EVALUATION

BUREAU FOR POLICY, PLANNING AND LEARNING: EVALUATION OF PROGRAM CYCLE IMPLEMENTATION

September 2013

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EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK REVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK REVIEW

1   OBJECTIVE

The evaluation of Bureau of Policy Plannng and Learning (PPL) Program Cycle implementation included a systematic review of Program Cycle products related to Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), Project Design, and Evaluation. As PPL's Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research (LER) was already undertaking a review of the quality of evaluation reports, the objective of systematic review for evaluation focused on alignment of USAID Evaluation Scopes of Work (SOWs) to the Evaluation Policy and other supporting guidance documents, and assessment of whether Evaluation SOWs there is any change or improvement since the release of the USAID Evaluation Policy.

2   METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team developed a checklist of criteria to assess the quality of evaluation evaluation SOWs, drawing from the following documents:

- The Evaluation Policy
- Evaluation SOW Checklist (V1, keyed to the Evaluation Policy, and ADS 203.3.6.3)
- ADS 203 (November 2012)
- TIPS: Preparing an Evaluation Statement of Work (No. 3, 2nd Edition, 2010)

The checklist (see Appendix 1) is divided into thematic categories, with each category containing line item criteria used to assess the evaluation SOWs. For each criterion, the evaluation SOW was given a score of either 0 (not aligned), .5 (somewhat aligned), or 1 (fully aligned). evaluation SOW .The evaluation SOWs were assessed on 11 key categories, as set out in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: Key criteria to assess USAID evaluation SOWs

Description of intervention: SOWs should describe the specific intervention, program or process to be evaluated. The duration of the project should be included, as well as the reference period for the study.

Development hypothesis: SOWs should include a clear description of the development hypothesis including intended results of the intervention and critical assumptions.

Existing information sources: SOWs should identify existing performance information sources with special attention to monitoring data. This includes internal monitoring data as well as other sources of information that would be useful to the evaluation team.

Audience and use: SOWs should be clear and specific about why the evaluation is being conducted and should indicate who makes up the audience for the evaluation.

Evaluation questions: SOWs should identify a small number of evaluation questions that are relevant to future decisions and answerable with empirical evidence.

Methods: SOWs should describe data collection/analysis or clearly indicate that such decisions are to be made by the evaluators. SOWs should be clear about data disaggregation and sampling, analysis, or response criteria.

> ***Deliverables:*** SOWs should specify evaluation deliverables and include timelines.
>
> ***Evaluator expertise:*** SOWs should have clear expectations about the methodological and subject matter expertise and composition of the evaluation team, including expectations concerning the involvement of local evaluation team members.
>
> ***Scheduling and Logistics:*** SOWs should clearly identify whether support, and if so, what kind of support, will be provided to the evaluation team or if the team is responsible for making their own arrangements.
>
> ***Reporting and dissemination:*** SOWs should clarify reporting and dissemination requirements.
>
> ***Budget:*** SOWs should be clear about LOE and total budget for the evaluation.

The evaluation team selected a random sample of 30 evaluation SOWs, ten from each year 2010-2012). Based on a list of completed evaluation reports that had been uploaded to the Development Experience Clearinghouse, a random selection was made. If the selected evaluation report did not contain a SOW in the Annex, the next evaluation report was selected.

3   PRINCIPLE FINDINGS

Description of intervention: Overall, evaluation SOWs scored high in this category when compared to other categories, however there was a notable drop in alignment within this category among the 2011 evaluation SOWs. Despite the relatively high average score, many evaluation SOWs did not clearly identify the project or program being evaluated and fewer than half identified the reference period for the evaluation.

Development hypothesis: Most evaluation SOWs reviewed did not contain any sort of development hypothesis and ones that did had only superficial language. None of the evaluation SOWs included language about critical assumptions.

Existing information sources: Evaluation SOWs scored very low in this category.While they sometimes referred to existing sources of information such as baseline indicators, mid-term evaluations, or performance reviews, very few of the evaluation SOWs reviewed mentioned external sources of information that would be useful to the evaluation team.

Audience and use: Most evaluation SOWs described the intended use of the evaluation, although evaluation SOWs from 2011 were noticeably lacking in this regard. Relatively few evaluation SOWs described the intended audience for the proposed evaluation, beyond simply mentioning that the evaluation would be used by USAID.

