it is ideally collected prior to program implementation. If the program has already commenced, baseline data will need to be reconstructed retroactively.

Quantitative data

- Primary data: Such as participant and program data directly from internal systems and/or previous evaluations/reviews. Ensure participants give consent for their data to be used for evaluation purposes.
- Secondary data: Data collected for another purpose, which could include data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Productivity Commission's Reports on Government Services, Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing surveys, and various economics reports.

Longitudinal data from the Commonwealth via the ABS such as BLADE (Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment) and MADIP (Multi-Agency Data Integration Project) are available to construct counterfactual cases. This may require state program data to be integrated. A counterfactual can be estimated simply using historical data (without linkage) or using a synthetically constructed control group (using propensity score matching techniques).

Qualitative data

Some common methods for collecting qualitative data might include:

- structured interviews
- focus groups
- written surveys
- observation notes.

See Attachment F.1 Evaluation Design Template for a guide on designing evaluations.

See Attachment F.2 Question Bank for examples of evaluation questions.

2.9 Risk management

A risk is an uncertain event that may have a positive or negative impact on a program and its evaluation. Unexpected events can affect a program's implementation and therefore its evaluation. An effective risk management strategy will allow the program evaluation team to proactively approach potential or real problems, rather than defensively respond to problems after they occur[8].

The DPC formal procedure for managing risk involves a 7-step process and can be navigated with the aid of DPC's risk management procedure guide, which can be accessed here (refer to the Risk Rating Matrix and Operational Risk Register Template).

2.10 Internal or external evaluation

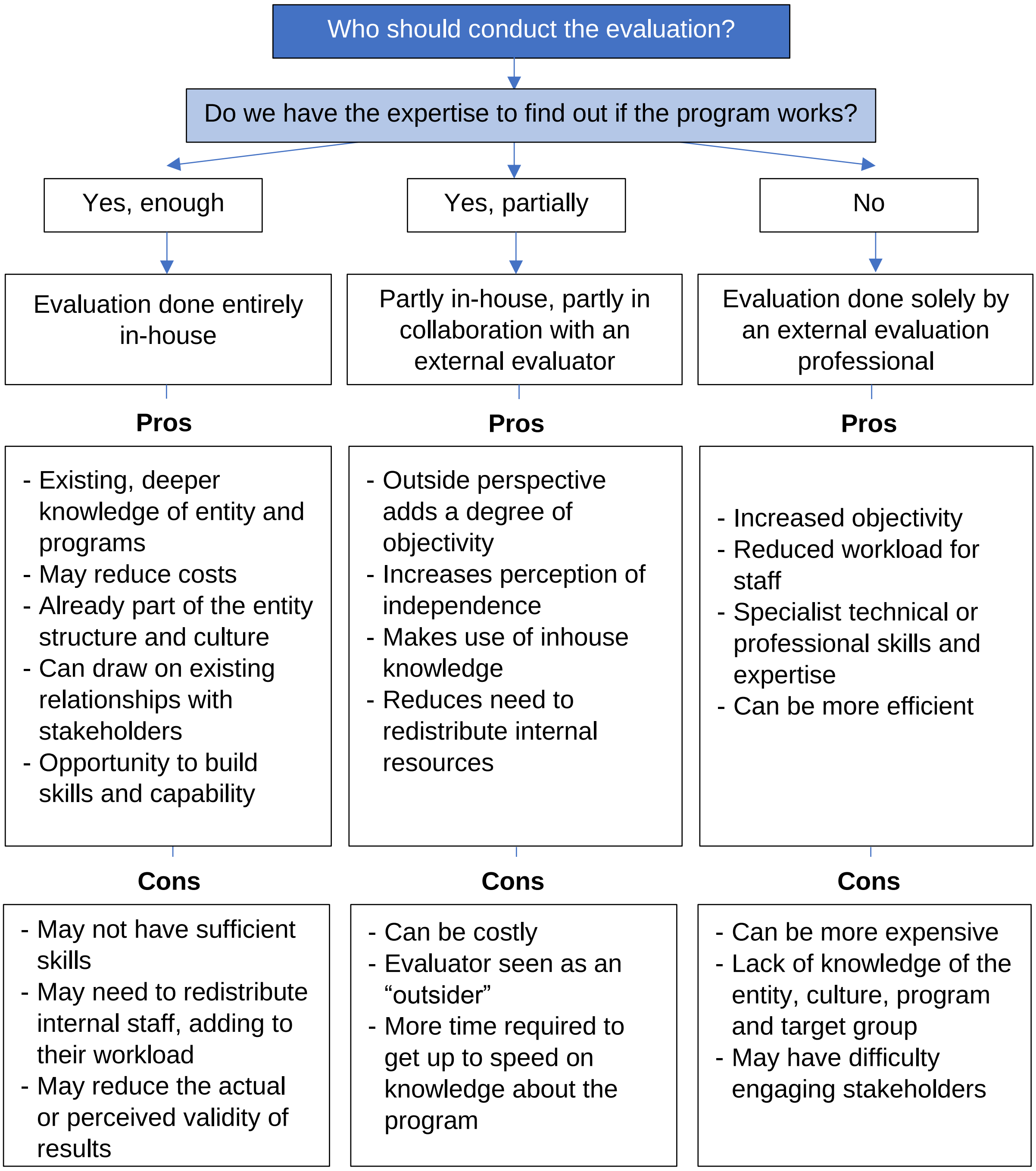
One of the first decisions to be made is whether the evaluation is to be conducted internally or externally. Factors that might influence this choice include, among others, cost; availability; knowledge of program and operations; ability to collect information; specialist skills and expertise; objectivity; and accountability for government funding[9].

The decision will also depend on the purpose and end use of the evaluation as it is not always appropriate for programs to be evaluated by the implementation team or even the responsible Department. In this case, an external evaluation may be required to bring independence. External evaluators can come from within, e.g. other SA public sector agencies. Figure 4 below provides a set of guide questions to resolve the question of whether to do an internal or external evaluation.

[8] Government of Western Australia, *Program Evaluation Guide*, Department of Treasury, p. 22.

[9] Conley-Tyler, M., *A fundamental choice: internal or external evaluation?*, Evaluation Journal of Australasia Vol. 4, Nos 1 & 2, March/April 2005, pp 3-11.

Figure 4: Decision tree: Who should conduct the evaluation?[10]



[10] Australian Government 2022, *Evaluation in the Commonwealth. Who evaluates?*, Department of Finance [Online].

3. Conduct the evaluation

Plan the evaluation → **Conduct the evaluation** → Implement recommendations → Build capability

3.1 Guiding principles

Key principles to guide an evaluation include:

- Maintaining integrity and impartiality throughout the process
- Ongoing consultation and collaboration with stakeholders
- A focus on delivering a logical, comprehensive and action-oriented final report

> **Stay engaged**
>
> Conducting an evaluation may span months or even years. Evaluations are most useful when the end-users (funders, people implementing the intervention and/or community) are involved throughout. The governance arrangements can support the effective operation of the evaluation.

These guiding principles will strengthen the credibility and acceptability of the findings, help overcome resistance and criticism and ensure that the evaluation will be used[11].

3.2 Data analysis

Once the data is collected, the next step is to investigate patterns, trends or themes that can help provide insights on how appropriate, efficient and/or effective the program is. The type of analysis will depend on the evaluation design and the volume of data that has been collected.

3.3 Report the evaluation findings

The purpose of evaluation is to inform decision making. The findings of the evaluation therefore need to be available to the people who are making subsequent decisions. Tips to promote the use of findings to inform decisions include[12]:

- Ensure the findings answer all the pre-determined key evaluation questions.

