DIY **Program Evaluation** Kit

Grosvenor™
PUBLIC SECTOR ADVISORY

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to Grosvenor's DIY Program Evaluation Kit. This resource is written for those of you involved in design and delivery of program and policy. It is a plain English and practical guide that will help you plan and conduct evaluations. It assumes you have limited evaluation experience and provides simple explanations of key terminology and concepts alongside templates and tools for your use.

What is program evaluation?

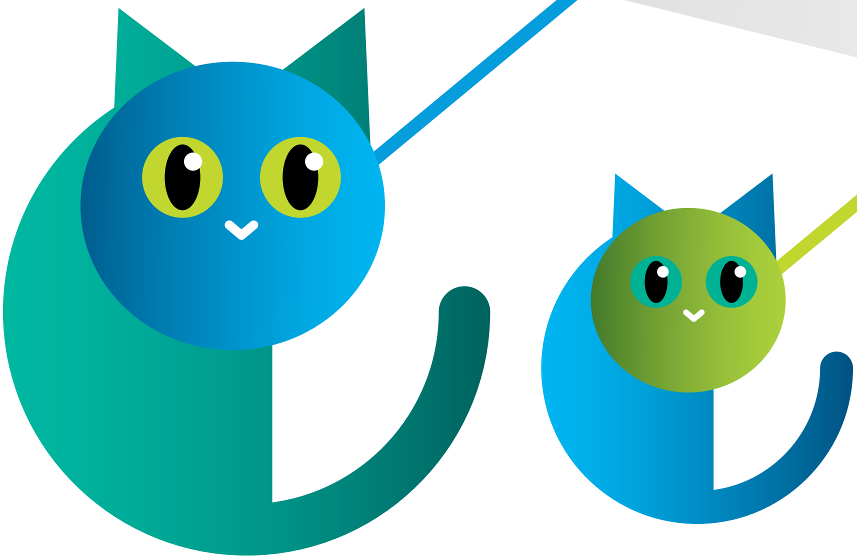
As program managers, we all know the importance of program evaluation to the successful governance and performance of our programs - not only so we can understand whether our program has achieved its objectives, but also so we know what's working, and what isn't.

But for many of us, the art of program evaluation can seem a bit of a mystery. What is it and what is it for and more importantly, how do I do it well?

Welcome to Grosvenor's DIY kit for program evaluation.

We've written this kit in plain English. When we first started learning about program evaluation, we found the guidance material overly complicated and highly academic. While we understand that there is a place for this more detailed guidance, we felt an easy to read and understand kit was missing and that we were well-placed to develop one!

This kit will help you understand and apply some of the most credible, tried and tested program evaluation practices available.



“Cats on Leads” – a program evaluation case study.

In this kit, we’ll be looking at a fictional program evaluation case study – “Cats on Leads”.

The Cats on Leads program gives Australia’s cat owners access to training programs which teach their cats to walk on leads. (OK, we did say this was fictional!)

The aim of the program is to reduce the impact of cats on our native wildlife. It encourages owners to house their cats indoors, and give them outdoor exercise by walking them on a lead.

Sounds crazy? Or are you thinking that you’ve seen crazier programs come out of Canberra before? Of course, Cats on Leads is a fictional example, but we hope that it will provide a practical, easy to understand insight into how program evaluation works.

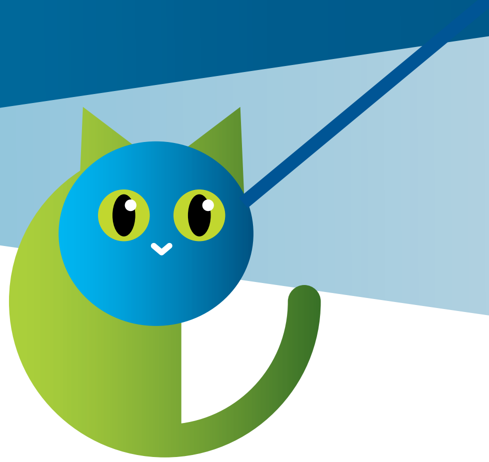
So what exactly is program evaluation?

Good question!

As with so many things, the best way to understand program evaluation is to understand its purpose, which is ***to inform decisions about a program's future, by evaluating its appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency.***

Below are the types of questions we typically use as a starting point.

Figure 1. Key questions to determine a program's appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency



Example: Cats on Leads – creating key questions

The diagram on the previous page can best be understood using our Cats on Leads case study. Here's how.

Is the program a good fit for the problem in hand?

The Cats on Leads program is based on a few key assumptions, namely:

- Cats who spend time outside kill native wildlife
- Killing native wildlife is bad
- Indoor cats require at least some time outside.

If you wanted to verify these assumptions, you could ask some or all of the following questions:

- Do cats actually kill native wildlife?
- What is the impact of outdoor domestic cats on Australia's ecology?
- What proportion of cat owners allow their cats outside?
- Do all domestic cats require time outside?

Is the program working?

To understand whether or not the program is working, you could ask some or all of the following questions:

- What proportion of cats can be trained to walk on leads?
- What proportion of enrolments are from owners of "outdoor" cats?
- Have owners of outdoor cats reduced their cat's unsupervised outdoor time as a result of the program? If so, by how much?
- Does restricting unsupervised outdoor time of cats reduce the amount of native wildlife killed?

Could we achieve the same results with fewer resources, or less money or time?

To understand the efficiency of the project you could ask some or all of the following questions:

- What are the success factors for:
  - cats successfully walking on leads?
  - cat owners reducing or eliminating unsupervised outdoor time for their cats?
- Can the results be replicated more quickly or with less expenditure?
- What improvement opportunities are there?

What is program evaluation used for?

Program evaluation – and the questions in Figure 1 above – can help you make some of program management's most important decisions, such as:

- Should the program continue?
- Are there any changes that can be made to improve the program?

The diagram below shows how decision-makers use program evaluation when making tough decisions about the future of a program.

Figure 2. Using appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency in program decision-making

APPROPRIATE	EFFECTIVE	EFFICIENT	CONCLUSION	EXAMPLE NEXT STEPS
✓	✓	✗	Program is not efficient. The program is well targeted and produces the desired results, but the same results could be achieved with fewer resources.	Implement process improvements to improve efficiency
✓	✗	✓	Program is not effective. The program's objectives address an identified need, and it is managed efficiently, but the program does not deliver the desired results.	Modify or redesign program to address the need.
✗	✓	✓	Program is not appropriate. The program efficiently achieves the desired outcomes but there is no longer support/need for acting on this issue.	Stop delivery of this program. It is no longer required.

In a nutshell

Put simply, program evaluation helps you assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of a program and to inform evidence-based decision-making about its future. Program evaluation uses a range of different approaches and can be undertaken at any stage of a program's lifecycle.

Program evaluation requirements in government

In each jurisdiction in Australia there are legislative or policy requirements outlining your obligations for program evaluation.

We have pulled together a quick reference guide of the key legislation, policies and guidance material that you should be aware of.

Table 1. Key legislation, policies and guidance to be aware of

Jurisdiction	Key legislation, policies and guidance	What do you need to do?
Commonwealth	▪ Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) ▪ PGPA Rule 2014 ▪ RMG-130 Overview of the enhance Commonwealth performance framework ▪ RMG-131 Developing good performance information	Publish high-level performance intentions within your corporate plan and report on performance in your annual performance statement. Collect and report performance information that provides details of the extent to which government policy objectives are being met.
New South Wales	▪ NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines ▪ NSW Government Policy Makers Toolkit ▪ DPC Circular C2016-01-Program Evaluation ▪ NSW Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 No. 52	Prepare annual evaluation schedules, conduct and (generally) publish periodic evaluations of your programs. Evaluations should be prioritised and inform key program, policy and funding decisions.

Jurisdiction	Key legislation, policies and guidance	What do you need to do?
Victoria	▪ Performance Management Framework ▪ Performance Management Framework Factsheet June 2017 ▪ Standing Directions of the Minister For Finance 2016	Prepare short and longer term plans. Report on performance against plans quarterly. Allocate resources to deliver against the Agency's plans and strategies efficiently, effectively and in a timely manner.
Queensland	▪ Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 ▪ Queensland Government Program Evaluation Guidelines ▪ Queensland Government Performance Management Framework ▪ Queensland Government Project, Program and Portfolio Management Methodologies	Prepare plans, measure and monitor performance, and report publicly in order to: ▪ inform direction setting, planning and policy development and implementation ▪ inform capability, resourcing and service delivery ▪ effectively measure and report on progress and achievements.
Australian Capital Territory	▪ Strengthening Performance and Accountability: A Framework for the ACT Government ▪ ACT Government Evaluation Policy and Guidelines ▪ Organisational Performance Measurement and Reporting Guide	Prepare an evaluation plan that complements core business activity and align evaluation with the funding cycle. Communicate results and act on recommendations.

Jurisdiction	Key legislation, policies and guidance	What do you need to do?
Tasmania	There are no state-wide policy or frameworks. However, policies for individual departments do exist.	Program evaluation remains a good practice element of program delivery – check individual departmental requirements.
South Australia	▪ Guidelines for the Evaluation of Public Sector Initiatives	Conduct regular evaluation to ensure programs and services are meeting expectations and objectives.
Northern Territory	▪ Financial Management Act ▪ Treasurer's Directions	Actively monitor actual performance, ensuring that results are correct, accurate, supported, reviewed and reported.
Western Australia	▪ Program Evaluation Western Australia website ▪ Program Evaluation Western Australia - Evaluation Guide	Evaluate all programs periodically to establish whether they're meeting their intended results.

