





Quality Assurance

Tips for practitioners

Thomas Delahais, Madrid, July 2023



« Someday, when Evaluator Utopia arrives, 'quality' and 'acceptable level' will be defined by all stakeholders in the same way. Until then, evaluators must continue to exercise due diligence in negotiating contested methodological terrain with clients, other stakeholders, and their fellow evaluators. » Michael Morris (2010)



A good evaluation is an evaluation...

1. That is implemented according to what was initially planned?
2. That follows a set of recognised rules and standards of quality?
3. That implements a cutting-edge methodology?
4. That provides a fair assessment of the situation?
5. That provides new perspectives / shakes foundations of intervention?
6. That is being used?
7. Which was an opportunity for dialogue among stakeholders?
8. Which results stakeholders trust?
9. ...



Definition of quality is shifting



COMPLIANCE
TO TOR?



RELIABLE BY
DESIGN



TRUSTABLE IN
PRACTICE



USEFUL

Quality in the evaluation process

Consider potential needs and uses and adapt to them

Relevant scope and adapted resources

Adequate approach and competencies

Respect of method. standards
Consideration of multiple perspectives

Justified adaptations to challenges

Transparent cross analysis
Evidence-based conclusions and recos

Design

Inception

Implementation

Finalisation

Quality in the evaluation process

In your case, which areas are causing problems? Are working well?

Consider potential needs and uses and adapt to them

Relevant scope and adapted resources

Adequate approach and competencies

Respect of method. standards
Consideration of multiple perspectives

Justified adaptations to challenges

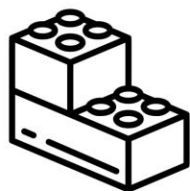
Transparent cross analysis
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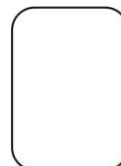
Evaluation Design Building Blocks

1 Build on
Evaluation plan

2 Map uses and
users

3 Prioritise

4 Ask meaningful questions



5 Elaborate a
Theory of Change

6 Secure data

7 Choose approach
and methods

8 Involve
stakeholders



Quality starts with good ToR!



Set the evaluated programme in a clear policy context



Ask clear evaluation questions



Give reasonable expectations of what the evaluation should cover



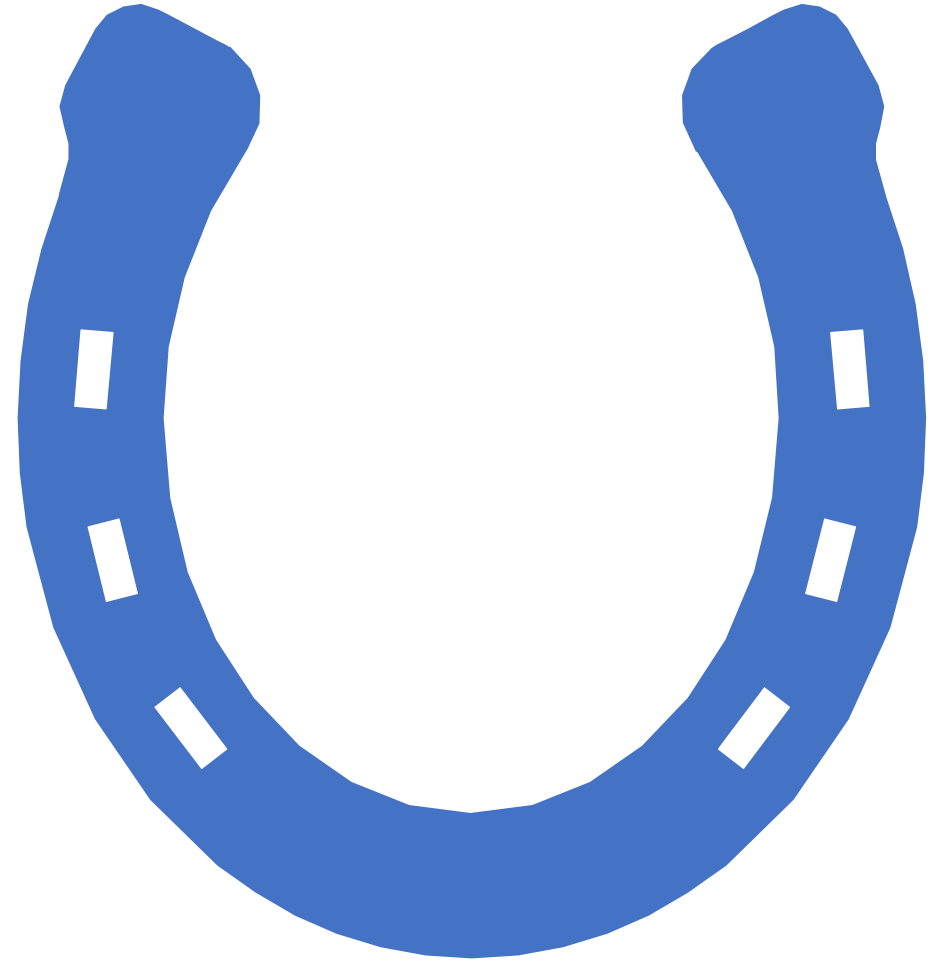
To do all of the above, clarify the Theory of Change behind the intervention



