



COURSE: PREPARING ADEQUATE EVALUATION QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATIONS

Mayo 2024



USAID

DEL PUEBLO DE LOS ESTADOS
UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA

WELCOME TO DAY 1





Learning Goal

- The participants are able to guide and craft specific, clear and concise EQs that are coherent with the evaluation objective that would enable it to design and implement evaluations that meet the needs and demand of the stakeholders and maximize the application of the evaluation recommendations.





WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- Address effectively stakeholders' concerns about evaluations.
- Guide stakeholders towards the identification of the objective of an evaluation and the appropriate set of questions.
- Be familiar with alternative studies to assess, evaluate and/or learn from projects.
- Relate purpose of evaluation and evaluation methods.
- Understand the importance of the process to generate a good product.
- Feel reassured that you will be able to address any inquiries about the selected questions and evaluation methodology.





UNIT I: AGENDA

PART 1 OF 3: PRINCIPLES

Welcome

Learning Activity 1: *Refresher of Workshop: Preparing strong terms of reference/scopes of work of evaluations*

Types of evaluations

Types and characteristics of a good question

Test

Exercise: USAID case studies

Close of session

PART 2 OF 3: PROCESS

Process over product

Exercise: Dealing with stakeholders

Close of session

PART 3 OF 3: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

What to present

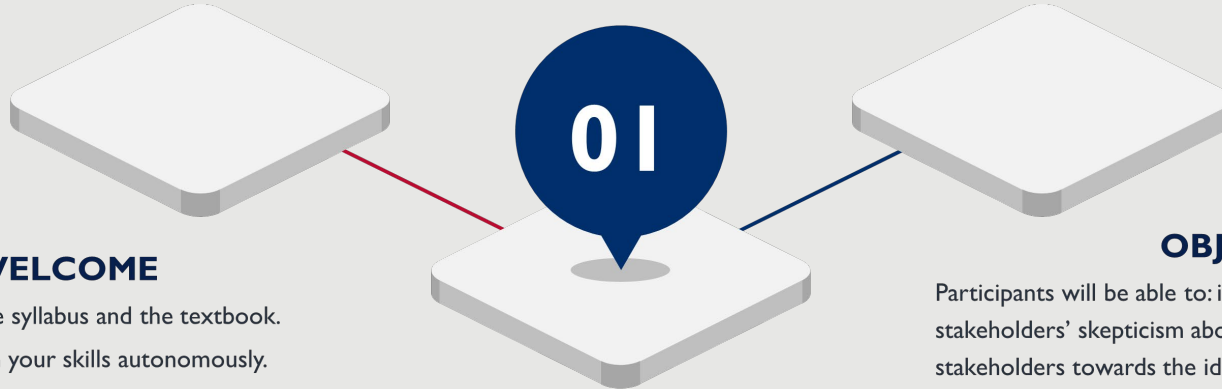
How to implement recommendations

Additional suggestions

Mission Order: Evaluation

Close of session

KNOWING OUR LEARNING ROUTE



WELCOME

- Review the syllabus and the textbook.
- Strengthen your skills autonomously.
- Enjoy the process.

UNIT I DEVELOPING EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Case study.

Involving key stakeholders.

Mission Order: Evaluation

OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to: i) Address effectively stakeholders' skepticism about evaluations; ii) Guide stakeholders towards the identification of the objective of an evaluation and the appropriate set of questions; iii) Relate objective of evaluation and evaluation methods; iv) Understand importance of a careful and collaborative process to generate a good product; and v) Feel reassured to address any inquiries about the selected questions and evaluation methodology.



LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

SUMMARIZED REVIEW OF
WORKSHOP: PREPARING
STRONG TERMS OF
REFERENCE/SCOPES OF WORK
OF EVALUATIONS

(A REFRESHER)





LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

- Answer the questions to identify your knowledge regarding how to prepare strong terms of reference of evaluations.
- Use the textbook for writing down your answers.

PRINCIPLES

4/30/2024





PRINCIPLES



PROCESS



**PRESENTATION OF
RESULTS**



THEME 1

TYPES OF EVALUATION



TYPES OF EVALUATIONS

Process evaluation



- 1 How the project/activity addresses the problem.
- 2 What the project services are and how the project operates.
- 3 What it does.

Outcome



- 1 Before and After.
- 2 What extent did the project/activity achieve its objectives.

