USAID — FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Module 8

Writing an Evaluation Scope of Work (SOW)

Module Objectives

By the end of this module you will be able to:

1 • Develop most elements of an Evaluation Scope of Work without assistance.

2 • Ensure that the 4 main elements of a SOW are present and of high quality.

3 • Determine whether there is a good match between evaluation team composition and the evaluation tasks.

4 • Determine whether a SOW is complete.

5 • Review a response to solicitation that includes an evaluation SOW for completeness and responsiveness.

6 • Understand 5 main differences between SOWs for PEs and IEs.

ADS References for this Module

ADS Reference	Topic or Issue
ADS 203.3.1.5	SOW to include methods that generate the highest quality and most credible evidence. SOW to include strengths and weaknesses of methods
ADS 203.3.1.4	Written design to include data analysis plan and a dissemination plan
ADS 203.3.1.10	SOW/design to be shared with country-level stakeholders and IPs before being finalized
ADS 203.3.1.5	SOW to include criteria for quality of evaluation report
ADS 203.3.1.5	Mission Program Office to organize peer review of SOW Based on the best methods
ADS 203.3.1.5	Statement of Work (SOW) Protocols
USAID How To Note No. 3	Preparing an Evaluation SOW (2013 version)

www.ioce.net provides information on evaluation organizations worldwide

REVIEW: Organizing Questions for Writing a SOW

- What is the main purpose of this evaluation? (Accountability, Learning, or Other?)

- What specific information is needed to make a management decision?

- Who needs the information and why do they need it?

- What questions must be asked to obtain the required information?

- What are the data requirements? (Based on level of change expected from the intervention and level of certainty or precision required to make the decision?)

- What data is already available?

- What is the best design given information required and constraints? (Budget, timing, etc.)

Developing an SOW

It is important to understand precisely what you want to know from the evaluation and how you will get there before focusing on the elements of an SOW.

- What resources can be mobilized for the evaluation?

- Is there a decision timeline into which an evaluation must fit to be useful?

- Are certain questions and approaches ruled out by timing or resource constraints?
  (For example, if it is Year 2 of the project, it may be too late to establish a valid comparison group unless the project is being phased-in to new districts each project year).

Utilization is a Goal – Build Toward It

Treat the SOW development process as a first step towards the utilization of an evaluation.

- Consult with key stakeholders early to identify their interests and possible information requirements;

- Build awareness of the planned evaluation in USAID and among partners;

- Elicit input on the evaluation purpose, questions, and decision-making schedules from USAID staff and partners.

Elements of an Evaluation SOW

The Four Main Elements of a good evaluation SOW:

- **Program/Project Information** – what, where, when

- **Evaluation Fundamentals** – purpose, questions, use and users

- **Technical Requirements** – design, methods, staffing/competencies

- **Management Information** – schedule, budget, deliverables, POC/roles, logistics

Elements of an Evaluation SOW

Look through **Exercise 8-1**: Evaluation SOW Elements. In your group, focus on one of the 4 evaluation SOW elements, and note sub-components of each.

- E.g. What is included under Project Information? Evaluation Fundamentals?
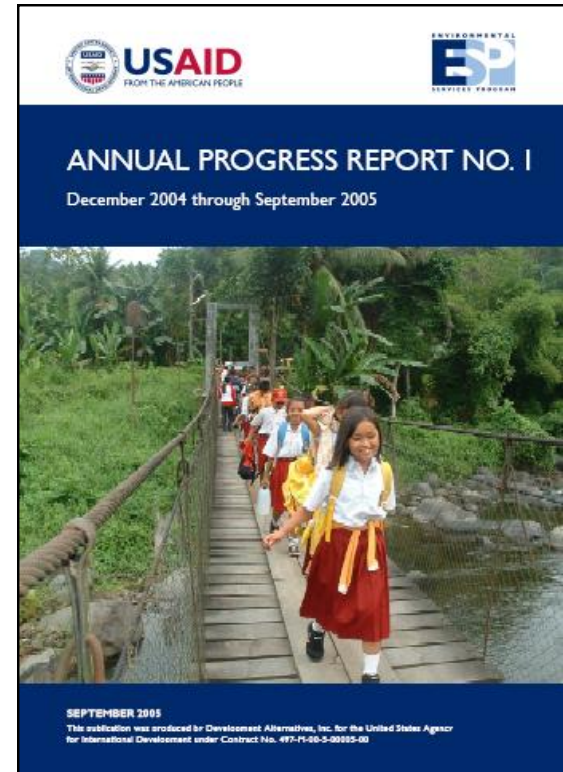
Program/Project Information - Description