---

[11] Australian Capital Territory Government 2010, *Evaluation Policy and Guidelines*, Policy Division, ACT Chief Minister's Department, p. 23.

[12] Government of Western Australia, *Program Evaluation Guide*, Department of Treasury, p. 42.

- Communicate the findings, particularly to key stakeholders and decision-making bodies throughout the evaluation process, not just at the end when the evaluation report is produced.
- Align the reporting and dissemination of findings with decision making cycles (e.g., prior to the next round of policy or program change, Budget and Mid-Year Review).
- Link the findings to the agency's and Government's strategic outcomes/goals.
- Present findings in an understandable format to stakeholders. For example, use a variety of mediums to present the findings such as graphs and tables.
- Use the results to present an argument – including models or alternative proposals.

Data visualisation is the process of representing data in a clear and easy-to-understand way. Some of the common data visualisation formats include tables, bar charts, histograms, line graphs and pie graphs.

Use of quotes that are representative of participants' views can help reinforce the message. Other tools for communicating the findings include visual storyboards about the evaluation and its findings.

A communications plan, which can be planned up front as part of the evaluation plan, can assist when you need to report findings to a range of stakeholders, in a range of formats, at multiple time points. The communications plan will include, for example, the regularity of updating to the Reference Group, frequency of minutes to executive/Minister, and when interim and final reports are due to coincide with funding cycles. Equally important, it will detail how you will feed back results to community members/participants, demonstrating respect for their time (e.g. if they provided survey data) and making good on the commitment to use the responses they provided.

See Attachment G Evaluation Report Template for a suggested outline for an evaluation report.

4. Implement recommendations

Plan the evaluation → Conduct the evaluation → **Implement recommendations** → Build capability

4.1 Monitor the implementation of the evaluation findings

Developing an implementation plan based on the evaluation's findings and recommendations will help implement any required changes and guide future action to improve the performance of the program.

This plan involves[13]:

- Prioritising activities most likely to lead to changes.
- Identifying activities that are not leading to the desired outcomes so you can stop or change them.
- Identifying whether anyone that should have been a beneficiary of the program is missing out.
- Reviewing the program's delivery method.

See Attachment H Implementation Plan for Evaluation Findings Template for a suggested outline for an implementation plan.

4.2 Post evaluation review

The evaluation process itself may be evaluated, once it is completed. Although it is not always required, critically analysing the effectiveness and appropriateness of completed evaluations will help improve future evaluations and contribute to better government policies and programs. Questions worth considering in relation to the three main stages of the evaluation include[14]:

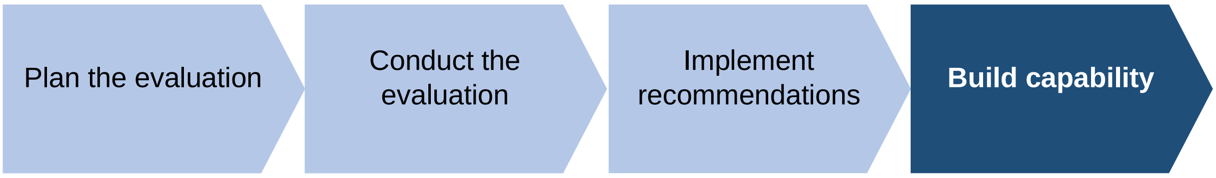
Evaluation Stage	Questions for consideration
Planning	• Were the objectives and scope reasonable? • Was the right evaluator chosen? • Were resources adequate and used efficiently?

[13] Australian Government 2022, *Evaluation in the Commonwealth. Implement improvements*, Department of Finance [Online].

[14] Australian Capital Territory Government 2010, *Evaluation Policy and Guidelines*, Policy Division, ACT Chief Minister's Department, p. 24.

	• Did the level of evaluation reflect the risk involved with the policy or program? Were risks avoided? • Was the stated purpose of the evaluation too broad?
Conducting	• Were all interested parties able to access the information? • Were research participants satisfied with the process? • Were stakeholders adequately engaged? • Was the data reliable and interpreted fairly?
Reporting / Reviewing	• Was the information from the evaluation useful? Were recommendations implemented? • Have lessons been identified that can contribute to improved decision making? If not, why not?

5. Learning and building capabilities



5.1 Building capabilities

In addition to providing useful insights to assess the appropriateness, efficiency and/or effectiveness of public programs, evaluations can also help agencies:

- Share knowledge and lessons identified both internally and across other agencies.
- Enhance expertise and experience in evaluation activities.
- Support learning and inform practice within the agency.
- Improve agency performance.
- Better align programs with policy design.
- Assist in the development of future programs.
- Promote the use of evaluation in decision-making.
- Foster continuous improvement of evaluation processes.
- Support accountability.

5.2 Reflecting on lessons identified

Reflecting on good practices and mistakes encourages agencies to identify lessons and generate insights for future interventions. Some helpful questions you can reflect on include[15]:

- What was good and bad about the program?
- What went well? Why did things go well?
- What didn't go so well? Why didn't it go well?
- What did the different stakeholders contribute to the situation (positively or negatively)?
- What else could you have done?
- What would you do differently the next time? What can you do better? How can you improve?
- What knowledge or skills are needed to improve?

[15] The University of Edinburgh, *Gibbs' Reflective Cycle* [Online].

5.3 Developing a culture of evaluation

Building evaluation capability is also critical for the development of an organisational culture that values learning and fosters continuous improvement. By embedding a culture of evaluation across government agencies, program evaluations will be regarded not only as a compliance requirement but rather as a necessary and integral part of policy development and program design.

To build a culture of evaluation, SA Government agencies need to:

- Plan early for evaluation and think about evaluation activities in the design stage of the program.
- Build on existing evidence and previous evaluations when designing new programs.
- Adapt the capability building processes to suit their nature, size and structure.
- Ensure there is a strong leadership that fosters learning and supports evaluation activities.
- Allocate adequate resources for training and development of evaluation skills and knowledge.
- Have access to quality evaluation resources, such as communities of practice, professional, academic and non-government bodies.

6. Evaluation resources

6.1 Definitions of commonly used evaluation terms

Activities: The tasks that are required to be done to achieve program outputs.

Appropriateness: Extent to which a program is, or remains, in accordance with the original government decision.

Baseline: Information collected before or at the start of a program that provides a basis for assessing subsequent program progress and outcomes.

Counterfactual: An assessment of what would have happened had the program not been implemented.

Cost-benefit analysis: A method of evaluation that attempts to estimate and compare the total benefits and costs of a particular proposal. It calculates the dollar value of the gains and losses for all people affected.

Cultural sensitivity: Being actively cognizant and understanding of the cultural context in which the evaluation takes place, appreciating the cultural differences and employing culturally and contextually appropriate methodology.

Effect: Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the program's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, considering their relative importance.

Efficiency: A measure of how economically resources/inputs are converted to results.

Evaluation: The systematic collection and analysis of information to enable judgements about a program's effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency.

Focus group: A type of group interview designed to capture information about norms, behaviours, practices, opinions and views within a particular population.

Impact: Looks beyond the immediate results of an initiative and identifies longer-term effects including unintended or unanticipated consequences.

Indicator: A measure that when tracked over time, indicate progress (or not) toward a specific target. They are often used as the starting point for designing the data collection and reporting strategies.

Informed consent: Full disclosure of the purpose to which the research will be put, the nature of the information sought from the participant, and the motivations of the researcher in seeking this particular information.

Inputs: The financial, human, and material resources used for the program's intervention.

Methodology: The process, design or framework that underpins the choice and use of particular methods and particular approaches. In some cases an evaluation may use more than one methodology.

Monitoring: A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing program with indications of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

Objective: A specific and measurable result that can be reached to accomplish a particular goal.

Outcome: The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.

