Mission Order: Evaluation

Mission Order Number: MO*200-203-02*	**Series**: 200
Effective Date: *Date of Signature*	**Supersedes**: MO200-203

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Mission Order is to provide Mission guidelines, procedures and recommendations related to evaluation of development objectives, projects and activities/implementing mechanisms.

II. AUTHORITY/POLICY

- **Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993** and **Government Performance and Results Modernization Act (GPRMA) 2010** regarding government-wide requirements regarding performance management.
- **ADS 203.3.1** regarding all aspects of evaluation; **ADS 203.3.3.1** regarding Evaluation Plan in the Mission-wide Performance Management Plan.
- **Performance Plan and Report (PPR) Guidance** regarding reporting in the Evaluation Registry of the PPR.

III. DEFINITIONS

Significant terms from the ADS for this Mission Order (MO) are:
- Evaluation (**ADS 203.3.1**)
- Impact Evaluation (**ADS 203.3.1.1**)
- Performance Evaluation (**ADS 203.3.1.1**)
- Mission-wide Performance Management Plan (PMP) (**ADS 203.3.3**)
- Development Objective (DO) (**ADS 201.3.3.3**)
- Project (**ADS 201.3.11**)
- Activity/Implementing Mechanism (IM) (**ADS 201.3.11**)

Other terms include:
- Program Office (PRO) Evaluation Point of Contact (EPOC): Per **ADS 203.3.1.2**, Missions must designate an EPOC within the Mission PRO. This individual plays key roles throughout the processes outlined in this MO, helps ensure Mission compliance with the Agency's Evaluation Policy across the Mission's projects, and interacts with USAID/W regional or technical bureaus and the Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning, Office of Learning, Evaluation, and Research (PPL/LER). The EPOC function is both as a value-added subject matter expert on evaluation

policies and procedures for the Mission while serving a central quality control and information-gathering function.

- Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)/Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR)/Activity Manager (AM)/Government to Government (G2G) Manager: For Mission awards, some evaluation responsibilities fall to the COR/AOR/G2G; for awards made in Washington (e.g. field support, Food for Peace, etc.), some evaluation responsibility falls to the AM.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Mission Offices are responsible for the implementation of this Mission Order and adherence to the Agency guidance and principles on evaluation. However, Program and Technical Offices are central to successful evaluations. Between these offices, there must be a clear delineation of roles and strong sense of cooperation and transparency. See **Figure A in ADS 203.3.1.2** for respective roles of these offices across various evaluation tasks. The PRO is responsible for updating this Mission Order.

A Mission-wide Monitoring and Evaluation working group was established and is chaired by the designee of the Program Office Director. This group will be composed of DO team and Program Office staff with primary responsibility for Evaluation and Performance Monitoring and will meet as needed. The roles and responsibilities of this working group will be defined subsequently.

V. PROCEDURES

A. Planning

The Mission Evaluation Plan

As part of the Mission-wide PMP, the PRO will create and maintain a multi-year Evaluation Plan that corresponds with the life of the Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS). It is formulated and approved initially as part of the PMP process. The plan will identify evaluations that are expected to be completed during the life of the CDCS, plus any planned in out-years to ensure sufficient lead time for the planning of individual evaluations. The Evaluation Plan includes both evaluations required by the USAID policy (see below) and evaluations that are not required. The Evaluation Plan should include (at minimum), for each planned evaluation, the project/activity/program to be evaluated, evaluation type, possible evaluation questions, estimated budget, planned start date and estimated completion date as described in **ADS 203.3.3.1**.

Determination of Evaluations to Include in a Mission Evaluation Plan:

For each project, consideration will be given during design to the performance evaluation(s) or impact evaluation(s) that will be undertaken (see **Project Design MO**), including identification of key evaluation questions. The PRO will determine if the project under design is subject to the "large projects" evaluation requirement or the "pilot activities" evaluation requirement. Those requirements are stated fully in **ADS 203.3.1.3**, but are restated briefly here:

- **Large projects**: Each large project should undergo at least one external evaluation. "Project" should not be defined as an implementing mechanism, but according to the current ADS 201.3.11

definition[1]. A large project is one that equals or exceeds the mean (average) project size in dollar value for the DO[2]. Projects with a budget or estimated budget during the life of the DO that is above the mean are required to be evaluated.