Taking an organisational approach to program evaluation

Defining your organisational evaluation policy

If program evaluation is a priority for your organisation (and it should be!) you should consider setting out your organisational policy for program evaluation.

Why have a program evaluation policy?

A program evaluation policy enables an organisation to drive its program evaluation strategy and objectives.

A program evaluation policy sets out the principles, rules and guidance to communicate the organisation's expectations regarding program evaluation practice.

Benefits of a clear evaluation policy

Five benefits of having a clear evaluation policy are:

- Responsibilities are clearly articulated
- Employees have a clear point of reference for guiding their decisions, saving time and effort
- Promotes consistent practice across the organisation
- Helps individuals and the organisation be successful
- Provides a means of communication.

Success factors

Here are six tips to make sure you reap the benefits above.

TIP #1 – Involve staff in development of your policy
Involving staff at the outset creates buy-in and supports the development of a practical and fit-for-purpose policy that adds value, rather than just red tape.

TIP #2 – Secure senior management support
Without senior management support, even the best policy will end up sitting on the shelf rather than getting the attention and priority it needs to be well implemented.

TIP #3 – Communicate the introduction of your policy (and subsequent changes)
For a policy to be effective, staff need to know about it – simple right? Use existing communication channels to inform and remind staff of the evaluation policy and requirements, and make the policy easy to locate.

TIP #4 – Review your policy regularly
Policies should be reviewed at least annually to ensure they remain aligned with your strategy and reflect current requirements, and that improvement opportunities are not missed.

TIP #5 – Monitor and evaluate your policy (of course!)
Lead by example and make sure you are getting the information you need to track progress and continuously improve.

TIP #6 – Support implementation
Scope out the level of support you'll provide to staff. This might include:

> tying in with existing induction and educational programs
> providing a support line for questions and queries
> developing procedures, tools or templates to support requirements set out in the policy having a compliance regime

Providing support helps to promote adoption of the policy in accordance with its intent.

Practicalities – what should the policy contain?

A program evaluation policy should:

- clearly describe the policy goal
- detail the purpose of the policy
- be clear about scope and application – what does the policy apply to?
- set out the responsibilities and requirements
- detail the consequences of not complying
- set out the policy currency and next review date.

Developing an organisational evaluation plan – Understanding which programs to evaluate

While all programs should have some form of evaluation in place, sometimes it can be hard to identify which programs would benefit the most from program evaluation at an organisational level.

This chapter will help you to:

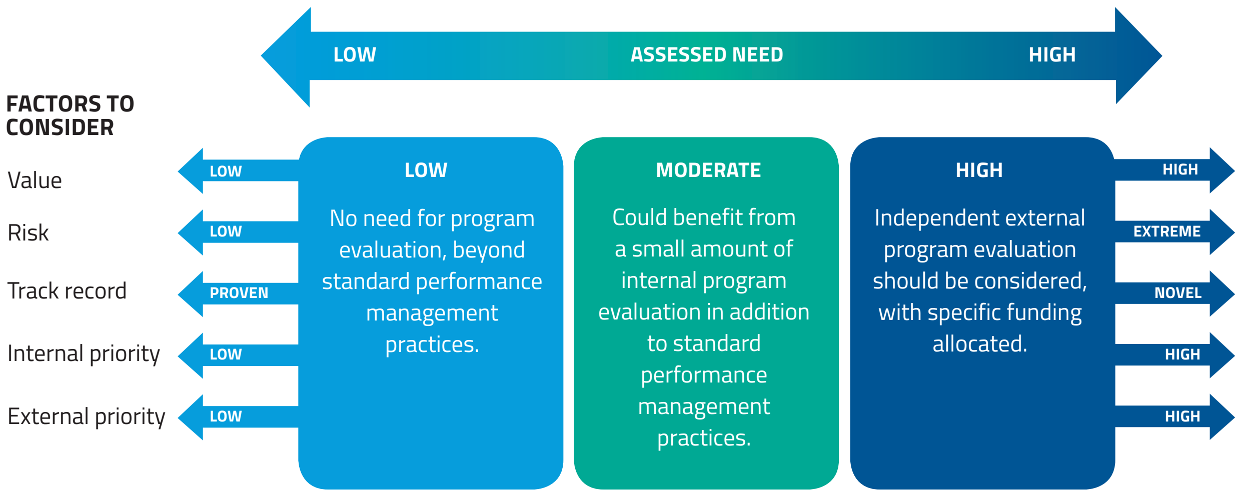
- make the most of your organisational program evaluation resources
- plan your program evaluation priorities at an organisational level
- identify program evaluations which could be under- or over-funded
- get more value from program evaluation results.

Introducing the needs assessment framework

In program evaluation, we often use a needs assessment framework to understand the extent of evaluation that a specific program needs.

See below for an example. This framework uses five key factors to help make decisions about prioritising and resourcing programs for evaluation.

Figure 3. Sample needs assessment framework



The framework includes five factors to consider when assessing the broad level of evaluation required for a program: see definitions below.

Table 2. Definitions of needs assessment factors

Factor	Description	Rationale
Value	The total value of the program, relative to other, similar programs.	Provides a measure of the scale of the program, relative to others in the organisation.
Risk	The overall risk rating of the program.	Increasing the scale of monitoring and evaluation is indicated for higher risk programs, as doing so can mitigate risk.
Track record	Considers the extent to which the program approach is proven to work (i.e. strength of the evidence base).	If the program is well tested and known to work there is less of a need to conduct evaluation beyond standard performance management, while novel programs require more evaluation to understand if the program is efficient, effective and appropriate.
Internal priority level	Considers the strategic importance of the program to organisational goals.	Programs which are of high importance, internally or externally, have a higher level of scrutiny.
External priority level	Considers the attitudes of key external stakeholders in relation to the program.	Evaluation can contribute to enhanced monitoring and assessment of the program to fulfil these needs.

Using the framework

Simply assess and rank the programs you are considering evaluating using the five factors outlined above.

Example: Cats on Leads – evaluation factors

The table below shows us how to use the framework to allocate your program evaluation resources. In this instance, assume Cats on Leads is one of many programs that you manage. You only have limited evaluation resources and need to assess which program would benefit the most from program evaluation.

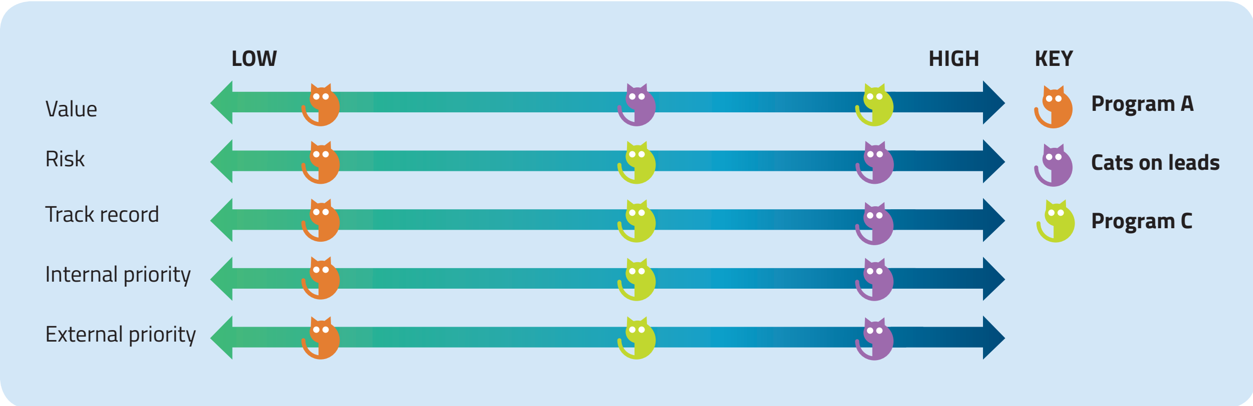
In this example, Cats on Leads is Program B.

Below is more information about the program, which will help you make your assessment.

Table 3. Cats on Leads evaluation factors

Factor consider		Assessed need
Value	$45 million	Medium
Risk	New program, lots of media attention	High
Track record	First of its kind, no examples of success on a national or formalised scale	High
Internal priority level	Main program, directly supporting one of the key organisational goals	High
External priority level	Election commitment, with backing of high-profile groups such as the RSPCA and a powerful environmental protection lobby	High

Figure 4. Sample evaluation framework for Cats on Leads



What the framework tells us:

You can see how the model above tells us at a glance that Cats on Leads would benefit from a good chunk of your program evaluation resources. Relative to the other programs, it's the highest ranked across four of the five factors. Program C shows only a moderate need (meaning it might need a small amount of program evaluation support) and Program A shows a considerably lower need.

This exercise shows how a simple needs assessment framework can simplify the hard decision-making task to identify where your program evaluation efforts should be directed.

This framework works just as well for individual program managers as it does for agency-based evaluation planning and resource allocation.