Evaluation questions: The majority of evaluation SOWs reviewed included specific questions for the evaluation team to address, and the evaluation questions were consistent and supportive of the evaluation's purpose. However, few of the evaluation SOWs were consistent with USAID's expectations of limiting the number of questions to a reasonable scope (less than 10). Only two evaluation SOWs prioritized evaluation questions.

Methodology: Very few evaluation SOWs specified any data disaggregation, sampling strategy, or analysis required in the evaluation, with the majority identifying that the methodology was the responsibility of the evaluators. Evaluation SOWs from 2011 scored especially low in this category.

Deliverables: The majority of evaluation SOWs reviewed included some information on deliverables expected from the evaluation team and this was one of the highest ranking criteria.

Evaluator expertise: Most evaluation SOWs included information on specific positions and/or skill sets required of the evaluation team, including the need for a minimum of one evaluation specialist. The majority of evaluation SOWs also noted a requirement that one team member should be a country national, however few evaluation SOWs included specific language about building local capacity.

Scheduling and logistics: The majority of evaluation SOWs from 2010 and 2012 included language on scheduling and logistics, compared to very few of the 2011 evaluation SOWs.

Reporting and dissemination: Few evaluation SOWs included language requiring the evaluation team to share the evaluation design with partners before finalizing, however there was some improvement in this area among the 2012 evaluation SOWs reviewed. Most also did not include language on evaluation report quality.

Budget: Some evaluation SOWs contained information on Level of effort, but very few contained any budget information. Budget was one of the lowest ranking indicators overall.

Exhibit 2 presents a comparison by year of the average scores for each key criteria for the evaluation SOWs assessed.

Exhibit 2: Average Scores across Key Criteria by Year
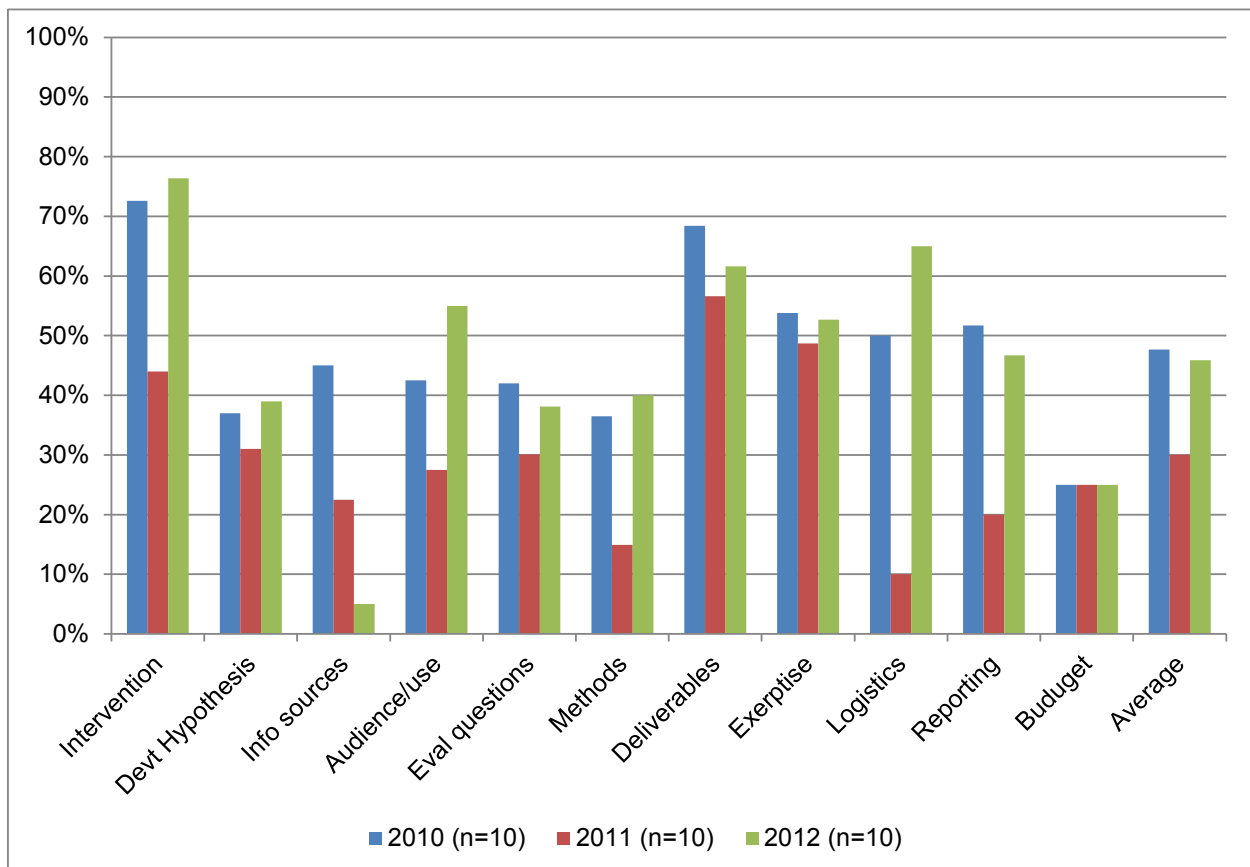
4   CONCLUSIONS