Outcome evaluation: This form of evaluation assesses the extent to which a program achieves its outcome-oriented objectives. It focuses on outputs and outcomes (including unintended effects) to judge program effectiveness but may also assess program processes to understand how outcomes are produced.

Outputs: The products, resources and services which result from the program, may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.

Policy: A statement of principle that articulates, and aligns with legislative, regulatory or organisational requirements.

Process evaluation: Evaluate the implementation and delivery of a policy to provide feedback, such as whether the policy is being implemented as planned, what is working well and whether it is delivering expected outputs and outcomes.

Program: A group of related activities (may be called a program, project, policy, intervention, initiative, strategy or service) undertaken by or for government that intends to have a specific impact (that is, government is choosing to do something to achieve a result).

Program evaluation: A systematic and objectives assessment of an on-going or completed project, program or policy. Evaluations are undertaken to (a) improve existing interventions or program, (b) assess their effects and impacts, and (c) inform decisions about future programming. Evaluations are formal analytical endeavours involving systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information.

Program logic (also known as logic model): Management tool used to improve the design of programs. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts) and their causal relationships, indicators and the assumptions or risks that may influence success or failure. It therefore assists planning, execution and evaluation of a program.

Qualitative data: Information that is difficult to measure or count in numerical terms. It can instead be expressed using categories (dichotomous, nominal, ordinal).

Quantitative data: Information that can be expressed in numerical terms, counted, or compared on a scale.

Recommendations: Proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a program, at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. Recommendations should be linked to conclusions.

Result: An observable measure of achievement, performance or change. It provides evidence of activities, success or otherwise.

Scope: A written description of the objectives, tasks, methods, deliverables and schedules for an evaluation.

Terms of reference: Written document presenting the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the methods to be used, the standard against which performance is to be assessed or analyses are to be conducted, the resources and time allocated, and reporting requirements

Theory of change: Management tool used to improve the design of programs. It explains how the program activities produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. It includes linkages between short, medium and long-term outcomes.

6.2 Further reading

Australian Capital Territory Government 2010, *Evaluation Policy and Guidelines*, Chief Minister's Department, Canberra. Available from: http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/175432/ACT-Evaluation-Policy-Guidelines.pdf

Australian Government 2022, *Evaluation in the Commonwealth*, Department of Finance. Available from: https://www.finance.gov.au/government/managing-commonwealth-resources/planning-and-reporting/commonwealth-performance-framework/evaluation-commonwealth-rmg-130

Australian Government 2017, *Evaluation Strategy 2017-2021*, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Office of the Chief Economist, Canberra. Available from: https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/default/files/May%202018/document/pdf/department_of_industry_innovation_and_science_evaluation_strategy_2017-2021.pdf?acsf_files_redirect

Better Evaluation 2014, *Rainbow Framework*. Available from: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/download_the_Rainbow_Framework

Better Evaluation, *Manager's guide to evaluation*. Available from: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/managers_guide

Better Evaluation, *Specify the Key Evaluation Questions*. Available from: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/rainbow_framework/frame/specify_key_evaluation_questions

Conley-Tyler, M., *A fundamental choice: internal or external evaluation?*, Evaluation Journal of Australasia Vol. 4, Nos 1 & 2, March/April 2005, pp 3-11.

Government of New Zealand, *Making sense of evaluation: A handbook for everyone*, SuperU, Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit, Wellington, 2018. Available from: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle

Government of South Australia 2022, *Better Regulation Handbook*. Available from: https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/resources-and-publications/Better-Regulation-Handbook.pdf

Government of South Australia 2021, *Assurance Framework*, Infrastructure SA. Available from: https://www.infrastructure.sa.gov.au/our-work/project-assurance/isa-assurance-framework/ISAAF-2021.pdf

Government of South Australia 2014, *Guidelines for the evaluation of public sector initiatives*, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Part A available from: https://www.treasury.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/515292/ti17-guidelines-part-a.pdf

Part B available from: https://www.treasury.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/515293/ti17-guidelines-part-b.pdf

Government of Western Australia 2020, *Program Evaluation Guide 2020*, Department of Treasury. Available from: https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-01/evaluation-guide.pdf

HM Treasury 2022, *Green Book: Central Government guidance on appraisal and evaluation*, HM Treasury, London. Available from:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063330/Green_Book_2022.pdf

HM Treasury 2020, *Magenta Book: Central Government guidance on evaluation*, HM Treasury, London. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879438/HMT_Magenta_Book.pdf

Markiewicz, A. and Patrick, I. 2016, *Developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks*, SAGE Publications.

New South Wales Government 2022, *Evaluation Toolkit*, Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Available from: https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/tools-and-resources/evaluation-toolkit/

New South Wales Government 2016, *NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines,* Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Available from: https://arp.nsw.gov.au/assets/ars/f506555395/NSW-Government-Program-Evaluation-Guideline-January-2016_1.pdf

Queensland Government 2020, *Program Evaluation Guidelines*, Queensland Treasury. Available from: https://s3.treasury.qld.gov.au/files/Queensland-Government-Program-Evaluation-Guidelines-2nd-edition-2020.pdf

The University of Edinburgh, *Gibbs' Reflective Cycle*. Available from: https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2010, *The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation (Second Edition)*, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Washington DC. Available from: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/program_managers_guide_to_eval2010_508.pdf

W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2004, *Evaluation Handbook*. Available from: https://www.wkkf.org/~/media/62EF77BD5792454B807085B1AD044FE7.ashx

W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2004, *Logic Model Development Guide*. Available from: https://hmstrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/LogicModel-Kellog-Fdn.pdf

Evaluation Guidelines

2022

Attachments

Table of contents

Attachment A: Evaluation Plan Template

Evaluation Plan

[INSERT NAME OF PROGRAM]

1. Program background

Brief summary outlining what the program is about. Describe the objectives, target population, where the program sits within the policy context and how the program aligns with your agency's purpose.

2. Evaluation purpose

What decision might the evaluation inform?

Is the purpose to learn, to be accountable for resources, or to make a judgement about whether you succeeded/whether to continue an intervention?

What have you promised publicly in terms of evaluation?

3. Evaluation scope

Describe what is 'in' and 'out' of scope for the evaluation, including the timeframe of the program the evaluation will cover and the focus (what parts of the program are being evaluated). Remember that a broad scope is likely evaluated at a 'shallow' level, a narrower scope is likely evaluated at more depth; a simple issue of resourcing.

4. Evaluation audiences

Who will be interested in the findings? How will they be engaged? Are there primary and secondary audiences?

5. Evaluation timelines

When are the findings needed? Which project milestones will be delivered by which dates?

Consider any other milestones, such as the evaluation plan being finalised, interviews and data collection, first draft of the evaluation report, final draft of the evaluation report, consideration by the Reference group, consideration by the executive team and final report deadline.

Develop a timeline for key evaluation deliverables.

6. Evaluation governance

Who will oversee the evaluation, and how?

Outline how the evaluation will be managed and implemented and who will participate in what capacity. You can use a table to indicate the broad roles and responsibilities of different areas and individuals involved in the evaluation. You might include some combination of a policy area, a program area, a consultant and an evaluation area (if your agency has one).

7. Evaluation resources

People and budget.

8. Key evaluation questions

These are the 3-5 high-level questions you want to answer.

9. External or internal evaluation

This decision balances factors such as:

- Perceptions of independence and potential access to specialist skills and expertise (if not available internally) using an external evaluation,
- Knowledge of the program and context, availability and flexibility to respond to changes in focus from an internal evaluation.

10. Reporting/knowledge dissemination

Outline the principal users of the evaluation and how the results will be used and shared. What will you report, when, to whom?