TOOLS **Organisational evaluation plan template**

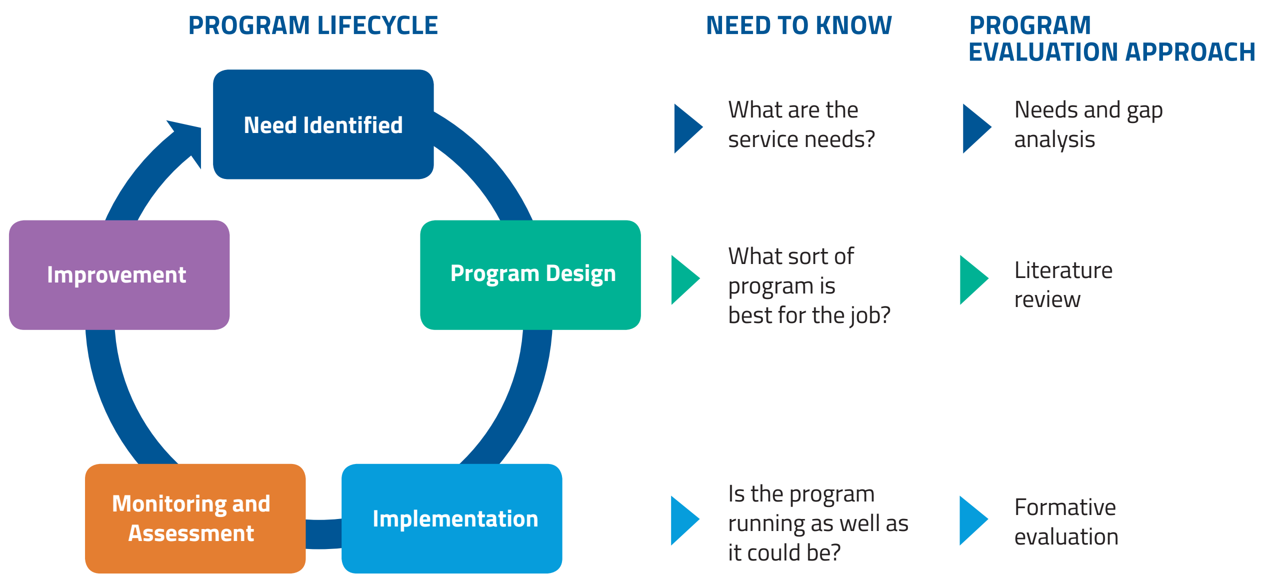
https://www.grosvenor.com.au/resources/organisational-evaluation-plan-template/

When is the best time for program evaluation?

When should I be using program evaluation?

You can use program evaluation at many different stages of the program lifecycle: wherever you need to assess its effectiveness or make significant decisions. Below are examples of the different program evaluation approaches and when they can be used.

Figure 5. Program evaluation approaches at different stages of the program lifecycle



There are many evaluation approaches that can add value at different points along the project lifecycle.

Program evaluation shouldn't only be considered at the end of a program's life.

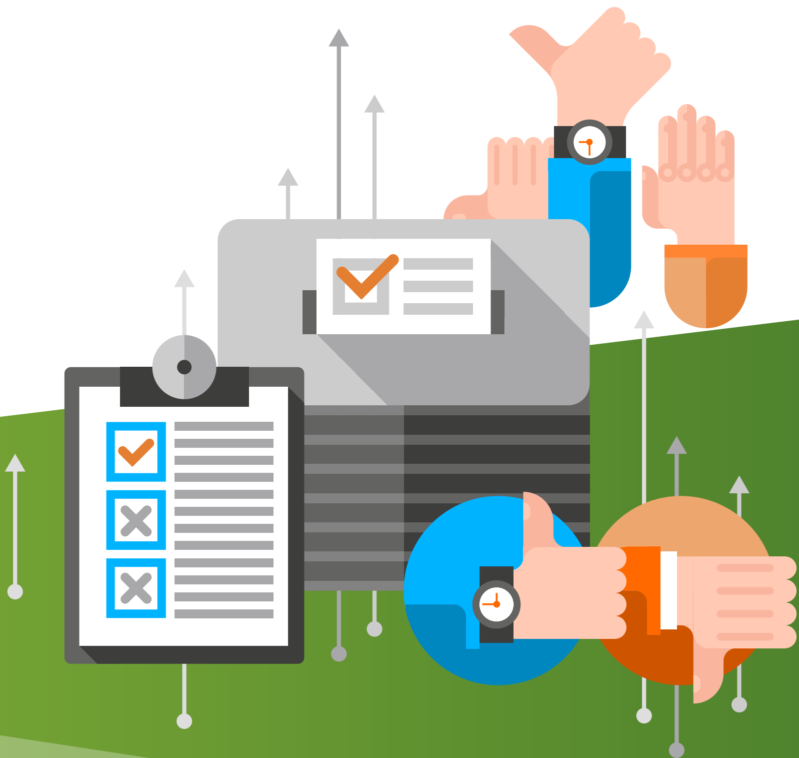
Timing an evaluation

Once you have decided which program(s) you are going to evaluate, you'll need to consider the best time for your program evaluation activity.

Here are key factors you should consider when setting realistic program evaluation timeframes, including the lead time you will need: this will help you set realistic and achievable timeframes for the evaluation of your program.

Key influences on timeframes

There are six key influences that you should consider when setting a timeframe for your program evaluation activity.



1. Nature of the evaluation activity

By their nature, different types of evaluation activity need to be undertaken at different points in a program's lifecycle.

If you have a specific need or activity in mind, plan for the appropriate timing of the activity.

2. Decision-making timeframe

Program evaluation is almost always driven by an upcoming decision about the future of a project. When does that decision need to be made?

When you're planning the timeframe for your program evaluation, this will almost always provide the first point of reference for your planning.

For instance, a decision will need to be made before the program's current end date for funding: meaning the evaluation report and recommendations regarding the program's appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency would need to be available well in advance of this point to be of most use.

3. Existing governance arrangements

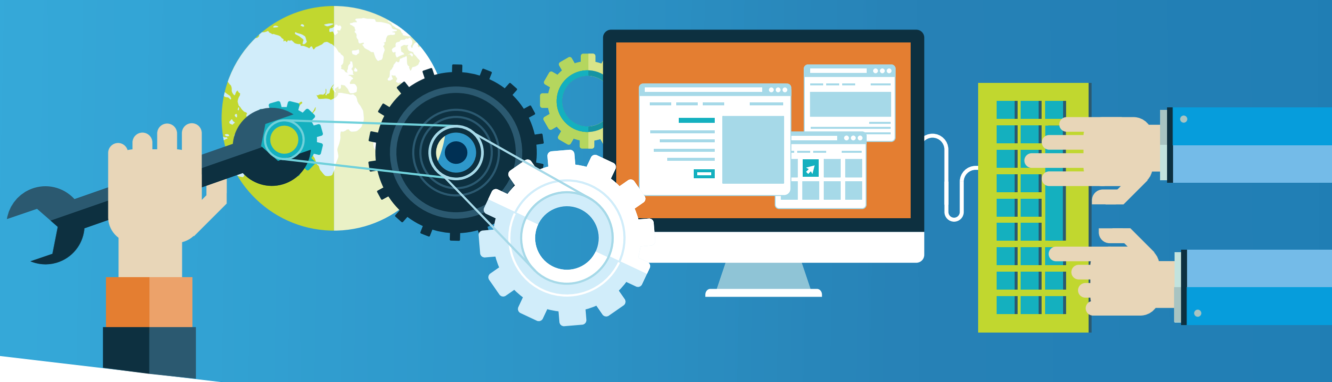
If your program has existing governance arrangements, these often provide key points (for example, annual reports, scheduled reviews) at which the results of your program evaluation may be required.

4. Program timeline

As program manager, you will probably have already considered the timeline for your program at the planning stage. This would include factors such as:

- length of implementation
- anticipated uptake of the program by participants
- length of the program
- lead time for long-term objectives to be achieved.

You should consider all these factors when deciding the timeframes for your evaluation. For instance, a longer-term program may benefit from several evaluations over its lifespan, allowing you ample opportunity to implement the learnings from the evaluations.



5. Availability of data

What data will you need to perform your program evaluation? How will you collect it? How long will it take to collect? Depending on the data you need and the questions you are seeking to answer, there may be a significant time lag before your data becomes available for analysis.

6. Evaluation lead times

Depending on what you need to evaluate, and how you choose to do it, program evaluation can take varying lengths of time.

Let's look at some lead time guidelines below.

How long should you allow?

There are many factors to consider when you're planning your program evaluation lead time – not all of them within your control. Failing to plan thoroughly can compromise the quality of the evaluation or even result in non-delivery, so it's important to get it right.

Did you remember ... ?

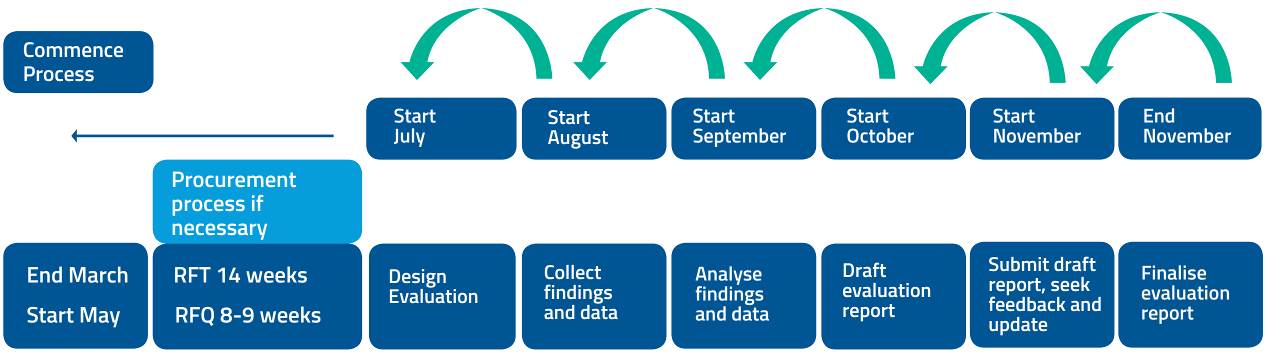
Below is a checklist of program evaluation processes that are often forgotten or underestimated:

- approvals processes (often multiple)
- selecting / procuring an evaluator (if you're outsourcing)
- data collection (can vary according to method, volume, distribution and levels of internal engagement)
- data analysis
- report drafting and proofing.

