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INSTITUTO
PARA LA EVALUACIÓN
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GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC POLICIES

INSTITUTE FOR THE EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES

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AUTHORS:

-Celia Casillas

-Laura García

- Mónica Macía

-Javier Rico

Director: Celia Casillas

Guidelines for the Evaluability Assessment of Public Policies

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Secretariat of State for Territorial Policy
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INTRODUCTION

The greater demand by citizens for a rational use of public resources has increased since the economic crisis of recent years. Coupled with their demand for more transparency in the decision-making process, it requires public interventions to be evaluated under suitable conditions to provide worthwhile results to decision makers and involved stakeholders, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

A comprehensive assessment, as conceived of here, is a complex process that requires the co-existence of certain contextual factors, sufficient time to arrive at the necessary conclusions and to make useful as well as suitable recommendations, and the use of (human, technological and economic) resources for its fulfilment. For this reason it is essential to ascertain the presence of these determining factors when undertaking a comprehensive assessment. This may be performed by an evaluability assessment that shares the main characteristics of a comprehensive assessment (systematic and well-thought out process and information compilation and analysis for evidence that leads to a value judgement) but has different goals, features and nature, as we shall see in this Guidelines.

The Guidelines acknowledges this challenge and provides simple, prompt and low-cost measures to assess the evaluability of public interventions. On one hand, they recommend for or against a comprehensive assessment under existing conditions or circumstances and on the other, they detect possible areas of improvement in the intervention design for improved results as well as to facilitate the subsequent comprehensive assessment.

The Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies is the body in charge of promoting the culture of evaluation of public policies and the formulation and dissemination of methodologies for evaluation, within the scope of the General State Administration and its public bodies¹. It also seeks to facilitate the use of tools that help to assess any policy plan or programme². This Guidelines is a part of these functions and is presented as a useful tool meant for two different users: the persons or bodies in charge and managers of the interventions, who must decide whether to perform an evaluability assessment; and the evaluators, who may either be an internal team (performing a self-assessment) or an external team.

¹ Royal Decree 863/2018 of 13 July which outlines the basic structure of the Ministry of Territorial Policy and the Civil Service. Article 6.5., Sections b) and c).

² The Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies has also published the following guides: Guide for Evaluating Public Policy Design (Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies, 2020), Guide for Evaluating Public Policy Implementation (Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies, 2020), and Guide for Evaluating Public Policy Results (2020). All the guides are published on the website of the Ministry of Territorial Policy and the Civil Service in the Institute section: <https://www.mptfp.gob.es/portal/funcionpublica/evaluacion-politicas-publicas/Guiaevaluacion.Html>.



The first part, “General Questions” is aimed at persons or bodies in charge and managers so they may understand the basic aspects of evaluability assessment in a brief *question and answer* format: what is it, what does it consist of, why is it recommended, and how to perform an evaluability assessment.

The second part, “Evaluability Assessment Process” provides a detailed description of what is required for an evaluability assessment; the stages of the process, the dimensions that are analysed, the documents and products of the evaluation, the tools used for assessment and the methodology of analysis.

PART ONE GENERAL QUESTIONS



What is an evaluability assessment?

Research on the evaluation of public interventions or policies generally single out two essential concepts around evaluability from a wide range of approaches. On one hand, the concept of *evaluability* itself. One of the most commonly accepted definitions is formulated by the OECD which defines evaluability as the extent to which a government intervention (policy, plan, programme, standard) may be reliably and credibly evaluated (OECD-DAC 2010). Some authors such as Youtie Bozeman and Shapira stress the idea of evaluability as the extent to which the specific design characteristics of a programme or plan affect the ability to make an effective evaluation (1998).

On the other hand, the concept of evaluability assessment (hereinafter EA) includes the highlighted essential aspects, but emphasises the system and the process, and therefore may be termed “evaluability assessment”, “analysis” or “protocol”, depending on the author cited. The EA is the systematic process that helps us to identify whether the assessment of a programme is justified, if it is feasible, and whether it can provide useful information (JEEC, 2003). Or it may be a prior low-cost activity that seeks to better prepare programmes, practices and some policies for conventional evaluations (Leviton et al, 2010). This process (OECD, 2010) allows us to determine “whether or not the development intervention is adequately defined and its results verifiable, and if evaluation is the best way to answer questions posed by policy makers or stakeholders”.

These definitions reiterate some of the essential characteristics of the EA. The main characteristic is that evaluability assessment focuses on the analysis of whether a subsequent evaluation is justified, at what cost, what can it and should it contribute in view of the intervention and its context, and provides a general definition of some of the elements of the subsequent evaluation. Another characteristic is related to the EA activity itself which must be performed within a short period of time and at a low cost.

Generally a distinction is drawn between two clearly defined goals, essentially as a result of EA in practice and the difficulties that have traditionally been encountered in the evaluations of public interventions, especially their comprehensive assessment.

One goal is **more related to the nature of the project or programme** and focused on the existence of a theory of underlying change, coherence between objectives and measures, and the achievement of results by the intervention as intended. Joseph Wholey, the father of evaluability, calculated that more than half of all public interventions were not evaluable owing to factors related to the intervention itself, to the managers, or because the (economic, human and time) resources were not suitable with regard to what was sought to be achieved with



the evaluated public action (AEVAL, 2007) The realisation that the shortcomings detected in the interventions (especially in the design and planning stage) made evaluations expensive or unable to be performed in time, led to EA focusing on the programme design and its potential for the subsequent evaluation. This is why EA has also been used as a tool to improve programme design and for improved management and performance. At a very early stage, in 1987, Wholey himself drew a clear distinction between the two goals by affirming that “although evaluability assessment (as the name suggests) explores the feasibility of evaluations of programmes, another important focus... is the probable utility of evaluation in improving the performance of the programme”. This has been maintained until today. However it has also led to a debate on the “improper” use of EA as an instrument to design public interventions and occupying the role that corresponds to correct planning (public policy design), and has occasionally generated confusion in the EA itself.

A more practical dimension from the point of view of evaluation, focused on the availability of relevant data for evaluation and their accessibility, the monitoring and evaluation system, the political context, the managers or stakeholders that may affect the evaluation, etc.

With the information obtained from the evaluability assessment, we may judge whether it is convenient or possible to subsequently perform *“a more in-depth evaluation (termed comprehensive assessment) if there are suitable conditions for undertaking it and to propose the required improvements to said intervention so it may be evaluated”* (Government of Navarre, 2008) successfully. That is to say, on one hand it assesses the “quality of the planning” and on the other hand, what this Guidelines terms the “governance of the evaluation” which are the other factors that determine the suitability or possibility of performing an in-depth evaluation.

This Guidelines is based on the premise, which is shared with most current guidelines, that although all public interventions are evaluable, the factors mentioned by Wholey can have an important effect on whether or not to recommend a comprehensive assessment, to the point that it may be discouraged until these negative circumstances or aspects that have been detected have been changed or improved.



What is the role of evaluability assessment?

Evaluability assessment (EA) is a tool that provides an added level of transparency and accountability to public actions by means of its different functions, some of which are common to all types of evaluation, both from the point of view of evaluation and from the perspective of public policy design and strategic planning:

1. *From the point of view of public policy evaluation:*

- ✓ It helps to ascertain whether a public intervention **is evaluable**, under what terms, and of what use is the subsequent evaluation. At the same time, it helps to establish the probability of achieving measurable results and impacts and to identify and manage the risks or obstacles that may be encountered by the aforementioned evaluation, before resources are committed to a large-scale evaluation. Evaluability assessment is therefore an instrument within the field of evaluation.
- ✓ It allows us to **avoid costs** (related to time, material resources and human costs) of performing an in-depth evaluation when the intervention is not ready for it or the conditions are not ideal for performing it. In short, it makes a cost-benefit analysis of the subsequent evaluation.
- ✓ It provides an overview of “how” the evaluation may be performed (the evaluation design), especially with regard to the possible **definition of the scope or focus of the evaluation**. Nevertheless, it is not advisable for the EA to establish the concrete design of a subsequent evaluation, given that it would constrain it excessively and pose a risk that may lead to the failure of the evaluability assessment (R. Davies, 2013).
- ✓ It generates a climate of **confidence** among the different stakeholders with regard to the design which in turn increases the **credibility** of a subsequent evaluation.