You can use the following table:

Table A.1 Communication plan

Audience	Content	Format/Media	Timing	Resources

11. Evaluation methodology

How will the evaluation collect data and from which sources? See table A.2 Evaluation methodology.

Table A.2 Evaluation methodology

Evaluation question	Data collection				Data analysis		
	Data	Data source	Responsibility	Timeframe	Approach	Responsibility	Timeframe

Adapted from Wellbeing SA Evaluation Plan Template.

Attachment B: Program Logic Template

Program Logic

[INSERT NAME OF PROGRAM]

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Problem statement: What is the need for the program or activity?</td><td colspan="2">Program objective: What is the program or activity aiming to achieve?</td></tr>
<tr><td>INPUTS</td><td>ACTIVITIES</td><td>OUTPUTS</td><td>OUTCOMES</td><td>IMPACT</td></tr>
<tr><td>What you invest (money, people, time, infrastructure)</td><td>What you do (to implement the program or activity)</td><td>What the program team and/or participant does (quantify how many actions, or activities, plan to be delivered and all stakeholders).</td><td>The specific changes expected to result from the program.</td><td>The difference the program makes in the:
• Short
• Medium
• Long term</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Assumptions: (assumptions made as part of the theory of change – e.g. beliefs about how or why the program will work, who the stakeholders and participants are)</td><td colspan="2">External factors: (areas of influence external to the entity/company that affect outcomes - these can include economic, geographic, cultural, competition and technology factors)</td></tr>
</table>

Adapted from the Commonwealth Performance Framework, Department of Finance.

Attachment C: Theory of Change Template and Examples

How to develop a theory of change?

1. **Task one**: Identify the long-term outcomes

Bring your group together and dedicate a whole session to developing the long-term outcome/s your program or activity is aimed at. It may take more than one session.

A more systematic analysis can include a review of existing documentation which explains why an intervention was developed; relevant research, evaluations and other evidence from similar programs; and communications with stakeholders about how they understand the intervention is intended to work.

2. **Task two**: Develop your pathway of change or outcomes map

Develop explicit change theories and show causal linkages between program elements. Start the process of “backwards mapping”: this means working backwards from your long-term goal to the earlier outcomes that must be achieved before it is possible to achieve this outcome.

For example, behaviour changes can come about through one or more change theories, such as changing social norms, changing incentives, increasing opportunities, and removing barriers.

Talk with your staff and partners, check previous documentation and review relevant research to find out:

- What are the change theories underpinning expected changes for individuals, organizations, and communities? How plausible do these seem?
- Are there different change theories at different stages of the project or program?
- Are there different change theories for different people?

3. **Task three**: Operationalise outcomes

For each outcome you need to answer the question “What evidence will we use to show that this outcome has been achieved?” This evidence becomes your indicators.

First figure out what would be the best indicator, then figure out how to measure this.

Think about the threshold for each indicator and how much change is required to achieve this outcome.

4. **Task four**: Define interventions

Decide what interventions or activities are needed to achieve each outcome. Interventions are specific to that step on the pathway of change, not the whole pathway.

5. **Task five**: Articulate assumptions

Document your assumptions and why you think that one outcome will lead to the next (you can base it on existing theories, research, or expert consensus).

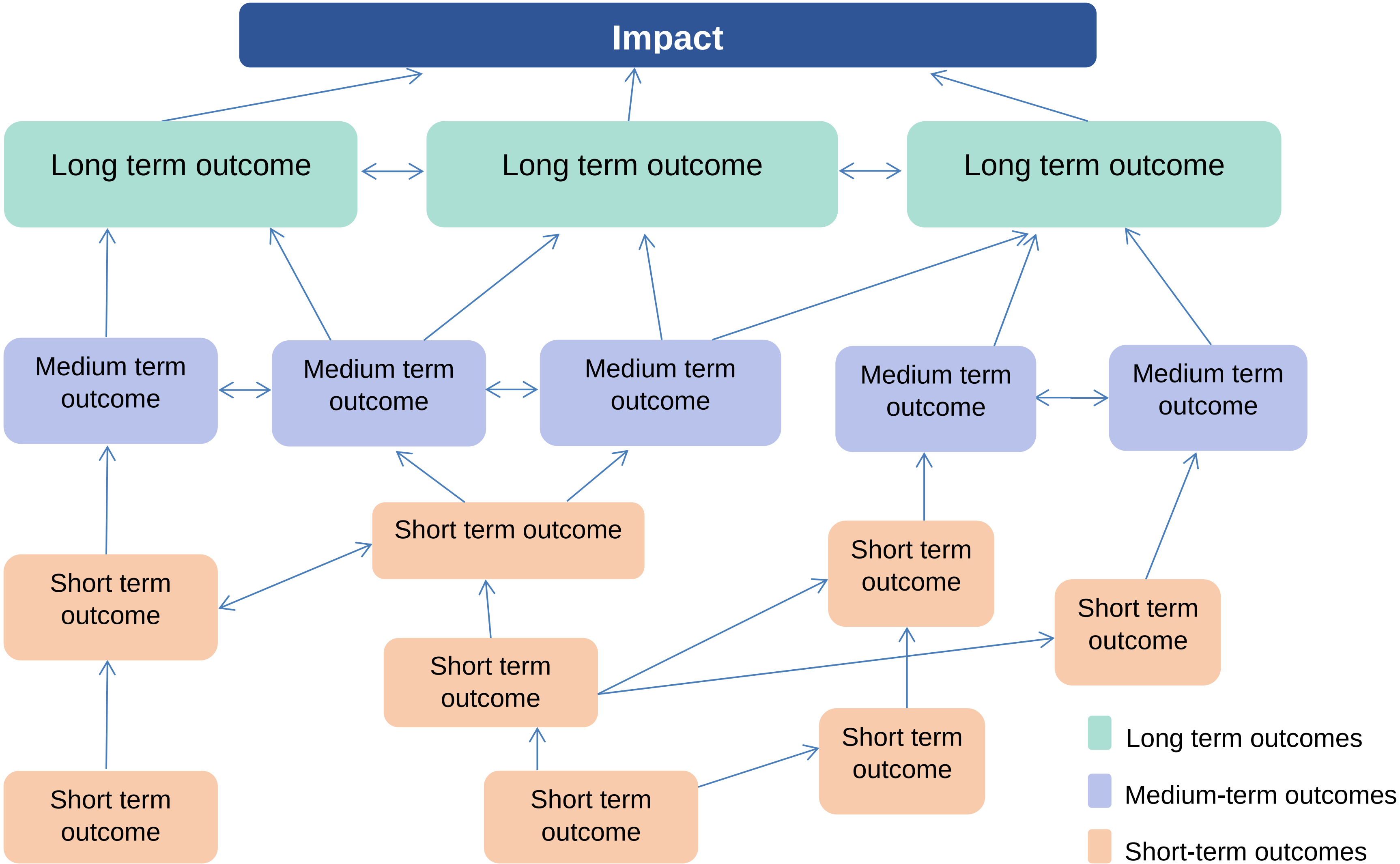
Why is each outcome necessary in the pathway of change?

Is your theory of change plausible, testable and feasible?

What is the context/environment your project is operating in? Document how this informs your theory of change (e.g. existing programs/ services, social conditions, community norms)[1].