Impact evaluation



- 1 Cause and Effect/ Attribution
- 2 What extent did the project/activity affected people's life and/or institutions' functioning

Economic evaluation



- 1 Cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses
- 2 How cost effective is the project/activity
- 3 Are there alternative approaches that could have had the same outcomes with less cost?

OTHER SIMILAR TYPES OF STUDIES

Economic evaluation

Quantitative measurement of different units of cost, cost per resources, cost per benefit, cost per development results.



Needs Assessment

Identifies the development gaps, clients' demands, market failures relevant to the project.



Assessment/ diagnosis

Forward-looking process designed to examine country or sector context to inform strategic planning or project/ Activity design.



Rapid appraisal

Quick evaluation/ assessment of concrete and specific issues.



A systematization

Focused on systematic learning about process, implementation, challenges.



An ethnographic study

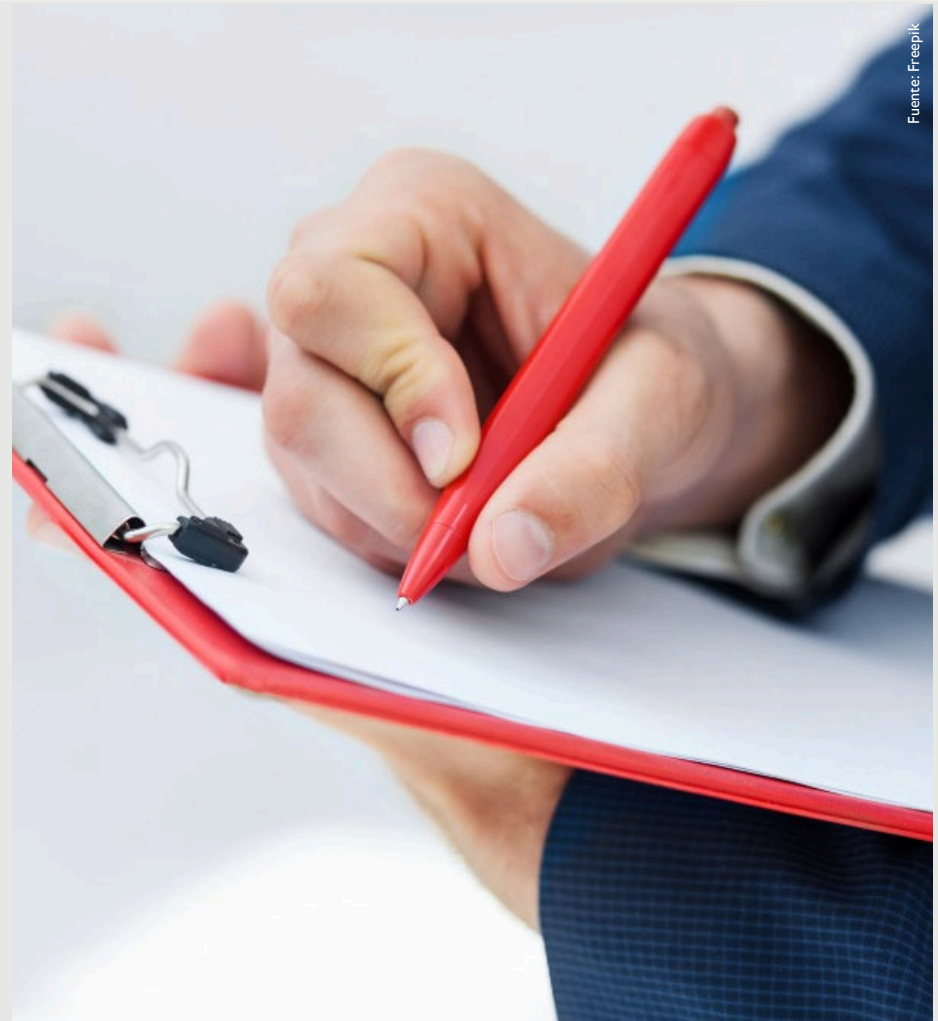
Almost exclusive anthropological study to explore the behavior of human beings, family units, communities.

DISCUSSION

- When are evaluations and Similar work necessary?
- Take notes in the textbook.