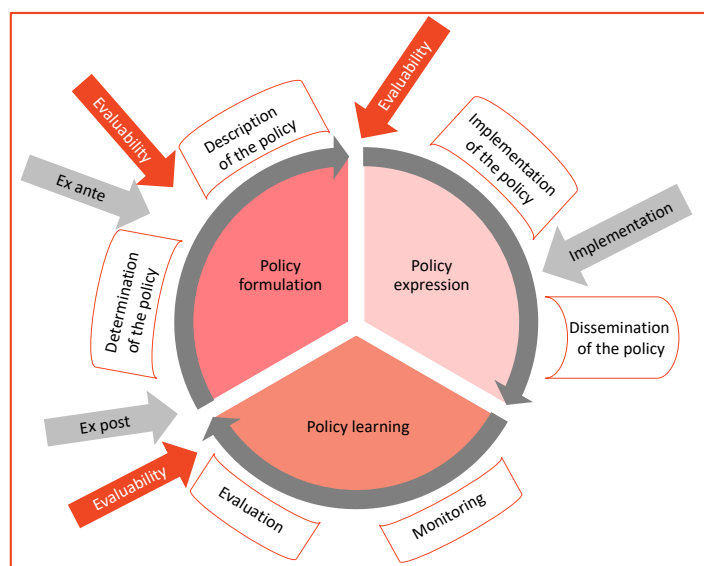
When the EA is performed at an early stage such as the intervention design, it **rigorously defines** the monitoring and evaluation system for the subsequent evaluation, facilitating both the availability of the information that answers the evaluation questions, as well as baseline data capture.

2. From the perspective of public policy design and strategic planning:

- ✓ It contributes to **reinforcing the design** of the intervention, helping the persons or bodies in charge of planning to correct identify and define the problem or requirement and to increase the coherence of the intervention. Especially when the EA is performed for interventions that have not yet been implemented. In this regard, it may serve as a planning tool.
- ✓ It is a **decision-making** tool in strategic planning as it provides quality evidence and information that improve public action. Evaluability contributes to improving interventions which in turn contributes to their improved chances of success (IAAP, 2017).
- ✓ It **improves the efficiency** of public interventions and public action in general. This is because it improves the formulation of the intervention and thus its results, with regard to its low cost in terms of execution times and resources (the evaluability assessment is performed in a short period of time, with low-cost tools and may be performed either internally or externally).

With regard to its framing within different approaches to evaluation, EA is a part of **comprehensive assessment**, defined as the systematic and reasonable process for knowledge generation, by compiling, analysing and interpreting information, aimed at the global comprehension of a public intervention –be it a policy, plan, programme or standard– to achieve a value judgement based on evidence, considering its design, implementation and effects (results and impacts) (AEVAL, 2015b)”³.

Figure 1 Position of evaluability assessment in the life cycle of public action and within the framework of comprehensive assessment. Source: Authors' own based on Ruerd Ruben (n.d.).



³As a matter of fact, AEVAL evaluations systematically include evaluability assessment or some of its elements in the stage of “analysis of the commission”.



The figure above displays the position of the EA in said comprehensive assessment (both with regard to the timeline as well as the contents to be evaluated⁴).

The EA is of greater **utility** when it is performed “prospectively”, that is to say, when it accompanies the intervention design. By incorporating the recommendations based on its findings, it allows us to obtain the most suitable characteristics for subsequent evaluations of requirements, design, intermediate stages, results or impacts (the last two are ex-post evaluations)⁵, essentially in-depth evaluations.

This is notwithstanding the possibility of also performing an EA with good results at the beginning of the implementation stage, and also before an intermediate and ex-post evaluation. In this case, the EA contributes to the detection of conditions for recommending or discouraging an in-depth evaluation.

What are the main goals of an evaluability assessment?

An evaluability assessment may have the following main goals:

- ✓ Improve the quality of the formulation and the design of public interventions.
- ✓ Contribute to ensuring the efficient allocation of public resources.
- ✓ Prepare the intervention to be evaluable.
- ✓ Encourage in-depth evaluations to be effective, efficient, transparent and prompt.

⁴ The timeline determines if an evaluation is ex-ante (if the intervention has not yet been implemented), intermediate (if implementation has commenced) or ex-post (if its life cycle has ended). Meanwhile, the content to be evaluated allows us to distinguish between an evaluation of needs, design, implementation, results or impacts, although they are always conditioned by the aforementioned timeline.

⁵ In this regard, see the recommendations of the World Bank experts, Gertler, Martínez, Premand, Rawlings and Vermeer (2012) in “Impact Evaluation in Practice”.



What does an evaluability assessment consist of?

An EA is an analytical process with different dimensions applied to a public intervention, and from which certain conclusions (and recommendations) may be derived with regard to:

- ✓ The **quality of the intervention planning and design**. It pays special attention to how the problem or requirement mentioned in the plan has been identified and defined; how the goals of the intervention have been defined and how they align with the problem; and thirdly, the underlying logic of the intervention. Likewise, it also examines the mechanisms for implementing the intervention and the (human, economic and technological) resources that are available for its optimal development. It also analyses participation and mechanisms for coordination and cooperation in managing the intervention.
- ✓ The **quality of the information, monitoring and evaluation system** anticipated in the formulation of the intervention, its sustainability, and its contribution to improving the results. It pays special attention to the indicators that assess progress with regard to the goals.
- ✓ **The governance of evaluation**. This dimension performs a pre-emptive analysis of the potential risks that may impede or limit the effective fulfilment of an in-depth evaluation, create delays in delivery, recommend its cancellation or discourage its performance. In short, all that falls within the environment/context in which the evaluation shall be performed. They are risks that may be associated with the intervention to be evaluated as well as the quality of its planning, the monitoring and evaluation system; or with external factors such as the institutional context in which the in-depth evaluation is to be performed, its goal or the utility of the evaluation. Possible limitations to performing the evaluation must also be considered, such as available resources, cost, time, evaluating team, etc. The persons or bodies in charge of the evaluation and the evaluators must anticipate possible problems in the evaluation, the chance that they may appear and their impact, and how to minimise the risk of their appearance or how to handle them if they do. This stage may be summarised as ascertaining if the Evaluation is achievable, feasible, viable and useful.

Furthermore, rather than a binary question of whether something is evaluable or not, it is more a question of degree, how evaluable is it? And above all, is it worth it?

The importance of these three sets of questions that are usually included in evaluability assessments may vary according to the intervention stage at which the assessment is performed. If the intervention is in the design stage, analysing said design has a critical value. On the contrary, if the intervention is in the implementation stage or it has been completed, the aspects relating to information availability and governance acquire greater relevance.



In order to analyse these dimensions of evaluability, the main tools used are: documentary analysis, evaluability questionnaire and interviews.

The EA process generates a **report** that includes the main results of the investigation. For greater accountability, it is recommended that the report be made public and an ad hoc dissemination among the stakeholders be made. Later, it is worthwhile to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations in said report.

Why is an evaluability assessment recommended?

From the point of view of the **persons or bodies in charge of policies and decision-makers and managers**, the EA functions as a tool that aids them to take decisions and, when dealing with public policy formulation, it may reinforce internal validity, transparency and accountability with regard to results and impacts. It thus helps to increase the efficiency of public interventions and increases their chances of success.

On the other hand, it provides proof of the factors that condition the governance of a more in-depth evaluation, and thus helps to avoid them or suggests the evaluation be postponed until they have been taken care of.

From the point of view of the **evaluation teams**, the EA prepares the intervention itself (helping to improve the different dimensions of planning in order to provide the best conditions for performing an evaluation) as well as the stakeholders for a subsequent in-depth evaluation.

In the first case, this is due to the fact that the intervention then possesses (at least, owing to the recommendations of the final evaluability report) the tools required to facilitate the evaluation, with regard to both time and cost.

Secondly, it allows the “adjustment” of the intervention to both the decision-makers and managers, as well as other stakeholders, which results in a greater involvement in its development. It may also reduce the aforementioned negative conditioning factors to facilitate the evaluation.



How is an evaluability assessment performed?

The EA is a process of evaluation which focuses primarily on planning quality⁶, the tools for development, and the conditioning factors that can facilitate or pose obstacles to a subsequent comprehensive assessment.

The process is initiated when decision-making spheres or other involved parties, whether evaluators or managers, propose to perform an evaluation. This point is usually reflected in the initial technical document⁷. It continues with an analysis of the different dimensions of evaluability, and ends with the drafting of a final report which includes the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The duration of the evaluation depends on the complexity of the intervention and its nature, characteristics and conditioning factors (both of the intervention and the resources available for the EA), although in any case, it must be brief and delivered within an adequate period of time in order to be of use.

⁶ Although an ex-ante evaluation is also focused on the design, its goal is different from an EA and it requires greater depth of analysis.

⁷ Whether it is an evaluation by demand or a self-evaluation, it involves documenting the elements of the process to be undertaken.

PART TWO. EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Establishing a process for evaluability assessment (EA) seeks to endow the evaluation with methodological rigour, provide credibility to its result, and optimise its utility and use. From the perspective of the evaluator, it provides an integrated mode of proceeding which facilitates the layout and comprehension of the overall process, and a flexible approach that makes it possible to adjust to the specific questions of the stakeholders. Therefore, the evaluability assessment process should not be deemed a rigid set of procedural stages, rather a methodology, as suggested by Wholey (AEVAL, 2007). The main steps of the process are displayed sequentially for their comprehension in the following section:

Figure 2 Evaluability assessment process. Source: Author's own.



