



BETTER CRITERIA FOR BETTER EVALUATION

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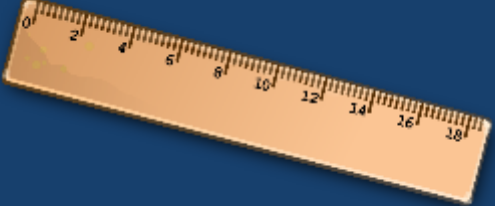
Presentation to Belgian Development Co-operation Partners

January 2021



Exercise

1. Write down at the top of your paper a short description of an intervention (a policy, project, programme, strategy, etc.) that you might be interested in evaluating. Be sure to specify the objectives (what it aims to achieve).
2. As we go through each definition, try to write down one or two questions that you could ask through the lens of that criterion



What are the evaluation criteria?

First set out by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1991, defined in 2002, the criteria encourage a focus on effectiveness and results (looking beyond inputs and activities).

Definition: “A principle or standard by which something may be judged or decided” - Oxford Living Dictionary

Though originally developed for use in the context of development co-operation, now widely used and referenced, including for national and south-south co-operation. Demand-driven spread.

Why do criteria matter?

*“If they can get you **asking the wrong questions**, they don't have to worry about answers.”*

- Thomas Pynchon

SOME POINTS ON LANGUAGE & SCOPE

Intervention used to refer to the subject of the evaluation. Encompasses all the different types of efforts: project, programme, policy, strategy, thematic area, an institution, financing mechanism, etc.

The criteria can be used to evaluate international co-operation activities, as well as private sector, non-government actors, and national or local governments in domestic policy contexts.

Beneficiaries has specific meaning here. Defined as, "the individuals, groups, or organisations, whether targeted or not, that benefit directly or indirectly, from the development intervention." Other terms, such as rights holders or affected people, also used.

Notes are part of the definition, further detail in document: oe.cd/criteria

Each criteria is a lens,
giving a different
perspective on the
intervention – both the
implementation
process & the **results...**







...together, they provide a
more complete picture.

RELEVANCE



**Is the intervention doing
the right things?**

RELEVANCE

The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change

Note: "Respond to" means that the objectives and design of the intervention are sensitive to the economic, environmental, equity, social, political economy, and capacity conditions in which it takes place. "Partner/institution" includes government (national, regional, local), civil society organisations, private entities and international bodies involved in funding, implementing and/or overseeing the intervention. Relevance assessment involves looking at differences and trade-offs between different priorities or needs. It requires analysing any changes in the context to assess the extent to which the intervention can be (or has been) adapted to remain relevant.

COHERENCE

A blue-tinted photograph of a rural agricultural field. In the foreground, a man in a white shirt and shorts stands with his back to the camera, looking towards a group of people working in rows of crops. The field is filled with people engaged in various agricultural tasks, some bending over to work the soil. The background shows a hilly landscape under a clear sky.

**How well does
the intervention fit?**

COHERENCE

The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

Note: The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa.

Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres.

External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

COHERENCE

What are the priorities for applying Coherence in your context?

Internal coherence: Trade, migration, security – policy coherence for development; human rights norms and standards

External coherence: Between Members states / external in the same context?

EFFECTIVENESS



**Is the intervention achieving
its objectives?**

EFFECTIVENESS

The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

Note: Analysis of effectiveness involves taking account of the relative importance of the objectives or results.

EFFICIENCY



How well are
resources used?

EFFICIENCY

The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

Note: “Economic” is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. “Timely” delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).



IMPACT

**What difference
is the intervention making?**

IMPACT

The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

Note: Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. Beyond the immediate results, this criterion seeks to capture the indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention. It does so by examining the holistic and enduring changes in systems or norms, and potential effects on people's well-being, human rights, gender equality, and the environment.

SUSTAINABILITY

A photograph of a rural agricultural field. In the foreground, a man in a white shirt and shorts stands with his back to the camera, looking over a field of rows of crops. Several other people are scattered throughout the field, some bent over working. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky. The entire image has a yellowish tint.

