



# EVALUATION Protocol and Guidelines 2015

(Fifth Draft)

Gross National Happiness Commission  
Royal Government of Bhutan



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## INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the need to institutionalize monitoring and evaluation system in Bhutan, the erstwhile Planning Commission, now renamed as the Gross National Happiness Commission established the National Monitoring and Evaluation System (NMES) in 2006 to serve as a standard system of monitoring and evaluating developmental plans.

Since then, reasonable progress has been achieved in the monitoring area especially during the 10<sup>th</sup> five-year plan (2008-2013) while very little progress has been made in the area of evaluation. Only a few donor-led evaluations of programmes and projects have been carried out with varying processes and standards. Lack of understanding on the benefits of evaluation coupled with lack of technical knowledge on evaluation concepts and practices have undermined the importance of evaluation. Most importantly, the absence of clear institutionalized evaluation procedures has been a key impediment for the development of evaluation culture in Bhutan.

Against this backdrop, the Research and Evaluation Division under GNH Commission spearheaded the development of Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines to provide focus and impetus to evaluation. It is a step towards institutionalizing the evaluation system in Bhutan. This document is an elaboration of the evaluation section of the existing National Monitoring and Evaluation (NMES) Manual 2006 strengthening it and making it more relevant to the current context. In addition to programmes and projects, the Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines shall apply to the evaluation of policies.

With the formal launch of the Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines, it is expected that evaluation activities will gain ground and eventually contribute towards improved accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of limited resources available in the country for socio-economic development.

The Evaluation Protocol and Guideline begins with a brief explanation on basic concepts of evaluation and guiding evaluation principles and standards. The main part of the protocol and guideline spells out the evaluation scope, jurisdiction, procedures and other requirements. It should be noted that this document should not be taken as evaluation manual and the evaluators are expected to have prior technical knowledge on evaluation.

# CHAPTER 1. GUIDING EVALUATION STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES

The evaluation of a programme, project or policy should be guided by the following evaluation standard and principles.

## 1. Independence

The evaluation function should be carried out by an independent entity, which is separate from designing or implementation of a programme, project or policy. The independence of evaluation will reduce the potential for conflict of interests and provide legitimacy and credibility to the findings.

## 2. Impartiality

The findings of the evaluation should not be influenced by personal preferences of the evaluator and it must be true and capture balanced views.

## 3. Objectivity

The evaluation findings must be based on verifiable or objective evidence.

## 4. Transparency

Transparency of the evaluation process is the key to credibility of evaluation findings. The relevant stakeholders must be kept abreast of the evaluation process and must have access to information concerning any part of the evaluation process.

## 5. Feasibility

The feasibility of carrying out an evaluation in terms of practicability of methodology and availability of resources must be considered.

## 6. Propriety

The evaluation of a programme, project or policy must not harm individuals or communities.

## 7. Cost-efficiency

The evaluation of a programme, project or policy must be carried out at the least cost without compromising the quality of the evaluation.

## **8. Accuracy**

The collection of data should maintain the highest level of accuracy and precision by using the most relevant measures and methodologies.

## **9. Fairness**

The presentation of evaluation findings should be unbiased and balanced.

## **10. Credibility**

The evaluation of a programme, project or policy must consider all other core principles such as independence, impartiality, transparency, objectivity, accuracy, and fairness to ensure credibility of the evaluation findings.

## **11. Usefulness**

The evaluation findings must be useful to implementers, decision makers, policy makers, development partners, politicians and other stakeholders.

## **12. Evaluation ethics**

The evaluation process should observe the evaluation ethics, which include integrity and honesty; gender sensitivity, respect for culture, beliefs, and etiquettes; protection of the rights and welfare of participants; and protection of the confidentiality of participants.

## CHAPTER 2. PROTOCOL FOR EVALUATION

Any form of development evaluation carried out within the geographic area of Bhutan, whether by government or non-government entity, shall follow the Protocol for Evaluation as laid down below in 9 steps.

### Step 1. Scoping evaluation

The agency shall first consider the scope of evaluation as provided in chapter 3 of the Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines to assess the jurisdiction of the evaluation areas.