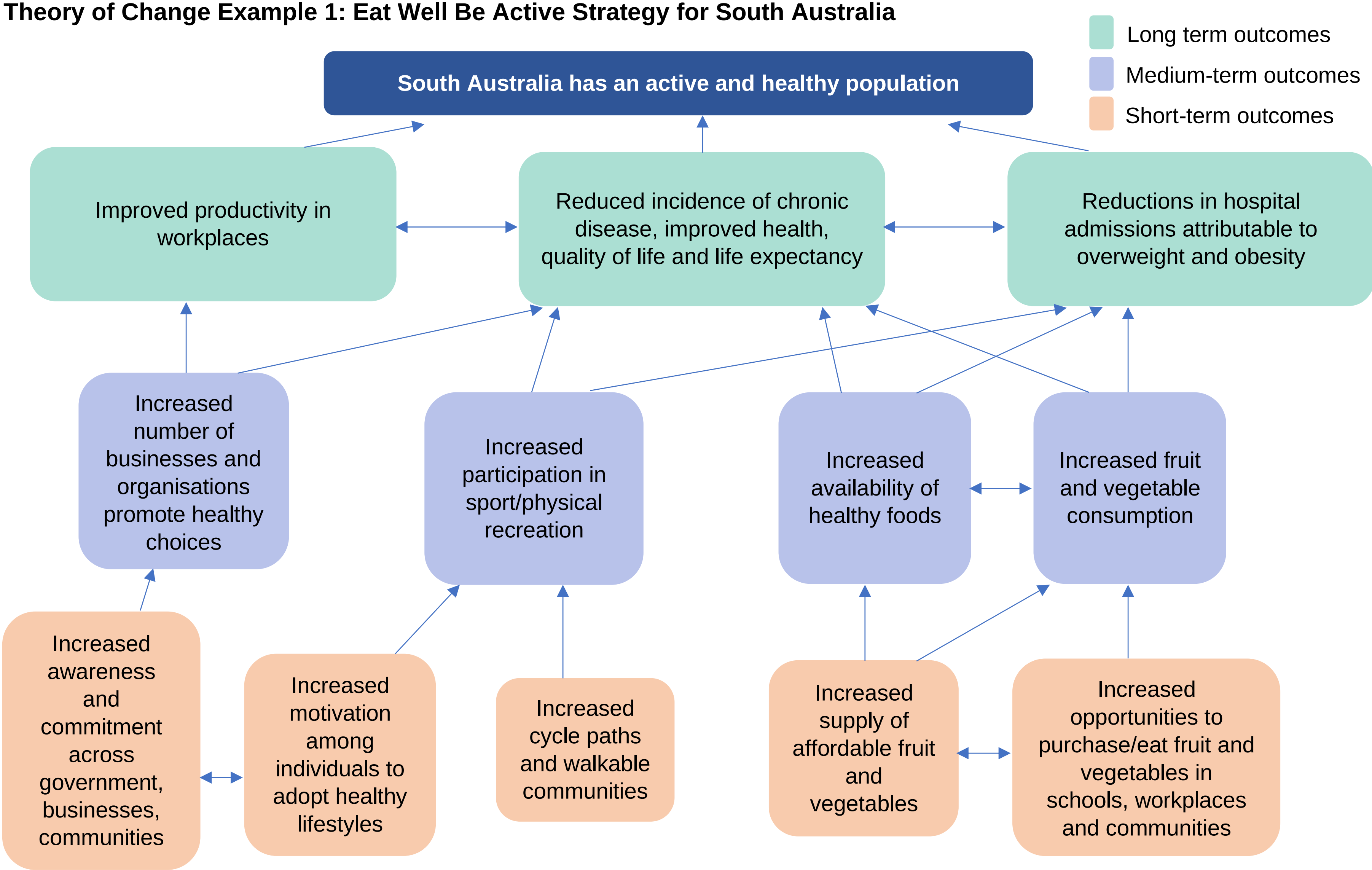
[1] Adapted from the Australian Government Commonwealth Performance Framework, Department of Finance.

Theory of Change Template



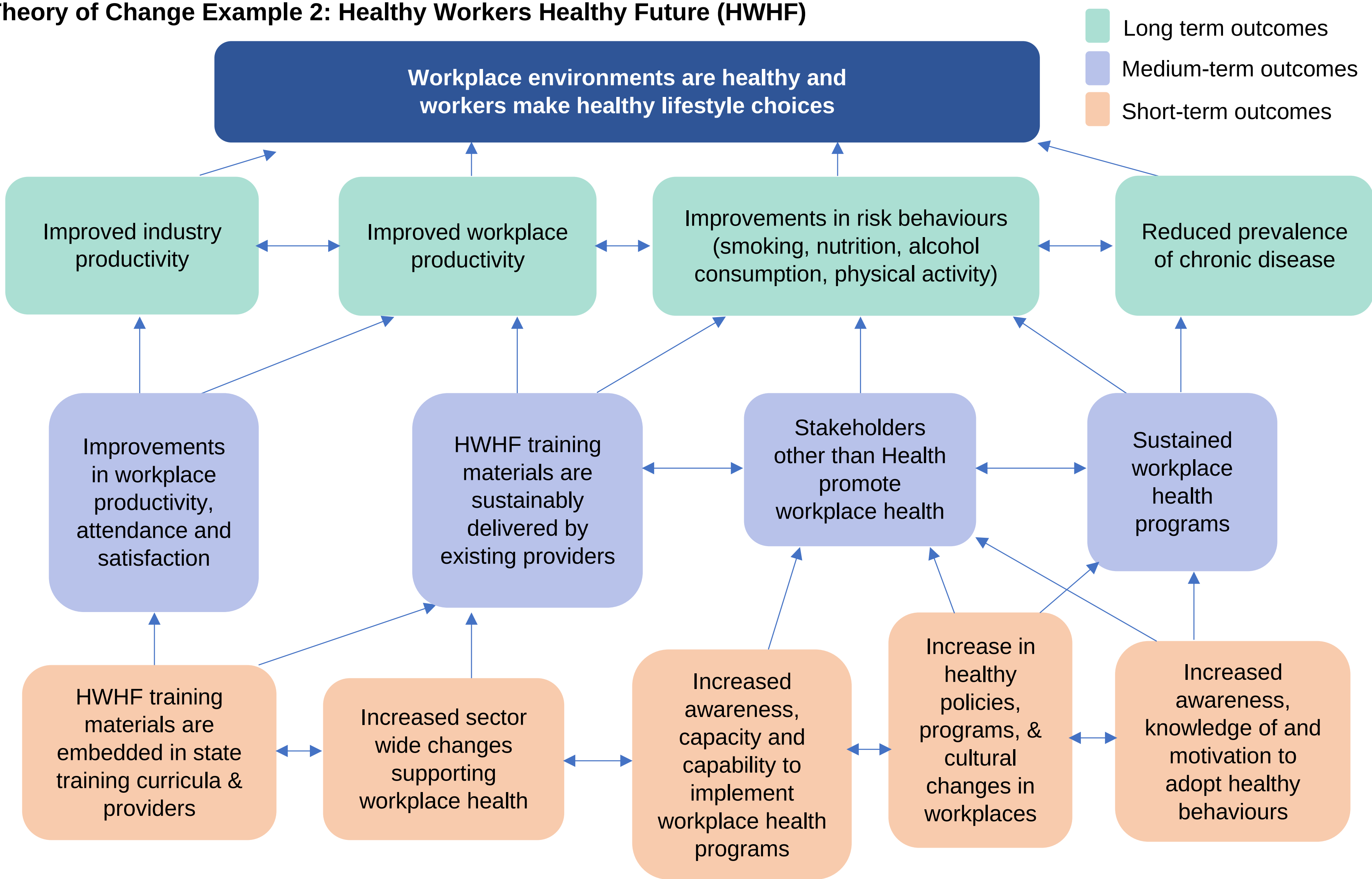
Adapted from the Commonwealth Performance Framework, Department of Finance.

Theory of Change Example 1: Eat Well Be Active Strategy for South Australia



Adapted from Government of South Australia, *The Eat Well Be Active Strategy for South Australia 2011-2016,* Department of Health and Wellbeing [Online].