**Will the
benefits last?**

SUSTAINABILITY

The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.

Note: Includes an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. Involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs. Depending on the timing of the evaluation, this may involve analysing the actual flow of net benefits or estimating the likelihood of net benefits continuing over the medium and long-term.

Key principles for use

PRINCIPLE ONE: THINK FIRST

The criteria should be applied **thoughtfully** to support high quality, useful evaluation.

They should be **contextualized to the individual evaluation**, the intervention being evaluated, and the stakeholders involved.

PRINCIPLE TWO: NO STRAIGHT JACKET

Use of the criteria depends on the purpose of the evaluation.

Covered according to the needs of the relevant stakeholders and the context of the evaluation. More or less time and resources may be devoted to each criterion

Thoughts on next steps

Criteria support critical thinking, help us ask the right questions.

Supporting *better* evaluation also requires:

- paying attention to **quality**
- focusing on **use**
- **building capacity**

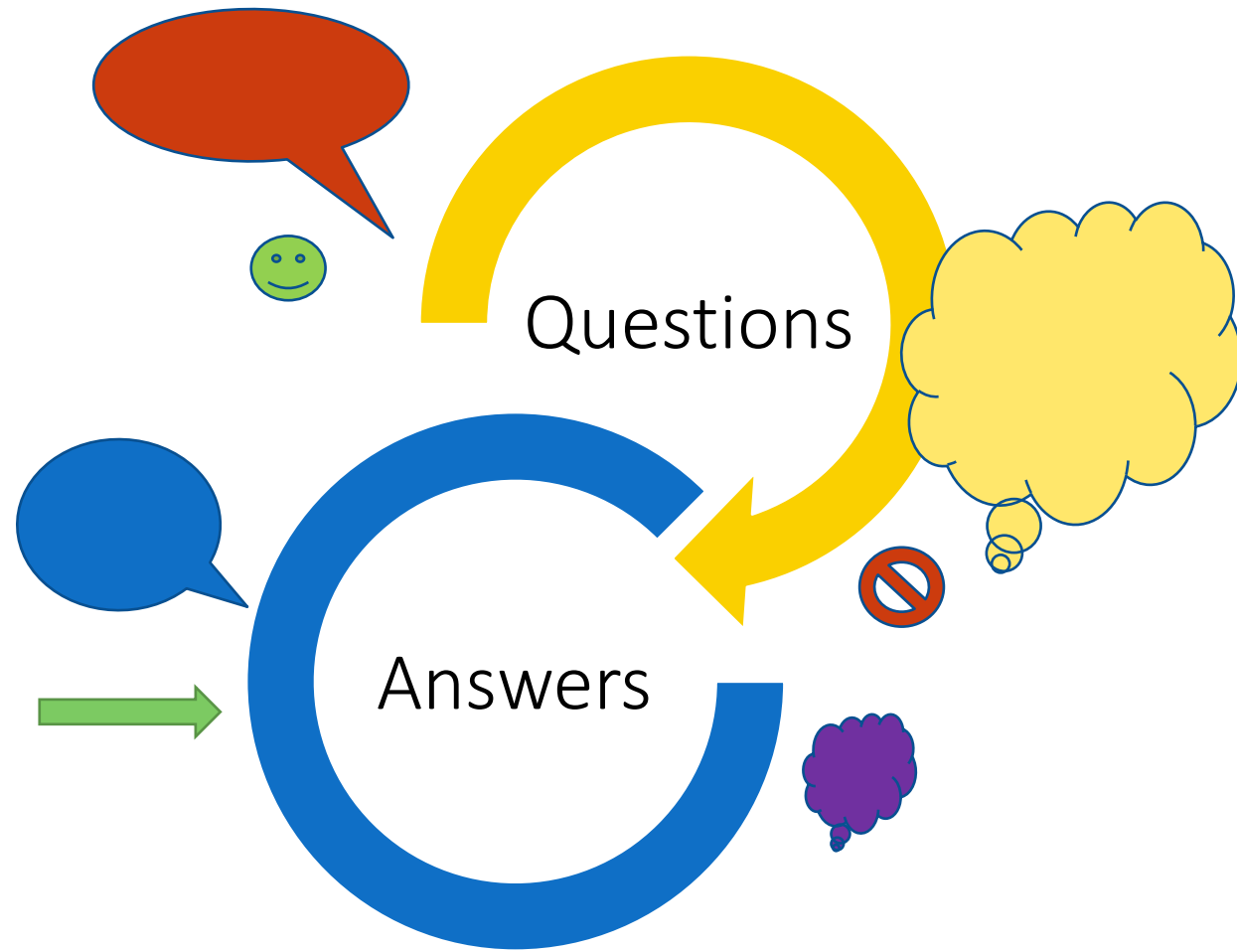
Operationalizing the criteria

Responses to the criteria update may include:

- Incorporating the principles (and lessons on risks for use) to policies, manuals, trainings
- Using the new definitions, and guidance
- Institution-specific language
- Operational instructions on scope/focus (coherence, impact)
- Other changes to evaluation systems (

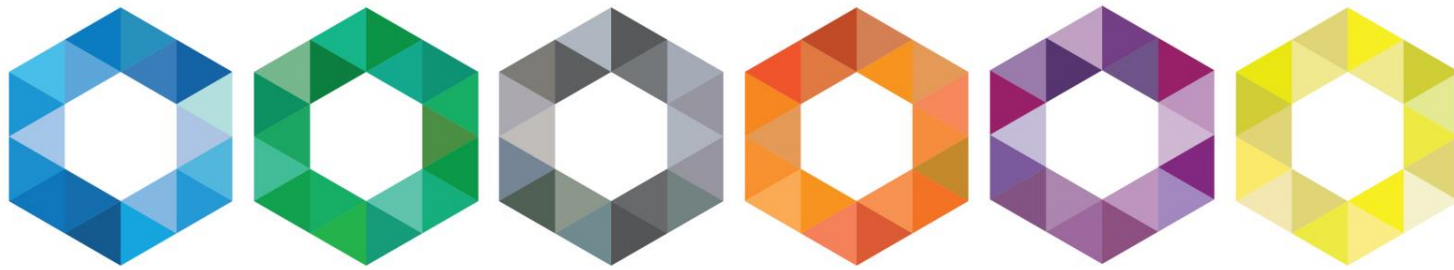
Ultimate goal is to *improve interventions*: to improve relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. Other systems and functions also support this goal:

- What changes are needed beyond evaluation?



Discussion

Thank you!



oe.cd/criteria

[@OECD_EVALNET](https://twitter.com/OECD_EVALNET) [#EvalCriteria](https://twitter.com/OECD_EVALNET)



