REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
DIRECTORATE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

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MEDNARODNO RAZVOJNO
SODELOVANJE SLOVENIJE
SLOVENIA'S DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

EVALUATION POLICY OF SLOVENIAN OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Evaluation Policy is to set out the approach to the evaluation process and its contribution to the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of development assistance within the context of Slovenian development cooperation. It seeks to establish consistent quality standards and determine competence and responsibility.

2. Legal Bases of Development Cooperation Evaluation

The legal bases of development cooperation evaluation are set out in the act regulating International Development Co-operation, the Resolution on the International Development Co-operation of the Republic of Slovenia and the Resolution on Legislative Regulation.

Evaluation contributes to effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of the state budget, as stipulated by the Public Finance Act. The Republic of Slovenia has a targeted budget in which evaluation is part of the budget process, focusing on objectives and results.

The planning and implementation of evaluation policy is based on the annual Implementation of the Republic of Slovenia Budget Act, the Rules on Procedures for Implementing the Budget of the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Financial Rules and the Public Procurement Act.

3. Evaluation of Development Cooperation

The evaluation of development cooperation is the responsibility of the national coordinator for international development cooperation – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). At the MFA, responsibility for implementing extensive, strategically important programme- and theme-specific evaluations lies with the operationally independent evaluation service within the Directorate for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, which is accountable to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (evaluation service of the MFA). It covers the evaluation of all Slovenian official development assistance funds. It provides feedback to the MFA, other ministries and spending units on development cooperation processes, results and accountability to Parliament and the public for the results of Slovenian development assistance.

The responsibilities and duties of the evaluation service of the MFA include:

- Annual planning of evaluation activities with an indication for the two subsequent years;
- Programming, formulating and managing evaluations of development cooperation funded or co-funded by Slovenia, particularly bilateral, if possible in the form of joint evaluations;
- Contributing to the learning process within the MFA, including embassies, other ministries, spending units and partner countries, by providing feedback to the operational departments and management about the relevance, impact and operational performance of development activities.

- Informing the Inter-ministerial Working Body for International Development Co-operation, as the key vehicle for ensuring that key findings are incorporated into the appropriate policy, strategy and planning;
- Contributing to improving the accountability of Slovenian development assistance by disseminating evaluation results to the ministries' managements and staff, the National Assembly, the Slovenian public, partner countries, other donors and other interested parties;
- Participating in international cooperation on evaluation, principally in the Development Aid Committee of the OECD (OECD DAC) and European Union (EU) contexts;
- Managing a database of reports and recommendations.

Financial resources for evaluations are provided in the financial plan of the MFA under the policy 'Foreign policy and international development cooperation' and the programme 'International development cooperation and humanitarian assistance'.

4. Concept of Evaluation

As set out in the OECD DAC norms and standards, evaluation is defined as the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed policy, programme or project, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the value or significance of an activity, policy or programme.

5. Purpose of Evaluation

The main purposes of evaluation are:
- to improve future aid policy, programmes and projects through feedback of lessons learned;
- to provide a basis for accountability, including the provision of information to the public.

Evaluation seeks to explain to key stakeholders the extent to which development interventions and their modalities have succeeded or failed and the reasons why. The knowledge generated from evaluations is used to inform decision making and policy processes for the purposes of increasing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of development assistance. The principal users of evaluation results are the management of MFA (including embassies), other ministries and partners, staff and stakeholders in partner countries who are directly concerned with the activities under review. Other audiences include the general public, other development organisations, and researchers concerned with development issues.

Appropriate and rigorous evaluation of development interventions helps to ascertain the extent to which value for money is being achieved and serves the public interest in Slovenia and in its partner countries.

6. Principles and Criteria for Evaluation

Slovenia recognises and adopts the principles, criteria and standards for evaluating development cooperation jointly approved by the OECD DAC and the EU.

The principles of evaluation are:
- impartiality and independence,
- credibility,
- usefulness,

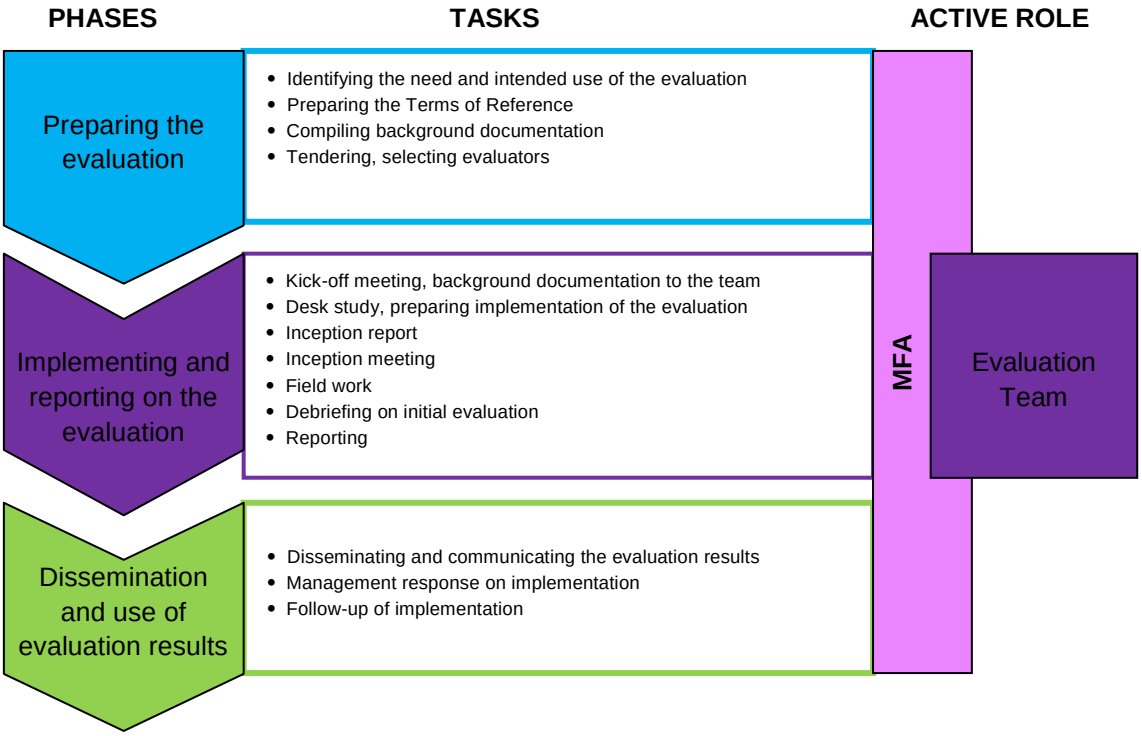
- participation and
- donor cooperation.