Sample timeframe

Below is an example timeframe for a program evaluation.
This one needs to be completed by the end of November.

Figure 6. Sample program evaluation timeframe



Of course, the timeframes for your program evaluation may vary from this, depending on the nature of your program. But this should give you a frame of reference to start with.

Example: Cats on Leads

In our fictional "Cats on Leads" example, there are two main factors to consider:

- the program is the first of its kind, and
- the program will run over a relatively long time of five years.

Based on this, the following evaluation schedule is designed.

Table 4. Cats on Leads evaluation schedule

Timeframe	Evaluation type	Rationale
1 year	Formative evaluation	An early evaluation provides a good opportunity to understand whether any changes to the program design are required, while there is still plenty of time to implement those changes.
2.5 years	Interim evaluation	An interim (or mid-point) evaluation will give an opportunity to look at early outcomes and indicators of effectiveness.
Final year	Summative evaluation	A final evaluation at the end of the program will help determine if it should be continued. It could also be used to identify lessons that could assist similar programs in the future.

Is your program evaluation ready?

To find out, try our **planning checklist**

Types of program evaluation

Program evaluation can be confusing. Not only are there different types of program evaluation, but different people use different terms to mean different things – or the same thing! (As if there wasn't enough confusion already!)

Although evaluations often share a similar purpose – to inform decision-making about future program development, planning and delivery – they all differ in terms of what they cover and when they happen.

For simplicity, we're limiting this to the two most commonly used terms to describe the many types of evaluations.

Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation is typically conducted during the program period to improve or assess the program delivery or implementation. With a formative evaluation, you have the opportunity to apply your learnings as you go. "Formative evaluation" can also refer to evaluation activities involving the design or development of a program.

Figure 7: Types of formative evaluations

Summative evaluation

This form of evaluation helps make judgements of the program's overall success in terms of its:

- effectiveness – were the intended outcomes achieved?
- efficiency – were resources used cost-effectively?
- appropriateness – was the program a suitable way to address the needs of the group targeted by the program?

Figure 8: Types of summative evaluations

Which type do you need to consider?

This depends entirely on the objectives of your evaluation. Are you looking to make a sudden, short-term improvement in a particular area, or a longer-term, broader impact? Many program managers find a combination of both works best for them.

Example: Cats on Leads – program evaluation

As shown in figure 9, Cats on Leads has three different evaluations planned.

After one year: formative evaluation

This evaluation is planned for the end of the first year, when implementation is complete and the program is fully operational.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the program delivery and identify any opportunities for improvement early on in the program's life.

After 2.5 years: interim (formative) evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to help determine if the program should continue in its current form, or whether further adjustments are required.

End of program: summative evaluation

The purpose of the summative evaluation is to assess the overall success of the program and advise whether the program should be continued beyond its initial timeframe. Here, the evaluation will seek to establish the impact the program has had, including whether it has performed to expectations.

Talking the same language

As you can see, there are different types of program evaluation and different terminologies to describe them. It will be up to you to choose the type of evaluation, based on your program management needs.

Whichever you choose, it's vital that the entire project team – internal and external – is aligned on the evaluation purpose, type, and terminology being used. This way you can ensure buy-in and manage expectations from the get-go.

Defining problems and identifying needs

Evaluations are conducted on programs that exist, but before a program becomes established there are a range of decisions that are made about:

- identifying the problems or needs that require intervention
- the priority or importance of each problem or need (relative to others)
- scope and definitional aspects including framing of what each problem is and who it is a problem for
- identifying what can be done to address each problem
- the level of investment or what can be afforded to address each problem.

These sorts of decisions are made by all sorts of groups and levels including by countries and governments, industry and interest groups, not-for-profits, businesses, communities, families and individuals.

At the highest level, the Australian government makes investment decisions about where to allocate expenditure and what problems and needs to prioritise each year in the annual budget cycle. Likewise, individuals make decisions about their problems and needs, where to invest and how to best address the needs in their individual lives.

For example, individuals and families will make different assessments, investment decisions and take different approaches to meeting their human need for shelter. They will prioritise investment in meeting their need for shelter differently depending on a range of individual circumstances, and shaped by social and cultural factors and values.

Take the following two individuals, both have the same basic needs for shelter but their specific circumstances shape the way they have approached meeting their needs and the level of investment.

Table 5. Problem definition and needs

Problem definition and needs	Individual A	Individual B
High level problem/need	Require shelter	
Age	20	30
Occupation and employment	Casual retail job, typically 3 shifts a week Full-time university student	Full-time car sales representative
Family situation	Parents live in Melbourne Good relationship with parents and siblings Parents are happy for them to stay living at home rent-free while at university	Parents live in Melbourne Good relationship with parents and siblings Has partner and single child
Annual salary/funds	$26,000	$73,000
Other personal circumstances/context	Attends University of Melbourne, has 2 more years to complete undergraduate degree Casual job is nearby family home	Partner also works full-time and child attends school and outside school hours care
Further need definition	> Requires public transport access to university and work > Bedroom is sufficient as individual space	> Requires public transport access to work > Wants minimum 2-bedroom home/ apartment individual space
Options (not exhaustive)	> Rent – alone > Rent – shared > Buy > Live in family home	
How is the need currently met?	Lives in childhood bedroom in family home	Currently rents a 2-bedroom apartment in the Southern Metropolitan Region with their partner and child
Investment in housing arrangements	$0	Rent of $500/week Plus additional costs for utilities

All problem definition and needs identification activities must also look at the range of circumstances and factors which influence behaviours and shape decision-making. Problem definition and need identification is essentially a tailored process of data collection, data analysis and forming conclusions to identify "what should be done, what can be done and what can be afforded"[1].

Tools to support problem definition and need identification

The following tools and approaches can be used to support problem definition and need identification processes:

- user stories/**Personas**
- client **journey mapping**
- approaches like the **5 Whys, CATWOE** and **SCAMPER**
- use of demographic, population and other data sources such as the **Australian Bureau of Statistics** and **data.gov.au**
- example **needs assessment template** designed to capture key information and design a response to an emergency situation families and individuals.
- **need assessment guide** as part of the Department of Health's and PHN's commissioning cycle

[1]Wright J, Williams R, Wilkinson JR. Development and importance of health needs assessment. BMJ 1998: 316: 1310 1313.

Policy decision made – what next? How to design a program

Program design is about working through the options to address a specific problem or need that has been identified (refer to chapter 6).

Designing a program is most likely going to be a non-linear process – a process that alternates between exploring and defining, and continually revisits and refines program components as it progresses. At its heart, it should be evidence based, meaning there is a logical and rational argument for doing things the way you have chosen to, based on the best available data, and subject to any constraints.

There is no one way to design a program. Below we highlight five different approaches and options for tackling the design of your program.

1. Literature review

A literature review involves searching journal databases and other sources to identify articles, reports and information about how others have previously addressed the same problem/need. It includes:

- reviewing the articles found
- assessing the quality and relevance
- identifying themes and features that should be considered as part of your own program design
- drawing conclusions about your program's design based on the evidence you have gathered.

2. Market/comparator assessment

A market or comparator assessment involves identifying current or past similar programs and capturing details of the programs including the scope, how they were delivered, level of investment, and performance information to identify different service delivery models and the benefits, risks and costs of each. This can inform the selection of a preferred model for your own program.

Market/comparator analysis can include the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data via a range of mechanisms such as desktop review or stakeholder interviews. It can also include analysis techniques such as benchmarking.

3. Program theory approach

A program theory based approach can use subject matter experts or documented evidence and domain based theories to develop a program logic that describes:

- the current state
- the desired state
- and how the gap between the two will be bridged.

All other program design elements are then built based on the program theory.

4. Minimum viable product

This approach takes its lead from lean and agile software development. Essentially it is based on the principles of:

- start small
- try and learn quickly
- continually change, update and expand iteratively.

Techopedia defines minimum viable product as: "A development technique in which a new product or website is developed with sufficient features to satisfy early adopters. The final, complete set of features is only designed and developed after considering feedback from the product's initial users."

Program designers can use this approach to focus on core features and simplicity in the first instance. Key to this approach is getting user / client feedback frequently and making incremental continuous improvement as well as work on adding enhancing features once the core program is designed and tested.

5. Pilot program

A pilot is a preliminary trial of your program. Piloting allows you to test your program in real world situations but on a small scale. This allows for all components of the program design and delivery to be fully tested and evaluated. Evaluating at this early point on a small-scale implementation allows for more informed decisions about:

- should the program be expanded? And, if yes:
    - how much should be invested?
    - what needs to be changed?
    - what have we learnt to better inform further implementation planning?

Each of these approaches can facilitate the program design process so that at the end of the design phase you have confidence that your program design is appropriate.