Evaluation @ Enabel

Sharing experience on the non-mechanical
application of the DAC Criteria

Géraldine LADRIERE – Operation Advisor ENABEL

Evaluation of Interventions @ Enabel

When

Mid-Term Review (MTR) and End-Term Review (ETR) for every project



Who

Framework contract with external evaluators (consultants)



How

Standard Terms of Reference, based on the DAC criteria



Approach

Generic evaluation questions

- to assess the project's **performance**
- based on the five DAC criteria
- using a 'standard evaluation grid'



Including

- at least two **transversal** themes (gender and environment)
- two **horizontal** themes (result-oriented steering and monitoring)



Specific evaluation questions

To assess **crucial** and/or **particular** aspects of a project



Challenges

1

A standard evaluation grid can make the work 'mechanical', without really looking at what is relevant

2

Overlap between generic objective, specific objective, transversal and horizontal themes

3

Too many objectives can reduce the depth of a review

4

DAC criteria -> 'does it work?'
While forgetting about the why, for whom and how

5

Long and redundant reports

Better health care and health services in Rwanda

- 2015-2020 – 18 M°€
 - Large project, many outputs
 - Focus on one DAC criterion for every result
- R1. Quality assurance system is set up, integrated and functional in all hospitals - **effectiveness**
 - R2. Mental health services are accessible at community and national level - **sustainability**
 - R3. Urban health coverage is rationalized and extended in line with National Policy - **relevance**
 - R4. Leadership and governance is reinforced - **relevance**
 - R6. Asset management system is designed and operational – **effectiveness**

Conclusion : choice of criteria according to the results of the Intervention, allow more focused and relevant evaluation – more evidence on results information - avoid duplication with specific questions.