The evaluation criteria are:
- relevance,
- efficiency,
- effectiveness,
- impact,
- sustainability and
- also, as far as possible, criteria of coordination, complementarity and coherence.

If one of the above criteria is not regarded as relevant or appropriate for a particular evaluation, this is to be explicitly stated in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation (ToR) or in the evaluation report. Slovenia applies a human-rights based approach and adopted gender and environment as cross-cutting principles.

7. Phases and Tasks of the Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is divided into three different phases: preparation, implementation and reporting, and the use of evaluation results. The MFA plays an active role throughout the evaluation. The evaluation teams play an active role in the second phase of implementation and reporting.



8. Preparing the Evaluation: Planning

The evaluation service of the MFA operates on the basis of an annual action plan of evaluation with an indication of activities for the two subsequent years. The Minister of Foreign Affairs approves the annual action plan of evaluation of development cooperation, which is distributed for information to the MFA's departments (with embassies), the Inter-ministerial Working Body for International Development Co-operation and the Experts Council. It is also published on the intranet, the MFA cable system and on the official website of the MFA.

9. Preparing the Evaluation: Terms of Reference and Selecting Evaluators

The terms of reference (ToR) set the main parameters for the evaluation process. They must be clearly defined and have standardised headings: background of evaluation; rationale, purpose and priority objectives of the evaluation; scope of the evaluation; issues to be addressed and evaluation questions; methodology; the evaluation process and time schedule; reporting; quality assurance mechanisms; expertise required; budget; mandate; annexes.

The tendering and selection of evaluators is accomplished in accordance with public procurement procedures.

External, independent consultants and/or experts are commissioned to carry out the evaluation. The evaluation is performed by applying the development evaluation criteria and quality standards of the OECD DAC and the EU.

10. Implementation

The implementation of evaluation is typically carried out in three phases. The inception phase comprises signing the contract, a kick-off meeting, submitting background documentation, reviewing the documents as a desk study, preparing an inception report with a detailed implementation plan, and approving the inception report by the MFA. The field phase includes briefing by the evaluation team, collecting, consolidating and analysing data and a debriefing workshop to discuss the initial results of the evaluation. The reporting phase comprises the final analysis of data, writing the draft evaluation report, quality assurance of the report, the submission of the draft evaluation report for comments and addressing the comments, and writing the final evaluation report.

11. Reporting on the Evaluation and Publicity

The evaluation report has to be presented in clear and accessible formats for dissemination to all stakeholders. It is based on a general outline with defined main components and an evaluation report quality checklist. The main components of an evaluation report are: executive summary; introduction; context; programme being evaluated; findings; conclusions; recommendations; lessons learned; annexes. Responsibility for the content of an evaluation report and its independence rests with the authors, whilst responsibility for minor editorial rights and copyright ultimately rests with the MFA.

As a rule, the evaluation reports are public. Reports are issued as a numbered series with a uniform visual appearance. Reports are made available on the official website of MFA. Reports are also embedded as an electronic link at the website of the OECD DAC's evaluation network. Press releases are prepared for all evaluations.

Invitations to public presentations of evaluation reports must be published on the intranet, the MFA cable system and on the official website of the MFA, in addition to which invitations are sent to target groups. The evaluation results are presented by all or some of the members of the evaluation team that produced the evaluation. The abbreviated summaries, slides and graphs of the presentation are published on the intranet, the MFA cable system and on the official website of the MFA.

12. Use of Evaluation Results

To ensure that the findings and recommendations of evaluation are properly taken into account by the operational departments concerned, a Management Response is formally documented as an action plan. This identifies the actions needed to improve the quality of the project, programme or policy in question, or to rectify problems. A Management Response is prepared for every evaluation. It is prepared by the evaluation service of the MFA, discussed with implementing partners (departments, ministries….) and approved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. If recommendations are rejected by the operational department/ministry concerned, the reasons for rejection should be clearly stated. The implementing partners report on the implementation of the Management Response in progress reports.

Abbreviations

DAC – Development Aid Committee
EU – European Union
MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ToR – Terms of Reference

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted Evaluation Policy of Slovenian Official Development Cooperation on 24 December 2014.