ECB Emergency Capacity Building Project

What We Know About Joint Evaluations

of Humanitarian Action

Learning from NGO Experiences

Section 3 of 3: THE TOOLS

April 2011

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have shared their valuable experience and time in the creation of this booklet. Special thanks go to all of them, particularly, in Guatemala, Carla Aguilar of Save the Children US, Hugh Aprile of Catholic Relief Services, Borys Chinchilla of Mercy Corps, and Juan Manuel Giron Durini of the ECB Project; in Niger, Jasmine Bates and Marianna Hensley of Catholic Relief Services, and Julianna White, of CARE; in Indonesia, Adhong Ramadhan and Josephine Wijiastuti of Catholic Relief Services, Agus Budiarto and Evi Esaly Kaban of Save the Children, Harining Mardjuki and Anwar Hadipriyanto of CARE, and Richardus Indra Gunawan and Yacobus Runtuwene of World Vision International. Special thanks also go to John Wilding, Pauline Wilson, John Telford, Maurice Herson of ALNAP, Jock Baker of CARE and Guy Sharrock of Catholic Relief Services who have given critical input into this work. Malaika Wright was the author of the first paper.

The April 2011 version of the booklet was updated by Katy Love from the ECB Project, Loretta Ishida of Catholic Relief Services, Jock Baker of CARE, Hana Crowe of Save the Children, and Kevin Savage of World Vision. The booklet was revised based on feedback and reports from those who participated in ECB-supported joint evaluations in 2010 in Indonesia, Haiti, the Horn of Africa, and Niger. These people served as evaluation managers and coordinators, team leaders, team members, Steering Committee members, ECB field facilitators, and ECB accountability Advisers in joint evaluations, including: Paul O'Hagan, Greg Brady, Yves-Laurent Regis, Angela Rouse, Katy Love, and Jock Baker (Haiti); Yenni Suryani, Pauline Wilson, Loretta Ishida, and LeAnn Hager (Indonesia); Kevin Savage, Chele DeGruccio, Jim Ashman, and Wynn Flaten (Horn of Africa); and Kadida Mambo (Niger). The ECB Project thanks all who contributed to this work.

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet was written to share knowledge gained from the experiences of people that have been involved in joint evaluations conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It mainly profiles the work of NGOs involved in the Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB), which has a goal to improve the speed, quality and effectiveness with which the humanitarian community saves lives, improves the welfare, and protects the rights of women, men and children affected by emergencies.

This booklet also draws on the lessons of multi-agency evaluations that already exist within the humanitarian sector. Major contributions have come, in particular, from the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP).

We hope that learning from previous experiences captured here will be useful for all those considering leading their agencies through a joint evaluation. The learning shared here is targeted at evaluation practitioners, managers, and NGOs contemplating a joint evaluation. Additionally, we hope that it will contribute to a growing body of knowledge on these processes and show that while there are many unanswered questions about joint evaluations, there is a lot we already know.

This booklet is comprised of three sections. The first section, **The Guide**, can be referred to as a 'how-to' for those closely involved in joint evaluations. It provides a framework for those approaching an interagency evaluation. The second section, **The Stories**, shares several case studies from the ECB Project's experiences. The third section, **The Tools**, includes many templates and tools that can be adapted for evaluations, including sample terms of references, agreement documents, and checklists.

THE TOOLS

Sample Terms of Reference for a Joint Evaluation

1. **Background and context for the evaluation**

2. **Purpose of the evaluation**

3. **Specific scope of the evaluation (boundaries including what will not be part of the evaluation):**
   - Geographic coverage
   - Time frame
   - Evaluation framework used and standards (OECD/DAC, Sphere)
   - Evaluation deliverables/outputs
   - Technical support to be provided by each participating organization
   - Administrative support to be provided by each participating organization
   - Logistic support to be provided by each participating organization

4. **Administration/ Finance:**
   - Resources required: Budget and staffing: how many people will be required, for how long, and at what cost
   - Determination of ‘ownership’ of the products of the joint evaluation, i.e. intellectual copyright, etc.
   - Identification of process/procedure for dealing with inter-agency disagreements concerning any aspect of the joint evaluation
   - Agreement on report format, the use of agency logos, etc.