- **Pilot activities**: Any <u>activity/IM</u> within a project involving untested hypotheses or demonstrating new approaches that are anticipated to be expanded in scale or scope through U.S. Government foreign assistance or other funding sources will, if feasible, undergo an external impact evaluation. DO teams should identify pilot activities at the design stage. If pilot activities are added to a project after the design stage, the EPOC must be notified. If it is not possible to effectively undertake an impact evaluation, the DO team may instead propose a performance evaluation, with PRO's approval.
- **Non-required Evaluations**: Projects/programs/activity/IMs that are not subject to the "large project" or "pilot activities requirement" may still, of course, be evaluated. This may include, for instance, DO level evaluations or evaluations based on the high-priority evaluation questions identified in the CDCS. In such a case, DO teams, the PRO or the front office may propose either external or internal evaluations for inclusion in the Mission Evaluation Plan.

Evaluation Plan Maintenance

While the Evaluation Plan is initially drafted and approved with the Mission-wide PMP, it is fully expected that, through project design, learning and unforeseen changes, the Evaluation Plan will be updated.

- The Evaluation Plan will be updated on an ongoing basis by the PRO EPOC in coordination with DO teams as projects are developed, new information during program/project/activity implementation "triggers" a need for an evaluation (**ADS 203.3.1.3**), or details for already planned evaluations are filled-in or changed.
- Generally, major decisions on changes must be made through some other formal decision process, for example, as decided in a portfolio review (see **Portfolio Review MO**), a Project Appraisal Document's (PAD) review meeting, or a Quarterly Financial Review meeting. Major decisions would include the addition or subtraction of an evaluation, the re-classification of an evaluation from required to non-required, or a change in evaluation type. However, there will also be routine maintenance, such as updating budget estimates to actuals and changing names and dates. In both cases, DO teams should share new information with the EPOC, and the EPOC will simply enter the new information into the Evaluation Plan to keep it up to date.
- Updates must be made <u>at a minimum</u> on an annual basis, so that the Evaluation Plan may serve as basis for the Evaluation Registry, submitted as part of the PPR.
- The EPOC will provide a read-only copy of the most recent version of the Evaluation Plan for Mission use on P:\ammanpub\M&E Repository\.

Budgeting

Per **ADS 203.3.3.1**, the Evaluation Plan includes the estimated budget for each evaluation. As part of Evaluation Plan maintenance, the EPOC will update those budget estimates (including updating with actual figures) on an ongoing basis. Based on this work, the PRO will calculate, on an annual basis

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[1] A "project" is defined as a set of executed interventions, over an established timeline and budget intended to achieve a discrete development result through resolving an associated problem. It is linked to the CDCS Results Framework. More succinctly, a project is a collaborative undertaking with a beginning and end, designed to achieve a specific purpose.

[2] PPL/LER recommends to divide the total estimated program expenditures over the entire life of a Development Objective (i.e., over the CDCS time frame) by the number of projects under that DO (current and planned) to calculate the mean.

(usually during the preparation of the Operational Plan, since external evaluations are also IMs), a budget estimate for the external evaluations to be undertaken during the following fiscal year. The purpose of this exercise is to compare Mission evaluation plans with the 3% goal stated in the ADS, and to inform Mission decision-making about the extent and cost of an evaluation versus an Agency standard (see **ADS 203.3.1.2**). In the case of a mission-wide M&E contract which may conduct evaluations, the COR of the M&E contract will inform DO team leaders of the associated costs for evaluations conducted by the M&E contractor, both for transparency and for financial planning purposes. In addition, missions are required to annually update the Evaluation Registry of the PPR with budget data for the current fiscal year plus two out years.