Drawing up the Terms of Reference. This document contains the intention to perform an evaluability assessment, either for self-evaluation or because it is demanded at different levels of the decision-making process. Moreover, just as the process of an evaluation is conditioned by the object to be evaluated or the type and approach of evaluation, the evaluability assessment will depend on the nature or type of intervention, when it is to be performed, the current status of the intervention, the existing institutional context, and the dimension or aspect that has the greatest importance. These questions are included in the Terms of Reference which serves as the process guidelinesline and includes the information required to work towards the needs and expectations of the possible users of the EA. Likewise, it also serves to define the dimensions and assessment criteria to be analysed in the evaluability assessment process.

Analysis of the dimensions of evaluability. This stage includes the in-depth analysis of three components: a) the planning of the intervention; b) the information and monitoring system, and c) the governance of the evaluation. The result of the analysis of the dimensions allows us to determine the level of evaluability of the intervention and based on the level of evaluability obtained, it conditions certain key elements of the in-depth evaluation to be performed subsequently.

Drafting the ***Final Evaluability Report***, the third stage of the process, includes the analysis, the findings, the conclusions and recommendations. It also includes the communication and dissemination of the evaluation results. The process ends with the ***follow-up*** of the recommendations and their level of implementation.

The following sections describe the elements and products of the process.



Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference express the intention to perform an evaluability assessment. It describes both the public intervention (although very briefly) and the evaluability assessment to be performed, including the scope of the work and the concrete goals that are sought to be achieved with the EA.

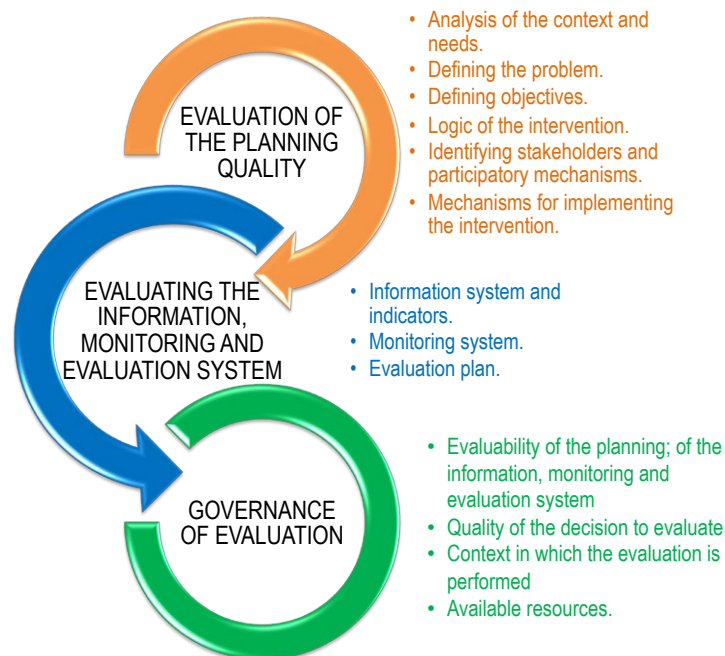
The main points that must be considered when drawing up this document are:

- ✓ The description of the **decision to evaluate**. If it is a self-evaluation, the decision behind performing it is explained. If it has been commissioned, the body or stakeholder requesting the EA must be mentioned, along with the terms, scope and period of time in which the EA must be executed.
- ✓ A brief description of the **object of the evaluation** (the intervention to be evaluated). It includes the goal of the intervention, its scope of action (time, area-related), the current stage of the intervention's life cycle (drafting, implementing, completed, etc.) and finally, it mentions the complexity of the intervention.
- ✓ **Objective, justification and utility of the evaluability assessment** These aspects are essential for analysing certain conditioning factors of a possible subsequent in-depth evaluation.
- ✓ The description of the main areas of the **evaluability assessment process** to be performed and which involves the analysis of different dimensions of evaluability, as well as the tools to be used. It also includes an estimate of information availability or requirement, according to the characteristics of the evaluability assessment. It also indicates if the EA includes in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, etc. (Occasionally, the EA is performed on the basis of relevant documentation. In others, the evaluation team travels to interview the stakeholders of the intervention). When an EA has been commissioned, it may be worthwhile to come to an agreement on the terms of reference with the persons in charge of the public intervention, so that all aspects of the process are made clear, thus ensuring that the EA fulfils the expectations of both parties.
- ✓ It includes the **relations and the mechanism for coordination** between the evaluation team and the stakeholders. This is especially necessary if the EA is to be performed alongside the planning and is performed by an external team. In the case of a self-evaluation, it is performed by the same team. In any case, coordination is important so that the evaluation may be performed in a specific manner and with sufficient time to adopt the decisions that may be required at each stage of the planning.

Analysis of the dimensions of evaluability

The EA consists of an analysis of three **dimensions of evaluation** that examine the planning quality (A); the quality of the information, monitoring and evaluation system (B) and the governance of evaluation (C).

Figure 3 The dimensions of evaluability and their aspects or factors. Source. Author's own.



These dimensions are inter-related, they are not necessarily stand-alone or consecutive and they break down into a series of analyses on different aspects and factors that affect the quality of the intervention and the chances of a successful evaluation.

The goal of the analysis of these three dimensions is to check if the persons or bodies in charge of planning have performed the actions required to equip the intervention with the characteristics that ensure a greater probability of success. The EA does not delve too deeply into the fulfilment of these characteristics, rather it verifies their existence and quality (or their projection) in the formal document of the intervention. This will be undertaken in the subsequent comprehensive assessment, if recommended, using different criteria (significance, relevance, coherence, participation, sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness, etc.).

Next we describe the different dimensions of evaluability.



A. Evaluation of the planning quality

This dimension analyses six inter-dependent aspects: the context and the needs; the definition of the problem; the definition of the goals, the logic behind the intervention⁸; the identification of the stakeholders and participatory mechanisms; and the mechanisms for implementation. The basis of the analysis is the formal intervention document to be evaluated and it is supplemented with interviews and/or complementary documents.

A.1. Analysis of the context and needs

The intervention must be based on an analysis of the socio-economic context (which includes the identification of the main context indicators and their sources), as well as the related regulatory and area-based frameworks, taking into account the different levels of government that may potentially be involved or play a role at any point in the life cycle of the public action.

At the same time, it must explore existing needs and ones that might promote or justify an intervention for their fulfilment, with regard to extension, complexity, degree, etc.

It is possible and it is recommended to use social science methods (such as analytical methods, comprehensive methods, etc.) in both the aforementioned analyses. It is also possible to use certain qualitative-quantitative tools such as a SWOT analysis that allows us to detect strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the situation.

Finally, it checks for possible impacts with regard to gender and/or environmental perspectives in planning.

A.2. Defining the problem

The results of the different analyses provide us with the information to identify and analyse the problem or requirement sought to be resolved by the intervention, and to prioritise the measures to be undertaken, in a cause-effect relation with said problem / requirement. It must be remembered that the results obtained with these measures must be assessable and verifiable. It must all be explicitly mentioned in the document that defines the intervention.

Additionally, there must be an analysis of the risks and alternatives, in a participatory process that is defined for each case. Finally, the intervention must state its temporal, territorial, area-based, geographical and subjective scope.

⁸ These sub-dimensions are consistent with the initial ones of the five stages into which most authors divide the life cycle of a public policy: 1) identification and definition of the problem; 2) formulating alternatives; 3) adopting the best alternative; 4) implementing the alternative and 5) the evaluation.



A.3. Defining objectives

This sub-dimension analyses the alignment with the general goal of the intervention as well as the alignment of the strategic goals of said intervention, with the results of the SWOT prioritisation and the effect on the detected weaknesses and strengths. The goals must be measurable, clear and concise and concrete stages and deadlines must be mentioned in the planning document. It is important to take into account a projection of desired impacts and a baseline that allows us to measure progress.

A.4. Logic of the intervention

Analysing the logic of the intervention allows us to establish the validity of the plan's design, the theory of the change intended by the intervention and the coherence of its goals, core areas and measures. It also identifies possible synergies between the core areas / programmes / strategic lines. And on an external basis, its alignment with other public interventions at different levels of government that may aid or prevent the achievement of the objectives.

A.5. Identifying stakeholders and participatory mechanisms

It is necessary to have considered a participatory mechanism once the stakeholders have been identified, where a key role is played by the population that the intervention is aimed at.

