

key evaluation questions



What do we mean by Key evaluation questions?

- Carefully crafted questions
- Are the “organising” construct of:
 - any “evaluation study”,
 - or for an organisational monitoring and evaluation framework
- Not the same as survey questions
- Good at reminding us to explore **why** something occurs, what worked for whom, and so on.
- Used to ask specific questions. Eg:
 - And what were the unexpected outcomes?
 - how were partners engaged?
 - how did the intervention affect women etc?
- Therefore we synthesize a number of questions to ensure our evaluation meets **all** information needs



One way of developing/refining KEQs

- Identify any external evaluation Users
- Identify their evaluation questions –
conduct inquiry
- Identify if the team has any additional
evaluation questions
- Synthesise key evaluation questions

Reminder: Who are the evaluation users?

- People who REALLY demand the information generated from the evaluation
- Always includes the team themselves and partners – Sometimes some external people
- There shouldn't be many of them!
- **Not necessarily** same people as the project boundary partners
 - Boundary partners = targeted stakeholders for change
 - Evaluation Users = people who take an action or make a decision based on the evaluation findings



Conduct inquiry with evaluation users

The users of your evaluation may:

- value certain information above other information
- value certain methods of data collection above others
- Have specific questions to ask of your project performance

Therefore involve any evaluation users in
the evaluation planning process

Some different types of KEQs

Impact To what extent is it likely that the desired practice change will lead to improvement in the STATE (eg less poverty, improved water quality). Eg TWE is it likely that change in the way nurses use technology will lead to improved health outcomes?

Outcomes: To what extent did participating farmers change their practices around fertiliser management?

Approach/ model questions: How does our model of engagement and capacity building compare with best practice? (comparative study)

Process :To what extent were partners adequately engaged during the project development process? (process evaluation)

Quality: What was the quality of the research/research outputs?

Cost effectiveness: What Is the predicted cost-benefit of this intervention?

Some organizations develop their own KEQS and ask partners to address them: Oxfam Australia

- What **significant changes have occurred in people's lives** and to what extent are these likely to be sustained?
- *How far has **greater equity** been achieved between women and men and between other groups?*
- What **changes in policies, practices, ideas and beliefs, and attitudes** have happened?
- Have those we hope will benefit been appropriately **involved** at all stages and **empowered** through the process?
- How effectively have we worked with others to **build partnerships, alliances, or to contribute to the development of a campaign or advocacy force**, and have they been appropriately **involved** at all stages and **empowered** through the process?
- How **cost effective** has the intervention been?
- To what degree have we **learnt** from this experience and **shared the learning**, and **what will we now do differently, or what will we do more of?**

One way of creating key evaluation questions

Gather all preliminary questions - one per sticky note. They may come from:

- Any questions your users require answers for eg. evidence of achievement of objectives.
- The list of things your team wants to know about the performance of your project. You may also wish to check that you have included questions relating to unexpected/unanticipated outcomes and continuous improvement.