At the end of the design stage you should have a range of key program management documents/deliverables to support the delivery and implementation of the program, such as:

- Program theory and logic – describes how the program is intended to work and outcomes to be achieved. Refer to **chapter 8** on the following page for details of how to develop a program logic and its uses.
- Service delivery model and program delivery document – describes the program scope and how it is to be delivered.
- Monitoring and evaluation framework – describes how the program's performance will be measured. Refer to **chapter 9** for advice on developing a M&E Framework and use our template to get started.
- Implementation plan – describes how the program will be established.

Depending on the scale and nature of the program, there may be a whole range of other management and operational documents and deliverables needed. Examples include: business cases, stakeholder engagement and communications plans, risk management plans, actions and issues logs, quality assurance and continuous improvement plan, change management plans and standard operating procedures.

Program theory and program logic: articulating how your program works

Have you ever noticed how hard it can be to describe to others exactly what your program is for, and how it works? And how hard it can sometimes be to get internal buy-in and support as a result?

In this chapter, we show you how to develop a watertight program theory and program logic.

First things first: the benefits of having a program theory

Put simply, program theory is the way that you articulate the "why" and the "what" of your program: the reason for its existence, and the steps it will go through to accomplish its goal. It is a description of how the desired changes will occur, based on previous research and experience.

Here are seven reasons why a solid program theory is worth its weight in gold:

1. Creates a shared understanding of the program among stakeholders.
2. Provides an opportunity to refine and improve the program at the design stage.
3. Allows you to identify potential supporting and disrupting factors: and be prepared for them.
4. Provides a time-bounded roadmap, promoting shared expectations among stake holders.
5. Provides an opportunity to pressure-test the beliefs and assumptions underlying the program.
6. Ensures the long-term goals are kept in sight while short-term goals are implemented.
7. Helps to identify suitable performance measures for the program.

How to develop a program theory

Below is a list of the key activities typically involved in developing program theory.

If the list looks daunting, don't worry! You've probably already ticked off some of the stages in the early development of the program, or perhaps someone else in your organisation already has the information you need. In this case, just a short review and / or a workshop may suffice.

Figure 9. Steps for developing a program theory

1. ***Identify the primary reasons for your program's existence*** – this should form your frame of reference from beginning to end
2. ***Review existing information*** – look for anything that will inform how your program should operate and the outcomes it is likely to achieve
3. ***Conduct an environmental scan*** – look for barriers, enablers and related programs and policies
4. ***Map stakeholders*** –understand who will be involved, at what level, stage by stage
5. ***Obtain stakeholder input*** – facilitate buy-in and understand needs
6. ***Draft your program theory*** – develop and document your program theory based on the information gathered in the previous steps
7. ***Circulate for stakeholder feedback*** – be prepared for at least one round of changes
8. ***Use your program theory*** – a program theory is a useful program management and governance tool.

Resourcing your program theory appropriately

Program theories come in all shapes and sizes. It's important that the effort spent developing the theory matches the scale of the program itself. A smaller-scale program, for instance, would certainly merit a leaner program theory.

Program logic formats

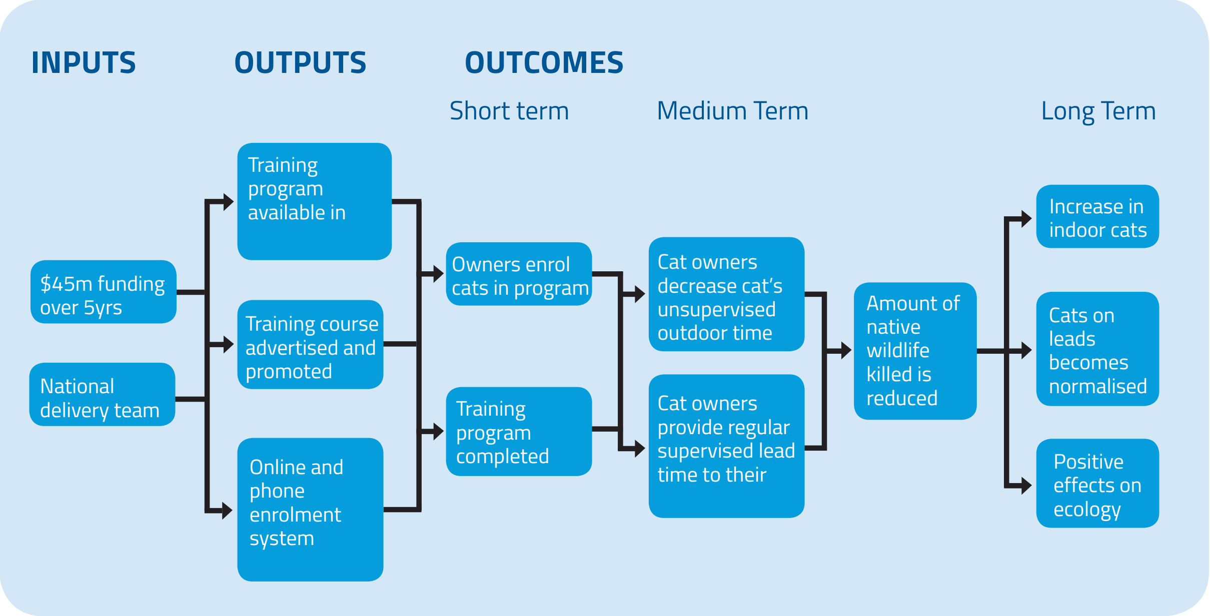
Now you have captured the detail, you may like to sum up your program theory in the form of a program logic. This is simply a graphical portrayal of your theory that is succinct and easy to understand.

Your program logic can take the form of words, diagrams, tables, or a combination of all three. Program logics are often (but not always) captured in one page, and are typically divided into inputs, outputs and outcomes. See below for two very simple examples using our Cats on Leads program.

Table 6. Sample program logic: table format

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes		
		Short term (1 yr)	Medium term (2-4 yrs)	Long term (5 yrs +)
> $45m funding over 5yrs > National delivery team	> Website and promotional materials > Enrolment and delivery ICT system > Training program > Trained trainers	> Owners enrol cats > Training delivered > Cat owners and cats complete training course	> Attendees decrease unsupervised outdoor time > Native wildlife killed is reduced > Owners provide regular supervised lead time to their cats	> Increased indoor cats > Cats on leads becomes normalised > Positive effects on ecology

Figure 10. Sample program logic: flowchart format



TOOLS

Use the program logic template to see a range of other formats and use one that suits you.

https://www.grosvenor.com.au/resources/program-logic-templates

TOOLS

Use our tool clarifying outcomes and determining data requirements to take you to the next level.

https://www.grosvenor.com.au/resources/tool-for-clarifying-outcomes-and-determining-data-requirements

Evaluation planning and delivery

Tools for planning program evaluation #1: evaluation framework

There are hundreds of tools you can use for program evaluation. In this chapter we're going to focus on one of the most common and useful: evaluation frameworks.

(And because nothing is ever simple in program evaluation, you might also hear these referred to as "monitoring and evaluation frameworks", "reporting and improvement frameworks", "learning frameworks" or a combination of all three!)

What is an evaluation framework?

Put simply, an evaluation framework is the overall approach to the evaluation of a program (or policy, system or organisation) over a period of time. It's a macro picture of the program's evaluation activities and is typically developed at the beginning of a program.

Here's how to do it.

1. Revisit the program's rationale

Confirming the rationale for the program with stakeholders ensures a common understanding and that you're all working towards the same outcomes.

2. Identify Measures for program performance

For each relevant stage of your program's evolution, ask yourself: ***How will I know if the program has been a success?***

First, identify what you can measure. Documenting these expectations will help identify the information that you'll need to gather at every stage.

Next, think about how you can measure. Plan the data collection and reporting you'll need at each stage.

3. Document your plan as soon as the program starts

In order to effectively measure the impact of your program, it's important to plan your program evaluation from the outset. Considering questions such as ***What will success look like in three years?*** and ***How will I know the program is on track to achieve success?*** will help ensure your program is on track from the get-go.

4. Plan what you will measure and when

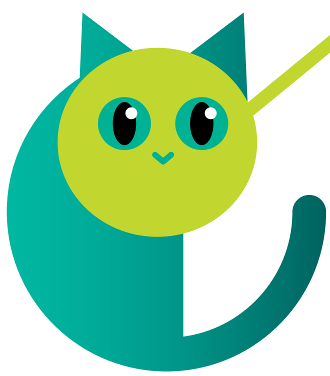
In order to plan when your program evaluation will happen, consider the key points when important decisions about the future of the program will be made. Refer to **chapter 4** for information about planning your timeframes effectively.

Next, identify the questions that will need to be asked to support those decisions. Remember that each evaluation project should focus on providing insight into a particular aspect or aspects of the program.

Example: Cats on Leads evaluation framework

We've already discussed that there will be three evaluations over the five-year course of the Cats on Leads program.

In order to make sure these evaluations work well and work together, they all need to be planned upfront, with a second, more detailed planning phase just before each evaluation starts.



Here's how it's done.

1. The program theory for Cats on Leads is developed and designed as a program logic, with input from a series of workshops with key stakeholders.

2. Key expectations are established, including 2,000 cat owners enrolled within one year of launch date, resulting in an overall 20% reduction in unsupervised outdoor time for enrolled cats.

3. The evaluation framework is established during the program design phase, ready for program commencement.

4. Data is collected throughout the course of the program. For example, an enrolment form captures the current outside/indoor time of cats. This data collection is repeated upon course completion and six months after program completion.

