Evaluation Checklists:
Sustainability Evaluation & Organizational Effectiveness

http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/
2010/06/daniela-schroter-ph-d/

Agenda

SEC
- Development & Validation
- Content

OEC
- Development & Validation
- Content

Quality Criteria
- For Evaluation Design
- For Checklists
Sustainability Evaluation Checklist

Development & Validation

Problems and Needs

- Definitional problematique”
- Discrepancy between global and program efforts to evaluating sustainability
- Need for a comprehensive and integrative approach to evaluating sustainability
Checklist Development

- What are checklists?
- Why develop checklists?
- What sustainability checklists exist?
- What models for checklist development exist?
- What are characteristics of good checklists?

Mnemonic
- Iterative
- Weakly sequential
- Laundry list

The SEC is NOT a measurement device, but a “meta-tool” intended to help planning and designing sustainability evaluations.

Introduction: Purpose, intended users, characteristics, and key concepts

Part A: General considerations in evaluation
  - Section 1: Grounding the EVALUATION
  - Section 2: About the EVALUAND

Part B: Criteria of sustainability
  - Section 4: Criteria of merit
  - Section 5: Criteria of worth
  - Section 6: Criteria of significance

Appendices: Glossary of terms, references to further readings
Initial Feedback on Drafts

During development

- EASY ECO 2006
- EES 2006
- AEA 2006/2007

Validation Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>✓ Evaluation, sustainability, and international development experts and practitioners (N=111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling procedures</td>
<td>✓ Purposeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Maximum variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Snowball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of data collection</td>
<td>✓ Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analytic Framework

Triangulated Findings

Utility concerns
  > Accuracy concerns
    ✓ Feasibility
    ✓ Concreteness
    ✓ Conciseness
    ✓ Ease of following the SEC
    ✓ Ease of applying the SFC

Strengths largely converged
  ✓ Importance
  ✓ Relevance to (international) development
  “Very, very useful”
Enhance the Checklist

- Specifications
- Clarifications
- More guidance
- Structure and format
- Simplification

Limitations

- Ivory tower SEC development
- Validation limited to content and perceived utility, though evidence of use exists
- Resource availability
Sustainability Evaluation Checklist

Content with interdisciplinary application

Purpose

The Sustainability Evaluation Checklist (SEC) was designed to guide practitioners in planning and designing evaluations of sustainability for sustainability’’

Evaluation of Sustainability = The extent to which the evaluand and its resulting impacts are maintained prior to the evaluation

Evaluation for Sustainability: The extent to which “the evaluand prospectively contributes to improving human, social, and economic conditions under consideration of ecological confines”
### Part A: General Consideration in Evaluation

#### Section 1: Grounding the EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear</th>
<th>Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direction of the evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User of findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose(s) of the evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of the evaluation team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of the evaluation team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe under evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaevaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Section 2: About the EVALUAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear</th>
<th>Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Components of the evaluation object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability dimensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local historical context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impactees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part A: General Consideration in Evaluation**

**Section 3: General evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCEDURES</th>
<th>Clear</th>
<th>Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Part B: Criteria OF Sustainability FOR Sustainability**

**Section 6: Significance**

Is the continuation of the evaluand important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs for human sustainability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs for social sustainability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs for economic sustainability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs for environmental sustainability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and duration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks and vulnerability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part B: Criteria OF Sustainability FOR Sustainability

#### Section 4: Merit (Quality disregarding costs) What are the properties which define good sustainability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of evidence from monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration/involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding the community and its environmental context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive and negative impacts over time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Section 5: Worth (Quality under consideration of costs) Is the continuation of the evaluand or its outcomes worth the costs that accrue now and in the future?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time at which costs/resources are accrued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders and impactees, to whom monetary and nonmonetary costs accrue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facets of cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific costs or resource use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource renewal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application & Discussion

Organizational Effectiveness Checklist

Development & Validation

http://homepages.wmich.edu/~wmartz/oec.htm

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Instructor, Marketing, WMU
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OEC Overview

- Organizational evaluation process framework
- Iterative, explicit, weakly sequential
- Six steps, 29 checkpoints
- Criteria of merit checklist
  - 12 universal criteria of merit
  - 84 suggested measures