The participatory mechanisms of the intervention may be quite varied and at different levels, from the early stages of planning (identifying the problem, for example, or detecting requirements), or during intermediate stages. An open participation or one that is limited to a few selected stakeholders is also an option. In any case, this participation must be taken into consideration in a regulated procedure.

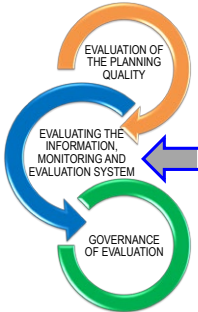
All aspects related to participation must be mentioned in the document that describes the intervention.

A.6. Mechanisms for implementing the intervention

In this sub-dimension we examine the mechanisms for implementation that are included in the intervention, whether designed (if the intervention is at the planning stage or immediately before implementation) or already implemented (in the other cases).

In this regard, the intervention must take into account a series of (economic, human, technological, temporal) resources in order to achieve its goals. It must also anticipate the development of the different activities, by identifying those in charge, the tasks to be performed, the goals and deadlines, etc. that are later factored into the information and monitoring system in order to measure progress and detect at an early stage bottlenecks, limitations or negative incidents of any kind.

It is also essential to set in motion mechanisms for coordination that take into account the resolution of possible conflicts at the implementation stage, for an optimal development of the intervention.



B. Evaluating the information, monitoring and evaluation system

This dimension analyses whether the information, monitoring and evaluation system and the evaluation plan/activities scheduled in the intervention will permit a subsequent evaluation and decision regarding the type of evaluation that is the most convenient.

B.1. Information system

A solid information system from the planning stage onwards and before the implementation of the intervention is a necessary tool for evaluations especially those that deal with results and impacts. This sub-dimension analyses the degree to which the defined indicators, the sources of information and the information compilation system are suitable for performing in-depth evaluations.

In practice, public interventions often suffer from a lack of indicators, which are essential for evaluation especially with regard to the quality of indicators, timelines, objective values and coherent hierarchies of results and baseline data capture, in order to perform a good evaluation of the results. It has been demonstrated (BERD, 2013) that even in EAs themselves, time-bound programmes display relatively low scores in these areas.

The definition and quality of the indicators are measured according to SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), the establishment of standards and goals, the alignment of the indicators with the goals and the measurement process, the structure of the indicators that allows us to identify the key indicators to judge the progress made with regard to goals, monitoring the activities, the results and impacts. Special attention must also be paid to the nature of the data required for a conceptually and methodologically correct evaluation, as well as the availability and predictability of said indicators or data that go beyond mere management indicators to respond to questions of the subsequent evaluation, primarily for an analysis of the results that constitutes more than just an enumeration of the results of the intervention.

It also analyses if the key sources of information on the different aspects of the intervention are identified, along with the quality of the sources of information used to build the indicators, their degree of accessibility and the establishment of a mechanism for access.

With regard to the information capture system, evaluability refers to the existence of a systematic procedure that defines the data to be collected from the sources of information, how and at what moment is the data collected in order to calculate the indicators, and if methods that generate relevant information for decision-making based on the sources of information are used.

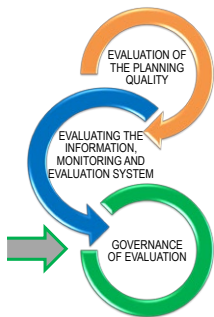


B.2. Monitoring system

The monitoring system is assessed to ensure the goals of the intervention are fulfilled: defining responsibilities in the monitoring system, the analysis selected on the basis of the information system available in the intervention, assessing the degree of fulfilment of the goals throughout the intervention, establishing intermediate goals or objectives, and the existence of response mechanisms in case of deviations.

B.3. Evaluation plan

The evaluability of the intervention takes into account the execution of evaluation activities throughout its life cycle from the planning and implementation, until the end of the intervention, the type of evaluation expected; the resources earmarked for these evaluation activities within the planning of the intervention costs and the availability of information for the evaluation.



C. Governance of evaluation

For the purposes of this guidelines, governance of evaluation may be understood as the administration of this process of evaluation in order to make it effective, efficient, prompt, simple, participatory and transparent.

The basics of risk management adapted to the management of any evaluation process are applied to the analysis of this dimension. Therefore we may claim that the evaluability of governance consists of identifying, analysing and proposing measures to control the potential risks that may limit or make it difficult to perform an in-depth evaluation, delay its delivery within the scheduled deadline, recommend its cancellation or discourage its performance, as the case may be.

Potential risk⁹ factors may be divided into two groups. *Internal* factors that are inherent to the intervention to be evaluated such as the elements for its formulation and design. These factors are analysed in the stages prior to the evaluability assessment process, but the governance of evaluation evaluates the degree to which the results may affect, either positively or negatively, the execution of an in-depth evaluation.

The second group consists of the factors that make up the *environment of the evaluation*. These include: the quality of the decision to evaluate, that is to say, the goal and utility of the evaluation, the institutional and socio-political context in which the evaluation shall be performed and the resources available for the evaluation; time, costs, evaluating team, schedule, etc.

⁹ It uses a risk management methodology. This analysis provides recommendations to establish pre-emptive measures aimed at mitigating, controlling or eliminating the detected risks.



The evaluating team in charge of the evaluability assessment must identify and assess the potential risks that may appear throughout the process of an in-depth evaluation. It includes questions related to what may fail in the process and to what extent (possibility); what would be the repercussions; and what are the means to minimise the risk of failure. Once the potential risks have been identified and assessed, they analyse how to manage the risk if it emerges and propose the most suitable measures to mitigate, control or eliminate the identified risks, focusing mainly on those that are the most important owing to their increased possibility and impact on the in-depth evaluation.

The analysis and management of potential risks is essential for establishing the most suitable *evaluation designs* and for the *feasibility* of the in-depth evaluation. The pre-emptive control of these risks also contributes to ensuring that the in-depth evaluation to be performed fulfils a double goal of accountability as well as serving as a tool for learning and improvement, and that its execution is in line with the principles of effectiveness and efficiency that govern all public administration activities.

An analysis of the governance of evaluation at the planning stage of any public intervention allows the persons or bodies in charge to use strategies for correcting the identified risks and thus improve the intervention, ensure that the design contains the elements required for a subsequent evaluation, and to correctly plan the evaluation. Evaluations may lack sufficient planning which can lead to ambiguity in their aims and objectives, imprecision in their scope, a lack of rigour in their analysis and finally, to the vacuity of their recommendations (toolbox).

C.1. *Evaluability of planning quality and information and monitoring systems*

The results of the evaluability of planning quality, design and information and monitoring systems may condition the execution of an evaluation. It analyses the degree to which gaps in the design of a public intervention or in the information and monitoring systems may influence the in-depth evaluation, by limiting its design or in recommending its performance. The probability of these risks and their potential impact on the evaluation process will determine the strategy to be followed to control the risk according to the type of evaluation to be performed. Thus, the inability to reach a minimum evaluability in indicator quality or deficiencies in access to sources of information or their absence would be critical in the case of an impact evaluation. However, in a design evaluation, the results of the assessment criteria associated with the goals would be more important, for example.



C.2. *The quality of the decision to evaluate*

One of the reasons for which evaluations are not used is that their results do not meet the expectations of those that commission them or satisfy their need for information. This occurs when the decision to evaluate is not well founded by the person or body that commissions the evaluation (the elements responsible for the decision to evaluate are not clear or not well-explained), or because the evaluator has not analysed or taken into account these elements in the design. In any case, this results in an evaluation report with conclusions and recommendations that cannot influence decisions on the intervention, thus losing their utility. The evaluator must focus on the potential risks associated with the elements that constitute the decision to evaluate and their management, without it limiting or fixing the scope or focus of the in-depth evaluation. These elements and their associated questions for determining the quality of decision-making are:

- ✔ Object of evaluation: What can be evaluated, what are its dimensions and complexities?
- ✔ Aim and justification for the evaluation: Why evaluate?
- ✔ Goal/objective of the evaluation. What do I want to learn?
- ✔ Utility of the evaluation. Why do I need the information provided by the evaluation?

For a suitable response to these questions, the evaluator must analyse whether the goal of the evaluation is clear and explicit; whether there are hidden objectives; if there is a justification for evaluating or if it is only to fulfil a regulatory requirement; if the reason for evaluating is clear, that is to say, what purpose is served by the evaluation; the degree of stakeholder and participant involvement in the evaluation and its utility; whether there is a commitment to considering the conclusions and recommendations for improving the intervention, etc. Other elements that must be taken into consideration are the stage of the intervention's life-cycle and whether it is suited to the type of evaluation that may be performed, the complexity of the intervention, and the need to define the limits of the evaluation.

With regard to accounting for evaluation in the intervention planning, it analyses if the persons or bodies in charge have mentioned evaluation activities or plans in the text of the intervention and if so, whether the goal, utility, type and time of evaluation have been specified.