Support to Health Ministry in Niger

- **Institutional support (focus on 'soft')**
- **Why and how did change happen?**
- **DAC criteria + Realistic Evaluation**

1. **DAC criteria:** were the changes achieved relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable ?
2. **Evaluators then focussed on a explanatory approach :** Why did it worked (or not), for whom, under what circumstances, in what way, over what period and for how long ?

Conclusion

Combining DAC criteria and Realistic Evaluation increased the learning function and the steering function of the evaluation



Belgian development agency

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1000 Brussels

enabel.be

A man wearing a white cap and a green shirt is focused on tasting coffee. He is leaning over a table with four glass cups filled with dark coffee. He is using a small spoon to stir the coffee in the second cup from the left. In the background, another man in a white shirt is working at a table. The setting appears to be a professional coffee cupping room.

rikolto
VECO

Efficiency analysis

Thursday, Jan. 21, 2021

Setup of the efficiency analysis

- Black box in previous evaluations: how do we capture the efficiency of our work beyond farm level? (*farm-FO-enabl.env.*)
- Research question: *Which outcomes/return can investors or donors expect upon investing x amount of money in a Rikolto intervention?*
- Open to any research method that is
 - Comprehensive: *systemic perspective*
 - Replicable: *low-cost and internally*

Case selection criteria

Coverage of efficiency considerations from a food system perspective

Diversity in focus and geographic location

Availability and quality / reliability of data

Strategic relevance of the subject (future programmes and fundraising)

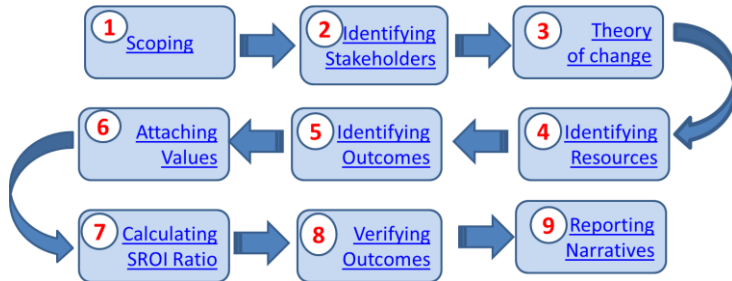
Timeframe:
Oct-Jan



Efficiency analysis: methodology and cases

- **Light-touch SROI process** that passes through all steps of a SROI process but skips fairly quickly over some steps by making good use of available data from M&E and MTR
- Complementary multi-criteria efficiency analysis

Figure 1 - Nine steps of SROI



Indonesia:
sustainable and
inclusive value
chain

Belgium: short
chain initiative

Burkina Faso:
franchise model for
parboiled rice

Nicaragua:
sustainable
landscape
management

DR Congo: specialty
coffee for export



Initial meta-findings

- Sparked a lot of interest and active involvement among colleagues (refreshing!) before, during and after the analysis > less resistance than with regular evaluations
- Very interesting for our colleagues in terms of methodology (valuation of intangible, non-monetary benefits)
- Greater insight into actual benefits as perceived by stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Insight into which interventions of a project are more efficient
 - Tweak investments towards interventions with greatest return
 - *Did we invest enough in intervention x?*
- Brings finance and programme colleagues closer during an evaluation
 - Fin. can better attribute costs and understands to which kind of results these costs contribute
- Not considered an “evaluation”, more an opportunity to learn and for fundraising
- Important to foresee additional guidance on how to use the findings in practice
- Art and science
 - Capturing unintended benefits is not easy, you need to train your ear to capture them when capturing information and stories from the stakeholders
 - Balancing the attribution (deadweight) is tricky, can be easy to overattribute
 - Combine quantitative SROI with qualitative multi-criteria efficiency analysis to better grasp the dynamics of the project and nuance the analysis
- Challenge to replicate without an expert:
 - Enthusiasm of colleagues to dig their heels into the analysis
 - Ability to take a distance, to be self-critical and open for blind spots



nikolto

What will we eat tomorrow?