- **Title:**
- **Start and End Dates:** 2006-2010;
- **Budget:**
- **Major changes** - Have major changes in the program/project environment occurred and affected implementation or expectations about being able to achieve intended results?
- **Target group**
- **Target area** - be specific:

Explain the situation – don't force an evaluation team to discover what you already know.
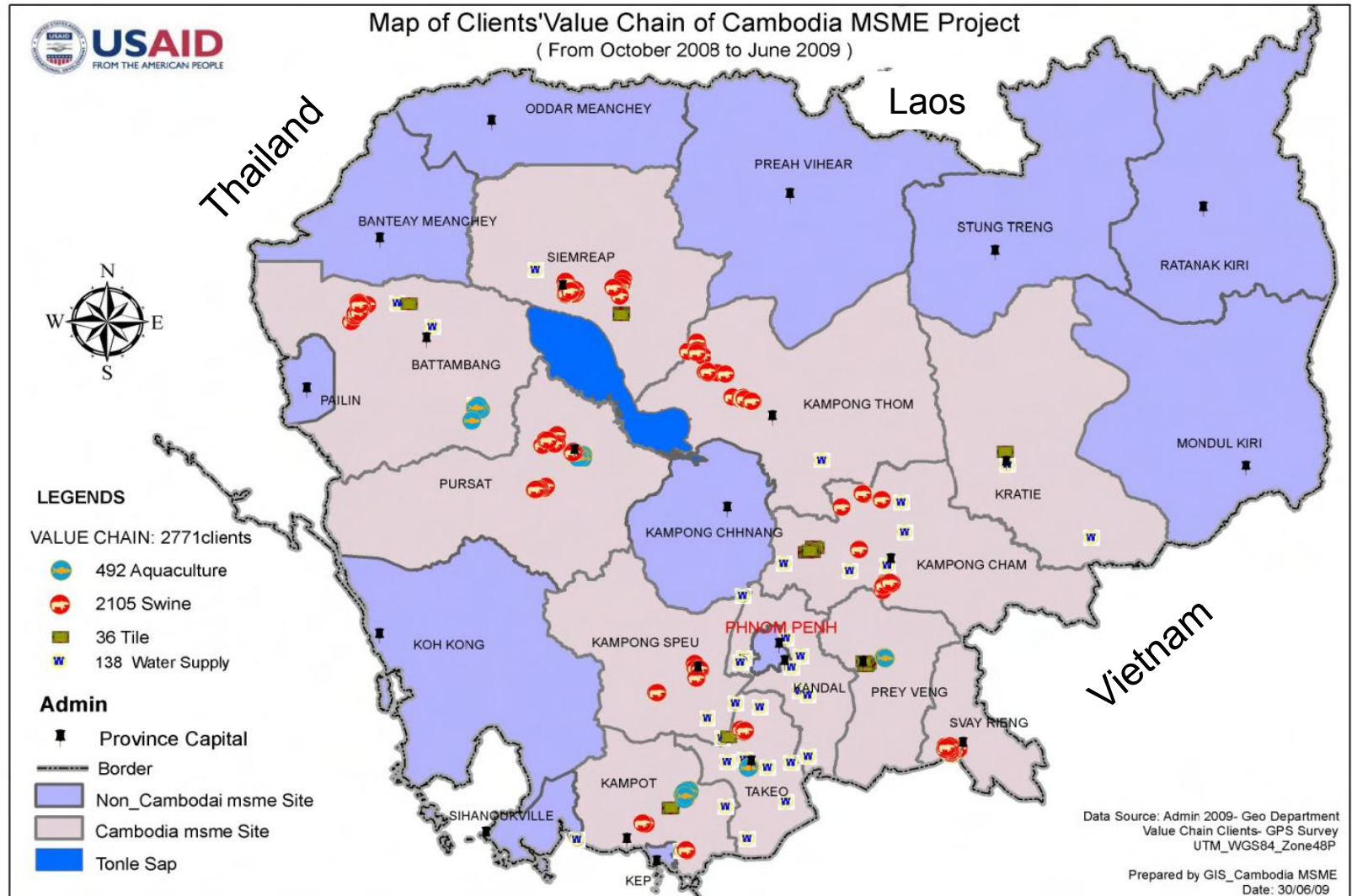
Program/Project Information: Existing Information

Include program and project performance reports and other background materials as attachments or URLs:

- Quarterly reports

- Annual reports

- Management assessment

- Previous evaluation

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ENVIRONMENTAL ESP SERVICES PROGRAM

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT NO. I
December 2004 through September 2005

SEPTEMBER 2005
This publication was produced by Development Alternatives, Inc. for the United States Agency for International Development under Contract No. 497-M-00-5-00005-00

A map included in a SOW helps explain target areas and groups

Background

Important background information necessary to understand project status, and success or challenges, should also be provided.