C.3. The context in which the in-depth evaluation is performed

Just as the decision to evaluate is a factor that conditions its utility, the context in which the evaluation is performed is another reason why its result may not be used depending on opportunity. By context we mean the public policy scope of the intervention, the institutional framework or the existing political situation that promotes or obstructs the successful performance of the evaluation.

It deals with two different aspects:

- ✓ On one hand, the degree to which the results, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation shall be used to take decisions based on the context of the evaluation at all times.
- ✓ On the other hand, the context may also pose problems to the successful performance of a subsequent evaluation. For example, the evaluation of politicised plans or programmes or those with a high social or media-related impact, the presence of interested parties that strongly resist them, etc. It is also worth pointing out that institutional environments may be less inclined to evaluate, thus making it impossible to perform the evaluation.

An added element is the analysis of the stakeholders involved in the intervention. This involves identifying the most important stakeholders in the intervention, their roles or functions with regard to the intervention, their specific interests, motives or ability to influence the evaluation, and the role they may play in the evaluation process.

C.4. Resources earmarked for the evaluation

The (economic, technological, human and time) resources allocated to the evaluation may condition its execution and design with regard to the scope or type of evaluation to be applied, the choice of techniques and the methodology of analysis. According to the nature of the intervention and the type and scope of the future evaluation to be performed, different analytical tools will be required that may demand more than the available resources. Thus, the evaluation of a public policy that is strategic, cross-cutting, has a territorial dimension, and ranges from the design to the impact stages, may require various quantitative and qualitative tools to respond to the evaluation questions. This implies a high cost, whereas an evaluation of the implementation of an operational plan or programme may be much more affordable in this regard.



Analysing this factor assesses whether there is a correct prediction of the costs involved in the evaluation of the intervention planning or the adjustment of resource allocation at the moment of taking the decision to conduct a comprehensive assessment. For example a low budget affects the design of the evaluation, which may define an inadequate selection of tools, with the consequent repercussions on the rigour of the analysis to be performed, on the coherence, the internal validity of the evaluation, and thus on its diminished use.

The time taken to perform the evaluation and its alignment with the time required by the person or body commissioning the evaluation is also assessed, or the analysis of the dynamics of the evaluation compared to the dynamics of the decision-making. Delivering the evaluation within a deadline that is not line with the needs of the decision-makers is a factor that conditions the use of the evaluation, therefore the evaluator must consider whether the most suitable design includes evaluation process times (administrative requirements for using tools or the time required for data analysis and exploitation) and the planning of the evaluation activities (activity timeline) that permit delivery within a suitable time frame for political / administrative decision-makers.

Other aspects to be considered are the selection of evaluators (composition, skills, conflict of interests, impartiality and independence) and the most relevant and suitable techniques and tools, in keeping with the object and goal of the evaluation.

Techniques and tools for the analysis of the dimensions of evaluability

To perform the analysis of the EA dimensions, the techniques used are essentially qualitative such as documentary analysis and interviews among others, although surveys of decision-makers / stakeholders are also used.

These techniques are used to fill in the **evaluability questionnaire**, which is the main tool for information compilation and analysis of the dimensions and factors that play a role in the evaluability of a public intervention.



The evaluability questionnaire

The evaluability questionnaire is one of the tools commonly used in an EA, which lists the evaluability questions that are assessed in order to determine the degree to which an intervention may be evaluated, as well as the risks to a subsequent evaluation.

The use of evaluability questionnaires or checklists is widespread in the field of EAs¹⁰. Nevertheless it must be pointed out that both the questions and the assessment criteria used in evaluability, their specific content, scope and range, greater or lesser emphasis on the different dimensions, the critical elements considered, as well as the use of questionnaires, may be quite varied.

The utility and validity of evaluability questionnaires as instruments or tools of evaluability has been highlighted by different authors¹¹. Among other things, they allow us to perform a systematic analysis of the important questions on evaluability, offer comprehensive coverage and provide visibility to all the elements that constitute evaluability.

On the other hand, the concrete analysis and assessment of the dimensions and criteria of evaluability assessment may be based on different aspects. Some bodies or organisations employ a more qualitative and analytical focus. Other simply check whether a series of conditions are fulfilled or not (for example, “Yes / No”). Evaluability questionnaires that use metrics or scales of assessment to measure the degree of assessment of the items are quite common. They may use scales from 1 to 10, or Likert scales (a lot / all-enough / mostly, few / scarcely, none).

The evaluability questionnaire adopted in this guidelines consists of two parts; the list of questions and the summary. However, its applicability and structure are sufficiently flexible and may be adapted according to the set of dimensions, the evaluability criteria and the assessment system followed in terms of utility, the end goal, the nature of the intervention, or the status of the project to be evaluated. For example, if the programme is in the design stage, there is no need to include the criterion of indicators of evolution or implementation of the intervention.

¹⁰ A few years ago, R. Davies (2013) pointed out that of the 19 agencies studied, 11 used checklists.

¹¹ It is worth mentioning, among others, R. Davies (2013) or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2013). The latter has made a statistical comparison of checklists and highlighted that the two major risks are the difficulty of applying them consistently and the need to refine them further.



The first part of the questionnaire is the **list of evaluability questions (Figures 4, 5 and 6)** for the assessment of the activities of the EA process. It possesses the following structure:

- ✓ The first level deals with the dimensions of the EA (intervention design quality, monitoring system, environment or governance of evaluation)
- ✓ The second level deals with a set of assessment criteria that constitute each one of the dimensions, and which analyse specific aspects of these dimensions.

Thus the structure of the questionnaire allows us to perform analysis and judgements for each dimension, sub-dimension or at a more detailed level, for specific assessment criteria. Another advantage is that it allows us to give aggregate scores. Thus we may determine if the evaluability of the public intervention is due to the latter's design quality (with a high score, for example) but not due to the governance of the evaluation (with lower scores). Each dimension may possess some aspects where the evaluability is high, but not in others.

On the basis of the information compiled in these questionnaires, an analysis is performed on the basis of a series of scores / variables. Apart from the scores, the questionnaire also identifies areas for improvement and improved practices.

Depending on who performs the EA, the questionnaire may either be filled internally by the unit when the EA is used as a self-assessment tool to judge the quality of an intervention (plan or programme), or by the evaluating team that performs the EA.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of a **summary section (Figure 7)** which presents a conclusion on each dimension of evaluability on the basis of an ad hoc "summary question" which provides the proof required to support the statements that are made.

The general features of the different parts of the evaluability questionnaire are listed below.



Figure 4 Evaluability Questionnaire. List of questions on planning quality.

EVALUABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE OF A PUBLIC INTERVENTION						
EVALUATION OF THE PLANNING QUALITY						
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		SCORE				Dimensions
Set of characteristics (36) that demonstrate the performance of actions required to formulate a high-quality public intervention. DEFINITION: The persons or bodies in charge of the intervention have undertaken a process to detect requirements within a specific context; they have defined the problem / requirement to be approached with the required analyses in order to provide the greatest number of elements that help to increase the chances of success of said intervention.		1 UNPERFORMED OR EARLY 0-25%	2 LESS PERFORMED 25-50%	3 PARTIALLY PERFORMED 50-75%	4 FULLY PERFORMED 75-100%	
1	The document presents a reliable assessment framed rationally within its context, with a theory on the intervention					Evaluation of the context and needs.
2	A socio-economic analysis has been performed.					
3	The assessment includes main context indicators and their sources.					
4	The regulatory and area-based framework has been analysed, taking into account the different levels of government.					
5	A SWOT analysis has been performed or methods to analyse requirements and context have been used					
6	Gender-based perspective has been considered when performing the assessment.					
7	Environmental perspective has been considered when performing the assessment.					
8	The plan has been explicitly framed within the territorial, area-based, time-based, geographical and subjective contexts.					
9	The problem / requirement to be solved by the intervention is explicitly defined.					Defining the problem
10	The definition of the problem / requirement is based on the analysis of the context and requirements performed.					
11	The causes and consequences of the problems and requirements have been analysed.					
12	A risk analysis has been performed and possible alternatives studied.					
13	The beneficiaries / target population of the intervention have been mentioned.					
14	The measures proposed and their expected effects are measurable and verifiable.					
15	The measures to be undertaken have been prioritised with reference to the expected cause-effect relation.					
16	The plan has been explicitly framed within the territorial, area-based, time-based, geographical and subjective contexts.					
17	A participatory process has been designed and implemented to define the problem.					Defining objectives
18	The objectives clearly meet the detected problem or requirement (alignment with the general goal)					
19	The strategic objectives are aligned with the priority results of the assessment made (SWOT or other similar techniques)					
20	The objectives are measurable.					
21	The objectives are clear and concise.					
22	The effect of the objectives on the strengths and weaknesses has been analysed.					
23	A time frame has been established to achieve the objectives (and intermediate goals, as applicable).					
24	The desired impacts (long-term, on society, etc.) have been established.					
25	A point zero or baseline has been established in order to measure progress.					Logic of the intervention
26	The objectives have been arranged according to their corresponding logical sequence (general, specific, operational).					
27	The causal relationships between the different objectives and between them and the detected problem / requirement have been established.					
28	The consistency of this intervention with European strategy in this area and with international regulations or other complementary public interventions has been analysed.					Stakeholders and participatory mechanisms
29	The primary stakeholders have been identified.					
30	The target or beneficiary population of the intervention has been explicitly mentioned.					
31	Participatory mechanisms with a regulated procedure have been considered, at least in the problem assessment and definition stages.					Mechanisms for implementing the intervention
32	A procedure for participation has been established at all stages of the life cycle of the intervention, from the detection of requirements until the evaluation.					
33	The intervention takes into account the resources required to achieve its goals (economic, human, technological, etc.)					
34	A forecast of the development of the activities has been made, marking intermediate goals and time frames.					
35	The persons or bodies in charge and their respective tasks have been clearly identified.					
36	Mechanisms for coordination to resolve possible conflicts have been envisaged.					
Have the elements required to perform an assessment of the requirements and the context been clearly and precisely identified?						
Have the elements required to correctly pinpoint and define the problem or requirement been clearly and precisely identified?						
Good practices						
Elements to be improved						

