

Appendix 8

External Evaluator Selection

Selecting an External Evaluator

1. Ask a lot of questions!!!
2. Determine the qualities of the external evaluator. A list is provided below.
 - An understanding of development issues.
 - An understanding of organizational issues
 - Experience in evaluating development projects, programs or organizations
 - A good track record with previous clients.
 - Research skills.
 - A commitment to quality.
 - A commitment to deadlines.
 - Objectivity, honesty and fairness.
 - Logic and the ability to operate systematically.
 - Ability to communicate verbally and in writing.
 - A style and approach that fits with your organization.
 - Values that are compatible with those of the organization.
 - Reasonable rates (fees), measured against the going rates.
3. When you decide to use an external evaluator:
 - Check his/her/their references.
 - Meet with the evaluators before making a final decision.
 - Communicate what you want clearly – good Terms of Reference are the foundation of a good contractual relationship.
 - Negotiate a contract which makes provision for what will happen if time frames and output expectations are not met.
 - Ask for a work plan with outputs and timelines.
 - Maintain contact – ask for interim reports as part of the contract – either verbal or written.
 - Build in formal feedback times.

Do not expect any evaluator to be completely objective. S/he will have opinions and ideas – you are not looking for someone who is a blank page! However, his/her ***opinions must be clearly stated as such***, and must not be disguised as “facts”. It is also useful to have some idea of his/her (or their) approach to evaluation.