TOOLS

DIY Monitoring and evaluation framework template

https://www.grosvenor.com.au/resources/monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-template/

TOOLS

Monitoring and evaluation framework guide

DIY M&E: A step-by-step guide to building a monitoring

https://info.grosvenor.com.au/monitoring-evaluation-framework-guide

Tools for planning program evaluation #2: evaluation plan

One of the most important tools you will come across in program evaluation is an evaluation plan. Put simply, an evaluation plan is the step-by-step project plan for a specific evaluation project. It identifies (in more detail than the evaluation framework) the what, when, who, why and how to complete the evaluation.

Evaluation plans are typically developed at the beginning of an evaluation. Here's how to create one.

1. Articulate the reason for the evaluation

What do you expect your program evaluation to achieve? What is it not going to do? Describing your evaluation's raison d'être helps to ensure the evaluation project is correctly focussed and delivers on stakeholder needs.

2. Allocate resources and budget

The resources and budget you have available will determine the scope of your evaluation: it's important to get this agreed from the outset.

3. Identify information needs

Go back to the reason for the evaluation. What information do you need to address the evaluation's purpose? Consider:

- what documentation needs to be reviewed
- what data will be analysed
- which stakeholders will be consulted
- the topics that need to be researched and understood.

For ease of planning, group the project's information needs into those that are already available and those that need to be specifically collected during the project.

TOOLS

Use the data collection matrix to capture your data needs.

www.grosvenor.com.au/resources/evaluation-data-collection-matrix

4. Specify project deliverables

Determine what documentation and deliverables the project will produce.

Examples of potential deliverables are:

- final project report
- findings and recommendations presentation
- revised program logic
- revised monitoring and reporting templates/tools.

Consider the immediate program needs, as well as future applications of the learnings.

5. Design your evaluation approach

Once you've done your research, it's time to design your evaluation approach. This involves describing the entire process of your program evaluation, taking into account what you already know about the reason for the evaluation, resources and budget available, information needs and project deliverables.

Don't forget to plan how you will achieve stakeholder buy-in and communicate the results and recommendations to those who need to know.

Table 7. Example inputs for the Cats on Leads summative evaluation plan

Reason for the evaluation	To assess the overall success of the program and advise whether the program should be continued beyond its initial timeframe. This is done by establishing the impact the program has had, including whether it has performed to expectations.
Resources and budget	> External evaluation provider to be engaged for the project > The project budget is $200,000
Information needs	> Actual spend against planned expenditure > Website statistics > Training attendance and completion data > Pre and post survey results – lead use, unsupervised outdoor time, owner satisfaction, owner perceptions > Rates of indoor/outdoor cats > Rate of lead use amongst general community (not participating in program) > Effect on native wildlife > Interviews with program staff, training delivery team, key stakeholders, and participants to collect qualitative feedback on the program
Project deliverables	> Final project report > Findings and recommendations presentation to project board > Social media / press communication of evaluation results

TOOLS **Planning a program evaluation**

https://www.grosvenor.com.au/resources/planning-a-program-evaluation-a-practical-checklist/

How is your program going ... really? Performance monitoring

Monitoring and managing the performance of a program is an integral part of program management. This chapter helps you identify the factors you need to consider when developing a performance management framework.

Performance monitoring

When we talk about performance monitoring we're referring to the continuous, systematic collection of data. Done well, this gives you an ongoing indication of how well your program is doing.

Performance monitoring helps you to:

- Track progress against your program's aims and objectives
- Ensure your program delivers the intended outcomes
- Account for the efficient and effective use of funding
- Identify improvement opportunities.

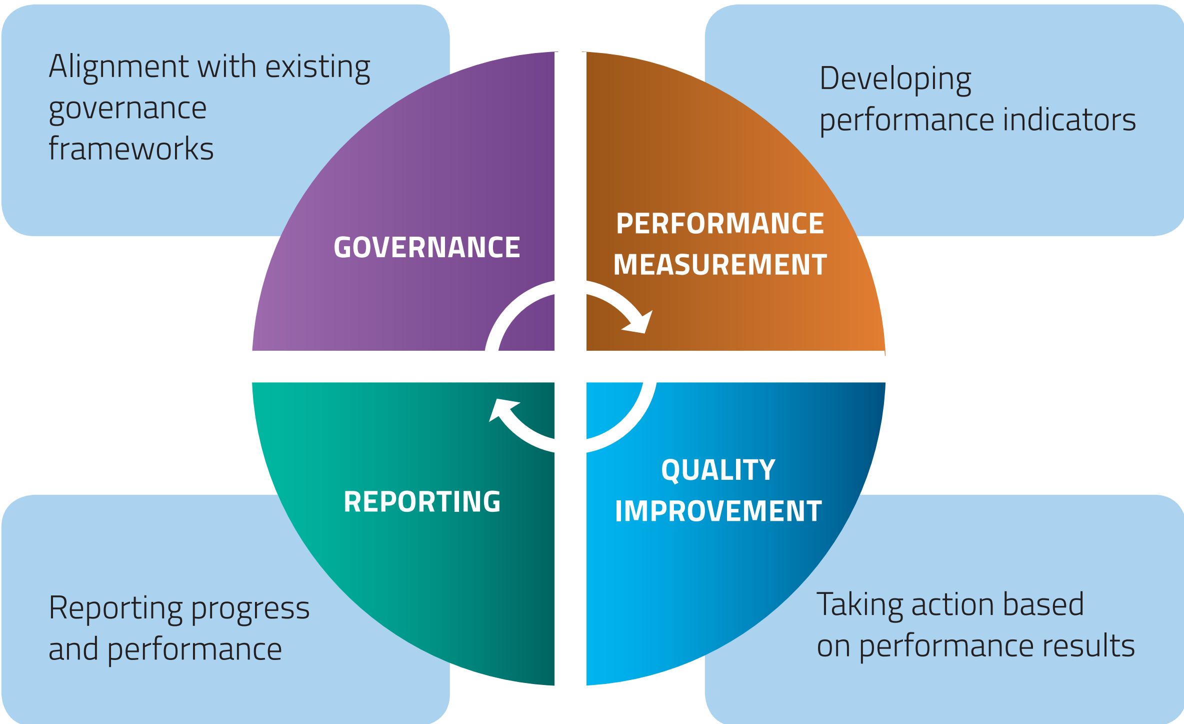
Ongoing monitoring will help you to identify any areas not performing to expectations, and determine whether any adjustments to the program are required.

Performance management framework

Establishing a solid performance management framework (one that's closely aligned with the organisation's strategic goals, and is rigorous and transparent) will help you to monitor the performance of your program where and when you need it.

Most performance management frameworks typically consist of some or all of the activities below:

Figure 11. Typical performance management framework



Here's what you need to consider when developing the above four areas:

GOVERNANCE

Your organisation's existing governance mechanisms provide a good starting point when establishing performance monitoring for a specific program.

Start by reviewing existing governance arrangements (this may be all that is required for some programs) then look to align your program with them, and / or develop additional governance mechanisms.

Make sure you're aware of any existing governance arrangements such as:

- executive management groups
- personnel reporting relationships
- financial reporting
- annual reports
- steering committees
- advisory groups
- contractual or grant reporting requirements
- role descriptions and accountabilities for specific programs.

Example: Cats on Leads program

- Agency has quarterly executive meetings at which each program needs to report
- Program manager needs reporting on a minimum monthly basis.

Therefore, monthly reports are the most suitable reporting frequency for this program.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

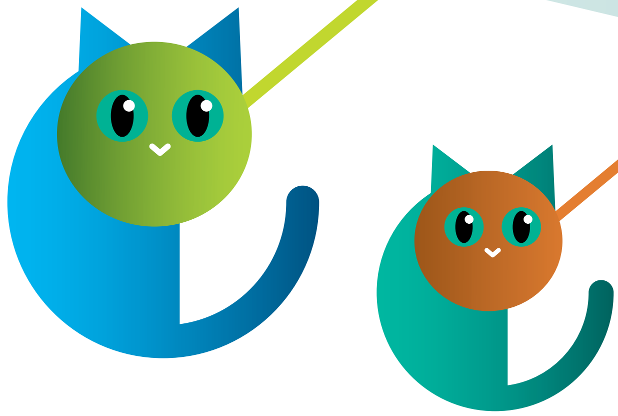
Successful performance measurement is all about developing and using performance measures that are ***appropriate to your organisation and program.***

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are a great place to start. Here's how:

Ask yourself: what aspects of the program need to be measured? (Hint: your program theory in **chapter 8** provides a good starting point.) Don't forget to focus on the outcomes expected as well as the activities that are delivered.

Ensure every KPI is:

- well-defined, relevant and informative – does it tell you something important about how the program is performing?
- something that can be influenced by the program – avoid performance measures that can be heavily influenced by outside factors.
- based on data that is available and cost-effective.
- comparable with a benchmark or previous results – you will need a comparable starting point in order to track whether you're improving.



Example KPIs: Cats on Leads program

- actual spend against planned expenditure
- number of website visits per week
- % of enrolment target met
- % of enrolments completing training
- owner satisfaction with quality of training; net promoter scores
- % of time cat spends outdoors unsupervised.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Creating a performance management framework involves not only generating performance information, but also using this information in decision-making. This includes identifying performance that does not meet expectations, and acting on opportunities to improve.

Example: Cats on Leads program

To tie in with the quarterly executive meetings, it is decided that a quarterly improvement cycle will be used. Each quarter, the program team holds a half-day workshop to assess results and identify and plan improvements for the next quarter.