Source: Author's own.



Figure 5. Evaluability Questionnaire. List of questions on information and monitoring system.

EVALUABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE OF A PUBLIC INTERVENTION						
EVALUATING THE INFORMATION, MONITORING AND PLAN EVALUATION SYSTEM						
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		SCORE				Dimensions
		1	2	3	4	
Set of characteristics (21) that demonstrate the performance of actions required to formulate a high-quality public intervention. DEFINITION: An information system based on SMART indicators and reliable and accessible sources has been defined that helps to perform the activities required to monitor the progress of the intervention. An evaluation plan with different activities at different stages of the life cycle of the intervention, including the impact evaluation, has been considered.		UNPERFORMED OR EARLY 0-25%	LESS PERFORMED 25-50%	PARTIALLY PERFORMED 50-75%	FULLY PERFORMED 75-100%	
1	There are specific, measurable, relevant and time-based indicators of the evolution of the intervention, and they are easy to obtain and interpret, with reliable sources.					Information system
2	There are context indicators.					
3	Standards and goals have been set for each objective in each indicators.					
4	The indicators are in line with the goals and the measurement process.					
5	The structure of the system of indicators allows us to identify key indicators to assess different elements of progress (achieving goals, monitoring activities, results and impacts).					
6	There is sufficient information (documents, complete information aimed at evaluation) to assess the results and impact of the intervention.					
7	Systematic, regulated and homogeneous processes have been prepared for data collection, with reference to the source, the process for data collection and the time when the data is collected in order to calculate the indicators.					
8	The key sources of information on the different elements of the intervention have been clearly identified.					
9	The sources of information are of high quality and allow us to create reliable indicators.					
10	The sources of information are accessible.					
11	There are possibilities of compiling additional information from other (reliable) sources.					
12	There is a plan to monitor the intervention.					Monitoring
13	The monitoring responsibilities have been defined.					
14	An analytical process based on an information system has been established to assess the level of fulfilment of the goals at different points in the life cycle of the intervention.					
15	The intermediate goals or targets have been established.					
16	Mechanisms to respond to deviations from the objectives have been envisaged.					Evaluation Plan
17	There is an evaluation plan that includes different evaluation activities throughout the life cycle of the intervention.					
18	The evaluation plan includes the objectives of each evaluation activity.					
19	The cost programme of the intervention includes the resources allocated for each evaluation activity to be performed according to the evaluation plan.					
20	The execution of an external impact evaluation has been accounted for.					
21	The execution of an ex-ante and an intermediate evaluation has been accounted for.					
Has a reliable information system been designed to monitor and evaluate the intervention?						
The indicators are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound						
Has an evaluation plan that may be executed as required to obtain useful, reliable, clear and fact-based conclusions and recommendations been designed?						
Good practices						
Elements to be improved						

Source: Author's own.



Figure 6. Evaluability Questionnaire. List of questions on the governance of the evaluation.

EVALUABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE OF A PUBLIC INTERVENTION						
EVALUATING THE GOVERNANCE OF THE EVALUATION						
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		SCORE				Dimensions
Set of characteristics (14) that demonstrate the performance of actions required to formulate a high-quality public intervention. DEFINITION: The intervention possesses the resources required to perform an in-depth evaluation and the risks that may compromise the governance of the evaluation are adequately managed.		1 UNPERFORMED OR EARLY 0-25%	2 LESS PERFORMED 25-50%	3 PARTIALLY PERFORMED 50-75%	4 FULLY PERFORMED 75-100%	
1	The allocation of the (human and material) resources required to perform the envisaged actions has been ensured and explicitly mentioned.					Resources
2	There are sufficient resources for sustainable monitoring.					
3	The necessary resources have been allocated for the evaluation.					
4	The necessary personnel are available for the evaluation.					
5	There is sufficient time to perform the evaluation.					
6	A deadline has been set to present the results of the evaluation which allows us to make improvements to the Plan.					Participation / Cooperation
7	The involvement of key stakeholders have been ensured by means of a regulated procedure.					
8	Mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration with the co-managers and other stakeholders have been accounted for.					
9	The dissemination of the results of the evaluation among the stakeholders has been accounted for.					
10	Mechanisms for conflict resolution have been accounted for.					Implementation
11	The intervention is being implemented as intended.					
12	Mechanisms to detect difficulties, bottlenecks or limitations have been accounted for.					
13	Mechanisms to reduce negative impacts of the context on the evaluation have been accounted for.					
14	A follow-up of the incorporation of the recommendations has been accounted for.					
Have the resources required to perform the actions and the monitoring and evaluation of the intervention been allocated?						
Is stakeholder participation in the intervention accounted for?						
What is the degree of implementation of the intervention with regard to the original projections?						
Good practices						
Elements to be improved						

Source: Author's own.



Figure 7. Evaluability Questionnaire. Evaluability Summary Section

EVALUABILITY SUMMARY SECTION		
IDENTIFICATION DATA OF THE INTERVENTION		
IDENTIFICATION DATA OF THE PERSON OR BODY IN CHARGE OF THE INTERVENTION		
IDENTIFICATION DATA OF THE PERSON OR BODY COMMISSIONING THE EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT, AS APPLICABLE		
CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE EVALUABILITY OF EACH EVALUATION ACTIVITY		
1. EVALUABILITY OF THE DESIGN		
	YES	NO
SUMMARY QUESTION		
Evidence provided		
2. EVALUATING THE INFORMATION, MONITORING AND PLAN EVALUATION SYSTEM DESIGN EVALUABILITY		
	YES	NO
SUMMARY QUESTION		
Evidence provided		
3. EVALUATING THE GOVERNANCE		
	YES	NO
SUMMARY QUESTION		
Evidence provided		

Source: Author's own.



Methodology of measurement and analysis

The overall analysis of all the responses to the questionnaire may be either qualitative or quantitative. If the evaluability assessment is performed by the responsible body as a self-assessment tool, the analysis may limit itself to a qualitative assessment. If, on the other hand, the evaluability assessment is performed in order to assess whether or not to make an in-depth evaluation of a public intervention, it is recommended that the evaluators (whether internal or external to the responsible body) perform a more in-depth quantitative analysis within the framework of an EA, in order to make the review as objective as possible.

Thus the dimensions and assessment criteria of the list of evaluability questions are answered with a quantitative scoring based on a four-point (1-4) *Likert* scale in this guidelines. At the same time, for each question or sub-dimension, we must include the references to the data collection techniques used and the evidence found¹².

Each assessment criterion must be answered using the following methodological benchmarks:

- If the specific aspect has not been performed or is at an early stage (less than 25%), a score of **One** must be given.
- If it has been performed, but it is limited, partially or clearly incomplete (25%-50% of the total), a score of **Two** must be assigned. For example, if the analysis of the context and requirements is limited or simply partial, then this criterion for appraisal would be ranked as mentioned above.
- If a considerable degree of the aspect under analysis has been completed (50%-75%) then it would be given a **Three**. For example, if there is a reliable assessment with an advanced theory on the underlying intervention, even if it is not complete. Or if there is an analysis of the risks and possible alternatives, but it is not holistic or total.
- The highest score **Four** is reserved for aspects that are at very advanced stages or have been fully performed (75%-100%). For example, if the analysis or examination of whether the intervention is complementary to other public actions has been completed.