Theory of Change Example 2: Healthy Workers Healthy Future (HWHF)



Adapted from Government of South Australia, *The Healthy Workers Healthy Futures 2014-2018,* Department of Health and Wellbeing [Online].

Attachment D: Stakeholder Engagement Template

Who needs to be involved to ensure the evaluation's utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy?* List their names or position titles:

Utility: Whose involvement and support are necessary to increase the chances that the evaluation results are valuable?	
Feasibility: Whose cooperation is needed to allow for an efficient and effective evaluation?	
Propriety: Who has a proper/fair/legal right to be part of the evaluation?	
Accuracy: Whose expertise is needed to ensure the evaluation findings are dependable and truthful?	

*Adapted from the Commonwealth Performance Framework, Department of Finance, and Davidson, E.J. (2013). Actionable evaluation basics: Getting succinct answers to the most important questions. Auckland, New Zealand: Real Evaluation. (pp.11-12). For more information on each of these categories see [Program Evaluation Standards - JCSEE]

Transfer the names above to the cells below that best describe (A) the person's main role in relation to the program and (B) how they are expected to be involved in the evaluation.

(A) Main role in relation to the program:	**(B) Type of involvement in the evaluation****				
	INFORM Keep stakeholders informed	**CONSULT** Listen to and acknowledge stakeholders' concerns and aspirations and seek their feedback	**INVOLVE** Work with stakeholders to ensure their concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed	**COLLABORATE** Look for stakeholders' direct advice in formulating solutions and incorporate their recommendations into the decisions	**EMPOWER** Implement the stakeholders' decisions
Served or affected by the program					
Involved in implementing the program					
Made decisions about the program, policies and/or funding					

** Adapted from Better Together. Principles of Engagement. Second Edition, Government of South Australia., and the Commonwealth Performance Framework, Department of Finance.

Attachment E: Terms of Reference Template

Terms of Reference

[INSERT NAME OF PROGRAM]

The [insert agency] will commission/undertake an evaluation of the [Insert program name]. The evaluation will be guided by the [program name] evaluation Reference Group. It will be conducted by [insert the name of the external consultant/internal team], with additional support provided by the [insert policy team].

1. Purpose

[Insert name] program was established in [insert year]. The program's objective is to [insert program objective].

Previous evaluations and reviews of the [Insert name] are listed in the table below.

Table X [insert Program name] previous evaluations

Date	Evaluator	Type

This evaluation will examine the performance of the [Insert name] program against the criteria of [appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness].

2. Scope and timing

The scope for this evaluation includes projects which commenced between [insert date] and [insert date]. This includes the program rounds [insert round] to [insert round] [delete if not applicable].

The evaluation will begin in [insert date] and be completed by [insert date]. The evaluation will include findings/recommendations/lessons identified.

3. Key evaluation questions

Evaluations focus on assessing the appropriateness (design), efficiency and/or effectiveness (outcomes/impact) of a program. You can organise the key evaluation questions under these categories. Refer to Attachment D.2 Question Bank.

4. Governance arrangements

The evaluation will be governed by the [Insert program name reference group]. The Reference Group will be responsible for providing advice and guidance to the evaluators for the duration of the evaluation.

The membership consists of [insert membership of Reference Group] who will provide relevant/area specific advice and perspectives, including feedback about directions and deliverables.

The responsibilities of the Reference Group are to:

- Ensure the evaluation is appropriately focused and targeted to the key questions that should be investigated;
- Oversee the appropriate and effective allocation of resources;
- Assist with the management of any sensitive matters arising from the review;
- Ensure key milestones and deliverables are met;

The Reference Group will:

- Approve the terms of reference and scope of the evaluation;
- Approve the evaluation plan and ensure appropriate engagement with key stakeholders;
- Endorse recommendations arising from the review;
- Approve the final report for submission to Executive and;
- Endorse key communications to stakeholders and other interested parties.

Membership on the Reference Group reflects the role rather than the individual. The Chair of the Group will sign off the Terms of Reference and will review the report's findings and recommendations. The Reference Group comprises (aim to have no more than 5-6 members):

Reference Group	Name	Position
Chair		*E.g.: an Executive who does not have line management responsibility for the program*
Program Representative		*E.g.: the Program Manager or some other Senior Representative of the program*
Independent Representative		*Appointed member by Director/Manager*
Quality Assurance (optional)		*E.g.: a member of the Planning & Project team*
Other Stakeholder Representative (optional)		*If there are any critical stakeholders who should be included in the Reference Group*

Other issues to be considered in the governance arrangements are:

- Which South Australian government entity will approve the final evaluation report?
- Who will commit the entity to implement the recommendations (if included in the evaluation report)? How will the implementation be tracked?
- Will the evaluation be published?
- How will the Minister's Office be briefed, and by whom?

5. Resources

Resourcing for this evaluation includes [insert resourcing and what area they represent].

6. Endorsements

Date created:

Version:

Endorsed by:

Endorsed by:

Endorsed by:

Endorsed on:

Approved by:

Approved on:

Attachment F.1: Evaluation Design Template

Evaluation Design

[INSERT NAME OF PROGRAM]

FOCUS AREA EVALUATION QUESTIONS*	INDICATORS: What are you going to track?	DATA: Where and how to source it?
Appropriateness		
• What was the nature of the problem or opportunity that the program was designed to address? • How appropriate was the South Australian Government's intervention? • To what extent was the program consistent with the government's strategic policy objectives? • What evidence supported the design choice of the program? What alternatives existed?	• Nature and magnitude of the market failure. • Alignment with the government's strategic policy objective. • Evidence-based links between activities, outputs and outcomes.	• Program policy documents, including original policy rationale, program logic, previous evaluations, program guidelines and briefs. • Research and literature reviews on similar strategies and programs, best practice. • Community consultation and focus groups. • Interviews and surveys at time of evaluation.
Efficiency		
• Was the program implemented on budget and on schedule? What obstacles were encountered? • How well did the program reach and engage with the intended participants? • How have program benefits been distributed? Did any groups benefit more or	• Program outputs (e.g.: number and value of applications received and approved; number of projects completed; number and nature of stakeholder engagement events). • Level of reach (e.g.: number and characteristics of participants, number of enquiries).	• Program policy documents. • Program administrative data. This includes application forms, funding agreements, administrative costs, program expenditure, progress/completion reports, program status briefs, milestone reports, final report, etc.

less than others? Were any participants or groups negatively affected? If so, who and how? • How well were risks anticipated, mitigated and managed? • Was the program reporting done in an adequate and timely way?	• Number and nature of feedback and complaints received. • Number and nature of risk events and risk interventions. • Level of adherence to structures and processes.	• Risk register. • Interviews and surveys at time of evaluation.
Effectiveness		
• To what extent have the intended short-term outcomes occurred? • To what extent have the intended medium-term outcomes occurred? • To what extent have the intended long-term outcomes occurred? • What was the magnitude of the changes that occurred? • What were the main factors contributing to the outcomes? • Were there any unintended consequences (positive or negative)?	• Distribution of access and benefits. • Variation in outcomes within different participants (by size, location, sector, cohort, etc.) • Number and type of participants negatively affected and the nature of the negative effects.	• Program data and documents. • Program logic. • Analysis of externally held data (e.g.: ABS). • Counterfactual analysis. • Interviews and surveys at time of evaluation.
Lessons identified		
• What went well? What didn't go well? • What can be improved for future programs? • What can be done differently? • What is needed to improve?	N/A	• Program documents (final project report). • Interviews and surveys at time of evaluation.

Adapted from the Commonwealth Performance Framework, Department of Finance.
*Selected from a question bank (see Attachment F.2 Question Bank).

