

Evaluation Strategy and Schedule

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Introduction

Quality management is the process for ensuring that all project activities used to design, plan and implement a project are effective and efficient. Quality management is a continuous process that starts and ends with the project. It is more about preventing and avoiding than measuring and fixing poor quality outputs. It is part of every project management processes from the moment the project initiates to the final steps in the project closure phase.

The term evaluation refers to the whole process of planning, controlling and assessing the results of a project in a systematic manner. It involves the determination of project objectives and requirements, the continuous control of the project as it proceeds and the assessment of its results. Evaluation should be a repetitive, cyclical process that will lead to improvement of the project. Ideally, at the very beginning of a project, the partners should develop their evaluation strategy.

A good evaluation strategy applied throughout the project will not only improve the quality of the project and facilitate its performance and management. It will also help in composing the interim and final report the project partners have to write. The evaluation is a tool for assuring the quality of the results and processes between the starting point and the completion of the project. The evaluation process should be seen as a number of stages going hand in hand with the other activities in the project. Evaluation consists of:

- Planning for evaluation
- Collecting and interpreting evidence
- Using the evidence to implement changes
- Reporting

Monitoring and regular reporting is the foundation for evaluation.

Evaluation Concept:

The evaluation process of the project will be split into two parts:

- **Process Evaluation** through evaluation of the projects current activities, strength and weakness, as well as the activities planned in future steps and the corresponding opportunities and threats.
- **Product Evaluation** by evaluation of the project results regarding their quality and their impact on future users through their validation

Product Evaluation

In this project product evaluation has two main aims. The first is to ensure that the products produced correspond to the application, which is part of the contract. This is accomplished by comparing the available product with the application text and by pointing out differences (positive or negative) and by explaining them. The second aim is to ensure that the project is easy to evaluate by external evaluators (e.g. in the interim and final reports). This is easily provided by ensuring that every product is evaluated in the same way and that the evaluation results are easy to be found and analyzed by anyone, even if not familiar with the project.

Product Evaluation is closely related to monitoring. The basic review of the products and the evaluation of their content is part of the monitoring process. Whenever a quarter of a year has finished the available products will be checked for availability and timely delivery and will be evaluated concerning their content. If this is concluded successfully the product will be set “green” or ok for the current status of the project.

The Monitoring Plan will be used to make the current status of all products visible (marking them green for being ok, orange for changes made, or red for missing and/or delayed products). The Monitoring Plan will be updated by the evaluation partner, relying on those products which the co-ordinator declares as final products. Note that even though the products are finished or “final” they might be changed one more time during final evaluation. In final evaluation the products will be checked once more, now having the whole project experience and will be modified when necessary.

The schedule for this process is:

Q1 report: End of December 2011
Q2 report: End of April 2012
Q3 report: End of July 2012
Q4 report: End of October 2012
Q5 report: End of December 2012
Q6 report: End of April 2013
Q7 report: End of July 2013
Q8 report: End of September 2013
Final Evaluation Q1-Q7: End of July 2013
Final Evaluation Q8: End of September 2013

Note that the quarterly monitoring procedure has the same deadlines. Each product is assigned to be delivered in a specific period:

Delivery Plan:

WP	Description	Number	Q1 (10.11-12.11)	Q2 (1.12-3.12)	Q3 (4.12-6.12)	Q4 (7.12-9.12)	Q5 (10.12-12.12)	Q6 (1.13-3.13)	Q7 (4.13-6.13)	Q8 (7.13-9.13)
1	Project Operational Plan	R1	x							
2	Report on the analysis of the products' usability	R2	x							
2	Description of the characteristics of the professional profile	R3	x							
2	Adaptation plan (containing operational guidelines)	R4	x							
3	Intercultural Mediator's Training Course Prototype	R5			x					
3	Experimentation Plan	R6			x					
4	Training course, products and methodology manual	R7				x				
4	Report on the pilots	R8				x				
4	Pilot evaluation report	R9				x				
4	Transfer plan	R10				x				
5	Consolidated Model (Training course, products and methodology manual)	R11							x	
5	Report on the transfer	R12							x	
5	Transfer evaluation report	R13							x	
6	Observation Grids and Reports	R14								x
6	Report on strengths and areas for improvement	R15								x
7	Dissemination plan	R16		x						
7	Logo and corporate image	R17		x						
7	Project's website and on line communication	R18		x						
7	Project's newsletter	R19		x						
7	Communication materials (brochure, poster, leaflet, slides, cd, pen drive)	R20		x						
7	Participation in events, meetings, conferences and workshops	R21		x						
7	Organising meetings, seminars and workshops	R22		x						
7	Editorials on press and external websites	R23		x						
7	Final publication	R24								x
7	Final conference	R25								x
7	Final dissemination and exploitation report	R26								x
8	Project's quality plan	R27	x							
8	Monitoring plan (with tools and protocols for use)	R28	x							
8	Monitoring reports	R29	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8	Final evaluation report	R30								x

Process evaluation

Process evaluation or “formative evaluation” will take place during the project. Formative evaluation of the project's processes is ongoing: this includes questions about project management; project progress against milestones; and dissemination of findings & learning.

Process evaluation will be done by the co-ordinator throughout the project. The co-ordinator will be supported by regular online questionnaires including SWOT analysis whenever necessary, but especially after every project meeting.

Objectives:

To continuously and throughout the project life

- gain information and feedback about the project process and the work undertaken within the project
- gain insight into potential improvement of the project (process as well as content) and to implement this improvement
- report this evaluation process

Main Evaluation Instruments

Minutes of meetings

The project pays a lot of attention to jointly developing materials and an optimal – also formal -interaction between the project partners. At regular intervals meetings are arranged to discuss the state of the project. It is essential to keep minutes of any meetings that are being held. The minutes of the meeting should provide all information complementary to the questionnaires below. The minutes should include the participant list, agenda, topics actually discussed and a short report by the host organization. Additionally any points of discussion, especially if there are any unsolved points need to be addressed. The minutes should be short and easy to read. They should allow getting a fast and complete impression of what was going on in the meeting.

Systematic Target Group Feedback

Whenever a product is introduced to the target group the target group should have the opportunity to feedback on the quality of the products. This can be done in different ways (expert meetings, feedback sessions, free feedback in emails, online questionnaires) depending on the exact product (e.g. feedback to a seminar would usually be collected by a feedback round of participants and by a feedback sheet distributed to all participants). The result of this process should be reported and collected; the results need to be considered before finalizing products.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires can consist of open questions, closed questions (with pre coded answers) or a mixture of both. Closed questions are easy to analyze statistically, while open questions allow for collecting more varied input. Questionnaires used in this project will mostly encompass closed questions when evaluating quality of products or processes and open questions for analyzing SWOT (Strength, weakness, opportunities and threats) of the project at various stages.

Document analysis

Regular monitoring and analysis of all project documentation is essential. It is very important to take into account:

- Filing and naming of documents according to a common standard system;
- Developing of common layout and templates for text documents and presentations to avoid additional work;
- Accepting Corporate Logo and graphical identity;
- Check spelling.

Main results of the evaluation:

Product evaluation will result in an evaluation sheet per product, which should be made available to external evaluators with the interim and final reports. These sheets will also be integral parts of the evaluation reports. Process evaluation will result in at least three online questionnaires and connected reports, one after each meeting. These will include a SWOT analysis of the current project stage each, they will also be integral parts of the project's evaluation reports.

Main outputs:

- Quality Management and Evaluation concept
- Project Evaluation forms and sheets
- Interim and Final evaluation report