

Global evaluation policy

Document control

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1. Policy purpose and scope

This evaluation policy describes WaterAid's minimum requirements for evaluation. Its purpose is to:

- a) Direct WaterAid members and country programmes involved in commissioning, managing and conducting evaluations or reviews.
- b) Inform and assure WaterAid's stakeholders – such as target communities, supporters and donors, of commitments and key practices expected from WaterAid's evaluation work.

2. Definitions

This policy covers both evaluations and reviews, where:

- WaterAid defines an **evaluation** as 'an assessment of an ongoing or completed project, country programme or strategy, its design, implementation and results'.

- WaterAid defines a **review** as a ‘periodic assessment of performance, emphasising operational processes and early evidence of effectiveness’.

These definitions should be considered when planning, managing and conducting the evaluation or review, to underpin the focus of it.

2.2 Evaluations and reviews at WaterAid

This policy applies to all mandatory evaluations and reviews (see 1.2.1) carried out by WaterAid or in WaterAid’s name. Any person or team planning or undertaking evaluation or review activities on behalf of WaterAid should uphold it.

WaterAid may choose to, or be obligated through contractual grant agreements to, conduct other evaluations or reviews in addition to the mandatory evaluations and reviews outlined here. If there is a conflict between this policy and such contractual obligations, the contractual obligations take precedence.

2.2.1 Mandatory evaluations and reviews at WaterAid

Type	Frequency and timing	Level of independence
Global strategy: end evaluation	Once every strategic cycle, towards the end of the cycle.	The evaluation must be externally led.
Global thematic reviews	At least one review per financial year, throughout the strategic cycle.	The review must include a component that is externally led.
Global advocacy priorities reviews	At least once every three years or once during the period planned for each priority, whichever is shorter.	The review can be internally led.
Country programme strategy: mid-term review	Once every strategic cycle, around the mid-term point.	The review can be internally led.
Country programme: end evaluation	Once every strategic cycle, with the evaluation completed a minimum of six months before the end of the cycle.	The evaluation must be externally led.
Project: mid-term review*	If the project duration is more than three years and has a budget greater than £300,000 or equivalent, a mid-term review must take place.**	If the total project budget exceeds £2 million, the review must be externally led.

Project: end evaluation*	Once every project cycle, towards the end of the cycle, for project budgets greater than £300,000.** For country programmes without qualifying projects (more than £300,000) at least one project end evaluation should be carried out during a strategic cycle.	If the total project budget exceeds £2 million, the evaluation must be externally led.
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*Where a project is being implemented as one of a number of projects under one funding arrangement, the 'amount' refers to the sum and the 'period' to the duration of the contractual arrangement. Where a project is funded through a number of funding streams (including WaterAid unrestricted funding), the 'amount' refers to the total sum of funding attributed to the project.

**For projects less than £300,000 a project assessment is required as part of the closing process of the project. This policy does not apply to these project assessments.

3. The purpose of evaluations and reviews at WaterAid

WaterAid evaluations and reviews serve two purposes:

1. To improve our work and that of the broader sector

Evaluations and reviews:

- Improve our performance through reliable and accurate assessment of successes and failures, and inform management decision-making processes.
- Help us to improve the relevance and quality of our work, optimising the use of resources, and maximising the transformative change of our work.
- Provide opportunities to reflect on and share experience and learning, so we can build on our strengths as a leading actor in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector.

2. To uphold accountability and transparency

- Timely and transparent evaluations and reviews demonstrate accountability to our stakeholders at multiple levels: target communities; partner organisations and governments; supporters and donors; and other key stakeholders in the WASH sector.
- Evaluations help demonstrate whether work has been carried out as agreed and in compliance with established standards.

- Evaluations and reviews provide opportunities for stakeholders, especially target communities, to provide input into and feedback about our work, demonstrating openness to criticism, learning and adaptation.

4. Minimum requirements

The minimum requirements consist of **criteria** (3.1) for **what** we assess and the **standards** (3.2) for **how** we assess at WaterAid.

4.1 Criteria

The following seven evaluation or review criteria outline **what** we assess at WaterAid. If a particular criterion is not applicable to an evaluation or review purpose or context, then this should not be assessed. The decision to omit any criterion should be made when the ToR is developed, and explained in the evaluation or review report.

- a) Contextual relevance** assesses the appropriateness of the intervention design and approach in addressing the identified problems, considering the implementation context.
- b) Results** measures the extent to which an intervention has achieved or is likely to achieve its intended, immediate results, i.e. the outputs and outcomes. It also includes identification of major reasons for achievement or non-achievement of results, and key lessons to inform further implementation or future interventions.
- c) Quality** assesses the extent to which the intervention meets WaterAid's [Quality Programme Standards](#). All evaluations and reviews should assess the extent to which the project, programme or strategy has met the relevant (a) risk-critical minimum standards; and (b) minimum quality programme standards.
- d) WaterAid added value and synergy** assesses what WaterAid contributes to the work that is unique to WaterAid; its role and capacity; and the extent to which our interventions complement interventions from other actors.
- e) Coherence** focuses on the extent to which an intervention contributes to WaterAid's mission and vision. It assesses the coherence between intervention, country programme and global strategy.
- f) Value for money** measures the extent to which results have been delivered in accordance with WaterAid's definition of [value for money](#).
- g) Transformative change** assesses the potential for, or contribution and progress made in, achieving lasting solutions and behaviour changes through

assessing the (a) **catalytic** effect, (b) **scalability** and (c) **sustainability** of interventions.