5. **Methodology:**
   - Standards against which performance will be assessed
   - How adherence to international standards will be assessed
   - Identification of the methodology and generally, what questions will be posed. Questions of a potentially sensitive nature should be discussed as early in the process as possible so that problems do not surface later. Some questions may be more sensitive to some organizations than others.
   - Identification of stakeholders and their level of involvement in the process
   - Data sources
   - Consideration of gender issues and vulnerable groups

6. **Team Composition:**
   - Team Leader with a description of role and responsibilities
   - Additional team members with description of roles and responsibilities
   - Team coordination configuration

7. **Management of the Evaluation Process:**
   - Intended use of evaluation results and parties responsible for follow up
   - Reporting structure within the joint evaluation configuration
   - Periodic reporting schedule throughout the process
   - Reporting requirements
   - Agreement on how to deal with fraud, misconduct or wrong-doing uncovered as part of the evaluation process

Source: CRS Guidelines for Participation in Joint Evaluations: Final Draft

Sample Terms of Reference for Evaluation Team Members

Background & Objectives

See the TOR for the Evaluation.

Team Composition

The team will consist of:

- A Team Leader who will be an external consultant
- A staff member from each of the participating agencies who is based in a country other than the host country and has not been directly involved in the emergency response
- A national consultant

1 a.) External International Consultant (Team Leader) - Responsibilities

The external consultant will act as Team Leader (TL) and will retain overall responsibility for meeting the objectives as detailed in the attached evaluation TOR (including editing authority for the final report), ensuring effective process and team management, and that outputs are of good quality.

Description of Tasks

i. Reporting

a) Development of inception report, up to three pages with a chapter plan and key areas of enquiry, to be submitted within four days of start of the consultancy
b) Submission of combined draft report, within one week of completion of field work
c) Submission of final report as per the specified schedule. The report should contain an executive summary (no more than five pages), key findings, conclusion and recommendations, as well as annexes.

ii. Lead an orientation briefing for stakeholders to ensure a common understanding and expectations regarding the scope and objectives of the evaluation.

iii. Organize and facilitate relevant meetings, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Undertake associated data collection activities (e.g. document review/research) as foreseen within the scope of this evaluation. Some of these activities may take place outside of the field mission, e.g. telephone or face-to-face interviews with HQ-based staff.

iv. Collate, analyze and synthesize data and other information collected during the course of the evaluation.

v. Prepare a daily written summary of interviews and “Main Points” in conjunction with the Team Members to assist with ongoing analysis and synthesis of information relevant to objectives.

vi. Delegate specific areas of responsibility to the other team members to maximize use of relevant skills and facilitate triangulation during analysis.

vii. Design, organize and lead (if appropriate) the debriefing for participating agencies (and key partners, if appropriate) on the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations within each region and at the end of the field mission.

viii. Ensure compliance of the team with international humanitarian assistance standards and take reasonable steps for ensuring that the security and dignity of the affected population is not compromised and that disruption to ongoing programmes is minimized.

1 b.) External International Consultant – Team Leader Profile

Required:

i. Fluent English and excellent communication skills; good working knowledge of the local language.

ii. Track record of substantive Team Leader and evaluation management experience.

iii. Extensive humanitarian programming management experience.

iv. Knowledge of mandates and *modus operandi* of principal humanitarian actors (host government, NGOs, UN agencies, Red Cross Agencies, etc.).

v. Proven writing skills

Preferred:

vi. Experience/expertise in the area of rapid onset emergencies.

vii. Has skills and experience in one or more of the following areas: food economy/livelihood security, water and sanitation, public health, programming, management, finance/admin, logistics, human resources, post-crisis rehabilitation, disaster risk reduction, or participatory approaches in emergencies.