### Step 2. Identifying evaluation areas

The agency shall identify the area/s of evaluation such as a programme, project, policy or thematic area that is within the agency's scope of evaluation using criteria provided in chapter 4.

### Step 3. Preparing evaluation proposal

The agency shall prepare evaluation proposal as per outline provided in chapter 5.

### Step 4. Reviewing evaluation proposal

The agency shall submit the evaluation proposal to Research and Evaluation Division, Gross National Happiness Commission for approval as provided in chapter 6.

### Step 5. Preparing evaluation programme and budget

The agency shall prepare the evaluation programme and budget for the next financial year as detailed in chapter 7.

### Step 6. Managing and assigning an evaluation

The agency shall institute evaluation management and evaluation team as detailed in chapter 8.

### Step 7. Implementing evaluation

The evaluation team shall collect data and information using approved methodology and analyze data and information as detailed in chapter 9.

### Step 8. Reporting evaluation findings

The evaluation team shall prepare report on evaluation findings as per format provided in chapter 10.

### **Step 9. Following-up, disseminating and utilizing evaluation reports**

The evaluation management shall prepare Follow-up Note, publish evaluation report and ensure utilization of evaluation findings as provided in chapter 11.

## Evaluation Protocol Framework

STEPS	PROCESS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY/IES
Step 1	Scoping Evaluation	Agency/Evaluation management
Step 2	Identifying evaluation areas	Agency/Evaluation management
Step 3	Preparing evaluation proposal	Agency/Evaluation management
Step 4	Reviewing evaluation proposal	GNH Commission and agency
Step 5	Preparing evaluation programme/budget	Agency/Evaluation management
Step 6	Managing and assigning evaluation	Agency/Evaluation management
Step 7	Implementing evaluation	Evaluation team
Step 8	Reporting evaluation findings	Evaluation team
Step 9	Following-up, disseminating and utilizing evaluation	GNH Commission and Evaluation management/Agency

## CHAPTER 3. SCOPING EVALUATION

The scope of evaluation is divided into four levels; national, ministry/agency, local government and non-government agency.

### 3.1 National level

National level evaluations shall be carried out by the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) under the Gross National Happiness Commission being the overall central coordinating agency. National level evaluations shall typically comprise of the following:

1. Major programmes of sectors, Dzongkhags and Thromdes that have strategic importance for the country;
2. Thematic areas and cross-cutting issues;
3. Joint evaluations with development partners;
4. National policies

### 3.2 Ministry/Agency level

Ministry/agency level evaluations shall be carried out by respective ministries and agencies. Ministry/agency level evaluations shall typically comprise of the following:

1. Selected programmes and projects within ministry or agency;
2. Programmes and projects of the ministry implemented in the Dzongkhags, Thromdes and Gewogs; and
3. Sector policies

### 3.3 Local Government level

3.1.1. Dzongkhag administration shall carry out evaluation of development plans of the following nature:

1. Selected programmes and projects within Dzongkhag
2. Selected programmes and projects within Gewogs

3.1.2. Thromde A shall carry out evaluation of the following:

1. Selected Programmes implemented by Thromde A

### 3.4 Non-Government Agency level

The non-government agencies shall carry out evaluations of the following nature:

1. Programmes and projects implemented by the non-governmental agency;
2. Thematic areas relevant to the non-governmental agency

## CHAPTER 4. IDENTIFYING EVALUATION AREAS

### A. Government agency and Joint Evaluation with Development Partners:

A government agency shall identify the areas of evaluation using the following criteria:

#### 1. The strategic importance of a programme, project or policy;

The strategic importance refers to impact, size of the target groups, size of the budget, requirement by the development partner/s, or current pressing issues on a programme, project or policy.

#### 2. Replicability of the programme, project or policy;

Replicability refers to possibility of up scaling or expansion of a programme, project or policy to other sectors or geographic areas or the increase of a target group.

#### 3. Availability of technical knowledge and understanding of the required methodology;

Methodologies would differ by objective, type and scale of a programme, project or policy. Therefore, it is essential to consider the availability of technical knowledge and experience to implement the methodology.