REPORTING

Reporting the progress and performance of a program involves documenting how well the program's objectives are being met, and sharing this information through appropriate feedback and governance channels.

Reporting should provide enough detail to inform decision-making, without going into information overload. To provide an accurate picture of the program's performance, your data should always be credible, impartial and relevant.

It's important to select the right reporting format for the group that will be reading it. Here's what you need to consider in order to get this right:

- Who needs to be aware of the results?
- What results do they need to know about?
- How often does the data need to be reported?
- What's the best way to communicate the results?

Example: Cats on Leads program

A range of program management reports are set up to be run monthly, along with a quarterly summary report designed for the executive team.

Communicating your program evaluation findings effectively

For most of us (even the most seasoned program managers!), writing program evaluation reports can be a daunting task.

In this chapter we look at the three main challenges most report writers face, and how to overcome them.

Challenge 1: writing for a broad distribution network

The usual report-writing mantra of keeping your audience in mind applies equally to program evaluation reports. The problem is that the intended audience for program evaluation reports is often very wide. Here's how to overcome that.

Confirm your audience early on

Not only will this influence the report's language and content, but may also influence evaluation methodology, stakeholder engagement and data collection. If your audiences are unusually diverse, you might need different reporting methods to suit their needs.

Identify sensitivities, privacy and confidentiality requirements

The sensitivity of information, privacy and confidentiality requirements may shape the distribution of your report, or require you to produce different versions for different audiences.

Challenge 2: the tricky matter of the "findings" section

Evaluation reports tend to follow a classic report structure of executive summary, introduction, approach, findings and conclusions, followed by recommendations.

Sounds easy enough, right? And for many program managers it is ... until you get to the findings section. Many of us are tempted to structure our findings section around our key evaluation questions, leading readers to expect conclusions (or come to their own) too early.

Here's what to do instead:

1. Organise the information into discrete topics and themes
2. Order the topics logically and group them using headings and subheadings
3. Be ruthless – consider the purpose of the report and exclude any information which is not 100% relevant
4. Interpret the information in a way that answers the overarching reasons for conducting the evaluation
5. Save your key evaluation questions for the conclusions section – it's a neat way to wrap up and ensures that the report addresses each of the key questions

Challenge 3: Sharing the results

Many program managers forget this penultimate part of the program evaluation journey. And it can be hard to get right, ensuring the right amount of coverage for your findings while managing organisational sensitivities.

Here's how to do it.

- Use your organisation's existing channels to share evaluation results externally and internally.
- Publishing an evaluation report on your organisation's existing website is one of the easiest ways to share the report with others. Bring attention to the publication by engaging through social media sites such as Twitter and LinkedIn.
- Remember that you may need to produce the report in different lengths and formats to suit different audiences. Possible formats include summary reports, infographics and multimedia.

You will also need to take precautions to ensure ethics, privacy, confidentiality and that organisational or political sensitivities are suitably handled.

Example: Cats on Leads program

As Cats on Leads is the first program of its type, it is agreed that it is important to share the learnings and invite discussion of the results. It is decided that each evaluation report will be made publicly available.

Each report is risk-assessed prior to publication, and a summary report is developed, if deemed necessary for sensitivity, privacy or confidentiality reasons.

Cats on Leads is now at its midpoint and has been wildly successful so far! (In fact, if you're not on a lead, you're not a cool cat). The program manager creates a communication plan to share the results, including engaging with social media, online "light news" channels, as well as more traditional channels (the conference circuit, other internal governance peer networks) to promote the program.

Breaking bad news

By their nature, program evaluations seek to determine if a program is working. Which means that, in reality, the answers are not always going to be positive.

So how do you deliver bad news without ruffling feathers or watering down the truth?

Here's what to do when your evaluation results don't meet expectations.

1. Create openness to all results – positive or negative

Start the discussion of possible results at the very beginning of a project. Simply raising the possibility of both positive and negative results can begin to create an environment of openness and acceptance of the possible outcome.

2. Keep everyone informed from the get-go

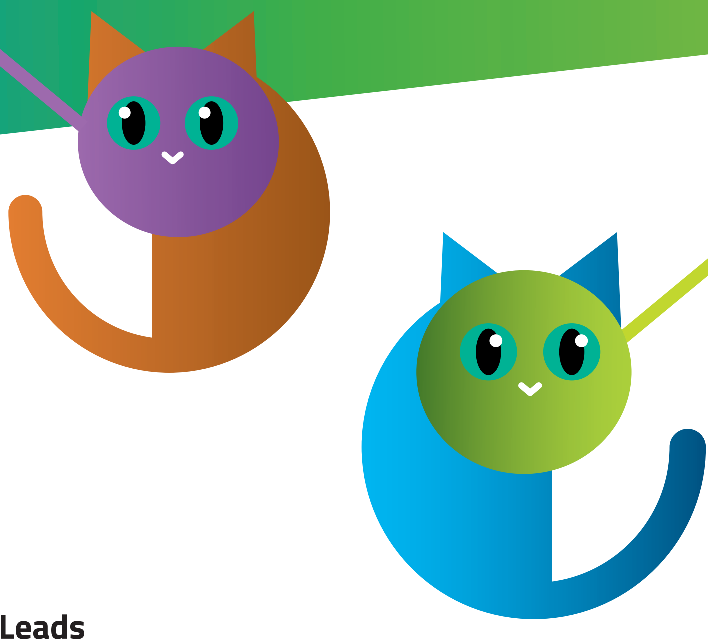
Bad news should never come as a surprise. The final report should never, ever be the first time a manager hears about their program's underperformance. Keep the entire project team and management well-informed throughout the project, ensuring you provide sufficient opportunities for findings to be digested and responded to.

3. Frame under-performance as an opportunity, not a failure

Less-than-positive results are opportunities for improvement. Frame them as such where possible. Be thoughtful in your use of language and how you pitch solutions.

4. Celebrate success

It is important to document what the program has achieved – even the small things. What worked well? Celebrate the successes to provide balance and context to overall performance.



Example: Cats on Leads

At the 2.5-year midpoint evaluation, it transpires that while the program is extremely popular overall, there are two small areas that need improvement:

1. While the website has received plenty of visits, there have been a slightly lower-than-expected number of signups to the training.

2. There have been a couple of issues with cats fighting and escaping during the training programs, which has led to an unexpectedly high dropout rate!

Luckily, you've prepared the project team for the potential evaluation outcomes from the outset, and you've framed the negative feedback in the context of the many good findings about the program. So the findings are seen as a constructive opportunity for improvement, rather than a failure, and the feedback is met with good spirit overall.

Putting improvements into practice

You've done all the hard work: you've planned your program evaluation, undertaken the evaluation and written your report. Now it's time to action the improvements you've identified.

This chapter shares practical tips for the best way to do this.

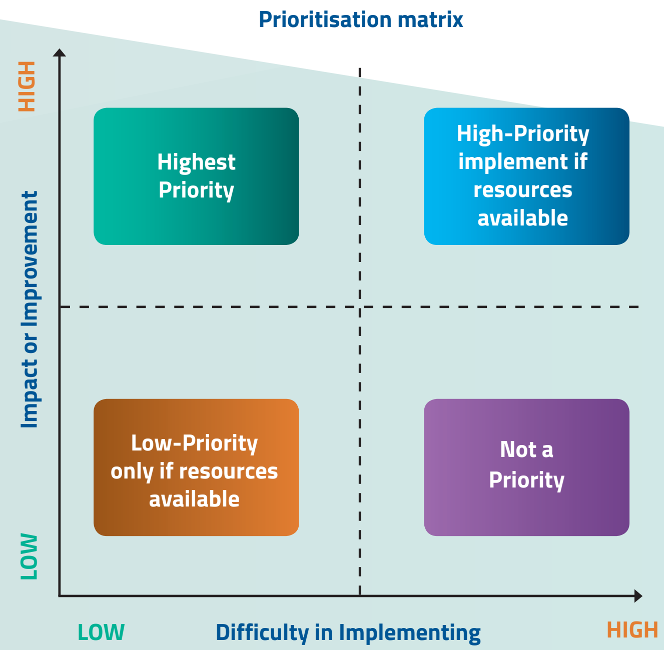
1. Prioritise improvements

While a program evaluation generally throws up multiple improvement opportunities, not all will be equally important. A great way to prioritise recommendations is to rank them according to:

- the impact the recommendation will have
- the risks involved
- the level of effort / cost.

The following priority decision-making matrix can help guide you.

Figure 12. Example of a priority decision-making matrix



2. Plan the approach

You will need to develop an appropriate plan for actioning each recommendation that you choose to take forward. Make sure you scope any constraints and risk-assess any possible fall-outs beforehand.

3. Assess resourcing requirements

Can the improvements be undertaken with existing resources and budgets, or will you need additional resources or expertise? If it's the latter, changes to resourcing allocation, recruitment or procurement may be needed.

4. Set timeframes

Set realistic goals for the commencement and completion of each task.

5. Assign responsibility

Task individuals with responsibility for implementing each activity. Ensure your task allocation reflects the roles, skills and responsibilities of the individuals involved.

6. Monitor implementation

Just when you thought you were done with program evaluation, here's another place where you need to measure success! Ensure implementation plain-sailing by monitoring progress and reporting on it regularly. This could involve short-term monitoring activities, or form part of the program's broader monitoring and reporting regime.

Example: Cats on Leads

The three improvement priorities for the 2.5-year midpoint evaluation are identified as:

- simplifying the website enrolment form, improving the calls-to-action
- offering more flexible hours of training to increase the number of signups
- changing the type of harness to reduce cat fights and escapes.