Hint at how the evaluation could be used

The case for quality assurance

- Quality control is like the cavalry; it is always late
- Quality goals are adaptive, they change along the evaluation process and must be negotiated
- Quality as usefulness is uncertain and means seizing opportunities as they arrive



Ingredients of Quality Assurance

Capacity

- Internal capacity
- Available methodological / substantive expertise
- Ability to identify needed skills

Tools

- Guidance on quality
- Templates
- Quality checklists
- Examples of quality products

Processes

- Consultation of stakeholders
- Feedback to providers
- Crisis resolution
- Complaint mechanism
- Rules of action

Culture

- Shared way of envisioning quality and improving it
- Disambiguation of misunderstandings



Quality is a collective endeavour



Commissioner

Evaluation planning
Structural / functional independence
Capacity (ToR, monitoring, challenging, brokering...)
Sufficient budget, time, data / Adequate focus
Process fostering use



Providers

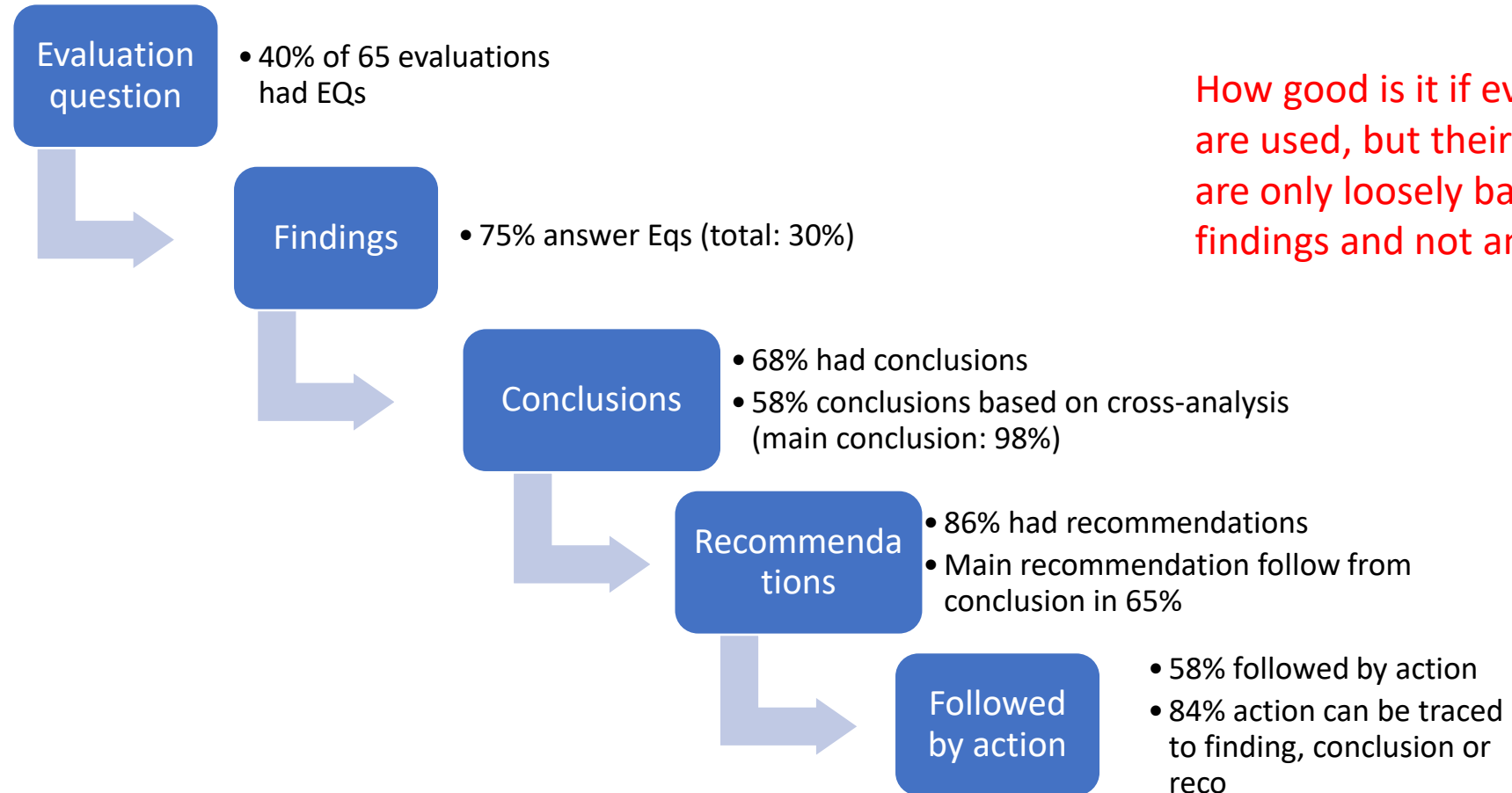
Team capacity (substantive, methodological, process, bargaining...)
Internal quality processes
Right attitude



Stakeholders

Active participation
Challenge process / results
Scrutinise / reclaim transparency
Follow-up

Quality: beware of the weak link!



Metaevaluation of 65 evaluations engaged in the framework of the “Public Action Modernisation” in France (2012-2017)


Impact Evaluation

**A Guide for
Commissioners
and Managers**




Impact evaluation requests additional efforts in quality

- Does the report make it clear how causal claims have been arrived at?
- How have different types of theory been used - testing programme assumptions or building on wider research? Has new theory been developed?