- Context

- Current status

- History of the project

- Institutional background: key decisions made or upcoming

State the Development Hypotheses

Describe the chain of "if-then" propositions (Theory of Change) that transform project inputs into results.

If possible, include one of the following:

- Narrative description of chain of linked hypotheses

- Results Framework (Program level)

- Logical Framework (Project and Activity levels)

Technical Requirements – Evaluation Processes

Describe any special characteristics of the evaluation

Joint (or Collaborative) Evaluations involve multiple organizational perspectives. They vary in terms of the degree to which they are participatory – other than in terms of sharing the funding burden.

Since the Paris Declaration was signed, some donors have significantly increased the share of their evaluations that are undertaken jointly with assisted countries.

Technical Requirements – Evaluation Processes

Participatory evaluations draw stakeholders, including beneficiaries into the evaluation process – the SOW should indicate what level of participation is envisioned.

Design rigor and degree of stakeholder participation are different dimensions.

Evaluation Design Continuum

All Aspects

Stakeholder Participation Continuum

Some Aspects

None
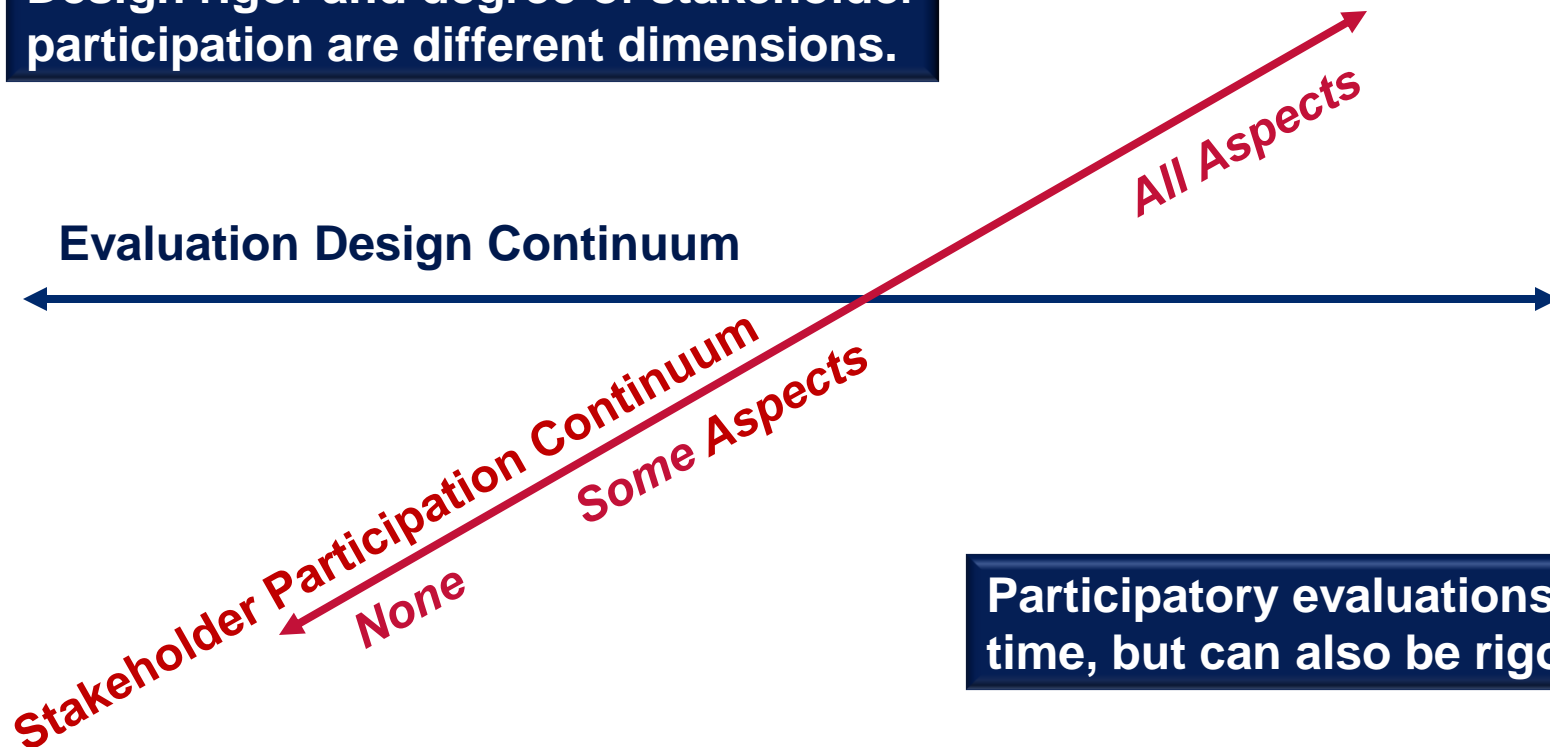
Participatory evaluations take time, but can also be rigorous