The sum of the scores for each dimension provides their individual quantitative value. Likewise, the aggregate score of the three dimensions gives us the total score of the EA.

¹² There are two questions at the end of the evaluability questionnaire which must be answered with regard to the analysis performed: "Have the elements required to perform an assessment of the requirements and the context been clearly and precisely identified?" and: "Have the elements required to correctly pinpoint and define the problem or requirement been clearly and precisely identified?"



An important question when using scales in EA is the possible use of weightings on the basis of the relative importance of the dimensions in the evaluability questionnaire. This may be applicable at two levels:

- A. *At the level of dimensions*** (planning quality, information and monitoring system, and governance of evaluation). At this level, different weights must be assigned in advance to each dimension on the basis of their relevance and impact with regard to the type of in-depth evaluation that is to be performed; or on the basis of the relevance of each dimension in designing the intervention, if the EA is performed as a complement to the planning. These weightings are therefore flexible and open to adaptation depending on the type of evaluation to be performed or planned in the text of the intervention.

To illustrate this, the information and monitoring system is especially important in evaluations of results and impacts and is assigned greater weight, for example 40%, thus making it more important than the other two dimensions. Whereas, planning design quality is decisive in evaluations of requirements and assessments, therefore this dimension will have relatively greater weight.

To prevent the number of criteria from affecting the weight that we have assigned to a dimension, we must divide the total score of each component by the total number of its assessment criteria.

- B. *At the level of a specific assessment criterion***: it is necessary to define the importance of each assessment criterion within every dimension. This question has been discussed and there are two options:

- Use simple assessment criteria, when each criterion provides the same information to its dimension, that is to say, all questions have the same value. The total score of each dimension is calculated by adding up the scores given to each assessment criterion and dividing the result by the total number of criteria.

- Using weighted assessment criteria, when all questions do not have the same value, rather the value is relative to a critical aspect of the EA that makes it necessary to assign different weights to the criteria. It has been established that there are often elements of greater importance, to the point that it is possible to ascertain the most evaluable projects based on a reduced number of criteria¹³. In this case, the total score is obtained by multiplying the score of each criterion by their assigned weight and adding the results.

¹³ See Poate et al. (2001) on human rights projects.



The evaluability questionnaire presented in this guidelines does not stipulate which criteria may be assigned greater weight (on the basis of their greater relevance), as this depends on a series of factors that must be examined in the EA, such as: the time of performance, the characteristics of the intervention, avoiding being conditioned or opting for one type of evaluation or another, or that the weighting must be based on the concrete experience of the evaluators.

The aggregate score of all the dimensions provides a **global score** of the degree of evaluability of the intervention. Assigning a general cut-off point beyond which an evaluation is recommended is not desirable. Neither is assigning one below which an evaluation is not recommended. For example, when 52% of the maximum score that may be obtained is used as the decisive element for determining whether to perform a subsequent evaluation. And when 50%-51% would discourage it.

Although it is worthwhile to centre the evaluation on interventions that have the highest chance of success when resources are limited, there are interventions that, given the volume of resources mobilised or their social or political interest, must be evaluated even when their aggregate score may be low.

There is an exception for organisations or institutions whose goal is to execute within a specific period of time (one year or more, generally by means of structured evaluation plans), a certain number of evaluations. In order to select the ones to be evaluated from a sizeable or small group of interventions, the EA global score may constitute a decisive factor to determine whether or not to perform the evaluations.

Later, we shall examine a concrete case where an evaluability questionnaire is applied to an intervention.

Final Evaluability Report

The formal drafting of the Final Evaluability Report must follow the same points and quality criteria as any evaluation report.

For this, it must follow certain guidelines on evaluation that have already been highlighted. AEVAL (2015b) states that: *“The report must be arranged in a logical sequence which presents the complete process of evaluation including the methodology, sources and the evidence of the findings that have been obtained. That is to say, the evaluation report demonstrates the process followed. This is essential from the perspective of evaluation transparency and also to facilitate an external assessment of the degree of independence of the evaluation. A detailed explanation of the focus, the methodology, the tools used and the data obtained, makes the evaluation replicable and consequently allows third parties to assess the quality of the evaluation process from this perspective.”*



With regard to the content and structure of the final report, the different analyses performed and the findings obtained must be included. The structure of the Final Report should reflect the different dimensions of evaluability (planning quality, quality of the monitoring and evaluation system, and governance of evaluation), for a systematic presentation of all relevant aspects in each segment¹⁴.

The report must contain the data obtained from the analysis of the evaluability questionnaire applied, and this questionnaire may be included in the body of the report or as an annex. It is also worth mentioning the different tools and techniques used.

The Final Report must include a section on the conclusions and recommendations obtained. Finally, it is worth drafting an executive summary of the EA.

A rigorous analysis and objective findings that reflect logical thinking are essential quality criteria of a Final Report. Similarly, the conclusions must be in line with the dimensions analysed in the EA and the recommendations must be comprehensible, useful, fact-based and sufficiently clear.

The evaluability questionnaire is also a quality instrument of the EA Final Report and may be used as a checklist to assess whether the findings and conclusions are in line with the dimensions and assessment criteria of the questionnaire, as is the case of question lists and evaluation criteria used in rigorous evaluations¹⁵.

As with any other process, the last stage is the EA follow-up. It involves performing a satisfaction survey of all stakeholders that have participated in the EA with the goal of assessing their degree of satisfaction with the evaluation process and team, and to identify areas of improvement. Additionally, it is also worthwhile to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations before embarking on an in-depth evaluation, in order to ensure that the issues that affected the evaluability of the intervention have been solved. This will ensure the correct execution of the subsequent in-depth evaluation.

¹⁴ In this case, it follows the systematic structure of AEVAL reports, where the analysis and findings are arranged according to the questions asked by the evaluation.

¹⁵ Consult, for example, the quality criteria mentioned in the Guía práctica para el diseño y la realización de evaluaciones de políticas públicas. Enfoque AEVAL (2015).



A case study of evaluability assessment

In this section, we present a practical application of the scoring system and the weighting of the dimensions in the evaluability questionnaire discussed earlier.

The hypothetical intervention consists of the implementation of a series of measures to improve economic and industrial activity and to create jobs in sectors of high added value. The intervention has already been implemented, therefore this is an evaluability assessment aimed at deciding whether to perform an ex-post in-depth evaluation (the degree of evaluability of the intervention and identifying the most important shortcomings that may limit the performance of the ex-post evaluation).

Alongside other aspects to be considered, evaluations of this type of intervention place greater importance on the use of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the intervention. The score of each assessment criterion and the aggregate score of each dimension are listed in the following figures.

As was mentioned earlier, depending on the type of intervention, the degree of implementation and other questions, it is possible to assign different weights to each dimension. In this case under study, a crucial aspect is analysing the economic impact and the impact on the employment programme, therefore greater weight may be given to the information and monitoring system. This weighting may be justified by the fact that the impact of the programme cannot be evaluated (especially whether the possible improvements observed are due solely to the intervention and not to other factors) if:

- a baseline measurement or one prior to the intervention in line with its scope, goals and possible results is not undertaken;
- there is no possibility of obtaining complementary information on the studied population;
- or
- it is not possible to create control groups



Figure 8. Final Score and Weightings in the evaluability case study.

SCORE OF THE DIMENSIONS OF EVALUABILITY			
DIMENSIONS	Weighting %	Score	FINAL Score percentage*score
1. INFORMATION AND MONITORING SYSTEM	40%	2.43	0.97
Evidence provided			
2. PLANNING QUALITY	30%	2.25	0.68
Evidence provided			
3. GOVERNANCE OF THE EVALUATION	30%	2.36	0.71
Evidence provided			
FINAL SCORE (sum of the scores of the dimensions)			2.35

The figure above presents a summary of the scores obtained. It displays how, in spite of a similar score in each dimension, the score of the information and monitoring system has greater weight when compared to planning quality and governance of the evaluation (0.97 against 0.71).

If the information and monitoring system had been given greater weight, the contribution of this dimension to the overall score would have been even greater. As may be observed, the final evaluability score is 2.35 on a scale of 1 to 4, that is to say, an intermediate score.