2 a.) Internal Agency Team Members – Responsibilities

Given this is an external evaluation, the agency team member does not represent his or her agency as such, but using an objective approach under the TL's leadership, she or he provides guidance to the team on relevant aspects of the agency's mandate, policies, strategies, and "realities." The agency team member's inputs should ensure that findings and recommendations targeted at that agency are well-informed and practical. Specific tasks are as follows:

i. Together with the other members of the evaluation team, provide an orientation briefing to stakeholders to ensure a common understanding and expectations regarding the scope and objectives of the evaluation.

ii. Participate in and, as necessary, facilitate relevant meetings, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and undertake associated data collection activities (e.g. document review/research) as foreseen within the scope of this evaluation. Some of these activities may take place outside of the field mission, e.g. telephone or face-to-face interviews with HQ-based staff.

iii. Provide agency specific information and contextual background to assist the TL in his or her analysis to ensure the findings take account of agency context and that recommendations are realistic.

iv. Collate, analyze and synthesize data and other information collected during the course of the evaluation.

v. Prepare a daily written summary of interviews and "Main Points" to share with the Team Members to assist with ongoing analysis and synthesis of information relevant to objectives.

vi. Draft inputs on specific areas of responsibility (as designated by the TL) for integration into the draft and final reports.

vii. Participate in the debriefing of the agencies (and key partners, if appropriate) on the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations at the end of the field mission.

viii. Assist the TL tasked with drafting the report and completing the final version of the report.

2 b.) Internal Agency consultants – Team Member Profile

Required:

1. Fluent English and excellent communication skills; good working knowledge of the local language.

2. Extensive humanitarian programming/project management experience.

3. Knowledge of mandates and *modus operandi* of principal humanitarian actors (host government, NGOs, UN agencies, Red Cross Agencies, etc.).

Preferred:

4. Experience/expertise in the area of rapid onset emergencies or natural disasters.

5. Has skills and experience in one or more of the following areas: risk reduction, food economy/livelihood security, programming, management, finance/admin, logistics, human resources, post-crisis rehabilitation, disaster risk reduction, participatory approaches in emergencies, monitoring and evaluation methodologies, or analysis.

3 a.) External National Consultant - Responsibilities

A national consultant will be selected by the agencies to provide to the evaluation team necessary analysis and background of the country, to allow findings and recommendations to be placed in an appropriate context.

1. Together with the other members of the evaluation team, provide an orientation briefing to stakeholders to ensure a common understanding and expectations regarding the scope and objectives of the evaluation.

2. Participate in and, as necessary, facilitate relevant meetings, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and undertake associated data collection activities (e.g. document review/research) as foreseen within the scope of this evaluation. Some of these activities may take place outside of the field mission, e.g. telephone or face-to-face interviews with HQ-based staff.

3. Collate, analyze and synthesize data and other information collected during the course of the evaluation.

4. Prepare a daily written summary of interviews and "Main Points" to share with the Team Members to assist with ongoing analysis and synthesis of information relevant to objectives.

5. Draft inputs on specific areas of responsibility (as designated by the TL) for integration into the draft and final reports.

6. Participate in the debriefing of the agencies (and key partners, if appropriate) on the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations at the end of the field mission.

7. Assist the TL tasked with drafting the country report and completing the final version of the report.

3 b.) External National Consultant – Team Member Profile

Required:

1. Fluent English and excellent communication skills; good working knowledge of the local language.

2. Expertise in the context and cultural issues of the country, including all its diverse ethnic groups and past experiences with international aid activities.

3. Humanitarian programming/project management experience.

4. Knowledge of mandates and *modus operandi* of principal humanitarian actors (host government, NGOs, UN agencies, Red Cross Agencies, etc.).