Review of 30 Evaluation SOWs from 2010-2012 indicate generally poor alignment with the Evaluation Policy guidelines. Overall, no increase in quality was found since the Evaluation Policy was released, with average scores of 46% in 2010, 30% in 2011, and 46% in 2012. While the numbers of evaluations reviewed are small, the drop in 2011 was quite large for some criteria (see Exhibit 2). The drop in scores in 2011 corresponds with the year in which there was a strong push to produce 250 evaluations to meet USAID Forward targets by the end of 2012.

Highest-ranking criteria were:

- Adequate description of the intervention being evaluated
- Specification of evaluation deliverables
- Evaluator expertise.

Lowest ranking criteria included:

- Budget information
- Specifying existing information sources.

Appendix 1. **Evaluation Scope of Work Review Checklist**

KPI 1:

Intervention

No.	Describe the specific intervention, project/program, or process to be evaluated	Source Document(s)	Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Is the SOW clear and specific about what is to be evaluated, e.g. activity, project/approach (identified by name and relevant identifier and agreement numbers); funding mission/office; sector/topic; budget; target group/area? (looking at the big picture)	SOW checklist			
2	Is the duration of the project or program stated in the SOW, i.e. start and end years?	SOW checklist			
3	Is the reference period for the evaluation stated clearly?	SOW checklist			
4	Does the SOW include a brief description of the context, history of the activities or programs?	TIPS			
	POSSIBLE POINTS			4	
	TOTAL			0	
	Percentage			0%	

KPI 2

Development Hypothesis

No.	Provide a brief background of the development hypothesis and its implementation		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Does the SOW provide a clear description of the development hypotheses?	SOW checklist			
2	Does the SOW provide a clear description of intended results?	SOW checklist			
3	Does the SOW provide a clear description of critical assumptions?	SOW checklist			

No.			Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
4	Does the SOW clearly describe the nature of the intervention, i.e. what USAID would deliver (training, TA, etc.)	SOW checklist			
5	Does the SOW clearly describe what was expected to change (at the output and especially outcome levels)?	SOW checklist			
POSSIBLE POINTS				5	
TOTAL				0	
Percentage				0%	

KPI 3

Existing Information Sources

No.	Identify existing performance information sources with special attention to monitoring data		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Is SOW clear and specific about existing activity/project/approach (program) monitoring data/reports that are available, i.e. specific indicators tracked, baseline data, targets, progress towards targets; narrative?	SOW checklist			
2	Does the SOW describe other documents or sources of information that would be useful to the evaluation team, e.g. government or international data USAID is using to monitor activity/project/approach outcomes, e.g. growth rate, poverty rate, etc.?	SOW checklist			
POSSIBLE POINTS				2	
TOTAL				0	
Percentage				0%	

KPI 4

Audience and Use

No.	State the purpose of, audience for, and anticipated use(s) of the evaluation		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS

No.		Source	Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Is the SOW clear and specific about why, in management terms, the evaluation is being conducted, i.e. what management decisions will an evaluation inform at this time? (ADS 203.3.6.1 identifies several management reasons for why USAID might undertake an evaluation).	SOW checklist			
2	Does the SOW indicate who makes up the audience for the evaluation, i.e. what types of managers in which organizations, e.g. USAID; Implementing Partner(s); host government, other donors, etc. are expected to benefit from the evaluation and how?	SOW checklist			
	POSSIBLE POINTS			2	
	TOTAL			0	
	Percentage			0%	