ORGANIZATION FOR
ECONOMIC
COOPERATION AND
DEVELOPMENT (OECD)
EVALUATION
STANDARDS



OECD EVALUATION STANDARDS

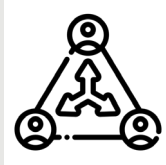
Relevance

- To what extent does the project/activity address an identified need?
- How well does the project align with government and agency priorities?



Coherence

- To what extent were factors (political stability, population movements) considered in the design and implementation.
- To what extent the project/activity coherent with policies and programs of other partners operating within the same context?



Effectiveness

- To what extent is the project achieving the intended outcomes in the short, medium and long term?
- To what extent is the project producing worthwhile results and/or meeting each of its objectives?



OECD EVALUATION STANDARDS

Efficiency

- Was the intervention cost-effective?
- Was the intervention implemented in a timely way?



Impact

- What were the effects of the intervention on participants' lives?
- Did the intervention contribute to long-term intended results?



Sustainability

- To what extent did project/ activity benefits continue after project completion?
- To what extent will project benefits last permanently?



BREAK



THEME 2 TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD QUESTION



WHAT ARE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (EQS)? (1/2)



EQs are the high-level questions that an evaluation is designed to answer, while interviews or survey questionnaires ask specific questions.



The purpose of EQs is to find clear, objective and solid answers and/or feedback of an activity/ project/ program consistent with its scope and objective that are of interest to the main stakeholders for the purpose of learning from it.



EQs can be qualitative (i.e., how and why) or quantitative (i.e., what and how much) in nature. Should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevance and timely.

WHAT ARE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (EQS)? (2/2)



To help focus the evaluation, EQs should be created so that they reflect not only the purpose of the evaluation but also the priorities and needs of stakeholders.



About 5 is the recommended number of questions; more is a signal that the stakeholders are not clear on what they want from an evaluation.

TYPES OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS (EQS)

DESCRIPTIVE questions:
“What is”

- What are the primary activities of the project.
- Who received what services?



NORMATIVE questions:
Comparisons of “what is” to
“what should be

- To what extent was the budget spent efficiently?
- To what extent was the target of vaccinating 90% met?



CAUSE AND EFFECT questions:
Identify if results have been achieved
due to the intervention

- Did the increase tax on gasoline improved air quality?
- As a result of the job training program, do participants have higher-paying jobs?



TIPS FOR DEVELOPING GOOD EQS (1/2)

Principle 1: Should be both a question and evaluative

Tip #1: A question for a sector assessment or a needs assessment is not an evaluation question.

Tip #2: A request for a recommendation is not an evaluation question

Principle 2: Should be limited (in scope)

Tip #3: No more than 5 question per SOW.

Tip #4: Need not address every aspect of the project/activity; rather address specific issues where you need further information.

Principle 3: Should be limited

Tip #5: Each word in the evaluation question should be clearly defined. Be careful about important (but ambiguous) terms, such as "effective", "sustainable", "success", "objective".

Tip #6: If necessary, include additional narrative along with the evaluation question to provide context and/or define your terms.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING GOOD EQS (2/2)

Principle 4: Should be researchable

Tip #7: Must be a way to generate objective evidence to answer the evaluation question with social science methods.

Tip #8: If you ask a normative question, it is only researchable if clear, measurable standards or criteria can be identified.

Principle 5: Should be useful

Tip #9: Link your evaluation questions to the evaluation purpose (but don't make your purpose another evaluation question)

Tip #10: Involve stakeholders in developing questions

CLOSE OF SESSION





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WELCOME TO DAY 2





LEARNING ACTIVITY 2





LEARNING ACTIVITY 2

- Answer the questions to identify what you need to reinforce.
- Use the textbook for writing down your answers.

BREAK





PRINCIPLES



PROCESS



**PRESENTATION OF
RESULTS**



THEME 3
PROCESS OVER
PRODUCT



1. INVOLVE KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND REVIEW THE LOGIC MODEL



Critical to minimize future challenges regarding the purpose of the evaluation, the questions, the methodology, the timeframe and the expected product.

- ✓ Get familiar with the activity/project/program that will be evaluated; that is, its objective, scope, main stakeholders, challenges and results.
- ✓ Review with stakeholders why you need to do an evaluation (the purpose) and how the results will be used and by whom
- ✓ Review the logic model to identify the key activities and the perspective process and outcome components associated and generate relevant questions.
- ✓ Identify the stage of development/implementation of your activity/project/program
- ✓ Focus on specific objectives to assess/measure

2. BRAINSTORM AND PRIORITIZE EQS



WHY THIS QUESTION?