Preferred:

5. Has skills and experience in one or more of the following areas: risk reduction, food economy/livelihood security, programming, management, finance/admin, logistics, human resources, post-crisis rehabilitation, disaster risk reduction, participatory approaches in emergencies, monitoring and evaluation methodologies or analysis.

6. Experience in monitoring and evaluation methodologies and analysis.

Duration

For the Team Leader, an estimated total of 28 days of fieldwork are foreseen from the start date, with an additional seven days for report writing at the end of the assignment. For the national consultants and internal agency staff, an estimated total of 28 days fieldwork and three days report writing is expected.

Sample Agreements Document

Ownership of the Products

An explicit agreement or 'protocol' should include designation of 'ownership' of the process and its products (e.g. the report and any other evaluation products such as articles, brochures, etc.). Ownership entails a series of aspects, from legal rights and obligations, to decision-making authority, especially in the event of disputes. Such a protocol would also include agreement and guidance on decision-making processes (quorums, voting versus observer rights, etc. and how these relate or are invoked for different stages or aspects of the process, e.g. more day-to-day management decisions will be delegated to the evaluation administrator/manager, and maybe the team, while more sensitive or important decisions will be made at higher levels).

Establishment of the Management Structure

Agreement and formalization would need to cover procedures for establishment of the management structure; dismantling of the structure (including consideration of future ownership of the products of the joint evaluation; a disputes-management mechanism (as in labour law, where potential disagreements will be addressed in an agreed manner); broad expectations for financial, material and human resource provision and management (including contracting the evaluation team and other resource provision, especially for day-to-day secretariat functions), etc..

Incorporation of Feedback

Of particular importance is explicit agreement on the incorporation of comments on the report, especially if they are from within the overall management structure, i.e. certain types of comments are always to be acted upon (such as errors of fact or inadequate verification) while others are of an advisory nature only (e.g. interpretations or analysis).

It may be useful to refer to the following checklist when reviewing the draft report:

- Consistency with the TOR - is the report consistent with the objectives described in the original TOR?
- Style and Clarity - is the report of an acceptable professional standard? Is the language and format reader-friendly for targeted stakeholders? Are the findings clearly stated with adequate supporting evidence? Does it strike an appropriate balance between conciseness and enough content so that it's not too general?
- Potential usefulness of the report to stakeholders. Is it clear what is being recommended and to whom? Do the recommendations provide adequate guidance for follow-up or are they too general? Are they realistic? Does the Executive Summary fulfill its purpose, i.e. provide a concise summary of the report, particularly for senior level decision-makers who may not read the entire report?
- How successful has the evaluation been in prioritizing key issues? Are there too many recommendations? Are there any critical omissions?
- Are there any important corrections and/or omissions to the text?

Management Response & Action Planning

Once the report has been finalized, the next important step is for the evaluation steering committee to discussed the recommendations and agree on whether to “accept,” “partially accept,” or “reject” a particular recommendation. If a recommendation is rejected, then it will be important to explain why. If a recommendation is “accepted,” then a clear follow up action plan with individual responsibilities for follow up should be entered in the management matrix. A partially accepted recommendation contains both elements: an action plan for follow up and an explanation why the recommendation was not fully accepted.

Joint Evaluation Readiness Checklist

Assessment and scoping of the value of conducting a joint evaluation

- What is the added value of a joint exercise as opposed to individual exercises?
- Is there sufficient buy-in for a joint evaluation, including understanding of the complexities, costs and benefits?
- What agencies and other possible stakeholders might be interested and involved?
- Can they be consulted?
- Who will conduct the consultation, how, when and where (e.g. in an agency headquarters, the field, or a neutral venue)?
- How much time is available for the joint evaluation?
- How large and broad can the evaluation be, in function of the time and resources available?