- Is the report clear about when and where impacts can be observed?
- Does the report convincingly identify contextual and causal factors and take them into account?
- Is the chosen design able to support explanatory analysis (answering how and why questions) if this was required?
- Is there a consistent link between evaluation questions asked, overall design, data collection and analytic methods used?
- Have alternative explanations that do not depend on programme effects been considered and systematically eliminated or accounted for?
- Have beneficiaries and other stakeholders been involved in scoping the evaluation and validating and interpreting results?
- Are the ways methods were applied and data collected clearly described and well documented?



Our ideas, your ideas

- Define quality criteria and make them available in the ToR
 - Ask evaluation team to include external quality expert in bid
 - Agree on quality goals during implementation
 - Involve stakeholders in definition of quality in this evaluation
 - Aim for trustful relationships
 - Invest on longer term
- 



Let's play cards!

- *What if?* is a game in which participants discuss quality issues and how to handle them. It contains 30 situations in which the quality of the evaluation is at stake.
- The aim of the game is to stimulate discussion about quality issues, how to handle them, and better, how to anticipate them.
- How to play?
 - Position the cards on the table and select three of them.
 - For each card, ask yourselves:
 - What should I do in this specific situation?
 - What can I do in the future to prevent this from happening?
 - Discuss the answers collectively.
 - You're done? Select three other cards and start again!