KPI 5

Evaluation Questions

No.	Identify a small number of evaluation questions that are relevant to future decisions and answerable with emperical evidence		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Does the SOW include a list of the specific questions the evaluation team is expected to answer?	SOW checklist			
2	Is the SOW list of evaluation questions consistent with USAID expectations about limiting the number of questions asked? (ADS 203.3.6.2 says "a small number of key questions or specific issues answerable with empirical evidence.") [Small is often considered to be less than ten; every question mark signals a question.]	SOW checklist			
3	Does the SOW indicate the relative priority of each evaluation question, e.g. are they in priority order or are "top priorities" identified?	SOW checklist			
4	As a group, do the evaluation questions appear to be consistent and supportive of the evaluation's purpose?	SOW checklist			
5	Does SOW identify all evaluation questions for which an examination of gender specific or gender differential effects are expected?	SOW checklist			
8	Is each question singular? (avoid asking two questions in one)	Evaluation questions checklist			

9	Does thes the SOW avoid yes/no evaluation questions?	Evaluation questions checklist			
POSSIBLE POINTS				7	
TOTAL				0	
Percentage				0%	

KPI 6

Methods

No.	Identify Evaluation Methods that will generate the highest quality and most credible evidence on each evaluation question taking time, budget, and other practical considerations into account, and specify methods with sufficient detail.		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Is it clear from the SOW whether USAID requires the use of specific data collection/analysis methods or it is leaving such decisions up to evaluators?	SOW checklist			
2	Is the SOW clear and specific about any data disaggregation, e.g. by gender, or geographic region, etc. it requires?	SOW checklist			
3	Is the SOW clear and specific about any samples (e.g. representative); analyses (comparison of means for two groups); or response criteria (significant at the .05 level) it mentions?	SOW checklist			
POSSIBLE POINTS				3	
TOTAL				0	
Percentage				0%	

KPI 7

Deliverables

No.	Specify the evaluation deliverables and their timelines and logistics, including the requirements for transfer of data to USAID and expectations concerning evaluation team involvement in the dissemination of evaluation results:		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS

No.		SOW checklist	Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Are the deliverables for which the evaluation team is responsible clearly specified in the SOW?	SOW checklist			
2	Does the SOW include information about expected start and completion dates for the evaluation?	SOW checklist			
3	Are dates provided for all of the deliverables specified as evaluation requirements?	SOW checklist			
POSSIBLE POINTS				3	
TOTAL				0	
Percentage				0%	

KPI 8

Evaluator Expertise

No.	Clarify expectations about the methodological and subject matter expertise and composition of the evaluation team, including expectations concerning the involvement of local evaluation team members (one team member should be an evaluation specialist)		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Are specific positions and/or skills the team is expected to include clearly defined, e.g. specific positions and associated qualifications including technical, geographic, language and other skill/experience requirements?	SOW checklist			
2	Is the SOW explicit about requiring that one team member be an evaluation specialist?	SOW checklist			
3	Is the SOW clear about whether and how USAID expects its staff, partners, customers/beneficiaries or other stakeholders to participate in the evaluation process (i.e. developing the SOW, collecting/analyzing data or providing recommendations)?	SOW checklist			
4	Does the SOW include methods of reinforcing local evaluation capacity and/or using local evaluation specialists?	TIPS criteria			
POSSIBLE POINTS				4	
TOTAL				0	
Percentage				0%	

KPI 9

Scheduling and Lostistics

No.	Address Scheduling, Logistics and other Support (one team member should be an evaluation specialist)		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Is the SOW clear about whether space, a car or any other equipment will be made available to the team or that they must make their own arrangements?	SOW checklist			
	POSSIBLE POINTS			1	
	TOTAL			0	
	Percentage			0%	

KPI 10

Reporting and Dissemination

No.	Clarify requirements for reporting and dissemination, including mandatory inclusion of Appendix 1 of the Mandatory Reference on Evaluation		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Does the SOW state when an oral report will be given at the mission and which stakeholders should be present for this meeting?	SOW checklist			
2	Is the SOW clear about dissemination requirements, e.g. numbers of hard copies of final report needed; PowerPoint/handouts for oral briefings; submission to the DEC, etc.	SOW checklist			
3	Does the SOW include information about the maintenance of appropriate documentation at the conclusion of the evaluation? (such as raw data and codebooks)	ADS			
	POSSIBLE POINTS			3	
	TOTAL			0	
	Percentage			0%	

KPI 11

Budget

No.	Include a Budget		Score	Value	ADHERENCE COMMENTS
1	Is the SOW clear about the LOE available for the evaluation?	SOW checklist			
2	Is the SOW clear about the total budget for the evaluation?	SOW checklist			
	POSSIBLE POINTS			2	
	TOTAL			0	
	Percentage			0%	

Appendix 2. SOW Summary Scores

Exhibit 2: 2010 Evaluation SOW Summary Scores by Country and Alignment Categories/ Criteria