Technical Requirements – Data Collection and Analysis Methods

- If USAID has prepared an evaluation design that includes data collection and analysis methods – include it.
- If USAID expects the team to propose data collection and analysis methods, any USAID expectations about methods or data need to be specified:

*Quantitative or qualitative emphasis in answers

*Comparisons to be made – to norms, benchmarks, non-recipients

Technical Requirements – Data Collection

- Specify if you know how large your sample size should be, or if you want the findings to be statistically significant. This may affect the evaluation team's proposed design, methods, and budget!

If needed, ask an evaluation methods expert, PPL/LER or a local survey researcher for assistance

Technical Requirements – Data Analysis

Consider requiring that an analysis plan include illustrative versions (empty shells) of the tables and graphs that will be produced. It is a good way to tell whether all of the data a team plans to collect are likely to be used.

Location	Adopted Project Technology				Did Not Adopt Project Technology			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Region 1								
Region 2								
Region 3								
Region 4								
Total								

Technical Requirements – Data Disaggregation

Sex- USAID's requirement for data disaggregated by sex extends to evaluation - but must be asked for in an evaluation SOW.

- **Percentage of trainees that were female**
- **Percentage of technology adopters that were female**

Disaggregation of evaluation data in other ways may be useful:

- **Ethnicity, region, age, education level, or income level**

Technical Requirements – Data Disaggregation

SOW requirements for disaggregating
data have implications for conducting an evaluation.

Examining the effects of a national program on Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority would force a team to spend time in districts where they live.

- ● - Albanian majority (more than 50%)
- ○ - Albanian minority (20-50%)
- ● - Albanian minority (10-20%)
- ○ - 0-10% Albanians
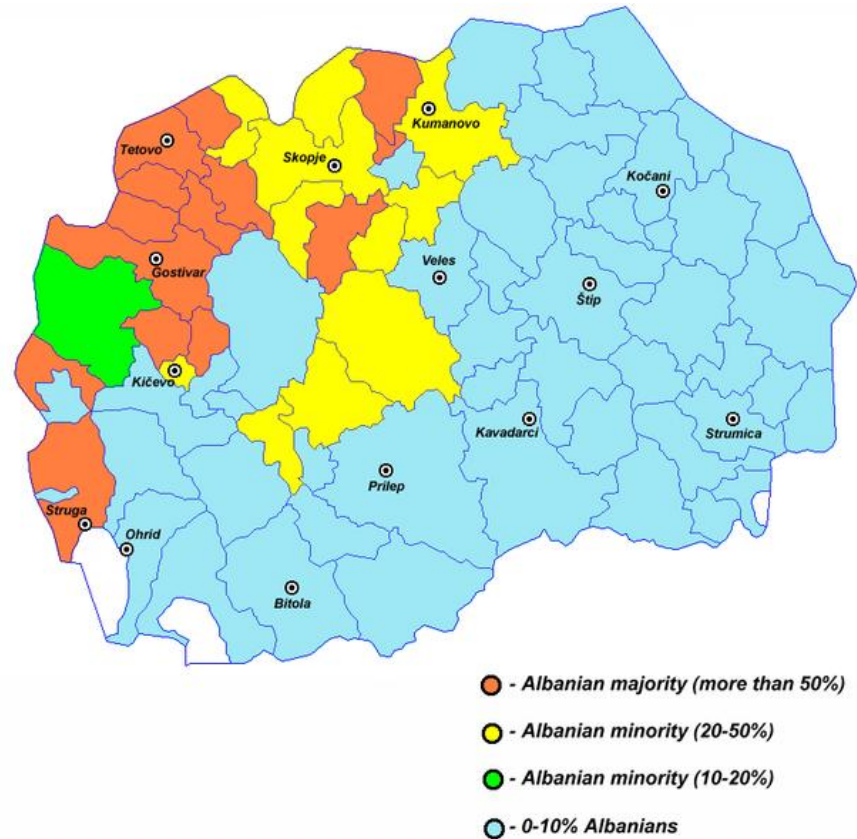
Technical Requirements – Team Qualifications