Figure 9. Questionnaire of evaluability case study. Planning Quality

EVALUABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE OF A PUBLIC INTERVENTION							
EVALUATION OF THE PLANNING QUALITY							
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		SCORE				Score	Dimensions
		1 UNPERFORMED OR EARLY 0-25%	2 LIMITED/LESS PERFORMED 25-50%	3 CONSIDERABLY PERFORMED 50-75%	4 FULLY PERFORMED 75-100%		
Set of characteristics (35) that demonstrate the performance of actions required to formulate a high-quality public intervention. DEFINITION: The persons or bodies in charge of the intervention have undertaken a process to detect requirements within a specific context; they have defined the problem / requirement to be approached with the required analyses in order to provide the greatest number of elements that help to increase the chances of success of said intervention.							
1	The document presents a reliable assessment framed rationally within its context, with a theory on the intervention.	x				1	Evaluation of the context and needs.
2	A socio-economic analysis has been performed.		x			2	
3	The assessment includes main context indicators and their sources.			x		3	
4	The regulatory and area-based framework has been analysed, taking into account the different levels of government.		x			2	
5	A SWOT analysis has been performed or methods to analyse requirements and context have been used			x		3	
6	Gender-based perspective has been considered when performing the assessment.				x	4	
7	Environmental perspective has been considered when performing the assessment.	x				1	
8	The plan has been explicitly framed within the territorial, area-based, time-based, geographical and subjective contexts.	x				1	Defining the problem
9	The problem / requirement to be solved by the intervention is explicitly defined.		x			2	
10	The definition of the problem / requirement is based on the analysis of the context and requirements performed.			x		3	
11	The causes and consequences of the problems and requirements have been analysed.			x		3	
12	A risk analysis has been performed and possible alternatives studied.	x				1	
13	The beneficiaries / target population of the intervention have been mentioned.				x	4	
14	The measures proposed and their expected effects are measurable and verifiable.			x		3	
15	The measures to be undertaken have been prioritised with reference to the expected cause-effect relation.			x		3	
16	The plan has been explicitly framed within the territorial, area-based, time-based, geographical and subjective contexts.		x			2	Defining objectives
17	A participatory process has been designed and implemented to define the problem.		x			2	
18	The objectives clearly meet the detected problem or requirement (alignment with the general goal) and with the SWOT analysis.		x			2	
19	The strategic objectives are aligned with the priority results of the assessment made (SWOT or other similar techniques)			x		3	
20	The objectives are measurable.					4	
21	The objectives are clear and concise.		x			2	
22	The effect of the objectives on the strengths and weaknesses has been analysed.	x				1	
23	A time frame has been established to achieve the objectives (and intermediate goals, as applicable).			x		3	
24	The desired impacts (long-term, on society, etc.) have been established.	x				1	Logic of the intervention
25	A point zero or baseline has been established in order to measure progress.	x				1	
26	The objectives have been arranged according to their corresponding logical sequence (general, specific, operational).	x				1	
27	The causal relationships between the different objectives and between them and the detected problem / requirement have been established.		x			2	
28	The consistency of this intervention with European strategy in this area and with international regulations or other complementary public interventions has been analysed.		x			2	
29	The primary stakeholders have been identified.			x		3	
30	The target or beneficiary population of the intervention has been explicitly mentioned.			x		3	
31	Participatory mechanisms with a regulated procedure have been considered, at least in the problem assessment and definition stages.			x		3	Stakeholders and participatory mechanisms
32	A procedure for participation has been established at all stages of the life cycle of the intervention, from the detection of requirements until the evaluation.	x				1	
33	The intervention takes into account the resources required to achieve its goals (economic, human, technological resources, etc.)	x				1	Mechanisms for implementing the intervention
34	A forecast of the development of the activities has been made, marking intermediate goals and time frames.		x			2	
35	The persons or bodies in charge and their respective tasks have been clearly identified.			x		3	
36	Mechanisms for coordination to resolve possible conflicts have been envisaged.			x		3	
TOTAL SCORE (sum of the score of the items / 36 questions)						2.25	
Have the elements required to perform an assessment of the requirements and the context been clearly and precisely identified?							
Have the elements required to correctly pinpoint and define the problem or requirement been clearly and precisely identified?							
Good practices							
Elements to be improved							



Figure 10. Questionnaire of evaluability case study. Information System

EVALUABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE OF A PUBLIC INTERVENTION							
EVALUATING THE INFORMATION, MONITORING AND PLAN EVALUATION SYSTEM							
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		SCORE				Dimensions	
Set of characteristics (21) that demonstrate the performance of actions required to formulate a high-quality public intervention. DEFINITION: An information system based on SMART indicators and reliable and accessible sources has been defined that helps to perform the activities required to monitor the progress of the intervention. An evaluation plan with different activities at different stages of the life cycle of the intervention, including the impact evaluation, has been considered.		1 UNPERFORMED OR EARLY 0-25%	2 LIMITED/LESS PERFORMED 25-50%	3 CONSIDERABLY PERFORMED 50-75%	4 FULLY PERFORMED 75-100%	Score	
1	There are specific, measurable, relevant and time-based indicators of the evolution of the intervention, and they are easy to obtain and interpret, with reliable sources.		x			2	Information system
2	There are context indicators.			x		3	
3	Standards and goals have been set for each objective in each indicators.		x			2	
4	The indicators are in line with the goals and the measurement process.		x			2	
5	The structure of the system of indicators allows us to identify key indicators to assess different elements of progress (achieving goals, monitoring activities, results and impacts).	x				1	
6	There is sufficient information (documents, complete information aimed at evaluation) to assess the results and impact of the intervention.		x			2	
7	Systematic, regulated and homogeneous processes have been prepared for data collection, with reference to the source, the process for data collection and the time when the data is collected in order to calculate the indicators.		x			2	
8	The key sources of information on the different elements of the intervention have been clearly identified.			x		3	
9	The sources of information are of high quality and allow us to create reliable indicators.			x		3	
10	The sources of information are accessible.		x			2	
11	There are possibilities of compiling additional information from other (reliable) sources.			x		3	Monitoring
12	There is a plan to monitor the intervention.			x		3	
13	The monitoring responsibilities have been defined.			x		3	
14	An analytical process based on an information system has been established to assess the level of fulfilment of the goals at different points in the life cycle of the intervention.					4	
15	The intermediate goals or targets have been established.			x		3	
16	Mechanisms to respond to deviations from the objectives have been envisaged.	x				1	Evaluation Plan
17	There is an evaluation plan that includes different evaluation activities throughout the life cycle of the intervention.	x				1	
18	The evaluation plan includes the objectives of each evaluation activity.			x		3	
19	The cost programme of the intervention includes the resources allocated for each evaluation activity to be performed according to the evaluation plan.			x		3	
20	The execution of an external impact evaluation has been accounted for.			x		3	
21	The execution of an ex-ante and an intermediate evaluation has been accounted for.		x			2	
TOTAL SCORE (sum of the score of the items / 21 questions)						2.43	
Has a reliable information system been designed to monitor and evaluate the intervention?							
The indicators are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound							
Has an evaluation plan that may be executed as required to obtain useful, reliable, clear and fact-based conclusions and recommendations been designed?							
Good practices							
Elements to be improved							



Figure 11. Questionnaire of evaluability case study. Governance of the Evaluation

EVALUABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE OF A PUBLIC INTERVENTION							
EVALUATING THE GOVERNANCE OF THE EVALUATION							
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		SCORE				Dimensions	
Set of characteristics (14) that demonstrate the performance of actions required to formulate a high-quality public intervention. DEFINITION: The intervention has the resources needed to perform an in-depth evaluation and the risks that may compromise the governance of the evaluation are adequately managed.		1	2	3	4	Score	
		UNPERFORMED OR EARLY 0-25%	LIMITED/LESS PERFORMED 25-50%	CONSIDERABLY PERFORMED 50-75%	FULLY PERFORMED 75-100%		
1	The allocation of the (human and material) resources required to perform the envisaged actions has been ensured and explicitly mentioned.		x			2	Resources
2	There are sufficient resources for sustainable monitoring.			x		3	
3	The necessary resources have been allocated for the evaluation.		x			2	
4	The necessary personnel are available for the evaluation.			x		3	
5	There is sufficient time to perform the evaluation.		x			2	
6	A deadline has been set to present the results of the evaluation which will allow us to make improvements to the Plan.					4	Participation / Cooperation
7	The involvement of key stakeholders have been ensured by means of a regulated procedure.		x			2	
8	Mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration with the co-managers and other stakeholders have been accounted for.			x		3	
9	The dissemination of the results of the evaluation among the stakeholders has been accounted for.			x		3	
10	Mechanisms for conflict resolution have been accounted for.		x			2	
11	The intervention is being implemented as intended.		x			2	Implementation
12	Mechanisms to detect difficulties, bottlenecks or limitations have been accounted for.	x				1	
13	Mechanisms to reduce negative impacts of the context on the evaluation have been accounted for.		x			2	
14	A follow-up of the incorporation of the recommendations has been accounted for.		x			2	
TOTAL SCORE (sum of the score of the items / 14 questions)						2.36	
Have the resources required to perform the actions and the monitoring and evaluation of the intervention been allocated?							
Is stakeholder participation in the intervention accounted for?							
What is the degree of implementation of the intervention with regard to the original projections?							
Good practices							
Elements to be improved							



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