Planning Individual Evaluations
In planning an individual evaluation, it is USAID/Jordan policy to follow these steps and guidelines:
- Evaluations should be considered in the CDCS and in the early stages of project design to ensure adequate planning and implementation (see **Project Design MO**).
- Evaluations may also be identified during the course of a portfolio review at any level (see **Portfolio Review MO**) or as needs arise during implementation. When this occurs, the EPOC should add the evaluation to the Evaluation Plan to ensure it is adequately resourced.
- Project managers and COR/AOR/AMs are responsible for ensuring that implementing partners (IPs) of the project that will be evaluated are aware of any planned evaluations and the steps IPs need to take to ensure a successful evaluation, such as the collection, maintenance and documentation of appropriate monitoring data.
- DO Teams will initiate and lead the writing of statements of work for evaluations in cooperation with the PRO. The statements of work (SOW) should conform to USAID Evaluation Policy requirements as described in **ADS 203.3.1.5**.
- Part of the value-added function of the PRO is to suggest potential implementing mechanisms for carrying out the evaluation.
- Once drafted, the EPOC (or designee) will lead a peer review of the SOW, including no less than two individuals in addition to the EPOC (or the designee). Peer reviewers may include individuals from the DO team and Program Office as well as USAID/ Washington regional and technical bureaus, PPL/LER and local partners. Emphasis should be placed on finding at least one peer reviewer with evaluation methods expertise.
- After receiving comments on the SOW, the relevant DO team will make any revisions in cooperation with the PRO before final clearance by the PRO. The PRO will be responsible for ensuring that the SOW is compliant with USAID evaluation policy[3].

B. Implementation

Independence is a critical element to high quality evaluations that is highlighted in **USAID's Evaluation Policy** and **ADS 203**. For this reason, it is USAID policy that all required evaluations are to be carried out externally through a third-party contractor or grantee, managed directly by USAID, and the contract or grant for the evaluation will be managed by the Mission's Program Office (i.e., COR/AOR/AM is an PRO staff member). In cases where Mission management determines that appropriate expertise exists within the Mission, Washington, or other posts and that engaging USAID staff will facilitate institutional learning, an evaluation team may include USAID staff, but an outside expert with appropriate evaluation skills and experience will lead the team. Non-required evaluation teams can be internal or external as needed.

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[3] Refer to easy-to-use documents like Evaluation SOW How-To Note on ProgramNet, which can help identify frequent weaknesses, like too many research questions in a SOW.

- Exceptions to the requirement that the PRO manage the evaluation will be made by the Mission Director. Rationale for the exception will be documented by the PRO in the PMP and available in case of a technical audit of Evaluation Policy compliance. Exceptions to the requirement for an external leader of the evaluation team will be documented in a memo and cleared by the Mission Director for a required evaluation.
- The PRO will be responsible for collecting signed statements from evaluation team members attesting that they have no conflict of interest or describing an existing conflict of interest relative to the project being evaluated (See sample form in **M&E Repository**). If a conflict of interest or potential or appearance of a conflict of interest exists, the PRO will determine if the evaluation team member should be removed from the evaluation team in order to ensure that the conflict does not impair the independence of the evaluation.
- As part of their evaluation management responsibilities, the PRO is responsible for sharing evaluation designs completed by an evaluation team with relevant stakeholders, particularly implementing partners or other funders who contributed to the evaluation or the program/project/activities addressed by the evaluation.

Reports

It is required that draft evaluation reports undergo peer review.
- Draft evaluation reports should be received by the PRO and distributed to relevant individuals for peer review.
- The EPOC (or designee) will lead the peer review of the draft report, including no less than two individuals in addition to the EPOC (or the designee). Peer reviewers will be given no less than 10 business days to provide comments on the draft report. Peer reviewers may include individuals from the DO Team and Program Office as well as from USAID/ Washington regional and technical bureaus and local partners. No more than half of the peer reviewers should be from the DO Team that oversees the project to be evaluated.
- Peer reviewers will be asked to review the draft report according to the Evaluation Policy standards of quality (as described in **ADS 203.3.1.8**).
- The Mission may identify issues, question analysis and provide suggestions to the evaluation team. However the final content of the evaluation is determined by the evaluation team. If necessary, the Mission may submit a statement of differences as part of the final evaluation report (see below).