What skills and experience must be represented on the evaluation team?

Evaluation skills/experience, per ADS 203

Technical/Sector skills/experience

Survey, sampling and statistical skills

Relevant qualitative methods experience

Financial analysis, cost-effectiveness

Language skills

Team management experience

Gender balance/skills

Cultural sensitivity

Technical Requirements – Team Size

- How large a team will be needed? (Consider purpose, type of evaluation, research design, number of questions, size of project, geographic scale, data requirements, etc.)

- Across how many different individuals will the skills required be spread?

    - Does it matter which team members have which skill sets?

    - Can the team split up to do the field work or do skill requirements dictate that the whole team visits every project site?

- Are all skills needed on a full time basis over the life of the evaluation?

Technical Requirements –Team Composition

USAID is actively seeking to build evaluation capacity internally. In order to meet this objective, USAID personnel may be asked to participate on evaluation teams. There are three possible configurations:

- **All team members are external**
- **Some team members are external, some are USAID staff**
- **All team members are USAID staff**

If consultants are expected to work with USAID staff as evaluation team members, these expectations need to be explicit and roles need to be clearly defined.

Technical Requirements – Local Personnel

Many USAID Missions advocate using local personnel on evaluation teams. This has important implications for overall team composition.

- **Cost:** If cost is the issue, can the entire team be local?

- **Evaluation capacity building:** If capacity building is the reason, in what evaluation areas is local capacity weak and how could the evaluation process be used to strengthen that aspect of capacity?

www.ioce.net provides information on evaluation organizations worldwide

Technical Requirements – Short Exercise

You have been asked to review and approve this Team Composition description for an Evaluation SOW.

D. Composition of Review Team

9. The Final Evaluation team is expected to consist of members which sets up the team to have a good local understanding, together with specialists who are recognized international experts in the different disciplines SHOUHARDO engages in. Specifically, the team is expected to consist of experts in 'food and nutrition security', 'economic security', 'health and hygiene', 'governance', 'rights based approaches', 'women empowerment', 'community empowerment', 'institutional development', 'urban', and 'disaster management'.

10. The team is expected to make a critical analysis of both 'software' and 'hardware', and how effective the Program has been to compliment one with the other.

11. The team size is expected to be between 5 to 8 strong (with a healthy mix of both expatriate and local team members, as well as an appropriate mix of gender). All the proposed members of the team must have a demonstrated track record, and be recognized as seasoned professionals who can conduct such a complex evaluation with a high degree of proficiency.

12. The composition and number of team members has deliberately not been 'exactly' defined, leaving it open for bidders to define this. At the time of review of proposals, this will be a critical assessment area for determination of the winning bid.

How will you respond?

Management Requirements – Deliverables

Ask for everything you want/need in the SOW:

- Inception report summarizing what is known from performance monitoring reports and/or literature reviews

- **Detailed evaluation plan (design, methods, data analysis plan, schedule) for review and approval prior to data collection –** *if not already prepared by USAID*

- Post field work and analysis briefing on findings, conclusions and recommendations prior to drafting report

- If applicable, describe any planned USAID contributions to these deliverables.

Management Requirements – Deliverables

Ask for everything you want/need in the SOW:

- Draft report (5 hard copies and soft copy)

- Oral briefings (2)

- Final report (15 hard copy and soft copy)

- Encrypted flash drive including all instruments and data in formats suitable for reanalysis

- Cloud Space for document sharing/storage

Management Requirements – Schedule

- **Table Brainstorm (2 minutes): What schedule-related factors do we need to address in an evaluation SOW?**

- **How many ideas can you generate?**

Management Requirements – Schedule

An evaluation schedule needs to include adequate time for:

- Detailed Planning – Instrument Development, Pre-testing and Revision

- Data Collection

- Data Analysis

- Report Preparation, Review and Revision

Management Requirements – Schedule

An evaluation schedule defines when specific steps in the evaluation process will occur and when deliverables are due.