- ✓ Brainstorm with key internal stakeholders (e.g. COR, Office Chief, MEL officer) and ideally also with external stakeholders (e.g. Implementors, beneficiaries, relevant authorities) and come up with a list of potential questions relevant to the evaluation.
- ✓ Apply to each questions the Criteria of Prioritizing (see next slide and Handout).
- ✓ Keep the questions as clear and concise as possible (see Handout).
- ✓ Are they reasonable, appropriate and/or realistic?
- ✓ Are they “answerable” to some degree of certainty’ Is there available data or is it “observable”?
- ✓ Consider the type of response that is expected when crafting each question.

SOME CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZING

Does this fit the stated objective of the evaluation?

Will this accommodate key stakeholders?

Who would use the information for what decision?

Would the information possibly change the course of events?

Does the question focus on a critical or major issue, or is the question merely of passing interest?

Is it feasible to adequately answer the question, given time and budget constraints?

Would the evaluation be compromised if this question was dropped?
Is it critical to the study's credibility?

Others?

3. CLASSIFY THE EQS



WHAT ASPECTS OF THE ACTIVITY / PROJECT / PROGRAM ARE BEING EVALUATED

Grouping questions by theme will allow you to identify those that measure similar topics and to begin to prioritize. Classifying them by process of outcome will also help you decide the type of evaluation.



✓ Is it focused on results (effectiveness)?



✓ Is it focused on process (efficiency)?



✓ Is it focused on “bang for the buck” (cost effectiveness and or cost-benefit)?



✓ Is it focused on timelines, appropriateness and opportunity (relevance)?

(CONSIDERATIONS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THROUGHOUT THE “PROCESS”)



CAN THESE QUESTIONS BE ANSWERED OR WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS?



- ✓ Consider the type, quantity and quality of data to be collected and/or required to answer the questions



- ✓ Pre-determinate the most suitable type of evaluation (e.g. process, outcome/impact) to answer the questions and the possible analytical tools (e.g. stakeholder analysis, social network analysis, institutional development analysis framework).

4. POST CRAFTING OF EQS (AVOID/MINIMIZE DEFENDING QUESTIONS)

- ✓ Write and validate the EQs with your key stakeholders
- ✓ Informed them and make sure they understand any limitations of the evaluation: the process, the timeframe, and the budget, among others.
- ✓ Test the questions with a small sample of people to ensure that they are being understood correctly



LEARNING ACTIVITY 3





LEARNING ACTIVITY 3

- Practice writing strong evaluation questions (group work) – 30 minutes
 - Work with at least two more colleagues (if possible).
 - Assign roles: MEL specialist, supporting MEL role, COR.
 - MEL Specialist: leads the discussion for establishing the evaluation questions.
 - Draft the strongest evaluation questions possible and the proposed evaluation method.
 - Use the textbook for this activity.

CLOSE OF SESSION





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WELCOME TO DAY 3





LEARNING ACTIVITY 4





LEARNING ACTIVITY 4

Approaching stakeholders and achieving consensus in crafting strong and appropriate evaluation questions

- Instructions:
 - ❖ Use the questions drafted in the previous learning activity.
 - ❖ Objective: Get an agreement signed the Office Chief and the other key stakeholder.
 - ❖ First, the POC Officer and the COR approach the Office Chief and agree on the EQs, possible methodology, timeframe and estimated budget and source.
 - ❖ Then, the POC Officer approaches another key stakeholder to obtain consensus of the EQs. He/she will explain why was selected the potential evaluation method and will request access and or provision of data as appropriate.
- 25 minutes for the entire exercise

BREAK





PRINCIPLES



PROCESS



**PRESENTATION OF
RESULTS**



THEME 4

WHAT TO PRESENT



TIPS FOR PRESENTATION OF RESULTS (1)

- ✓ ;An evaluation is only as good as its use. There is little value investing time in analyzing the data and writing a report if no one bothers to read it.
- ✓ Evaluations may have several audiences, each with different requirements both in terms of the questions asked and the way the answers are presented.
- ✓ Simple, plain writing: www.plainlanguage.gov

TIPS FOR PRESENTATION OF RESULTS (2)