#### 4. Availability of adequate financial resources;

Requirement of financial resources would also depend on type and scale of programme, project, or policy. Therefore, it is essential to consider the availability of financial resources to implement the evaluation of a programme, project or policy.

Ministries and agencies can also apply for funding from the 'Evaluation Fund' maintained with the GNHC ear-marked for evaluation. The steps 1 through steps 3 shall be completed before making the request for funding from the above Evaluation Fund.

#### 5. GNH values and other cross-cutting issues;

The programmes, projects or policies that may have direct impact on GNH values and cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, climate change, disaster risk reduction, poverty, and health may be considered for evaluation.

## **B. Non-government agency:**

A non-government agency shall identify the areas of evaluation within its scope as defined by the evaluation protocol and guidelines, depending on the scale and importance.

## CHAPTER 5. PREPARING EVALUATION PROPOSAL

### 5.1. Proposal Format

Both government and non-government agencies shall prepare evaluation proposal. The evaluation proposal shall at least consist of the following components, while submitting for review and endorsement.

#### i. Background

The evaluation proposal shall begin with the brief descriptions of a policy, programme or project to be evaluated including objectives, strategies, implementing agencies and partners and funding sources.

#### ii. Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation proposal shall describe the purpose of the evaluation as to why and for whom the evaluation shall be carried out, and how the evaluation shall be used for learning and accountability functions.

#### iii. Objective of the evaluation

Similarly, it shall describe the specific objectives of the evaluation clarifying what the evaluation aims to find out. The objectives of the evaluation may depend on the purpose of the evaluation, which may include but not limit to determining relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact or sustainability.

#### iv. Evaluation questions

Based on the objectives of the evaluation, a relevant set of evaluation questions shall be prepared to help design the evaluation methodology.

#### v. Evaluation approach and methodology

The selection of the evaluation approach depends on the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. The evaluation methodology on the other hand depends on the selected evaluation approach. The evaluation methodology includes specification of the evaluation designs and data collection and analysis techniques. While designing the methodology, a mixed of methods of quantitative and qualitative approaches are advised, though it shall depend on the evaluation objectives, evaluation questions, and availability of time and resources. Since both quantitative and qualitative methods

have weaknesses and strengths of their own, a mixed of methods can capitalize on strengths of each method and offset their different weaknesses.

**vi. Dissemination and utilization plans**

The proposals shall have clear plans on how evaluation findings shall be followed-up, disseminated and utilized as provided in chapter 11.

**vii. Costing and funding source**

The proposals shall contain the cost estimates of the evaluation programme with clear break-ups and source of funding.

## CHAPTER 6. REVIEWING EVALUATION PROPOSAL

### 1. Reviewing Body

The Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat shall be the reviewing body of any kind of evaluation within the scope of the Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines.

### 2. Submission of evaluation proposal

The evaluation proposal shall be submitted to the Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat for review and endorsement.

### 3. Feedback and comments

The Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat through the Research and Evaluation Division shall send comments and feedback, if any, to the proponent agency within two weeks from the receipt date of the proposal.

### 4. Incorporation of feedback and comments

The proponent agency shall incorporate the comments and feedback and send the revised proposal to the Research and Evaluation Division, Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat.

### 5. Letter of endorsement

The Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat shall approve the evaluation proposal if deemed satisfactory. A 'letter of endorsement' shall be sent to the proponent agency certifying the fulfillment of required standards and processes under the Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines within one week from the receipt date of the revised proposal.

A government agency shall present the letter of endorsement while requesting for the plan incorporation and budget proposal for evaluation. The relevant authorities such as GNH Commission Secretariat and Ministry of Finance shall not approve any plan and budget incorporation for evaluations without the letter of endorsement.