4.2 Standards

The following six evaluation and review standards underpin **how** we assess at WaterAid. The standards outline how evaluations or reviews should be planned, managed, conducted, and utilised. In some instances, the standards might be mutually supportive, for example impartiality and transparency contribute to the reliability of the findings. In other instances, the standards may impose conflicting demands that the evaluation team must negotiate. For example, reliability might conflict with feasibility because the evaluation and review context may limit data collection.

Useful: Evaluations and reviews are relevant and actioned by the intended audiences

- **Stakeholder engagement:** The design and process engages with stakeholders affected by the intervention.
- **Targeted needs:** The purpose and method address the needs of intervention stakeholders and intended users, and are robust enough for findings to inform decision-making and organisational learning.
- **Reflective practice:** The process, method and reports are structured in ways that encourage users to reflect, discuss and potentially revise their understanding and behaviour.
- **Recommendations:** Recommendations are specific and considerate of the implementation context.

Feasible: Evaluations and reviews are realistic and cost-effective

- **Realistic:** They are realistic, practical and considerate of existing constraints.
- **Context-specific:** They are suitable for the context while minimising the disruption to ongoing projects and programmes.
- **Resource management:** They make the best use of resources, including use of existing information and systems, and are led by staff and/or consultants with appropriate skills.
- **Budget:** They are properly budgeted at the outset of the project, programme or strategy.

Proper: Evaluations and reviews follow appropriate ethical and legal procedures

- **Fair and inclusive:** They seek the views of different stakeholders. Special efforts are made to make the evaluation design and process considerate of marginalised groups and communities, and gender balanced. This includes use of methods sensitive to inclusion and relevant disaggregation of data.

- **Respect and sensitivity:** They uphold the dignity, wellbeing and rights of participants. Activities are respectful of local cultures and sensitive to power imbalances.
- **Conflict of interest:** Any conflicts of interest and potential biases of the evaluation team, participants or other stakeholders are identified as early as possible, and stated in the evaluation or review report.
- **Cause no harm:** Evaluations and reviews minimise risks, harm and burdens to evaluation participants. This includes careful consideration of whether an evaluation or review or certain procedures should be foregone because of potential risks or harm.
- **Confidentiality:** Participants' identities are kept confidential. Quotes attributed to participants are only used in reports or other outputs if consent is given for them to be used for this specific purpose. WaterAid's [Ethical Image Policy](#) applies to photographing or filming participants.

Reliable: Evaluations and reviews are rigorous, accurate, truthful and based on valid data

- **Appropriate design and data collection:** They are based on sound and high quality methods, with reliable data collection from multiple sources to triangulate and verify the findings.
- **Information and data management:** Information and data are collected, processed and stored in a systematic way in accordance with data protection regulations.
- **Logical and justified:** They present a clear reasoning and appropriate interpretation of the data and reflect the local context.
- **Review and revision:** Stakeholders are given the opportunity to review outputs for accuracy, followed by revision of outputs by the author to address any discrepancies.
- **Capacity:** External evaluators have the necessary expertise and experience to conduct systematic assessments that uphold the highest methodological rigour, technical standards, professional integrity and best practices. In the case of internal evaluations and reviews, staff have adequate experience and expertise, which might necessitate capacity development as part of the evaluation process.

Honest: Evaluations and reviews are impartial, transparent and balanced

- **Integrity:** Findings, recommendations and conclusions are reported with honesty by balancing what we are doing well and what we should improve. WaterAid staff provide truthful and honest input.
- **Unbiased:** They are impartial, providing a comprehensive and unbiased assessment that takes into account the views of all stakeholders. If an evaluation or review is internally led, the evaluation team includes members with no vested interest in the intervention.
- **Open:** They are conducted openly and transparently. Complete descriptions of purpose and intended use, methods, findings, conclusions and recommendations

are shared with all stakeholders (unless doing so would violate legal or ethical obligations).

- **Public availability of reports:** The complete evaluation or review reports with management response for the Global evaluations, Country programme evaluations and Thematic reviews are made public, on www.WashMatters.org. The final reports are written to protect the rights and security of all participants and stakeholders. Other evaluation and review reports can be made public at management's discretion. If a report is not made public, then an executive summary should be made publicly available on www.WashMatters.org. To protect the rights and security of participants and stakeholders, all management responses include a statement of whether or not a report can be made public.

Well-managed: Evaluations and reviews are sensibly managed and stored

- **Evaluation team:** They have a defined team lead and team.
- **Terms of reference (ToR):** A terms of reference (ToR) is developed at the outset of the process.
- **Inception report/detailed plan:** An inception report (externally led evaluations/reviews) or a detailed plan (internally led evaluations/reviews) is developed before the data collection is initiated.
- **Management response and follow-up:** They require an explicit response to recommendations. This includes a prioritisation of the recommendations, and explanation of why any recommendation will not be addressed. For recommendations that will be acted on, the response clearly states how the recommendation will be addressed, the timeframe, responsibilities and accountabilities. The relevant senior management team is accountable for follow-up on actioned recommendations.
- **Dissemination:** Evaluations and reviews are disseminated in a targeted way to all relevant stakeholders.
- **Databases:** Reports are stored in appropriate databases. It is the responsibility of each relevant member to manage storage of country programme reports. The International Secretariat is responsible for managing a database for all global-level evaluation and review reports.