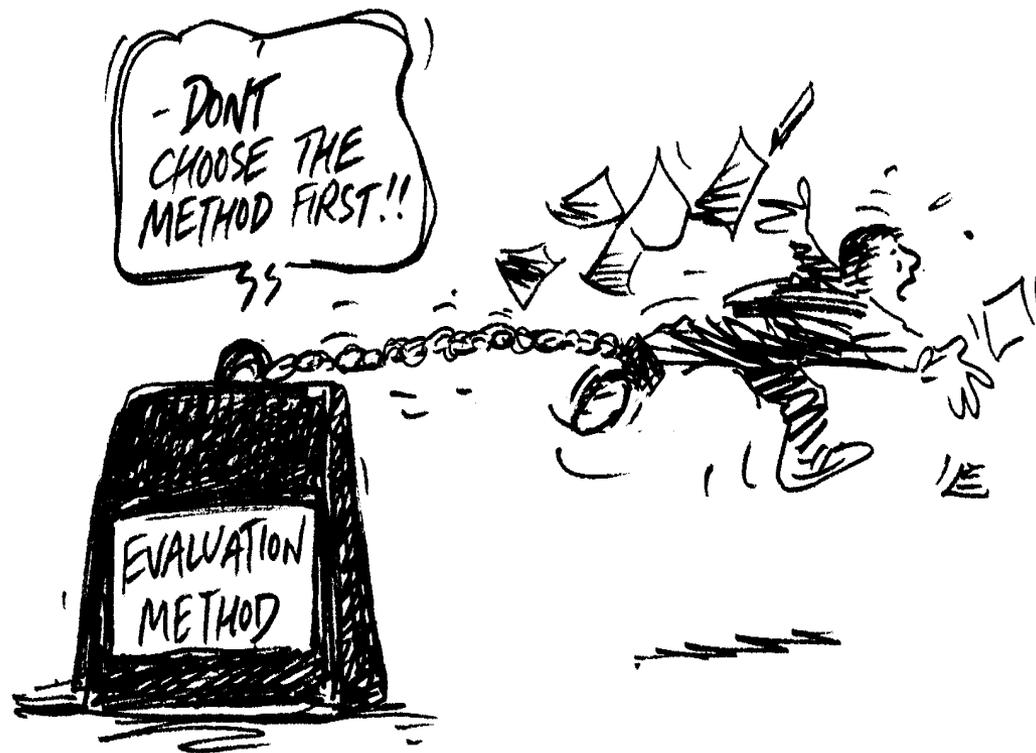
Cluster under the TYPES of questions, **prioritise** and group



What makes good KEQs?

- Specific enough to be useful in guiding you through the evaluation
- Broad enough to be broken down - are not the same as a question in a survey
- Data (qual/quant) can be brought to bear on KEQs
- KEQs are open questions (can't answer yes or no!)
- Have meaning for those developing the plan
- Lead to useful, credible, evaluation
- There aren't too many of them! Eg 2-4 is good!

Choosing methods/approaches





Choose methods

- **Determine what formats/systems**
- **Select methods for addressing evaluation questions for any “evaluation studies”**
- **Consider ethics, design, and analysis**



Choosing methods

- Remember not to start with methods!
- Aim & purpose of an evaluation should decide the method, rather than the reverse
- No shortage of qualitative & quantitative methods
- A methods-oriented approach can be misleading

Choosing methods

- No magic key to tell you the most appropriate method to answer your evaluation questions
- Most methods have some inherent bias or limitation
- Therefore in considering choice of method you should consider:
 - cost, time, resources, skill availability
the various biases of methods
 - degree of credibility required
 - What type of questions you have



Multi-method approach for collecting, retrieving and creating data

- No single method (or approach) of collection, retrieval or creation of data is completely free of limitations
- Therefore - choose more than one!
- Some types of question suite specific approaches/methods – so let them guide you
- Remember your Users may have opinions about what constitutes credible evidence.

Combinations:

Sequencing methods:

Depth – breadth – depth in an evaluation study

Eg depth interview – survey – depth interview

Supplementing a dominant method:

- One dominant approach to D&M&E (eg OM) supplemented with other techniques and tools – eg OM plus MSC
- Or logframes plus MSC

Matching against different key evaluation questions:

- Different methods for different questions!

Some types of methods “go” well with different types questions

Impact To what extent is it likely that the desired practice change will lead to improvement in the STATE (eg less poverty, improved water quality).

- contribution analysis Data trawl and expert panel/GEM

Outcomes: To what extent did boundary partners change their practices as expected? (addressed in OM)

- OM / MSC /GEM

Unexpected outcomes:

- MSC

Approach/ model questions: How does our model of engagement and capacity building compare with best practice in this area? (comparative study)

- Comparative study of different approaches

Process :To what extent were partners adequately engaged during the project development process? (process evaluation)

- Evaluation study: Interview process/ focus groups

Quality: What was the quality of the research /research outputs?

- Audit against standards, peer review

Cost effectiveness: What Is the predicted cost-benefit of this intervention?

- Economic modeling



Consider your KEQs

- For one or two KEQs try and select appropriate methods/approach
- Try to choose more than one method/approach
- State why you have chosen those methods