Belgique

partenaire du développement

**Europe
International**



Union des Villes
et Communes
de Wallonie asbl

DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION CRITERIA



21 JANUARY 2021

WHO ARE WE?

- The *Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie* (UVCW) is the **Association of the Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia**
- Since 2001, we have been devising and implementing the **Belgian Municipal Cooperation (MIC) Programme** (in partnership with the Association of the municipalities from the Brussels-Capital Region - *Brulocalis*) involving municipalities from Wallonia, Brussels and 5 African countries

WHAT WILL WE BE TALKING ABOUT?

- How have we made a **differentiated use of the evaluation criteria**
... taking into account the various aspects of our intervention and of our evaluations?

- We will address this issue in **two steps**
 - A. What are the **key elements at the origin** of our differentiated use of the evaluation criteria?
 - B. At which **levels** have evaluation criteria been used in differentiated way?

A. WHY THIS PARTICULAR USE OF THE CAD CRITERIA?

A. What are the **reasons** for our particular use of the CAD criteria?

- a. our **context**
- b. our **vision** of development
- c. our **expectations** based on this vision
- d. our **organizational structure**
- e. our **potential for monitoring and evaluation**

OUR CONTEXT

- a. **What is our context of action? ... *That is, what is imperative to us !***
- UVCW is a small organisation (around 60 FTE) which is **not initially dedicated to development cooperation**

HOWEVER

We have been devising and implementing the **Belgian Municipal Cooperation Programme**

... **for 20 years** as a partner of the Belgian Cooperation
 - Our main partners are **municipalities**, that is **non-professional** (and voluntary) actors of development cooperation

... which are also the beneficiaries (in the case of the African municipalities)

OUR CONTEXT

- Within this institutional cooperation, we act **both in the interest of**
 - ❖ the **donor**
 - ❖ the African and Belgian **municipalities** (the latter being also our members)
- ⇒ **Dual responsibility** that has led us to restructure our relationships
 - ❖ considering the “**Belgo-African partnerships**” as our **direct partners**
 - ❖ switching from a “**cooperation**” approach to a “**collaboration**” approach with a “development objective”

OUR VISION

b. What is our vision of development ? ... *That is, how does our context influence our vision?*

- Our interventions mainly aim at
 - ❖ **strengthening the capacities** of the partner local institutions

BY

- ❖ **empowering them in lead the of their own development**

OUR VISION

- What do we mean by
 - ❖ **strengthening the capacities** of the partner local institutions ?
 - = global and clustered approach with a special attention to
 - the strategic priorities identified in the development paths of the recipient local authorities
 - internal coherence between partnerships and external coherence with supralocal authorities
 - rigour in action (avoiding to skip steps and unwanted opportunity effects)
 - = 1 common and unique outcome, logical framework and ToC per country

OUR VISION

- What do we mean by
 - ❖ **empowering local institutions in lead the of their own development?**
 - ⇔ the recipient organisations are the headquarters
 - ⇔ UVCW takes on
 - the co-leading
 - the technical support
 - the overall coordination with the donor, etc.

OUR VISION

⇒ Our Programme is **organised on a collective work basis**

= collective **programming**

= collective (shared) **coordination**

= collective **decision-making**

= collective **strategic and operational planning**

= **collective and individual** (in parallel) **implementation of the activities**

= collective **monitoring**

= **collective** (internal) **evaluation**

*In other words, our philosophy is ... **let us share all that can be shared***

OUR EXPECTATIONS

c. What are our expectations about the collective approach? ... *That is, why is our vision of cooperation (collaboration) beneficial?*

Because a collective coordination allows (in particular)

- to share the resources and the potentials
- to optimize the management of a group of municipalities active within the same country
- to support the sustainability of the benefits and of the virtuous practices obtained thanks to the subsidies
- to make collective auto-evaluations
- to support the exploitation of pilot actions for dissemination and scaling up purposes