## CHAPTER 7. PREPARING EVALUATION PROGRAM AND BUDGET

### a) Government agency and Joint Evaluation with Development Partners:

A government agency shall prepare evaluation program and budget as provided below:

#### 1. Evaluation programme

Once the government agency receives a 'letter of endorsement', it shall prepare the evaluation programme and include it in the agency's five-year plan. An evaluation programme may contain one or multiple evaluations. Each evaluation proposal shall be processed through the Evaluation Protocol and Guidelines and shall obtain the letter of endorsement preparing the evaluation programme.

However, in order to promote the evaluation culture in the country, the agency shall have the flexibility to include evaluation plans during the annual planning exercise for the next financial year in the event an agency has not included an evaluation programme in its five-year plan.

#### 2. Budget ceiling

The budget of an evaluation program shall not exceed 10 % of the overall programme or project. In case of an evaluation of a policy, the budget ceiling shall depend on the availability of fund and the scope and intent of the evaluation.

#### 3. Submission deadline

The evaluation programme and budget shall be submitted to the relevant authorities such as GNH Commission and Department of National Budget following the normal procedure and timing of submitting five-year plans and annual plans/budgets. A letter of endorsement shall be enclosed with the request for plan incorporation and budget incorporation.

### b) Non-Government agency:

Non-government agency shall prepare their evaluation programme and budget following their own organizational planning cycle, and need not submit evaluation programme and budget to the government authorities.

## CHAPTER 8. MANAGING AND ASSIGNING AN EVALUATION

Any Government or Non-Government agency shall manage and assign an evaluation as provided below:

### 1. Evaluation management

The agency shall be responsible for overall coordination and management of the evaluation activities. Prior to actual implementation of the evaluation, the evaluation management shall carry out all the preparatory works such as collection of background documents and other relevant documents for evaluation, and carrying out/facilitation of meetings with key stakeholders.

### 2. Evaluation reference group

The evaluation reference group shall be formed with the minimum of 5 members for each evaluation to function as technical advisory group comprising of technical experts and other stakeholders. The evaluation reference group members can also be from other relevant agencies. In order to ensure credibility of the evaluation, the evaluation reference group member shall declare any conflict of interests in relation to prospective evaluation team. This group shall provide technical advice and comments on methodological issues, draft TOR, evaluation report, and other technical aspects of the evaluation process. The evaluation reference group shall participate in relevant consultative workshops to provide their technical advice and comments to ensure quality of the evaluation. However, the evaluation reference group shall not attempt to influence the evaluative judgments. The responsibility for evaluative judgments shall rest with the evaluation team only and not with the evaluation reference group.

### 3. Terms of Reference

The evaluation management shall prepare terms of reference (TOR) for each evaluation in consultation with the evaluation reference group. The terms of reference shall contain the following items:

1. Background
2. Evaluation purpose
3. Evaluation objectives and questions
4. Evaluation methodology

5. Work plan
6. Required experience and qualification (for consultants)
7. Expected outputs
8. Budget and logistical support

#### 4. Evaluation team

In line with the guiding principle of independence and impartiality, the evaluation team shall not be comprised of those involved in designing or implementing the programme, project or policy. The evaluation team shall work freely without interference and with full access to information and cooperation from the evaluation management. The evaluation team shall be internal or external depending on the purpose and context as explained below:

i. Internal evaluation team

When an agency wishes to have evaluation to learn lessons from the ongoing or completed programmes or projects for their own future programmes, projects or policies, the agencies may constitute an evaluation team internally from the agency itself. However, the members should be those who were not involved in designing or implementing the programme, project or policy. While evaluations can be implemented by the officials from the agency depending on the context and purpose, it is recommended that evaluation be implemented by independent external evaluators to receive more credibility of the evaluation findings.

ii. External evaluation team

When the independence and impartiality of evaluation is necessary for credibility of the evaluation findings; to have an outsider views at a policy, programme or project; or an agency cannot mobilize the evaluation team internally given the limited time, resource or technical capacity; the agency shall outsource the implementation of evaluation to the competent local or external consultants following the existing procurement rules and regulations of Royal Government of Bhutan.

iii. Joint evaluation team

In case of joint evaluation with government agency and development partner, the evaluation team shall be formed by the members identified by government agency and development partner as per the relevance of the evaluation.