Country	KPI 1 Intervention	KPI 2 Development Hypothesis	KPI 3 Existing Information Sources	KPI 4 Audience & Use	KPI 5 Evaluation Questions	KPI 6 Methods	KPI 7 Deliverables	KPI 8 Evaluator Expertise	KPI 9 Scheduling & Logistics	KPI 10 Reporting & Dissemination	KPI 11 Budget
Azerbaijan	63%	20%	25%	50%	25%	33%	33%	0%	0%	50%	50%
Georgia	25%	60%	75%	0%	50%	33%	50%	0%	100%	67%	0%
Guinea	100%	30%	50%	25%	50%	17%	100%	0%	100%	50%	0%
Iraq	50%	20%	0%	0%	56%	33%	100%	100%	0%	33%	0%
Kenya/Uganda	100%	80%	100%	50%	44%	67%	67%	63%	0%	83%	0%
Namibia	88%	40%	100%	50%	38%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Nigeria	75%	30%	50%	100%	63%	50%	100%	100%	100%	67%	50%
Pakistan	75%	50%	0%	100%	56%	33%	67%	75%	100%	67%	50%
South Africa	75%	40%	0%	50%	0%	33%	67%	100%	100%	67%	50%
Vietnam	75%	0%	50%	0%	38%	33%	100%	100%	0%	33%	50%
AVERAGE	72.60%	37.00%	45.00%	42.50%	42.00%	36.50%	68.40%	53.80%	50.00%	51.70%	25.00%

Exhibit 3: 2011 Evaluation SOW Summary Scores by Country and Alignment Categories/ Criteria

Country	KPI 1 Intervention	KPI 2 Development Hypothesis	KPI 3 Existing Information Sources	KPI 4 Audience & Use	KPI 5 Evaluation Questions	KPI 6 Methods	KPI 7 Deliverables	KPI 8 Evaluator Expertise	KPI 9 Scheduling & Logistics	KPI 10 Reporting & Dissemination	KPI 11 Budget
Afghanistan_1	63%	10%	50%	50%	36%	33%	50%	100%	100%	17%	50%
Afghanistan_2	100%	70%	0%	50%	50%	33%	100%	88%	0%	33%	50%
Ghana	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	83%	0%	0%	33%	0%
Iraq	38%	20%	0%	75%	43%	17%	67%	50%	0%	17%	50%
Lebanon	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Liberia	38%	40%	25%	0%	0%	0%	83%	N/A	0%	0%	0%
Serbia	88%	70%	50%	0%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
South Asia	0%	0%	0%	50%	29%	0%	67%	100%	0%	67%	50%
Uganda	50%	60%	25%	50%	57%	33%	83%	100%	0%	33%	50%
Zambia	63%	40%	50%	0%	43%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
AVERAGE	44.00%	31.00%	22.50%	27.50%	30.10%	14.90%	56.60%	48.67%	10.00%	20.00%	25.00%

Exhibit 4: 2012 Evaluation SOW Summary Scores by Country and Alignment Categories/ Criteria

Country	KPI 1 Intervention	KPI 2 Development Hypothesis	KPI 3 Existing Information Sources	KPI 4 Audience & Use	KPI 5 Evaluation Questions	KPI 6 Methods	KPI 7 Deliverables	KPI 8 Evaluator Expertise	KPI 9 Scheduling & Logistics	KPI 10 Reporting & Dissemination	KPI 11 Budget
Afghanistan	100%	40%	0%	50%	29%	33%	33%	63%	100%	67%	50%
Albania	38%	80%	0%	50%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Angola	75%	0%	0%	50%	0%	17%	17%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Bangladesh	100%	40%	0%	100%	50%	67%	100%	75%	100%	83%	50%
Colombia	25%	50%	0%	50%	0%	33%	100%	75%	100%	17%	50%
Ethiopia	88%	60%	0%	50%	30%	67%	100%	50%	100%	33%	0%
Kosovo	100%	40%	25%	100%	79%	83%	83%	63%	50%	67%	25%
Serbia	75%	20%	0%	50%	29%	33%	33%	13%	0%	100%	0%
Sri Lanka	75%	40%	0%	50%	64%	17%	50%	88%	100%	50%	50%
Sub-Saharan Africa	88%	20%	25%	0%	64%	50%	100%	75%	100%	50%	25%
AVERAGE	76.40%	39.00%	5.00%	55.00%	38.10%	40.00%	61.60%	52.70%	65.00%	46.70%	25.00%

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