Establishing a multi-agency management structure

- Can the main actors be identified and committed to the process, e.g. through their unambiguous commitment to provide time and resources?
- Can a lead or host agency be identified?
- Among those actors, what is the most effective and efficient management structure? (See organigram below).
- Can an explicit agreement or protocol be signed on roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations of all concerned? (See example below under sample tools).

Designing the Joint Evaluation and Terms of Reference

- What are the possible uses of the proposed evaluation and who will use the findings? This includes prioritization of those uses by possible target users and audiences for the products of the evaluation.
- What are the priority uses and therefore the main evaluation questions that need to be addressed within the time and resource limits available?
- What might be the expected methods in light of the purposes of the evaluation and coverage?
- What other aspects are needed for the ToR? Possible stakeholders to be involved, locations to be visited, duration, report style and length, etc. might be considered.

Team selection, preparation and planning

- What evaluator profiles are needed, and what will the size of the team be? The decision should be made by the steering committee.
- How and by whom will they be selected and contracted? For example, delegation of selection to the management sub-committee is based on accepted standards of professionalism, independence and transparency.
- How will ongoing coordination and information flows be managed among the main actors (management sub-committee, lead agency, JE manager, and the evaluation team)?

Conducting the Joint Evaluation, including analysis and reporting

- What methods and expertise are required to cover the range of issues, locations and aspects in the evaluation? This would mainly be the responsibility of the team and manager.
- What joint activities, including workshops and meetings, are required to facilitate quality understanding and analysis?
- When, how and by whom will draft reports be reviewed? (See sample protocol below).

Dissemination and use

- How many and what type of products will result from the joint evaluation, in order to meet the needs of the diverse sets of target groups/audiences, including individual and joint agency initiatives?
- How, by whom and by when will the products be disseminated and communicated? Agreement on a communication plan is required at the outset during the planning stage.
- What resources are available from whom for the implementation of the plan, and for unforeseen costs?
- As a complement to the communication plan, can a joint follow-up action plan be developed to address issues in the evaluation?
- Is a new structure required to implement and monitor relevant recommendations? Agencies may wish to take the results forward into a new 'review-and-action' process.
- Will there be a review of the joint evaluation itself, to identify lessons from the exercise? This would probably require at least one workshop or meeting of all main actors and stakeholders.

Suggested Topics for Discussion with Prospective Partner Agencies

	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 3
1. Is your organization planning to carry out an evaluation?			
2. If so, what will it be used for?			
3. What resources have been set aside for it (funds, staff time, etc.)?			
4. What is the current evaluation capacity within your organization (e.g. previous experience with evaluation, staff with monitoring and evaluation skills)?			
5. When is it planned for and how much time has been set aside for it?			
6. If an evaluation has not been planned, what types of information could you usefully gain from an evaluation?			
7. How are evaluations viewed within your organizational culture?			
8. What is your understanding of joint evaluations?			
9. What do you believe you could gain from a joint evaluation?			

References and Further Reading

Joint Evaluations

Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations. DAC Evaluation Series, OECD 2006.
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/28/37512030.pdf

Joint Evaluations: Recent Experiences, Lessons Learned, and Options for the Future. DAC Evaluation Network Working Paper, OECD, 2005.

Lessons About Multi-Agency Evaluations: Asian Tsunami Evaluation Coalition. http://www.tsunami-evaluation.org/NR/rdonlyres/9DBB5423-E2EF-43AB-B6D2-2F5237342949/0/tec_lessonslearned_ver2_march06_final.pdf

General Evaluations

USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation TIPS series.
http://evalweb.usaid.gov/resources/tipsseries.cfm

Western Michigan University, Evaluation Center. Evaluation Checklists
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/checklistmenu.htm#models

Shoestring Evaluation: Designing Impact Evaluations Under Budget, Time, and Data Constraints. M. Bamberger, J. Rugh, M. Church, and L. Fort, The American Journal of Evaluation, 2004.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation Checklist. Michael Quinn Patton
http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/ufe.pdf