All draft reports will be shared with implementing partners whose projects are addressed in the evaluation and other organizations who contributed funding to the projects or the evaluation as well as other implementers involved in the project.
- The implementing partners, funders, and evaluation team members will be given the opportunity to write an individual statement of difference regarding any significant unresolved differences of opinion to be attached to the final evaluation report.
- If any statements of difference are received, the evaluation team will be given the opportunity to revise and/or respond to the statements in the evaluation report.

In addition:
- The PRO will be responsible for ensuring that the final report is compliant with USAID evaluation policy and **ADS 203** and follows the recommended reporting practice as described in the **"Preparing Evaluation Reports" How-To Note** on ProgramNet.
- All data collected by USAID for purposes of an evaluation will be uploaded and stored in a central and accessible location managed by the PRO. The PRO will ensure that the evaluation team provides data that are organized and fully documented for use by those not fully familiar

with the project or the evaluation. In accordance with **ADS 203.3.1.10**, data can be submitted to **DevelopmentData@usaid.gov**.

C. Learning and Reporting

Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of information to better understand characteristics and outcomes of a Mission's programs, projects and activities. Given the time and effort that is expended in planning and conducting evaluations, it is essential that the Mission use evaluations to understand performance, test development hypotheses, question assumptions and cause and effect relationships and, ultimately, manage for results and learning. Per **ADS 203.3.1**, to ensure that evaluations are used and learning occurs, it is important to respond to and share evaluation findings. These procedures operationalize these principles.

Responding to Evaluation Findings

Following the completion of an evaluation, the PRO will lead relevant Mission staff through the process of responding to evaluation findings as described in **ADS 203.3.1.9**. This process will lead to the development of an action plan for addressing the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations the Mission has accepted or any other actions it deems necessary as a result of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. If necessary, the Mission may submit a statement of differences as an annex to the evaluation report. During Portfolio Reviews, the status of action plans for evaluation findings and their use in respective decisions will be discussed and documented (see **Portfolio Review MO**).
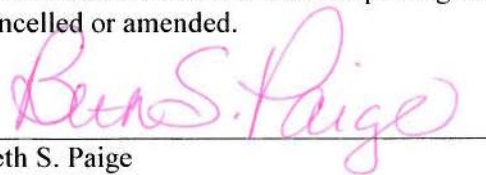
Sharing Evaluations with Stakeholders

Findings from evaluations will be shared as widely as possible, with a commitment to full and active disclosure. Following the completion of the evaluation report, the PRO will ensure that the final evaluation report is posted on the **Development Experience Clearinghouse** (DEC) no later than three months after completion.   Any exception to this requirement to make the full evaluation report available publicly on the DEC must be approved by the Director of PPL/LER. Every effort must be made to develop public reports and include classified material in a separate version or annex.

The PRO in cooperation with the relevant DO team will determine whether to post the evaluation on the Mission website and/or translate the executive summary into the local language.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE AND CANCELLATION

This Mission Order is effective upon signing by the Mission Director and will remain in force until cancelled or amended.

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Beth S. Paige
Mission Director
USAID/Jordan

Date: ~~July~~ August 7, 2014.

<u>Clearances</u>: Mission Order on Evaluation

DRAFTED:

PRO: AMarcus/ABouazza   Draft   Date   05/29/2014

CLEARANCES:

A/PRO: MYassien   Draft   Date 07/09/2014
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FPH: SBlanding   E-mail   Date 07/14/2014
DRG: JDunlop   Draft   Date 07/14/2014
MEO: AAlHmoud   _____   Date _____
Gender POC: GKara   E-mail   Date 08/03/2014
FMO: RShire   E-mail   Date 07/13/2014
A/RLA: MFittipaldi   E-mail   Date 07/13/2014
AAO: RRabie   E-mail   Date 07/17/2014
EXO: LPetersen   E-mail   Date 07/16/2014
DDIR: DBall   Draft   Date 07/15/2014