

Outcome and Impact Assessment in International Development

Zewo Guidelines for Projects and Programmes

These guidelines are designed to help project managers to assess the outcomes of their projects and programmes. They demonstrate how development agencies can implement an appropriate outcome and impact assessment system.



This 6-step guide explains how outcome and impact assessment can be integrated into the project management cycle. Several steps that are decisive for outcome and impact assessment need to be considered as early as the planning stage. The whole cycle lasts between three and five years - and even longer in the case of larger projects. The various stages may be gone through several times during the project cycle.

Definitions and some introductory explanations can be found in the sections [Key terms](#) and [What is impact assessment for?](#). The guidelines also address the [overarching goals](#) of international development cooperation, as well as [Organisational preconditions](#) and [Limitations on impact assessment](#).

The main methods are presented in a clear fashion in the chapter on [Resources](#), which also contains some useful links on the subject.



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Key terms and their usage

This chapter gives an overview of the key terms used in impact assessment and evaluation along with their definitions. It also explains how they are used in the literature and in particular in these guidelines.

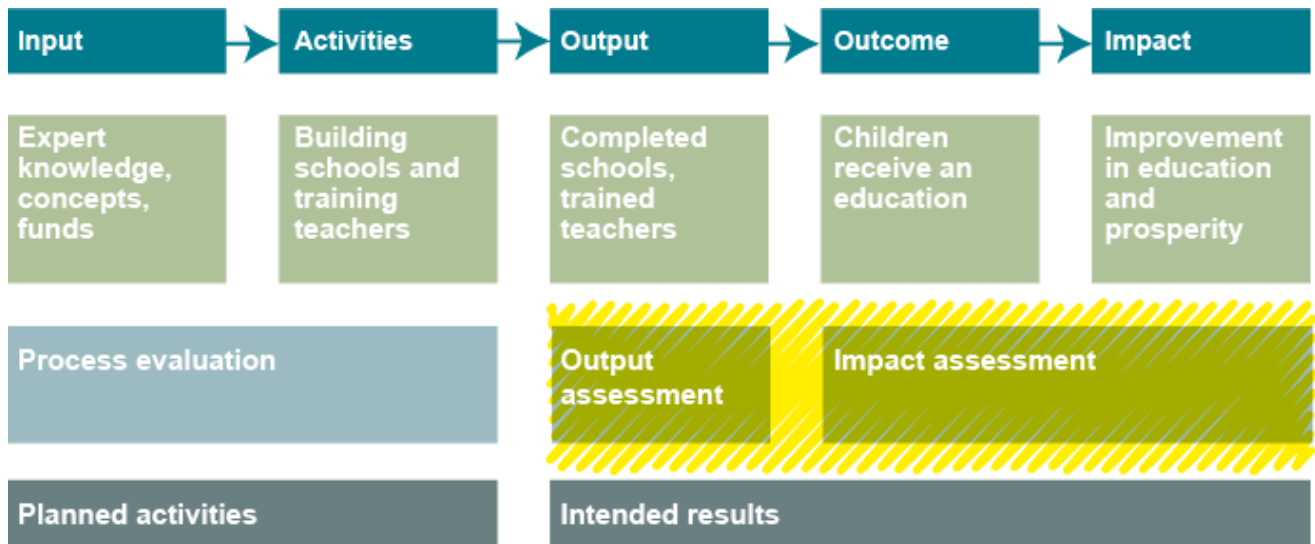
The glossary presents the appropriate terms in German, English, French and Spanish. It is based on the OECD definitions and their usage by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

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Impact assessment

The main aim of outcome and impact assessment is to record the direct effects (outcomes) that development agencies produce for the recipients through their outputs, along with the longer-term effects (impact) on others beyond the target groups. For simplicity's sake, we often use the term "impact assessment" to stand for "outcome and impact assessment" in general.



Input

The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention.

Source: OECD/DAC

Activities

Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

Source: OECD/DAC

Outputs

The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.

Source: OECD/DAC

NGO's outputs include financial contributions, products, information and advice, training and the free distribution and lending of material (equipment, housing, etc.).

Outcomes

The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.

Source: OECD/DAC

We define as effects on the target groups all outcomes that improve their economic well-being, their level of information, their education, their living standards, their awareness or their capacities.

Impact

Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Source: OECD/DAC

Effects

Intended or unintended changes due directly or indirectly to an intervention. Effects include outcomes and impact.

Source: OECD/DAC

Results

The output, outcome and impact of a development intervention. Results include outputs, outcomes and impact.

Source: OECD/DAC

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Evaluation

The term 'evaluation' is used in both literature and practice to describe activities at different levels and with varying foci. According to the SDC/OECD glossary, the term 'evaluation' describes a systematic and objective assessment of a project, including its design, implementation and results. An evaluation is intended to pass judgment on a project's relevance, the achievement of its development goals, and its effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

In these guidelines, the term 'outcome and impact assessment' is specifically used to mean the recording and appraisal of a project's effectiveness. Therefore, impact assessment can be part of a comprehensive evaluation. Yet impact assessment can also be carried out separately or integrated into the overall project management.

Three-level planning and evaluation: an illustration

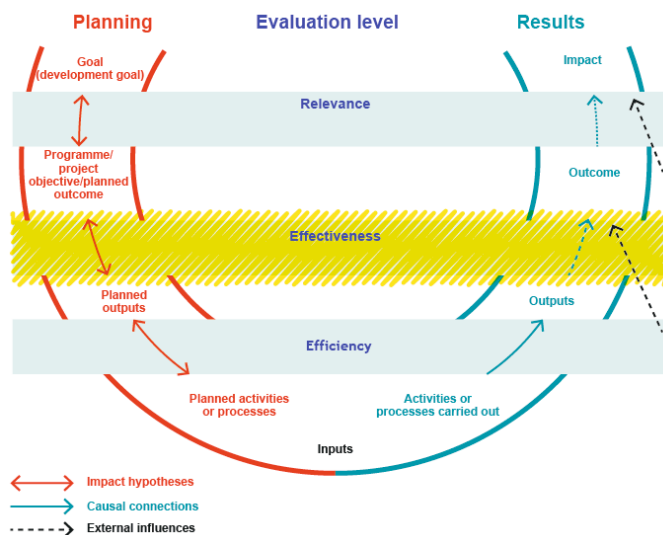


Illustration SDC

Efficiency

A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into results.

Source: OECD/DAC

Effectiveness

The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking account of their relative importance.

Source: OECD/DAC

Relevance

The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities, and partner and donor policies.

Source: OECD/DAC



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Glossary

Unfortunately, the terms associated with impact assessment are used in a very varied and disparate manner in both theory and practice. These guidelines follow the OECD/SDC terminology, although there may occasionally be some deviation from this.

You will find below a summary of the major terms used in these guidelines in four languages (German/English /French/Spanish).

Downloads

- OECD/DAC Glossary (extract as an Excel file)
- OECD/DAC Glossary (extract as a PDF file)

Links

You can find the complete OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management in various languages here.

- [Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results-based management](#)