1. OBJECTIVE: Reinforce utilization of evaluation findings through effective and diverse reporting.

AUDIENCE	Full evaluation report	Summary	Power Point Presentation	Fact Sheet	Web site
USAID/ Washington		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Directors			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gov. counterparts			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Implementing Partners			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Beneficiaries				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

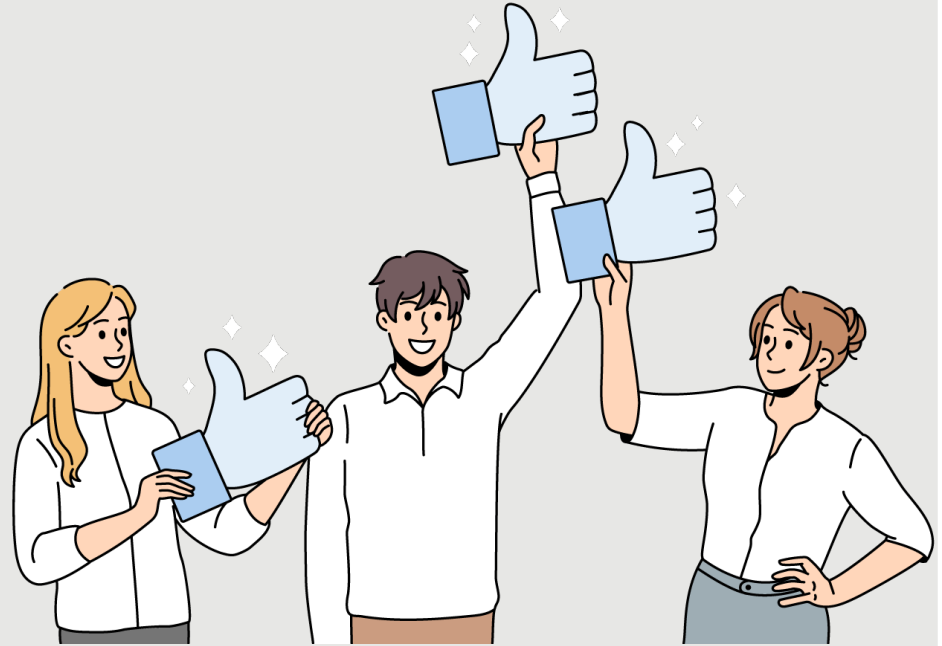
TIPS FOR PRESENTATION OF RESULTS (2)

- 2. STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS FOR A POWER POINT PRESENTATION (up to 12 slides)

SECTION	STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION
A	SUMMARY (1-2 pages)	Very succinct, synthesis. Lists key highlights. Reflective of full report.
B	BACKGROUND (1 page)	Context of evaluation. May include purpose of evaluation.
C	METHODS (1 page)	Describes how the evaluation was carried out. Points out any limitations (e.g., partial data, inaccurate data, inconclusive).
D	FINDINGS (1-5 pages)	The “what”. Structured by key question. Don’t display just results data. What do the results mean in terms of the evaluation question. Simple and short text. Display data graphically or in tables as appropriate.
E	RECOMMENDATIONS (1-3 pages)	The “now what”. What do results imply for the different stakeholders.

THEME 5

HOW TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS



GUIDE TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

After the presentation of the evaluation findings, pursue the implementation of recommendations.

I. DISCUSSION WITH DECISION MAKER(S)

- Purpose: Assess political willingness to support the eventual implementation of recommendations.
- Participants:
 - Limited discussion among senior management members.
 - More open discussion including COR and/or MELS office.
- Material: Recommendation sheets (see handout).
- Limited discussion of each or a selected set of recommendations.
- Obtain clearance and specific instructions for wider meeting.
- Prepare a brief meeting minutes for Chief of Office clearance.