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

d. How are we organized to implement the MIC Programme? ... *That is, how does our organizational structure reflect our vision?*

○ **Who?**

❖ **overall** coordination - *UVCW*

❖ **local** coordination - *duo of local Coordinators from the partner municipalities*

❖ **national** coordination - *a local Coordinator co-opted among the recipient municipalities in each partner country*

❖ coordination by **activity-type** - *a local Coordinator co-opted among the recipient municipalities in each partner country to conduct the activity-type*

(All the Coordinators in the recipient municipalities are municipal employees)

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

○ What ?

❖ **collective designing/updating** (around twice a year) **of the pluriannual strategy per country**

- collective proposal from the recipient municipalities
- ... collectively approved by all city-to-city partnerships

❖ **collective operational planning**

- detailed formulation (distribution of the activities-types between the local Coordinators within the recipient municipalities)
 - a. analysis
 - b. structuring
 - c. organisation of the implementation
(on a specific form for that purpose)
- check of the overall coherence and time schedule
- budgeting
- collective monitoring (every two months)

OUR POTENTIAL FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- e. What is our potential for the monitoring and evaluation of the MIC Programme? ... *That is, how does our vision of development cooperation influence our evaluation practices?*

In terms of M&E, the **complexity of the institutional organisation/ structuration also means**

- a multitude of **evaluation subjects**
- but also a multiplicity of **resources for qualitative internal evaluations**

B. LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

⇒ That is what has led us

- to resort to **qualitative internal evaluations**, in particular to « **collective auto-evaluations** »
- and to identify **3 levels at which the evaluation criteria are used in a differentiated way**
 - ❖ differentiation in the **way to interpret** the evaluation criteria
 - ❖ differentiation for **equity purposes**
 - ❖ differentiation for **formative purposes**

B. LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

a. To what extent does our vision lead us to interpret the evaluation criteria in a differentiated way?

- During our collective auto-evaluations we had to **wonder about the interpretation of the evaluation criteria**
- In the context of an **external evaluation** the consultants have to **agree on the interpretation** of the evaluation criteria to work in a coherent way

BUT

the same would be unrealistic in a context of auto-evaluation because the participants, who are also the evaluators, are

- ❖ numerous
- ❖ judge and jury
- ❖ not familiar with the evaluation practices

B. LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

⇒ **2 options**

- seek a **consensus**

BUT

- ❖ how to reach it?
 - ❖ what would be the « variance » from the « average » interpretations and how to relate that?
- accept the **coexistence of several interpretations** of the criteria, with a double advantage
 - ❖ no more difficulties in trying to reach a consensus
 - ❖ transparency about the diversity of the group of evaluators

... That is the solution we have chosen!

B. LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

- b. To what extent does our vision lead us to way to differentiate ourselves on the question of equity?
- The **wide diversity among the partner municipalities** (Belgian and recipient) creates **within the same Programme**
 - ❖ diverse work contexts
 - ❖ diverse levels of local ambitions
 - ❖ diverse capacities of action
 - Even if the partnerships have one unique and common objective, we apply the evaluation criteria in a differentiated way
 - ❖ in the planning and in the implementation of the activities
 - ❖ by relativizing the value of the indicators according to the different cases

The idea of a **collective development should be compared to a fish school approach** where everyone goes **in the same direction** but **at his own rhythm**, with a **specific role** and **in solidarity** with the others

B. LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

⇒ **We had to adapt ourselves for the different evaluation criteria**, for instance ...