OEC Validation Process

- Phase 1: Expert panel review
  - Critical feedback survey
  - Written comments made on checklist

- Phase 2: Field test
  - Single-case study
  - Semi-structured interview
Expert Panel Overview

- Study participants
  - Subject matter experts (organizational and evaluation theorists)
  - Targeted users (professional evaluators, organizational consultants, managers)
- Review OEC for providing critical feedback
- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Complete the critical feedback survey
- Write comments directly on the checklist

Expert Panel Data Analyses

- Critical feedback survey
  - Descriptive statistics
  - Parametric and nonparametric analysis of variance
- Written comments on checklist
  - Hermeneutic interpretation
  - Thematic analysis to cluster and impose meaning
  - Triangulation across participants to corroborate or falsify the imposed categories
Field Test Overview

- Evaluation client was a for-profit organization
- Conducted evaluation using revised OEC
- Strictly followed the OEC to ensure fidelity
- Post-evaluation semi-structured client interview
- A formative metaevaluation to detect and correct deficiencies in the process

Observations from Field Test

- Structured format minimized “scope-creep”
- Identified several areas to clarify in OEC
- Reinforced need for multiple measures, transparency in standards
- Minimal disruption to the organization
## OEC Validation Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Relatively quick validation process</td>
<td>• Single-case field study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Based on relevant evaluative criteria</td>
<td>• Selection of the case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Features a real-world application</td>
<td>• Selection of the expert panel members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Content

Presentation at the Conference of the Norwegian Association of Evaluation and EVA-Forum
Purpose

The Organizational Effectiveness Checklist was designed as a tool for professional evaluators, organizational consultants, and management practitioners to use when conducting an evaluation of organizational effectiveness.

OEC Steps

I. Establish the boundaries of the evaluation
II. Conduct a performance needs assessment
III. Define the criteria to be used for the evaluation
IV. Plan and implement the evaluation
V. Synthesize performance data with values
VI. Communicate and report evaluation activities
Step 1:
Establish the boundaries of the evaluation

- Identify the client and power brokers
- Clarify the organizational domain to be evaluated
- Clarify the reason for the evaluation
- Clarify the resources available for the evaluation
- Identify primary beneficiaries and participants
- Conduct an evaluability assessment

Step 2:
Conduct a performance needs assessment

- Clarify the purpose of the organization
- Assess internal knowledge needs
- Scan the external environment
- Conduct a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threat (S.W.O.T.) analysis
- Identify the performance-level needs of the organization
Step 3: Define the criteria to be used for the evaluation

- Review “universal” criteria of merit for organizational effectiveness
- Add contextual criteria identified in the needs assessments
- Determine importance ratings for each criterion
- Identify performance measures for each criterion
- Identify performance standards for each criterion
- Create performance matrices for each criterion

Step 4: Plan and implement the evaluation

- Identify data sources
- Identify data collection methods
- Collect and analyze data
Step 5: Synthesize performance data with values

- Create a performance profile for each criterion
- Create a profile of organizational effectiveness
- Identify organizational strengths and weaknesses

Step 6: Communicate and report evaluation activities

- Distribute regular communications about the evaluation progress
- Deliver a draft written report to the client for review and comment
- Edit report to include points of clarification or reaction statements
- Present written and oral reports to the client
- Provide follow-on support as requested by the client
Application & Discussion

Criteria for assessing evaluation checklists

Criteria
To have validity, the checklist must at least fulfill the following requirements:

• It must be complete.
• It should not include redundant or unnecessary information (i.e., commissions).
• The checkpoints should be independent from one another.
• The criteria within the checklist must exemplify aspects of good, valuable, and important aspects of the evaluand without tapping into indicators.
• The checkpoints should be clear and concise.
• Overall, the checklist should be useful for intended uses by intended users.

Lessons Learned in Checklist Development

• Checklist development should address unique attributes of the evaluand
• Sampling frame is critical
• Checklist validation should be grounded in theory, practice, and use
• Mixed method approach provides increased confidence in validation conclusions
• All checklists are a “work-in-process”
Thank you!

Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions and ideas regarding evaluation checklists.

Slide content has been prepared with help from Jason T. Burkhardt.