GUIDE TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

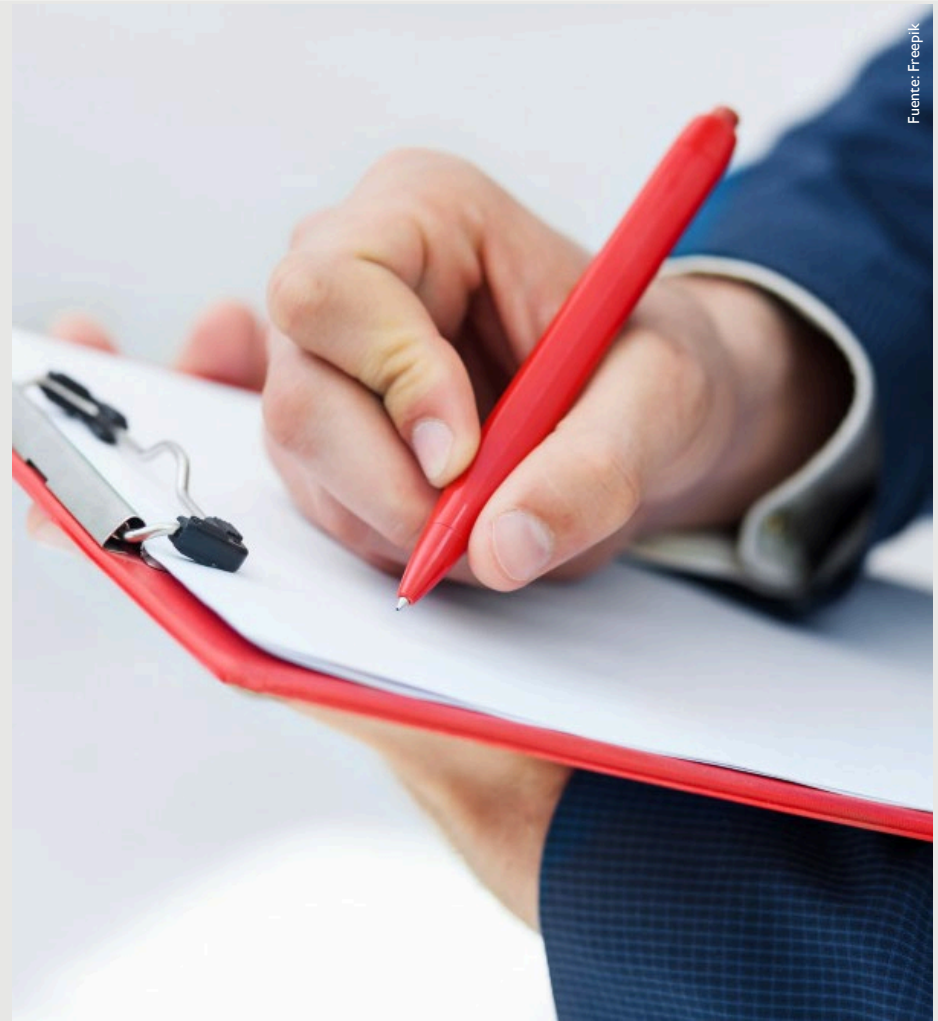
2. DISCUSSION WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

- Objective: Agree in the implementation of recommendations considering the conclusions reached at the Decision Maker(s) meeting.
- Selection of stakeholders: Support the COR in the selection of participants (internal and/ or external).
- Structure/ Contents/ Format (see handout).
- Role of MEL PoC:
 - Note taker.
 - Preparation of meetings minutes.
 - Responsible for signing of agreement(s).

DISCUSSION



THEME 6
MISSION ORDER:
EVALUATION



WHAT IS A MISSION ORDER?

ADS 201



Mission Order

- Agency level
- Includes MEL Guidelines
- Mandatory: “must”, “required” → mandatory references
- Non-mandatory: “should”, “recommend”, “may” → additional help

- Mission level
- Conforms with requirements in ADS 201, avoiding duplicate it, but cites the section
- **It documents any Mission-specific procedures (and recommendations) and serve as a useful tool for Mission staff (and Activities).**



CONTENT

- **I. PURPOSE**
- **II. AUTHORITY/POLICY**
- **III. DEFINITIONS**
- **IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
- **V. PROCEDURES**
 - **PLANNING (*MISSION + INDIVIDUAL*)**
 - **IMPLEMENTATION**
 - **REPORT**
 - **USE (RECOMMENDATION, EVALUATION REGISTRY, DISSEMINATION)**

Gaps + Best practices

- What is missing in the ADS?
- What is not quite clear?
- What are USAID/Peru best practices that should be included?



LEARNING ACTIVITY 5





LEARNING ACTIVITY 5

- If you are a USAID member, and now that you are familiar with the evaluation process, think about what is missing in the Mission Order: evaluation (if any) or what should be included in one.
- If you are not a USAID member, think about what evaluation processes should be stated or clarified.
- Use the textbook.

CLOSE OF SESSION





You have completed the course!