- **Efficiency** : as regards the distribution of the activities-types among the Coordinators (it is not anyone who is co-opted to be the leader of any activity-type!)
- **Sustainability**: by checking at the stage of the operational planning that each partnership meets the necessary preconditions
- **Impact** : common to all the participating pilot municipalities but to which each of them contributes to different extents as a
 - ❖ pilot new skills centre
 - ❖ relay for disseminating the good practices to the neighbouring areas
- **Effectiveness** (implementation rate):
 - ❖ relativized according to the actual capacities and consequent rhythm of implementation
 - ❖ by taking into account diverse strategic ambitions in the context of a collective approach

B. LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

- ⇒ **This allows each city-to-city partnership to**
- ❖ **make progress in a structured and coherent way**
 - ❖ **respect the individual needs and rhythms**
 - ❖ **leave no one behind**

B. LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

- c. To what extent does our vision lead us to way to differentiate ourselves throughout the intervention cycle?

The formative ambition in the collective approach leads us to use the evaluation criteria for that purpose but variably according to the stages of the intervention process, for instance ...

LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

- During the operational planning and the monitoring of the implementation
 - ❖ The Coordinators of activities-types are induced to **conduct and monitor the implementation** while wondering about **efficiency/efficacy/sustainability** aspects (assets and risks)
 - ❖ These **influencing elements** (assets and risks) are **monitored every two-months** and should rather then be considered as **warning indicators** for the aforementioned criteria and as **management data**
- During the mid-term and final evaluations, whether internal or external, the criteria
 - ❖ though still a **learning support**, are not an analysis tool anymore
 - ❖ but rather an **assessment tool**, with the influencing elements/warning indicators being used this time as **evaluation data** and **useful information to draw lessons** for the future and **facilitate the explanation of evaluation findings**

LEVELS AT WHICH THE EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE USED IN A DIFFERENTIATED WAY

- ⇒ This methodology consisting in a **detailed formulation** of the activities automatically **induces** the **empowered recipient municipalities** to
 - **grow familiar with the use of the evaluation criteria** through concrete reflexions and observations
 - **collectively develop technical expertise** in the intervention sectors of the Programme

As a conclusion, our **collective approach** has led us

- to **adapt our use of the evaluation criteria** according to **various purposes and circumstances** in order to make them **more relevant**, taking into account the **specific diversity of the target group**
- to use the evaluation criteria as a **leverage for more transparency, equity and (self-)learning**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Coherence & Self-evaluation tool

based on a tool developed by C-lever.org

in the frame of the Viva Salud, KIYO and Solidagro mid-term evaluation

Mid-term evaluation

Objective: To question the coherence of our common program through these 3 hypotheses:

- The framework of our theory of change is the rights-based approach and our themes (right to health, children's rights and the right to food) value this approach;
- The work in common program integrates our three themes, which are therefore mutually reinforcing;
- The activities implemented by our partner organizations are relevant to our theory of change.

Self-evaluation tool

- Based on the DAC-criteria
- With sub-questions related to coherence
- With local staff and partner organizations
- Attribution of scores for each sub-criteria and then consensus for a global score for one criteria

Example of Relevance

1.1. Answers to challenges, and priorities of beneficiaries' rights	5	4	3	2	1
<p>Did the program identify the main problems/challenges of the beneficiaries? Did the rights-based approach provide an adequate answer for beneficiaries?</p> <p>If activities are innovative, Have lessons learned been integrated into the Theory of Change?</p>					
1.2. Relevance in the choice of partners and stakeholders	5	4	3	2	1
<p>Are the program partners in line with the program approach? To what extent are they in line with the Theory of Change?</p> <p>Have the most important stakeholders been identified? Does the Theory of Change highlight complementarity with other relevant actors working on the same thematic?</p>					
1.3. Coherence with priorities and policies	5	4	3	2	1
<p>Is the programme in line with the development priorities and policies of authorities at all levels (national and local)? Other Belgian actors / Belgian policies in the country of intervention?</p> <p>Did the advocacy opportunities have been identified?</p>					
1.4. Coherence with the consortium approach	5	4	3	2	1
<p>Does the fact that the programme addresses different thematics have an influence on the coherence of the programme? Do the partners have the same approach? Does this approach facilitate or complicate the understanding / involvement of partners?</p>					

Questions related to coherence

- Relevance:
 - Coherence with priorities and policies
 - Coherence with the common program approach
- Efficiency:
 - Efficiency and the common program
- Effectiveness:
 - Effectiveness and coherence of the common program