

Guidance for Evaluation Purpose Statement

The Evaluation Purpose statement will become part of your program’s Evaluation Plan. It is valuable as part of the preparation for *any* evaluation effort.¹

The Evaluation Purpose statement should provide a short description of your evaluation effort. It should describe what is and is not being evaluated and the goal/purposes of the evaluation. It sets boundaries by identifying the program elements and time frame being considered, which audiences are being addressed, and which goals or objectives are of most interest.

Example for an *earlier* lifecycle program/evaluation:

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which participants in the Master Forest Owners Volunteer Training Workshop feel supported and well-equipped to share their forestry knowledge with other forest owners in their local communities. Considerations within the scope of the current evaluation include program structure and processes, curricular choices, and short-term outcome assessment. Other means of supporting forest management volunteers such as our newsletter and quarterly conference calls will not be assessed. Likewise, the program’s long-term impacts will not be directly addressed.

Example for a *later* lifecycle program/evaluation:

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the Master Forest Owners Volunteer Training Workshop in supporting and prompting MFO volunteers to extend their knowledge to other forest owners in their local communities. A secondary purpose is to provide documentation and assessment information for use by persons considering replicating the model with other forest owner groups. Considerations include assessment of contextual factors which may affect program effectiveness and medium- and long-term impacts. Other means of supporting forest management volunteers such as our newsletter and quarterly conference calls will not be assessed.

The program modeling and the “mining the model” steps in the evaluation planning process – and the resulting priorities and considerations – form a strong foundation for determining your evaluation scope and identifying the Evaluation Questions you intend to focus on in the next evaluation cycle. All of these will contribute to a succinct, well-defined Evaluation Purpose statement.

¹ This handout adapted from Duttweiler, M. (2010) “Focusing an Evaluation”. [Blog post]. *AEA365*. American Evaluation Association June 22, 2010. Accessed 6/19/2015. <http://aea365.org/blog/michael-duttweiler-on-focusing-an-evaluation/>