## CHAPTER 9. IMPLEMENTING EVALUATION

The evaluation team shall implement the evaluation as mentioned in the terms of reference (TOR). The implementation of evaluation mainly involve data collection, data analysis and reporting on the evaluation findings.

### 1. Data collection

The data collection is a systematic collection of information required to answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation team shall collect data using the data collection method as prescribed in the TOR. However, the evaluation team shall have flexibility to make minor changes in the data collection method in consultation with the evaluation management and evaluation reference group depending on availability of resources, time and context. Prior to data collection from the field, evaluation management as a part of preparatory works shall collect background documents and other relevant documents for the evaluation.

### 2. Data analysis

The evaluation team shall carry out the data analysis of the data thus collected. Data analysis is the process of organizing, describing and interpreting the data as briefly explained below:

#### **Preparing data:**

The data collected from the field are often in the form of raw data. These raw data must be subject to a quality check in terms of reliability and validity, and they must be organized according to evaluation questions and criteria. In addition, evaluation team shall also use the initial analysis of background documents and other relevant documents.

#### **Findings:**

The classified data is then aggregated to generate findings. At this stage, findings only describe facts and no evaluative judgments are passed.

#### **Conclusions:**

At this stage, the findings are interpreted and analyzed to formulate conclusions.

## CHAPTER 10. REPORTING EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation team shall prepare the report on the evaluation findings and submit to the evaluation management. The evaluation report shall contain the following items:

### 1. Executive Summary

It shall briefly provide important information on the purpose, objectives, major findings, conclusions, and major recommendations. It shall not be more than three pages.

### 2. Introduction

This part shall briefly describe the programme or project evaluated and the evaluation context.

### 3. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

This part shall list the evaluation objectives and questions and briefly describe evaluation methodology.

### 4. Findings

This part shall present the findings of the data analysis without providing any judgment on the findings. The findings may be presented in the form of tables, charts and graphs in addition to texts.

### 5. Conclusions

This part shall provide conclusions and judgments of the evaluation findings in relation to achievement level of expected results, relevance, effectiveness, impact or sustainability of a programme, project or policy depending on the objectives of the evaluation.

### 6. Recommendations

Having arrived at the conclusion of the evaluation findings, a set of recommendations shall be provided to enable management and decision makers to make necessary decisions.

### 7. Annexes

The annexes should provide all information necessary to support the findings, conclusions and recommendation provided in the report. Annexes should include the following:

1. Description of evaluation methodologies in detail.

2. Data collection instruments such as questionnaires
3. Description of data collection and analysis.
4. All classified detailed data in tables
5. List of places and persons interviewed
6. Terms of Reference
7. References

## CHAPTER 11. FOLLOWING-UP, DISSEMINATING AND UTILIZING EVALUATION REPORTS

### 1. Follow-up Notes

The evaluation management shall prepare a draft Follow-up Note proposing management responses to the recommendations of the evaluation report. The evaluation management shall finalize the draft Follow-up Note with deadlines after carrying out a consultative workshop with the concerned agencies. A copy of Follow-Up Note shall be shared with Gross National Happiness Commission. The Research and Evaluation Division under Gross National Happiness Commission shall carry out 'annual follow-up notes meeting' to discuss the progress of the follow-up notes.

### 2. Dissemination

A presentation of evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations and the Follow-up Note shall be made jointly by the evaluation management and evaluation team to representatives from relevant ministries, agencies, development partners, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, parliament, universities, and private sector. The Report shall also be made available for comments on the public domain.

The evaluation report shall be published and distributed by the evaluation management to all relevant agencies, development partners and decision makers. The Report shall also be uploaded on the website of the concerned agency. A separate press release on the evaluation findings shall be sent to media houses.

### 3. Utilization

The evaluation management shall ensure that the evaluation findings and recommendations are used in the development and revision of plans, programmes, projects and policies, in the allocation of resources, and in managing existing development programmes and projects. GNH Commission Secretariat shall carry out 'annual follow-up notes meeting' to discuss the progress of follow-up notes.

