



Developing Evaluation Questions

Why do you develop questions for your evaluation?

Evaluation questions help further focus your evaluation and should reflect the purpose of the evaluation as well as the priorities and needs of the stakeholders. You should develop questions you want the evaluation to answer about the program component/activity you are interested in evaluating.

How do you develop questions for your evaluation?

1. Involve key stakeholders and review your logic model

The first step to identifying and developing evaluating questions is to review with stakeholders why you need to do the evaluation and how the results will be used and by whom. Verify that the evaluation can be conducted with the available resources (e.g. funds, staff). Then review the logic model you created to identify your key activities and the respective process and outcome components associated with those key activities and generate relevant questions.

2. Brainstorm Evaluation Questions

The second step involves brainstorming a list of questions about the specific component or activity you want to evaluate. Ask yourself:

“What are the questions we want the evaluation to answer?”

Some questions you might come up with for activities to improve the quality of syphilis interviewing and reporting could include:

- Are DIS following standard protocols for eliciting sexual contacts from syphilis cases?
- What are the specific facilitators and barriers to interviewing clients?
- Are county health departments following the syphilis reporting protocol?
- What factors facilitate or impede the reporting process?
- How promptly are reports submitted to the State Department of Health?

Use your logic model to help you develop questions. Encourage your staff and other stakeholders to ask their own questions about program operations, implementation and outcomes. Make sure their interests, concerns, and perspectives are represented in the brainstorming process.

For more information and examples, see Step 3.3 in the Practical Use of Program Evaluation among STD Programs manual.

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/program/pupestd.htm>



3. Classify your questions

After you have your evaluation question(s) set, you will need to group the questions by themes (e.g. operations, behaviors, health outcomes, etc.). This will make it easier to identify questions that address similar topics and help you to prioritize evaluation questions.



TIP: Review an example of how to group evaluation questions by theme on pages 162–163 of the manual.

Next, you will need to classify the questions as process or outcome questions.

- **Process questions** are primarily concerned with the implementation, or process of delivering STD prevention and control activities. Process evaluation questions should incorporate key process components of your logic model (i.e. inputs, activities, and outputs)
- **Outcome questions** are concerned with the effects of STD program delivery and operations in the target population(s). Outcome evaluation questions should incorporate key outcome components of your logic model (i.e. short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes).

4. Prioritize evaluation questions

The last step involves narrowing down the number of proposed evaluation questions depending on the relevance of the question to the purpose of the evaluation and available resources to answer the question. Ask yourself:

“Why this question?”

Prioritize the list of proposed questions and assess whether each question meets the following criteria:

- Importance to program staff and stakeholders
- Reflects key goals and objectives of the program
- Reflects key elements of the program logic model
- Will provide information which can be acted upon to make improvements
- Can be answered using available resources (e.g. budget, personnel) and within the appropriate timeframe
- Will be supported by the STD program

Questions that do not meet all of the criteria should be considered lower priority. You may have to negotiate with stakeholders if it is not feasible to include some of their evaluation questions.



TIP: Use the “Criteria to Use When Prioritizing the Evaluation Questions” worksheet on page 171 of the manual.