A detailed project plan and timeline are created for implementation of these initiatives, and extra resources are allocated for their implementation. It is agreed to review the impact of these changes in six months' time, in addition to the scheduled 5-year summative evaluation.

Considerations for good evaluation practice: ethics and other important things

While this chapter is at the end of the kit, these things should not be afterthoughts in evaluation. Instead they are central to good practice. Read on for details about:

- ethics
- data storage and security

Ethics

The professional body, Australasian Evaluation Society, publishes the **Guidelines for the ethical conduct of evaluations.** These should guide the ethical practice of evaluators in Australia. Individual organisations may also have their own policies or ethics committees which need to be considered as part of an evaluation activity.

Ethical practice is a must for all evaluations, but not all evaluations will require ethics committee approval.

Table 8. What ethical practices should always be part of an evaluation?[2]

Ethical practice	Description	Better practice tip
Consent	Always provide information about the purpose and nature of the evaluation including data collection and its use, and obtain the individual's consent for participation.	Obtain consent in writing.
Respect	This should go without saying – treat everyone with dignity and respect. This includes respecting different values, cultures and beliefs.	Keep a "lessons learnt" or reflections log throughout the project to share and improve practice.
Potential harms or risks	Assess potential harms and risks which may eventuate as part of an evaluation activity and mitigate these.	Undertake a risk assessment to identify potential harms and risks.
Inequality and differences	Consider the implications of differences such as gender, religion, status, age and so on may have on the evaluation. These should be taken into account at each stage of the evaluation activity.	Seek to build a representative evaluation team, if possible.
Conflicts of interest	Potential or actual conflicts of interest must always be disclosed so they can be appropriately assessed. Conflicts of interest will not always prevent participation or delivery of an evaluation, but need to be disclosed to allow for suitable management.	Require decision -makers and evaluation team members to complete a conflict of interest declaration.
Rigor	Ensure the design, data collection and analysis are sufficiently rigorous to meet its intended purpose.	Clearly define the evaluation scope and objectives to ensure the design is fit for purpose.
Dealing with limitations	Report the limitations of the evaluation.	Discuss limitations of a given approach early during the design to ensure they are understood by all involved.
Confidentiality	Maintain confidentiality in accordance with participants' consent and the commissioner's requirements.	Only collect necessary information and request the commissioner data is anonymised prior to its receipt.
Acknowledge sources and contributions	Identify the sources of judgements and acknowledge contributors.	Develop a report template that contains key sections to be included (such as contributions) to prompt your memory.

[2]Based on the Australasian Evaluation Society **Guidelines for the ethical conduct of evaluations.**

In what circumstances will ethics committee approval be required?

The requirement for ethics committee approval will vary depending on the nature and design of the evaluation including the organisational rules and requirements.

For example, the National Health and Medical Research Council governs research requirements involving humans, and maintains the **National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) - Updated May 2015.**

Typically, ethics committee approval will be required for human research activities.

What do I need to know if I do need ethics clearance?

- **Read requirements carefully** – ethics committees will have defined processes and submission requirements that need to be followed
- **It can add significant time to a project** – committees will only meet periodically and developing the submission documentation can also take substantial time
- **Allow additional effort** – additional documentation needs to be prepared, and the requirement for ethics approval may require sequencing of preparatory takes to be altered.

You will also need to submit periodic reporting to the committee throughout the project.

Data storage and security

Data storage and security is a key consideration for all organisations including for those conducting or commissioning evaluations.

Ask yourself these questions.

- Is your evaluation data secure?

  Keeping data secure and having a plan should a breach occur is essential for today's organisations. The Australian Signals Directorate provides guidance on **eight essential mitigation strategies to prevent cyber security incidents.**

  Remember: it is essential to protect both hard and soft copy information.

- What arrangements are in place with third parties?

  If you use third parties or third party services to collect evaluation data, you need to be aware of the contractual arrangements in place and ensure they adequately cover and meet your storage and security requirements.

- What are my legal requirements?

Managing personal information

The **Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act)** and Privacy Principles must be complied with. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner provides **guides** on the application of the Privacy Act.

Data breach notification

The **Notifiable Data Breaches scheme** came into force on 22 February 2018.

This places a legal requirement on organisations within the scope of the Privacy Act to:

- notify individuals whose personal information is involved in a data breach that is likely to result in serious harm
- notify the Australian Information Commissioner of the breach.

Other requirements

Depending on the type of data, there may be other legal requirements for its protection, storage and destruction. Be sure to inform yourself of the requirements related to specific data types.

What if DIY isn't for me?

While it is great to DIY, it is likely at some point you'll want to get some independent and expert advice on program evaluation.

Engaging evaluators

First, you should contact your procurement team who will be able to help you with the process in your organisation. Hopefully, you can access an existing arrangement or panel with a range of suitable evaluation providers, and obtain procurement templates for you to use.

One of the key documents that will need to be drafted is a Request for Quote (RFQ) or Request for Tender (RFT). This is the document you will release to potential suppliers to outline the program evaluation services you are after. Typically, this would include the following key parts.

Table 9. Key parts of an RFQ or RFT

Section	Description	Tips
Terms and conditions of the procurement process	Many of these will be standardised within the template. It will set out the process to be followed. You will need to include key details such as: > A contact point for questions > The deadline for responses > Details about how to submit a response.	Allow enough time for respondents to prepare a quality response.
A description of your requirements	The requirements should outline: > The purpose of the project. Why are you doing it and what do you want to achieve? > background and context about the program or policy > the timeframes you want to achieve for the project > some details about the program's stakeholders > what data is available > what deliverables need to be provided > anything else that is likely to influence the approach and effort to deliver the project.	To write effective requirements: > use unequivocal language > fully describe the total
The criteria you'll use to assess responses	These should reflect the things that will make the project successful and meet your requirements.	Common criteria include: > The proposed approach > Experience > Capacity > Fees. Don't weight price – make a holistic judgement of the value for money of the response.
The response requirements or template	These are the questions you want respondents to answer and the details you want them to provide as part of their response.	Align the response requirements with the assessment criteria to make the assessment easier. Don't forget to ask for details that will be needed for the contract and compliance checks such as the company details, a contact point and insurance details.
The contractual terms and conditions	It is good practice to release the draft contract with a procurement request and ask respondents to identify any areas of non or partial compliance.	Fairly allocate risk between the parties.

And don't forget ...

In undertaking a procurement process, don't forget to consider:

- your budget – the scope of your requirements should be aligned with your budget. There is no point asking for gold if all you can afford is pyrite.
- the time it will take to prepare the request, allow time for responses, select a preferred provider, and prepare and execute the contract. This all needs to happen before the project start date. If in doubt, start early and allow plenty of contingency.
- and while we are on timeframes, be realistic about the project end date – especially if your stakeholders are time-poor.
- the approval points and documentation needed in your organisation and appropriate delegates.

How do I tell a good evaluator from a bad one?

It isn't always easy to judge a good evaluator from a bad one. Often, a poor result from an evaluation project is not caused by a "bad" evaluator but rather a poor fit between evaluator, client and project.

So, how do you achieve the right fit and a good project outcome?

Things to do:	**Things to avoid:**
Before your start > confirm the purpose of the evaluation, and make sure it is clear not only to you but to your stakeholders and those in your governance groups > spend time thinking about what else will make the project successful and how you will assess if the evaluators have these qualities > ask for and talk to referees – these will give insight to the technical and soft skills of the evaluators	> being prescriptive – you are engaging an expert – let them do their job; don't try and do it for them > judging suitability based on qualifications or years' experience – pieces of paper and age are not necessarily the best way to judge if someone has the skills you need
During the project > be engaged throughout the evaluation process and make sure important stake-holders are also engaged and available to the evaluation team > ask questions so you fully understand why something is being done a certain way > treat the evaluators with respect > discuss findings and report format before the report is delivered – a good evaluator will want to keep you informed and make sure your needs are met	> making unreasonable timeframe demands – instead, be realistic and seek fair compromises > taking too long to get important data or details to the evaluators – this will only delay the project > lack of contact between you and the evaluator – they should keep you informed at all times > asking the evaluator to change their findings or recommendations – if you feel there is misrepresentation, by all means discuss the matter and explain the context, but let the evaluator remain independent
After the project > write a management response detailing how each of the recommendations will be addressed > track how implementation of the improvements is going > seek out a 6 or 12-month health check (from the original evaluator) to keep you focussed and on track	> putting the report in a drawer and not using it > taking any improvement opportunities as a personal failing – each evaluation is a learning opportunity.

Outro

You're there!

This kit has taken you through the nuts and bolts of program evaluation, given you some tools to help, and shared with you the weird and wonderful world of Cats on Leads. We hope you have found this kit helpful in planning, implementing and communicating your program evaluations.

Grosvenor: the program evaluation experts

Grosvenor Public Sector Advisory are program evaluation experts with extensive experience in government and not-for-profit sectors.

Meet our program evaluation specialist

Dana Cross
BA (German, Anthropology), BSc (Genetics)

Leading Grosvenor's program evaluation practice, Dana is an experienced consultant and senior program evaluator. She has designed and executed evaluations for highly complex programs across a range of program areas including health and social, industry regulation, and environmental programs. Dana also has a keen interest in organisational review and improvement, particularly performance management.

If you need to talk through any aspect of program evaluation, please feel free to contact Dana directly.

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