<b>EVALUATION MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>EVALUATION TEAM</b>
Prepare draft follow-up note	Make presentation of evaluation report
Hold consultative meeting with concerned agencies	
Make presentation of evaluation report	
Publish and disseminate evaluation report	
Ensure utilization of evaluation report	

# ANNEX 1. BASIC CONCEPTS

## 1. Evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of a program, project or policy to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability or timeliness. Depending on when an evaluation is conducted, it can be classified into three kinds, namely, formative, summative and prospective.

### *a. Formative Evaluation*

Formative evaluations are carried out during the implementation phase of programmes, projects or policies to identify the challenges faced and new opportunities in achieving objectives. These findings serve as feedback to implementers for rectification and improvement of the performance of programmes, projects or policies.

### *b. Summative*

Summative evaluations are carried out after completion of programmes, projects or policies to determine their effectiveness and impact. The findings from summative evaluations are used as lessons for future development of programmes, projects or policies.

### *c. Prospective*

Prospective evaluations are carried out before implementation of the programmes, projects or policies to determine their likely outcomes or impacts. The findings from prospective evaluations are used for assessing the worth of implementing a program, project or policy.

## 2. Result

The effects of a programme, project or policy are broadly termed as result. The results can be at different levels in a results chain of a programme, project or policy in the form of outputs, outcomes or impact.

## 3. Impact

The long-term change in behavior or condition of both target and non-target group, contributed by a programme, project or policy is called an impact. This change is expected either immediately after

completion or few years after the completion of a programme, project or policy. A programme, project or policy has little control and indirect influence over the achievement of an impact.

#### **4. Outcome**

The short-term or intermediate change in behavior or condition of both target and non-target group, contributed by completion of a number of outputs is called an outcome. This change is expected immediately after completion of a programme, project or policy. A programme, project or policy has little control but direct influence over the achievement of an outcome.

#### **5. Output**

The immediate result of an activity of a programme, project or policy is called an output. The outputs are in the form of either goods or services, which directly benefit the target group. A programme, project or policy has direct control and influence over the achievement of an output.

#### **6. Activity**

The action transforming inputs into goods or services is called an activity. An activity is comprised of a set of related tasks.

#### **7. Task**

A task is a detailed action within an activity. A set of related tasks form an activity.

#### **8. Inputs**

Resources required for implementing activities of a programme, project or policy to achieve the results are called inputs. Inputs can be in the form of human, physical or financial resources.

#### **9. Indicator**

A qualitative or quantitative variable used as a means to measure achievement of the results of a programme, project or policy is called as an indicator.

#### **10. Target**

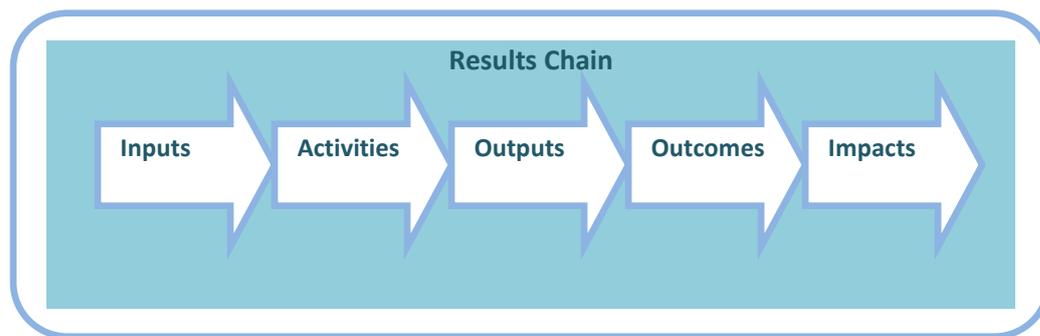
A target is an expected level of achievement at various levels of a results chain within a stipulated time. It is often expressed as a quantitative indicator.

## 11. Baseline

A baseline is measurement of behaviors or conditions of the target group and non-target group before the implementation of a programme, project or policy.

## 12. End line

An end line is measurement of behaviors or conditions of the target group and non-target group after the completion of a programme, project or policy.



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