Attachment F.2: Question Bank

Appropriateness	
Original rationale for the program	• What was the nature, magnitude and distribution of the problem or opportunity that the program was designed to address? - What was the concern or opportunity that gave rise to the program? - How many participants were potentially affected? What type of participants (e.g. businesses, indigenous communities) were they? What costs or obstacles were apparent? What potential benefits were being forgone? - What sectors, cohorts or regions were affected? • What actions were needed in order to overcome the problem or exploit the opportunity? • What was the likely consequence of not addressing the problem or opportunity? - Had no action been taken, how likely is it that the problem or opportunity would have continued? - To what extent might the problem have worsened, or the opportunity dissipated in the absence of any action? How many participants might have been affected? What might have been the economic and/or social consequence for those participants, their sector, community and/or the economy? • Did changes in the nature of the problem or opportunity occur over the program's lifetime that warranted a change in the program's design or scale? If so, how was this addressed?
Continuing rationale for the program	• Is there still a need for the program? - Has the nature, magnitude or distribution of the problem or opportunity changed since the introduction of the program? If yes, how, and to what extent, and does the program still address this changed need? - How and to what extent would businesses and the economy be affected if the program were to be reduced or abandoned? • Are the original and/or current policy objectives still relevant? - Have changes in the situation or environment overtaken the policy objectives? What, if any, amendments to the objectives would enable a more effective response to the problem or opportunity? - Are the original targets or outcomes still desirable and achievable?
Original rationale for government intervention	• Was it appropriate for the South Australian Government to intervene? Why/why not? - Were existing or prospective private sector activities likely to be less than fully effective in resolving the problem or maximising the potential benefits?

	- Was a market failure apparent? Were externalities or spill overs being generated or forgone to the detriment of the South Australian community? - What gaps or barriers prevented a solution being reached independently of government involvement?
Continuing rationale for government intervention	• Is government intervention still appropriate? - Are private/not-for-profit sector solutions still unlikely to deliver an effective outcome for businesses, industry, the economy or the South Australian community?
Alignment with strategic objectives	• To what extent was the program consistent with the South Australian Government's strategic policy objectives? - If relevant, did it also align with the government's key priorities?
Interaction with other programs	• How well did the program align and/or interact with other government or community programs targeting similar objectives, participants or activities? - Did any other government or community programs target similar participants or objectives? If so, to what extent did the objectives of the different programs complement or conflict with each other? - Did any other government or community programs engage in similar activities? If so, to what extent did the activities of the different programs complement or conflict with each other? - Were conflicting incentives being delivered?
Level of government	• Was the activity undertaken by the most appropriate level of government? - Did the activity lie within the powers and responsibilities of the South Australian Government? If not (or not solely), what was the reason for the South Australian Government involvement? - Did other levels of government take action instead of, or alongside, the South Australian Government? Why or why not? - To what extent were the Commonwealth and local governments involved in program activities?
Program design	• Did the program have clear and consistent objectives? • Did clear, evidence-based links exist between the program's inputs and activities and its expected outcomes? • Were mechanisms in place for outcome achievement to be assessed? Were appropriate targets and KPIs identified? • Was the program adequately resourced to undertake its planned activities? • Did the program design address the need? - Did any changes occur that reduced the effectiveness of original design elements? Could changes to elements of the design have produced a better outcome? • Why was this program or activity considered to be the most efficient and appropriate way to deliver this initiative? - What alternatives existed?

	- What evidence supported the design choice? • Were lessons from previous programs or similar activities considered in designing the program? • If previous reviews or evaluations of the program had been conducted, were the findings considered and recommendations actioned? • Have any changes or improvements been made to the design of the program since its inception (as a result of continuous improvement or other)? How effective were they?
Governance	• How effective were the program's governance arrangements? - Were the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the administration of the program clearly defined? - Were lines of accountability clear for all parties involved in the administration of the program? - Are record-keeping procedures in place to demonstrate compliance and ensure consistency in decision-making? - Are procedures in place to identify and manage potential conflicts of interest? - Is the governance structure appropriate to achieve the intended objectives? - Were governance arrangements consistent with the relevant South Australian Government governance frameworks/guidelines? • Were there areas for improvement in the program's governance structure?
Efficiency	
Rollout	• Was the program rollout completed within the timelines expected? If not, what obstacles were encountered? What, if any, action was taken to overcome them? • Was the program rollout completed on budget? If not, why not?
Administration	• Did program operations and procedures work effectively? • Were program delivery timetables realistic? Were there delays? If so, what caused the delays? What action was taken? • Were any significant administrative constraints or costs experienced? • Did the program have clear and consistent guidelines to enable consistent administrative decision making? • Were mechanisms in place to enable continuous program improvement? If so, how effective were they? • Were there areas in which the program's operations and procedures could have been more efficient? What changes or improvements were introduced? How effective were they?
Inter-agency cooperation	• If other entities or groups were involved in the administration of the program, how effective were the joint working arrangements?
Risk management	• What were the major risks associated with the program? How well did the program design anticipate and mitigate those risks?

	• Were changes made to program operations or governance arrangements to improvement the management of identified risks? • What were the consequences of facing and/or managing program risks?
Participation	• To what extent did the characteristics of applicants/participants (successful and unsuccessful) match those of the program's intended participants? • To what extent did the projects proposed by applicants match the program's intended focus? • Were efforts made to increase awareness of the program among different cohorts under-represented among applicants/participants? What was the outcome of those efforts? • Was the program over- or under-subscribed? - If the program was under-subscribed, were efforts made to increase awareness of the program among targeted cohorts? What was the outcome of those efforts? • How many participants/proposed projects were funded? What were the demographic characteristics of those cohorts? - How many projects were funded, or participants involved? - What was the geographical distribution of funded projects and/or participants? • In what ways did participants who were successful in obtaining government support differ from cohorts who were unsuccessful? • In what ways did projects/cohorts that were supported differ from projects/cohorts that were not supported?
Project management	• Did all projects commence as planned? If not, what obstacles were encountered? How were they dealt with? • Were program funds disbursed within planned timeframes? • Were all projects completed as planned? Why / why not? • In what ways did projects that were completed differ from those that were not completed? What obstacles were encountered?
Project reporting	• Were reporting requirements and processes adequate and effective? Were projects issued with clear reporting guidelines? • Did projects maintain and submit the required information? • Were project reports submitted in a timely way?
Project monitoring	• Was oversight of participants' progress, and their completion of the funded projects, efficient and effective? • To what extent were projects able to change course to accommodate unexpected barriers or developments, or to take advantage of unexpected opportunities? • Was the program implemented on budget and on schedule? • Did the financial records provide a transparent, accurate and reliable view of how program funds were allocated and used?

	• Was reporting sufficiently informative and timely to ensure that problems or opportunities could be identified and addressed quickly?
Monitoring and evaluation	• Were the targets and/or KPIs appropriate and related to the program objectives? - Were data in place to demonstrate that the program addressed the need underpinning the program rationale? - Were measures in place to assess high-level program attributes (such as cost-effectiveness, value for money, etc)? - Were measures in place to assess contribution to high-level outcomes (such as productivity gains, social connectiveness, reduced burden on business, spill overs, etc)? • Are more or different targets/KPIs required? • Did the program have sound data collection methodologies? • Were any problems encountered with data collection? If so, how were they addressed?
Effectiveness	
Achievements to date	• What data are available to determine initial outputs and early outcomes of the program? • What early outcomes or indications of future outcomes are suggested by the data? • Are the outcomes identified in the program logic model occurring as expected? • What is the likelihood that they will continue to be achieved? • Are mechanisms in place for robust later assessment of the program's outcomes and impact in terms of: - What was achieved? - How much was achieved? - Who was affected? - Where the outcomes were concentrated? - How/why the outcomes were achieved (attribution vs contribution)? - Unintended consequences? • Is a mechanism in place to identify and analyse lessons learned from the program?
Obstacles and success factors	• Have any issues or developments emerged that might limit the achievement of intended outcomes? If so, what actions are being taken to address them? • Have any issues or developments emerged that might reinforce achievement of intended outcomes? If so, what actions are being taken to exploit them? • Have external factors affected the program's operations or outcomes in any way? If so, is mitigating action required? • What, if any, obstacles have been encountered by program managers or program participants?