- Some activities will overlap – a GANTT chart is a good way to display time periods during which activities occur.

- **Elapsed time is often as important as real time.** Elapsed time is the total period during which an activity takes place, which may be much longer than the number of billable days involved.

Management Requirements – Schedule

Tasks	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
Initial Meetings	■								
E-Survey developed/sent	■	■							
Field intstruments developed/tested		■							
NGO headquarters visits		■	■						
Field site visits			■	■	■	■			
Data analysis					■	■	■		
Draft report							■	■	
Final report									■

Sufficient elapsed time is what makes an e-survey and waiting for USAID comments possible in an otherwise short evaluation period.

Allowing international team members to participate in an initial meeting by phone, work on the instruments prior to arrival, and be on site by the end of week two may save resources – without compromising data quality.

Management Requirements – Schedule Exercise

You have been asked to review and approve this Evaluation Schedule.

E. Timeline

13. The Final Evaluation is scheduled to take place over the months of August – October 2011. The expected start date is 10 August 2011. The draft report is to be submitted by 30 September 2011, around which time a detailed presentation is to be made to USAID and the implementing partner organization. USAID will take till 8 October 2011 to provide detailed feedback on the draft report. The submission date for the Final Report is 17 October 2011.

How will you respond?

Management Requirements – Logistics

A section on logistics in a SOW explains what assistance USAID will provide – or may in some situations place limits on when and where an evaluation team can travel.

- USAID will provide transportation in conflict area.

- Evaluation team members must stay at USAID approved hotels so that USAID staff members can attend mini-training on impact evaluation and attend evaluation briefings at that site.

- USAID will provide facilities for oral briefings to staff and other stakeholders on evaluation findings

Evaluation SOW Checklist

The Evaluation SOW Checklist will help you to ensure quality and realism in evaluation SOWS

Using **R-7 and C-16**, review the SOW in **Exercise 8-2**.

Evaluation SOW Checklist

Statement of Work Checklist Keyed to USAID's Evaluation Policy and ADS 203.3.6.3

Project or Program to be Evaluated:
_____

Person Who Reviewed the SOW:_____ Date of Review: _____

SOW Elements and Sub-Elements	How Well is the SOW Element Addressed[1]					Issues Noted by SOW Reviewer
	5	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*	
Adherence to General Principles in USAID's New Evaluation Policy						
1. Is the SOW developed as part of project design?						
2, Does the SOW include provisions for collecting, reviewing or reconstructing baseline data?						
3. Does the SOW take employ measures to reduce bias such as contracting evaluations with third-party contractors?						
4. Does the evaluation address the most important and relevant questions about project performance?						
5. Does the SOW propose methods that generate the highest quality ad most credible evidence to answer the key questions?						
6. Does the SOW take into account ways in which to reinforce local evaluation capacity and to use local evaluation specialists?						
7. Does the SOW include provisions for sharing the findings from the evaluation as widely as possible with full and active disclosure?						
8. Is the SOW clear about requirements for the Final Evaluation Report following Appendix 1 of USAID's New Evaluation Policy?						
Identify the activity, project, or approach to be evaluated						
9. Is the SOW clear and specific about what is to be evaluated, e.g.,						

[1] Key: 1 = element was not covered at all in SOW; 2 = At least one key aspect was not covered; 3 = All aspects were covered at a basic level; 4 = Covered all aspects but went beyond basics in at least one way that is likely to help evaluators; 5 = All aspects were covered thoroughly and completely, going beyond basics in a number of ways which will aid the evaluators.

PE and IE SOW Similarities

All evaluation SOWs have some common elements, no matter whether they are SOWs for Performance Evaluations or Impact Evaluations:

- Purpose
- Questions and expectations about answers
- Design and methods
- Deliverables, including reports
- Team qualifications
- Schedule
- Logistics
- Budget

There are also some important differences.

PE and IE SOW Key Differences

Impact Evaluations – **and thus their SOWs** – differ from those of Performance Evaluations in four main ways:

- **Duration**

- **Scope/Focus**

- **Importance of Design**

- **Interface with the Project Implementation Team**

Review Questions

- What are the four main elements of a SOW?

- What should be considered when reviewing a solicitation response?

- What are some main differences between SOWs for PEs and IEs?

- What should be considered when developing LOE and budget for an evaluation?