	• What characteristics distinguish the most successful projects and participants from those that are less successful?
What was achieved	• Did the program achieve its intended outcomes?
How much was achieved	• What was the magnitude of the changes that occurred? • Did the outcomes meet the targets, if any, established for the program? • How do the outcomes compare with those of related or alternative programs? • Was the program's reach sufficient to realise the required scale of change? • How durable or sustainable are the outcomes? To what extent do participants have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to maintain outcomes after the funding has ceased?
Who was affected	• What were the characteristics of the program's participants and/or beneficiaries (size, sector, etc)? • Did the actual participants/beneficiaries differ from the intended participants/beneficiaries? • Were any groups negatively affected by the program? If so, how?
Where were the outcomes concentrated	• To what extent did the outcomes differ by region or sector? • Did particular regions or sectors participate in, or benefit from, the program more than others? • Did the actual distribution of the outcomes differ from that which was intended?
How and why the outcomes were achieved	• What were the main factors contributing to the outcomes? • What, if any, obstacles were encountered? What was done to reduce their effect? • What, if any, external factors affected the program's operations or outcomes? • Were the assumptions specified in the logic model correct?
Unintended consequences	• Did the program have any unintended consequences, positive or negative? If so, what were those consequences? How and why did they occur? • What action, if any, was taken to reinforce positive unintended consequences and reduce negative ones?
Counterfactual	• Were methods considered or developed to determine what the situation would have been had the program not been conducted (for example, BLADE or control groups)? • What would have been the situation had the program not been conducted?
Return on investment	• To what extent can the return on investment be quantified for the program?
Cost-effectiveness	• Were methods considered or developed to enable future assessments of the cost-effectiveness of the expected activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts and benefits?

	• Was the program cost-effective? How did its outcomes compare with similar programs elsewhere, or with alternative ways of achieving the same outcomes? • To what extent did the benefits of the program outweigh the costs?
Evaluation-readiness	• How ready is the program for evaluation of its outcomes and impacts?
Lessons identified	
Lessons identified	• What, if any, lessons can be drawn from the program to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of future programs? - What went well? - What didn't go well? - What and how can we improve? What skills or knowledge do we need to improve? - What would we do differently next time?

Adapted from the Commonwealth Performance Framework, Department of Finance.

Attachment G: Evaluation Report Template

Evaluation Report

[INSERT NAME OF PROGRAM / REPORT TITLE]

Introductory information

- Title page
  - Name of Department
  - Date
  - Author/s
- Table of Contents
- Contact details of lead evaluator (name, position, Directorate, e-mail address).
- Acknowledgements

Executive summary

- Brief description of program objective and operation.
- Brief statement of the purpose of the evaluation, its scope, key evaluation questions and methodology.
- Summary of major findings.
- Summary of recommendations and conclusions.

Management response

If the management of your program or activity has responded to the evaluation and agreed an action plan, you could include that here. You may wish to include the response and action plan as an Appendix.

1. Introduction

Provide an introduction and outline what is covered in the report.

1.1 Background and program description

- Why the program was initiated.
- Program objectives and target groups.
- How the program contributes to achieving your agency's purpose.
- The broader context in which the program operates. What's the relationship and alignment with other programs (both internal and external)?
- External factors affecting the program.
- Assumptions and constraints.

- Existing performance information and measures.
- How the program was delivered (e.g. grants, direct payments, tax concession, advice services, facilitation, etc.)
- You can also include the theoretical approach for the program, the program logic and the theory of change.
- Details of previous evaluations and reviews.

2. About the evaluation

2.1 Aims and objectives

Describe the aims and objectives of the evaluation.

You can include a summary of terms of reference, with full terms of reference included as an appendix.

2.2 Key evaluation questions

Outline the key evaluation questions the evaluation sought to answer.

2.3 Method and approach

Summarise the methods and approach used to collect the data and evidence. Include any special resources used (e.g. consultants, travel).

Describe how you analysed the data; whether there were any limitations to the data; what the size of your evaluation sample was (e.g. how many people filled in a survey/participated in an interview). You can add detailed technical information as an appendix.

3. Evidence review

What is the evidence on why the program is needed?

What evidence suggests that the program will deliver its outcomes? If you've chosen an innovative or emergent approach (e.g. evidence is still emerging), then what convinced you that this kind of approach would work?

4. Findings of the evaluation

Detail your findings. Describe and analyse the information collected (quantitative and qualitative) and the feedback from stakeholders. Separate into categories according to your key evaluation questions. Use graphs and pertinent quotes/comments to illustrate specific points.

Include an assessment of:

- The strength, reliability and validity of the results.
- The adequacy of any performance criteria and the suitability of existing management information systems for ongoing performance monitoring and review.
- Presentation of conclusions, describing clearly how they relate to the findings.

- If conclusions cannot be drawn on particular issues explain why.

5. Discussions/Lessons identified

Discuss the results above. What has changed? What didn't? Were the expected outcomes delivered? Were there any unexpected outcomes? Is the program or activity on track? How can you improve? What actions will you take as a result of these findings?

6. Recommendations

List recommendations and cross reference them to the relevant conclusions and findings from the report.

Were there any findings from the evaluation that may influence the way you do things in the program or activity in the future? Do you have any recommendations/implications/opportunities for others running this type of program? Are there any wider recommendations/implications/opportunities based on your findings?

7. Implementation and monitoring plan

Summarise how the recommendations will be implemented and the frequency of monitoring required.

Discuss the strategies for implementing the recommendations, including the implications on:

- Program objectives and program participants
- Resources
- Consistency with Departmental and Government-wide policies
- Other related programs.

8. Appendices

- Evaluation Plan
- Terms of Reference
- Stakeholders consulted
- More detailed discussion of methodology (if required)
- More detailed data and statistics
- Implementation Plan
- References (if you have used evidence and literature review)

Attachment H: Implementation Plan for Evaluation Findings Template

Implementation Plan

[INSERT NAME OF PROGRAM]

Recommendation 1:					
Rationale: Explanation of how response accords with your entity's priorities and helps achieve its outcomes					
Response: Management's response					
Comment:					
Key Action(s)	**Timeframe**	**Responsible Unit**	**Other key implementer(s)**	**Monitoring**	
				Status	**Comments**
1.1 Insert what will be done to address the recommendation	Insert timeframe – including interim timeframes if relevant				
1.2					
1.3					

Recommendation 2:
Rationale: Explanation of how response accords with your entity's priorities and helps achieve its outcomes
Response: Management's response
Comment:

Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit	Other key implementer(s)	Monitoring	
				Status	Comments
1.1 Insert what will be done to address the recommendation	Insert timeframe – including interim timeframes if relevant				
1.2					
1.3					

Recommendation 3:					
Rationale: Explanation of how response accords with your entity's priorities and helps achieve its outcomes					
Response: Management's response					
Comment:					
Key Action(s)	**Timeframe**	**Responsible Unit**	**Other key implementer(s)**	**Monitoring**	
				Status	**Comments**
1.1 Insert what will be done to address the recommendation	Insert timeframe – including interim timeframes if relevant				
1.2					
1.3					

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL